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## Journal of Peace Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713624882>

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Online publication date: 18 April 2011

**To cite this Article** Israeli, Liora(2011) "The Other' - a threat or a resource? Polar interpretations of two children's stories: 'The ugly duckling' by H.C. Andersen and 'Raspberry Juice' by H. Shenhav', *Journal of Peace Education*, 8: 1, 1 – 17

**To link to this Article:** DOI: 10.1080/17400201.2011.553374

**URL:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2011.553374>

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## **‘The Other’ – a threat or a resource? Polar interpretations of two children’s stories: ‘The ugly duckling’ by H.C. Andersen and ‘Raspberry Juice’ by H. Shenhav**

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*(Received 24 July 2010; Accepted 1 December 2010)*

This article examines the educational work towards tolerance by analyzing two opposed social views in children’s stories: ‘The ugly duckling’ by H.C. Andersen and ‘Raspberry Juice’ by H. Shenhav. ‘The ugly duckling’ depicts a social state based on the evolutionary ladder, where the white entity is at the top, and the black one is at the bottom, concluding that multicultural society is an artificial order that is not recommended. ‘Raspberry Juice’ describes a social order based on cultural relativism where each entity is on equal footing, concluding that diversity encourages cooperative intercultural relations, widens ones’ horizons and promotes personal growth. The approach is interdisciplinary in scope, and, thus, it offers perspectives ranging from literary analysis, anthropological study and critical thinking skills. It provides teachers with the opportunity to develop social awareness in their classrooms and their students’ critical thinking skills, necessities in a democratic society. Figure 5 can be regarded as a litmus test when choosing a social text/program/activity aimed at teaching democratic values.

**Keywords:** education; multiculturalism; ‘the Other’; social values; racism; critical thinking skills; democracy

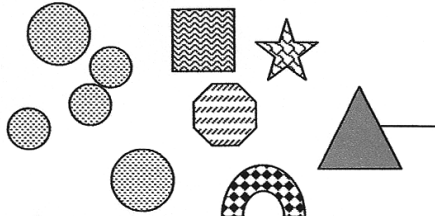

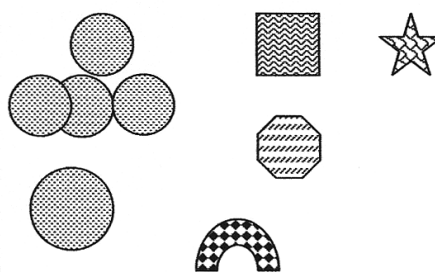
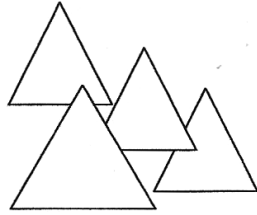
### **Introduction**

‘The ugly duckling’, by H.C. Andersen, first appeared in 1844 in Denmark, and was subsequently translated into approximately 60 languages.<sup>1</sup> ‘Raspberry Juice’, a Hebrew children’s book, which was written in 1970 by H. Shenhav, has been a best-seller in Israel over a span of many years. Both stories focus thematically on the social interactions between ‘the Other’ and the members of a particular community. This paper will compare the ramifications of the ‘Outsider’ in these two children’s stories.

On the surface, ‘The ugly duckling’ portrays the lamentable mistreatment of the protagonist, who escapes from the farm to seek refuge elsewhere; but, unfortunately, he continues to endure adversity in the outside world. As he struggles to survive while suffering through cold, hunger and isolation, he unknowingly goes through a dramatic physical transformation. He finally attains happiness and finds companionship when he comes upon a group of white swans who resemble him and accept him into their flock – for he is one of them (see Figure 1). ‘Raspberry Juice’ relates a tale that, on an apparent level, describes how Lion and Giraffe discover the true identity of ‘Raspberry Juice’ (a rabbit), and how the three of them establish a lasting friendship (see Figure 3).<sup>2</sup>

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On the Farm	In the wild	
		Beginning
		End

At the beginning of the story **The Ugly Duckling** is rejected by the poultry in the farm. At the end he becomes a beautiful white swan and finds company with a flight of swans.

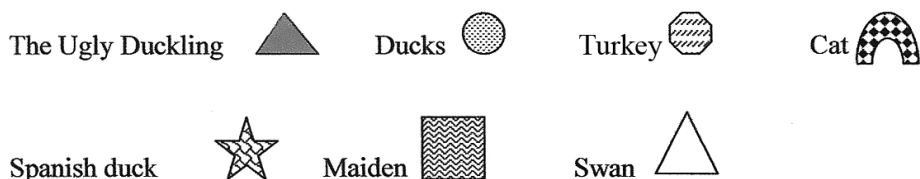


Figure 1. 'The ugly duckling' – the starting point vs. the ending.

The purpose of this article is to promote democratic values by revealing and examining the fundamental social concepts that are embedded in these two stories. The analysis of the stories is accompanied by four diagrammatic figures. A fifth diagram, from the anthropological realm, visually summarizes and describes how the polarity of social perceptions is conveyed by these two tales. Concurrently, it grounds rules for dealing with different materials in regards to their social-educational context.

### 'The ugly duckling'

In this tale, Andersen depicts the plight of a young bird who is banished from an intolerant society due to his ugly appearance. As the story commences, the readers already develop empathy towards the main protagonist – 'the other'. Actually, from

the title of 'The ugly duckling' alone, readers can anticipate that this story unfolds into a sad plot, and feel compassion for the poor central character.

Indeed, the tale of 'The ugly duckling' is one of difficult survival by a courageous individual who desires to evolve his personal integrity and step-by-step gains the readers' admiration. Bravely, he avoids remaining in the role of the victim by wrestling with his own bitter fate:

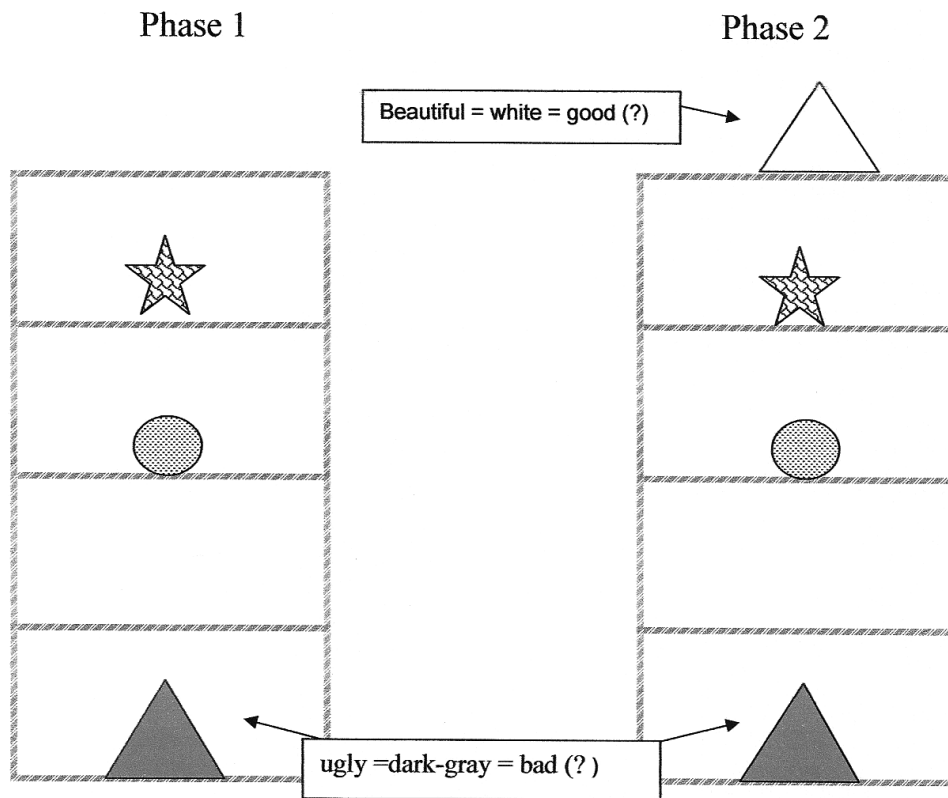
- His adopted mother rejects him and ceases protecting him from the constant abuse he must endure in the farmyard. Instead of submitting to the disparagement of the farmyard, he chooses to face the ominous dangers lurking beyond the fence (see Figure 1).
- He ignores the admonishment of the hen and the tom cat to behave in a 'practical' manner and to stay inside the hut. He disregards their advice to adopt the skills of the former (laying eggs) or the latter (arching his back and purring), but he chooses to follow his own intuition.
- While the kind peasant rescues him from certain death by freezing, the ugly duckling does not submit to domestication and longs to return to the 'savage Nature'.
- Unlike some of other characters in Andersen's fairy tales<sup>3</sup> the ugly duckling 'wins' his bitter fight. At the end of the tale, his inner radiance becomes apparent to all and to his joyful disbelief the protagonist is crowned as the most magnificent of all the royal swans (see Figure 2).

Looking back in hindsight, he feels no remorse at his crucial decision to escape from the farm. He is saddened, however, by the other ducks' refusal to accept him as he was: 'how gladly he would have lived even with the ducks had they only given him encouragement' (Andersen 1844, 9). The ugly duckling remained true to his original convictions and his unique identity throughout.

On the contrary, the protagonist's 'mother' is portrayed as a conformist who initially follows her own instincts, yet is ultimately unable to resist societal pressure. At first, she insists on sitting on the strange egg, despite the warnings of the older duck and she even begins to develop maternal feelings for the odd-looking chick. Yet the mother duck lacked the necessary strength of character to stand up against the others. At some point, she ceases nurturing the ugly duckling, in order to appease the demands of the intolerant community to which she belongs.

The juxtaposition of the protagonist's valiant non-conformist actions with those of the mother duck's compliance to the norm is the author's way of infusing criticism into the story. The story presents the reader with a tough dilemma, echoed in several different versions in various episodes. A choice must be made between (a) self-negation and adaptation, which would guarantee a comfortable and safe existence and (b) a radical departure from the mainstream, even at the risk of losing one's own life. Each one of these choices comes at a high price; Andersen expresses his preference for the second option (b) by leading the ugly duckling to a 'happy ending' at a distance from the farm. Yet, this 'happy ending' is most problematic for there are implied dangerous social messages interweaved in the plot.

The author infers the meaning of the bird's 'ugliness' through the use of various adjectives, such as 'large', 'not at all like the others', 'queer-looking' (Andersen 1844, 7), and a 'dark-gray color' (Andersen 1844, 10). All these negative adjectives provoke wonderment, for the society of animals in the farmyard is portrayed



At the beginning of the story (Phase 1), the **Ugly Duckling** is ranked low on the ladder and the ducks are at a higher level than him. At the end of the story (Phase 2) the **Ugly Duckling** turns into a beautiful white swan and is ranked high on the top of the ladder.



Figure 2. ‘The ugly duckling’ – evolutionary ladder.

as a ‘multicultural’ one. In other words, it had been previously accustomed to many types of diversity (ducks, chickens, Spanish duck, turkey, cat, and maiden). Wouldn’t it seem logical, therefore, that the members of the farmyard would be used to living together with creatures of many different shapes and colors, and would get along?

Why do they single out the ugly duckling? Could it be possible that his unusually large size compared to the other ducklings in the brood caused the farmyard members to reject him? If we analyze the conversation between the adoptive mother and the older duck, we come to realize that the ugly duckling’s conspicuous size is not

the main cause of his rejection. The older duck warns the foster mother that she would be better off to heed her advice and not try to raise a turkey chick:

I have no doubt it is a turkey's egg. I was persuaded to hatch some once, and after all my care and trouble with the young ones, they were afraid of the water. I quacked and clucked, but all to no purpose. I could not get them to venture in. (Andersen 1844, 5)

According to the older duck, the challenge of adopting chicks of a different breed creates unforeseen problems. However, she does not mention that the other farmyard animals raised any objections to turkeys *per se*, or that the size of the young bird made any difference to anyone.

Is it plausible that his trial to belong to the family of ducks incited anger in the society of the farmyard? The ostracized duckling looked very different than his siblings, which made it obvious that he wasn't a true member of their own flesh and blood. Was it the uncertainty over his breed which sparked their alarm and reinforced feelings of xenophobia as shown by the disgusted reaction toward him: 'What a queer looking object one of them is; we don't want him here' (Andersen 1844, 5).

Most of the physical characteristics of the ugly duckling are spelled out in vague and relative phrases, except for the words 'dark-gray' (Andersen 1844, 10), written at the end of the story. The author includes this description of him when the protagonist meets the three swans: 'From a thicket close by came three beautiful white swans' (Andersen 1844, 9). The protagonist feels an uncontrollable urge to approach those splendid birds, and decides to throw caution to the wind and goes up to them anyway. Once they catch a glimpse of the newcomer, the swans hurry toward him with outstretched wings. He humbly bows his head toward the surface of the water; he anticipates the worst – that the three swans would kill him. Yet, quite the contrary is true; they welcome him openly, and the protagonist is startled not only by their cordial reception, but also at his own reflection mirrored in the water: 'His own image; no longer a dark-gray bird, ugly and disagreeable to look at, but a graceful and beautiful swan' (Andersen 1844, 10). This key phrase is indicative of the truth being revealed. Only when the ugly duckling has undergone a complete metamorphosis, does he dare to allow his repressed feelings to surface, and even then, he keeps them silently to himself. He recognizes that the reason for his misery was his former despicable appearance – his stubby feathers had been dark gray.

Throughout the story, the swans are depicted as the reverse image of the ugly duckling: swans = dazzling whiteness, curved their graceful necks, glorious wings, royal, happy, beautiful, lovely, big (Andersen 1844, 8–10), in other words, *beautiful*. The ugly duckling = big, strange, dark-gray, disagreeable to look at, miserable, that is *ugly*.

If we still are skeptical about the aesthetic qualities which are most coveted by society, and which are expressed in this tale, these values are emphasized in the way humans relate to the different birds: the young maiden who tends to the animals in the farmyard kicks the ugly duckling with her feet and denies him food. In sharp contrast the children on the banks of the river are delighted at the sight of the unfamiliar white swan and consider him as 'the most beautiful of all' swans (Andersen 1844, 10). They joyfully run to tell their parents about him, they dance, clap their hands and throw more bread and cake into the water, to feed all the swans in honor of the newcomer's arrival.

It is curious to ponder different scenarios to this tale and how these versions to the story would have changed the way the ugly duckling's personality and destiny evolved: What may have happened to the unidentified chick if he was covered in light plumage? What if the farmyard residents had recognized from the very beginning that

he was not a duckling at all, but rather a white cygnet? Or what may have happened to the swan if had been transformed into black instead of white?<sup>4</sup>

The somewhat ironic twist to this tale is how the ugly duckling ultimately retaliates against those who harmed him, even if he doesn't do so through any deliberate actions. At the story's end he enjoys a kind of sweet 'revenge' as he transitions into a magnificent white swan, one whose aristocratic looks and noteworthy status hoists him from the bottom to the top rungs of the social hierarchy. At the conclusion of the tale, 'justice' is served through the protagonist's passive revenge, organisms are assigned their rightful place in the universal order and harmony is restored. Anderson illustrates this splendid picture in bright colors: The three swans (symbolic of the 'wild' natural world) 'swam round the new-comer, and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome' (Anderson 1844, 10); the children at the river (representing the 'civilized' world) deem the ugly duckling to be the most elegant of all swans. The elder-tree (nature) bends down into the water as a way of honoring the royal protagonist, and the glow of the sun's rays shine warmly to symbolize universal validation that things are as they should be.

Is this conclusion to the tale a 'happy ending'? The story expresses repetitively the anthropological notion of an evolutionary ladder, in which animals are ranked according to their position on a hierarchical scale which applies to domestic and wild creatures alike:

- When the ugly duckling's adoptive 'mother' tries to instruct her naive offspring about the rules of conduct to which they must abide: 'You must bow your heads prettily to that old duck yonder; she is the highest born of them all, and has Spanish blood, therefore, she is well off... she has a red flag tied to her leg, which is something very grand, and a great honor for a duck' (Andersen 1844, 8). The ducks in the farmyard willingly adopt the human framework of social status.
- The hen, at the old woman's cottage, proclaims that the old woman is the cleverest being on earth, followed by the tomcat, and then by the 'modest' hen. She condescendingly judges the ugly duckling as someone who pursues foolish fancies, based on his insistence to follow his own instincts rather than regard her more 'sensible' advice.
- 'The ugly duckling' prefers to be killed by the swans (the upper class) than by the lower class animals in the farm (Zipes 1999, 102): 'better be killed by them (the swans) than pecked by the ducks, beaten by the hens, pushed about by the maiden who feeds the poultry, or starved with hunger in the winter' (Anderson 1844, 9).

In truth, the entire plot centers upon the idea of how mistaken identity originally upset the balance and how erroneous judgment damages the hierarchical order, until it is finally corrected at the culminating scene. Yet, the 'happy ending' to this story does not truly liberate the ugly duckling, nor does it cancel out the significance or over-riding authority of the evolutionary ladder. Strangely enough, according to the tale, the protagonist himself shares the very same belief system held by the poultry in the farm which hurt him so badly: creatures that are white are automatically given supremacy over those who are dark. Anderson's 'happy ending' is a confirmation of a racial worldview. 'The ugly duckling', who had fought conformity with courage and determination, is actually a captive of a racial social system and his 'sweet revenge' is none other than surrender to the predominant set of discriminating values prevalent at Anderson's time.<sup>5</sup>

Anderson seems to believe in homogeneity as the preferred social order. From the first few paragraphs of this story, he illustrates how a multicultural society is an artificial and problematic manmade situation that violates the rules of nature. The author hints at the lack of cooperation among the resident animals in the farm when he writes: 'When they (the mother ducks and her young) reached the farmyard, there was a great disturbance; two families were fighting for an eel's head, which, after all, was carried off by the cat' (Anderson 1844, 5). The normative family of animals in the wild is made up of homogenous groups: the wild geese look upon the protagonist and collectively honk in unison: 'You are exceedingly ugly... but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family' (Andersen 1844, 6). Once they have managed to overcome their revulsion at the ugly duckling's unpleasant appearance, they entreat him to join their flock as long he won't make an attempt to spoil their breed's purity.

Wild and domesticated animals alike seem to instinctually comprehend the need to hold onto family purity. Anderson strengthens this notion by referring to the ugly duckling only in vague and general terms throughout. Though he never abandons his hero through agonizing as well as glorious moments as the story unfolds, he continually describes him merely by (a) which species he belong to (duckling); and (b) the main attributes typifying his physical appearance (ugliness). In all other ways, the ugly duckling remains anonymous, and is never given a real name. Moreover, at the 'happy ending', he is supposed to assimilate into the swan family, where he won't be easily distinguishable from the other members of the group.

The set of social values suggested by the story is based upon homogeneity, status and externalities. The real danger lies in that we can inadvertently plant the seeds of these ideas in young children, who look up to adults as their models. Could this be the case when we share with them the following judgmental equation?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ugly} &= \text{dark-gray} \\ \text{Beautiful} &= \text{white}^6 \end{aligned}$$

Could this aesthetic judgment later be transferred in their young, impressionable minds into a moral message?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ugly} &= \text{dark-gray} = \text{bad?} \\ \text{Beautiful} &= \text{white} = \text{good?} \end{aligned}$$

Paradoxically, Anderson, who accompanied his protagonist through sorrow and misery, was unable to extricate him from the European feudal-colonialist worldview. 'The ugly duckling' hatched from the egg to an archaic, racist set of values of the Old World that had still failed to adopt the radical ideas of democracy and equality etched upon the flag of the New World.

### 'Raspberry Juice'

When we analyze 'Raspberry Juice', we encounter a totally different perspective. While both works do have a so-called 'happy ending' (at least in the eyes of the authors) and both deal thematically with anthropomorphic animals who represent 'the other' in relation to society, there is little else that they share in common. Compared to the oppressive atmosphere of 'The ugly duckling', the setting of this story is bright and cheerful.<sup>7</sup> In 'Raspberry Juice', the protagonist's house is situated 'at the edge of



the forest' (Shenhav 1994, 5) – 'the Other' is included in the community, even though no one actually knows who he is. Like the miserable bird who escapes to save himself, Raspberry Juice also seeks self-protection in physical isolation. Yet their circumstances are completely different: whereas the poor juvenile swan nearly dies in the gray winter landscape, the hero of the latter story finds refuge in his multicolored abode, where he enjoys all the familiar comforts of home.

One fine day, when she is out on one of her strolls in the forest, Giraffe comes upon Lion who beckons her to join him in his quest to reveal the mysterious identity of Raspberry Juice. The appealing hero of the story is represented as a kind of enigma, a sweet riddle, who everyone wants to decode, yet no one can get close enough to. It is the opposite situation of the ugly duckling who wanted to belong but was rejected by the society he lived in.

Like Andersen, Shenhav also refrains from calling her animals anything that would grant them a sense of uniqueness, and instead merely labels them by the group to which they belong. Thus, all the animals, with the exclusion of Raspberry Juice, who is given a first and last name, are named by their species only: Lion, Giraffe, Elephant, Mosquito, and so on. Raspberry Juice's name results from the fact that no one knows what type of animal he is, and thus they have no other point of reference by which to describe him. But there is a world of difference between the name of Shenhav's hero and that of Andersen's protagonist: 'Raspberry Juice' is reminiscent of the sugary red juice which Israelis offer their young ones to quench their thirst and refresh themselves in the scorching summer heat. Thus, the name carries with it sweet associations of childhood memories, wakens the readers' curiosity and whets their appetite for adventure.

The author acknowledges and unravels the problematic situation of 'the other's' anonymity through the teamwork of Lion and Giraffe. She suggests a practical way to solve the riddle according to the old adage: 'Two heads are better than one'. Surely, the possibility of making a new friend is an uplifting prospect, yet to go hiking alone deep into the woods in order to meet a total stranger is also a risky and frightening experience. Thus it makes much more sense for Lion and Giraffe to go there together in pursuit of 'Raspberry Juice's identity. The male lion's invitation to the female giraffe to go with him is an interesting way in which Shenhav injects additional layers of meaning to her work which can be juxtaposed with the rigid order of social hierarchy in Andersen's fairy tale. Here, in contrast to its Western stereotype, Lion (the ultimate king of all animals), feels comfortable and self-confident enough to ask for a feminine perspective, Giraffe, who can observe the world from up above, without it threatening his self image. He demonstrates his belief in the equality of all creatures, regardless of gender and species in contrast to the way the reader judges him. Since the very onset of the story, the readers have been exposed to democratic values and to the idea of collaboration in a multicultural environment.

The two friends arrive at Raspberry Juice's house and ring the bell,<sup>8</sup> yet he is unwilling to open his door because this would put him in the vulnerable position of revealing the secret of his true identity. Thus, the two visitors decide to get out of sight and hide behind broad bushes until Raspberry Juice goes outside. Soon enough they discover that this is not an adequate solution, as Lion points out to Giraffe: 'Giraffe, I can see your head and your neck! "Raspberry Juice" will notice you and he won't come out of his house' (Shenhav 1994, 12). Next, they both make an effort to conceal themselves behind tall trees, but this attempt also fails. As Giraffe looks at Lion, she utters: 'Lion, your head and your tail are sticking out from behind the tree!

“Raspberry Juice” will see you and he won’t come out of his house’ (Shenhav 1994, 12). This rather comical and puzzling scene is significant in that it points to how both Lion and Giraffe are ignorant of their physical dissimilarities, even though they belong to two completely unrelated species.<sup>9</sup> It takes them a while to realize that their different shape must be acknowledged and respected and that Giraffe, due to her height, should hide behind a tall tree while, Lion, due to his bulky body, should hide behind a wide bush. The readers, as well as Giraffe and Lion, recognize that intercultural relations do not merely allow us to become acquainted with ‘the Other’, but also provide us with a perceptual mirror that fosters greater awareness of the Self.


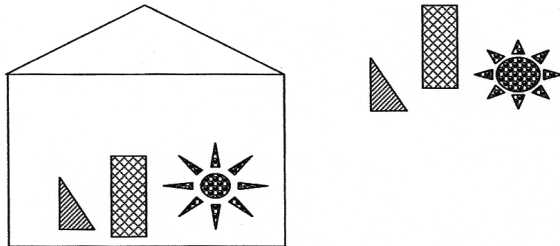
It is worth looking closely at the solution which the two companions sort out: Giraffe does not demand of Lion to shear off his mane in order to hide behind the tall tree. Nor does Lion make the ridiculous suggestion that Giraffe shrink her neck in order to fit behind the bush. In the same vein, neither one of them would think of trying to alter their setting to suit their own needs by cutting off branches on the trees or the bush. The only answer is for each of them to be flexible and to adapt to the existing conditions. A multicultural approach promotes respect for the uniqueness of each and every organism as well for its natural environment.

When Raspberry Juice eventually dares to venture out of his house, he is startled by the voices of Lion and Giraffe, who remain concealed in their hiding places, and shout out to him in an amusing game of hide-and-seek. Lion and Giraffe have already seen who he really is, yet they cleverly succeed in holding his attention through an innocent verbal exchange in which they pretend not to know his identity. This game breaks down the barriers between the strangers without being overly intimidating, as all of them are caught up in the amusement.<sup>10</sup> Thus, they mention the names of many different creatures that live in their community from diverse categories conveying a friendly-comfortable atmosphere of a multicultural community. Finally, Raspberry Juice’s identity is revealed, as one of the ‘guesses’ called out by the other two characters turns out to be correct. He admits that he is, in fact, a rabbit. Only then, do Lion and Giraffe step away from their hiding place to show themselves as well, and they suggest becoming friends. Raspberry Juice is eager to try out the new and exhilarating experience: ‘But what shall we do?’ he asks his newfound friends. Action seems to be the best bet: ‘A race, a race’ they exclaim excitedly (Shenhav 1994, 20).

The rabbit, small and weak as he outwardly appears, is victorious in the race, a surprising outcome which breaks once again common stereotypes. In a capricious game resembling ‘catch me if you can’, Raspberry Juice quickly crosses the ‘finish line’ to win the race, dashes inside his house and slams the door. As Lion and Giraffe arrive at the finish line themselves, they discover that this time, it is Raspberry Juice who has tricked them by disappearing into thin air. In a funny scene which closely mimics the beginning of the story, Lion and Giraffe once again ring the doorbell, and the rabbit inside pretends not to know who is there. ‘Who is it?’ asks Raspberry Juice (Shenhav 1994, 22). Yet a lot of ground has been covered since the opening of the tale, and this time the protagonist, who has made enormous progress in terms of his social interactions, no longer wishes to shut out his new friends. At this juncture, when trust and mutual respect have been established between the three characters he welcomes his friends into his house, his own intimate personal space. Raspberry Juice enjoys the delightful new world of friendship and sharing and he serves his guests all kinds of delicious candies, treats and a cool, refreshing drink – raspberry juice. The act

of drinking this sweet beverage seems to have an important significance to the context of the story: Raspberry Juice metaphorically gives totally of himself; he lets his close new friends internalize and ‘imbibe’ the protagonist himself. The story illustrates how the characters have moved away from encounter in a neutral zone, through outside activities, to the innermost recesses of the protagonist’s life: the privacy of his home and his Self (see Figures 3 to 4).

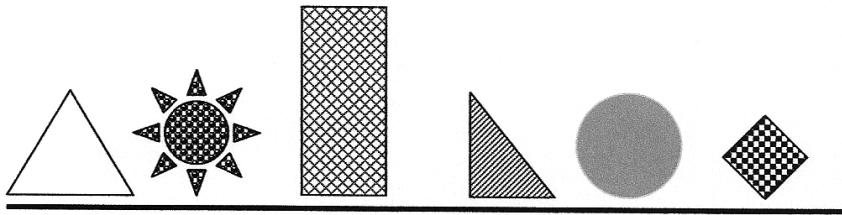
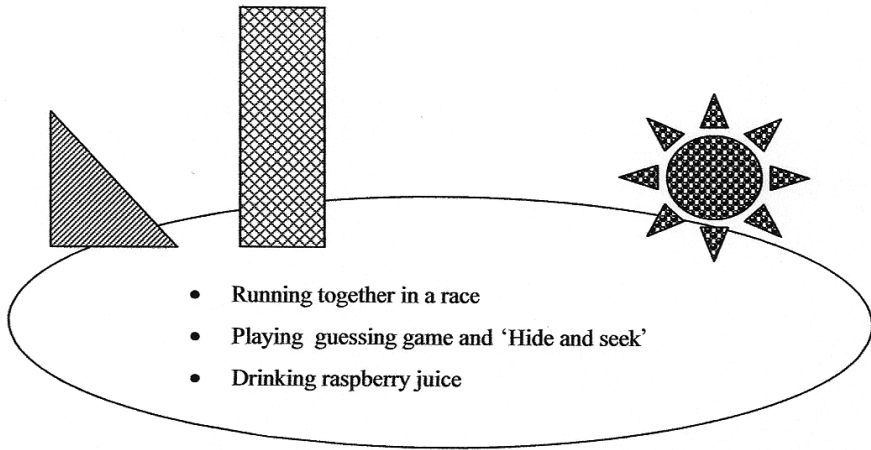
The two tales provide a model for diametrically opposed anthropological perceptions (see Figure 5, p.12) as well as opposed views of ‘the Other’. The ugly duckling depicts multicultural society as an undesirable situation and ‘the other’ as a threat,<sup>11</sup> while Raspberry Juice encourages its readers to experience intercultural relations and presents ‘the other’ as a resource. In both stories the four heroes: the ugly duckling, Raspberry Juice, Lion and Giraffe share considerable emotional growth and self-realization as the plot unfolds.

Animals in the Forest	Outer World	
		Beginning
		End

At the beginning of the story **Raspberry Juice's** identity is a riddle. His house is located at the end of the animals' territory. Right from the start **Lion** and **Giraffe** cooperate. At the end of the story **Raspberry Juice's identity** is revealed, and the three characters establish friendship.

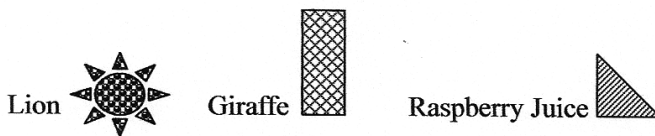


Figure 3. ‘Raspberry juice’ – the starting point vs. the ending.



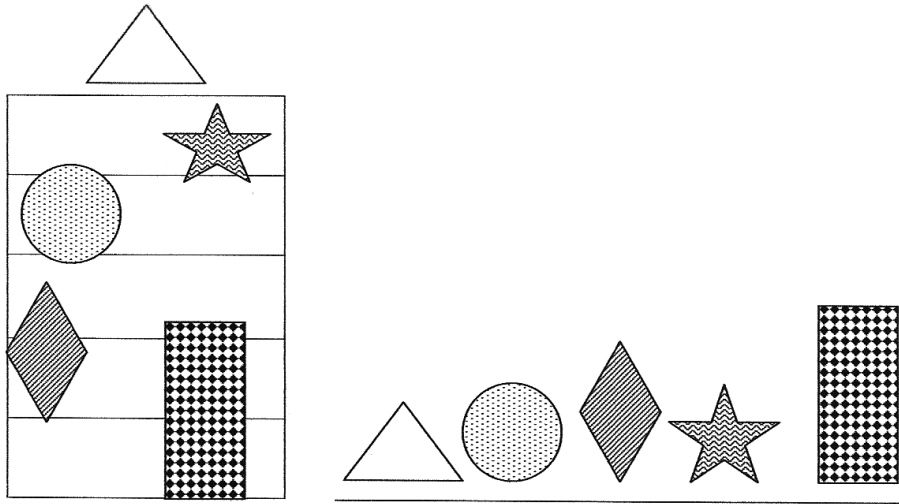
**Raspberry Juice, Lion and Giraffe** make friends on the basis of cultural relativism.

Each of them keeps his/her unique identity, yet they still share common areas of interest and fun: playing a game of hide and seek, running a race and drinking raspberry juice.



Different animals living in the forest

Figure 4. 'Raspberry juice' – cultural relativism.



<p><b>Evolutional Ladder</b></p> <p>Different cultures are ranked on a ladder which reflects their status.</p>	<p><b>Cultural Relativism</b></p> <p>Each culture is unique. All cultures stand on the same level.</p>
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This scheme summarizes the polar anthropological perceptions hidden in the two stories. It can be used as a litmus test when choosing a social text/ activity/ program aimed at promoting tolerance.

Figure 5. 'The Other' – a threat or a resource?

**Conclusion**

*Methodological viewpoints*

This study is characterized by an integrative, multidisciplinary approach unifying literary content-based analysis with methods derived from the anthropological domain and critical thinking skills. This multifaceted combination exposes, conceptualizes and sharpens the contrasting polarity between two perceptual approaches embedded in these tales and serving as cornerstones and basic premises of each.

### ***Promoting tolerance education***

The analysis of the two stories accomplishes a twofold strategy as a means of teaching tolerance and open-mindedness, with each separate part complementing and empowering the other. These two methods are: (a) fostering student awareness towards social issues and helping youth to better grasp social values as seen through anthropological and literary perspectives; and (b) development of cognitive proficiency, to help students fashion an image of themselves as moral individuals, who are highly capable of critical thinking skills and judiciously forming their own opinions.

### ***Anthropological and literary perspectives***

'The ugly duckling' focuses mainly on an attempt to identify what species of bird the protagonist is and, subsequently, to rank his social status. This classification is based upon a hierarchical scale, the evolutionary ladder, designed in the colonial era and later supported by the evolutionary theory, providing a means of defining and assessing different cultures. The essential assumption of this method is that different societies are at different stages of development. According to this view progressive Western cultures are more advanced than third world 'primitive' groups. Anderson, in the spirit of his times, solved the 'diversity problem' by favoring homogenous cultures and rejecting the idea of a multicultural society, but in the US, at the same time, the social policy known as the 'Melting Pot' designated to blur the differences between various ethnic groups and create a unified cultural archetype.

In contrast, 'Raspberry Juice' encourages intercultural relations while each culture preserves its identity and uniqueness, based on the twentieth century anthropological perspective, known as *cultural relativism*, pioneered in the US by Franz Boas (1848–1942). According to this view, culture is defined as a particular lifestyle of a group and different cultures reveal different ways of confronting their needs according to the unique geographical, historical, social and material conditions they face. All cultures are equally valuable and it is necessary to understand the customs of 'the other' within his own cultural context, without attempting to 'measure' him against the criteria of another culture. Cultural relativism, together with the western notion of individualism, built the foundations of the social policy named 'the Salad Bowl', a metaphor for a multicultural society. In a mixed salad, each and every ingredient keeps its own special flavor; similarly, in a multicultural society, individuals and cultures are all encouraged to maintain their own singular identities within the limited confines of the container (i.e., legal restrictions) (see Figure 5). A transparent bowl allows for the possibility of getting acquainted with the contents of other salad bowls. So too, multicultural societies who are willing to open themselves up to each another can benefit through observation, nurturing and absorption.

It must be pointed out that 'Raspberry Juice' avoids the portrayal of unresolved, knotty dilemmas that cultural relativism and 'the Salad Bowl' often raise in the real world. Instead, it creates the illusions that it is possible to solve complex social problems by completely relying on some kind of magic formula. The young citizens of tomorrow are invited to take on the future challenge of continually improving upon current anthropological perceptions, and reforming the future legislation of social policies.

***An instrument for developing higher thinking skills***

Analysis of 'The ugly duckling' provides us with an example of how racist perspectives permeated the very same educational system that embroidered upon its flag fundamental democratic values. In our current era, in which we are oversaturated with a wide diversity of available sources of information, educational and censorship systems are short-handed in controlling the quality of the information students are exposed to. Thus, it is more crucial than ever before to equip students with the ability to process data, to sift through and qualify information which is offered to them as unquestionable 'truth' in an independent manner (Giroux 1993). Recent studies have demonstrated that it is possible to improve the basic innate capacities we are born with to make these kinds of distinctions, through exposure to an environment that encourages and stimulates free thinking (Zohar 1996).

Thus, this article invites teachers to initiate a thought-provoking event for students studying a specific subject (McPeck 1981; Paul 1992) by unraveling a kind of a challenging riddle code. It is recommended to transform the insights gained through analysis of the stories for general active knowledge and to apply it to relevant social topics that are part of today's world news (Ennis 1987). Analyzing the literary texts, creates also an opportunity to enhance students' self-worth and concretize their self-awareness, as citizens and leaders of tomorrow, capable of using independent reasoning, taking responsibility and making moral judgments.

***Developing critical thinking through comparison***

The act of comparing and contrasting, scrutinizing objects, which have both similarities and differences, deepens our understanding of reality. 'Translating' the hidden social pictures into graphic organizers which focus on specific details (see Figures 1–4) while stripping away the complex, superfluous elements of the story and exposing the bare thematic elements might clarify things for the students (Levitz and Waner 2000). Students are encouraged to compare the social pictures portrayed at the beginnings and endings of the stories, as well as to examine the polarity presented by them. The comparison can sharpen their ability to distinguish between different types of social messages.

Comparison between earlier and later perceptions which exposes the disparity between earlier and later interpretations of the two texts based on a cognitive conflict (Zohar 1996) may provoke a lack of inner stability. It can force the students to confront the unbearable lightness with which our judgment may be diverted and encourage them to take an independent stance not predetermined by fixed dictates. The insights gained in this process might change their outlook from self-assurance to a more modest and cautious approach.

The comparison of the two stories with the aid of anthropological terminology is intended to familiarize students with the accepted jargon from the social science realm and to enrich their ability to conceptualize.

***The motivation of critical thinking through dialogue***

The 'detective journey' to uncover hidden textual messages in the two stories may spur the students on to somewhat tense – but fruitful – class discussions while still regarding the rules of conduct according to a democratic pact.

### ***Reflection as a means of developing critical thinking***

Reflective observation, in which the process of thought is analyzed, shows students the essential need of examining a system that questions the veracity of accepted truths, which are thought to be incontestable. It allows students to adopt certain modes of general behavior: to postpone passing judgment and to make meticulous research-investigation of the facts before making a verdict. The insights gained through the comparison of the two ‘innocent’ stories serve to develop students’ awareness to the power of ‘culture agents’ which allow the hearts of its ‘clients’ to be immersed in their worldview. This recognition will help students in the future to identify obscure information or propaganda, that which is based upon prejudice, stereotypes and self-delusion (Paul 1992).

The scrutiny of literary texts in this article is undertaken in the neutral and safe zone of imaginary children’s stories, which supposedly have no connection with the here and now. Reflective thinking can help in the shifting from a literal and pointed example to general principles with the help of inductive skills of thought (Weinberger et al. 1993). Anchoring what is studied to the emotional realm and linking this with personal experience will help to deepen the students’ ability to transform this active, generated knowledge into other areas of their lives (Perkins 1992).

### **Notes**

1. ‘The ugly duckling’ is considered a timeless classic, which has been chosen many times to help a rejected pupil earn the acceptance of his peers.
2. Some parallels might be drawn between ‘Raspberry Juice’ and ‘Pumpkin soup’ by H. Cooper (1999).
3. Many of the characters in Andersen’s stories are ‘already marginalized within their respective communities by their circumstances’ (Yenika-Agbaw 2008). The most lucid examples of this are found in the heroes of ‘The steadfast tin soldier’ and ‘The little mermaid’, who both courageously fight to be accepted, yet have been stigmatized due to their ‘physical disabilities’ (Yenika-Agbaw 2008). Most of Anderson’s protagonists ‘endure silent suffering’ as they undergo tragic episodes (Tater 2007). It might be that ‘The ugly duckling’ is largely an autobiographical work which echoes the emotional scars of the author’s past (Zipes 2005). Anderson was born into the lower class and his status as well as his self-image were radically transformed after earning recognition later in life.
4. It is almost certain that none of Andersen’s contemporaries had ever seen black swans (*Cygnus atratus*), which are native to Australia. The first sightings of black swans by Europeans were documented on 1636 and 1697 by Dutch researchers in the southern Hemisphere. There is evidence that Governor Macquarie brought seven swans to England on his return voyage in 1822. Specific documentation which commented on how rare the black swans were in Europe began to emerge after a British group frequently referred to as: ‘Swan River Colony’ settled in 1829 along the ‘Swan River’ in Australia. It does appear that Andersen was familiar with mute swans, a large white species of the same family, which are inherent to North America and Eurasia. Similar to the black swan, the young cygnets of the mute swans are also brown or gray in color in the juvenile stage. It is also interesting to note that the black swan is symbolic of the Aborigines in Australia, while the white swan represents Australians of European descent. Aboriginal natives believe that their forefathers, which belonged to the Bibbulman tribe in Western Australia, were initially black swans, who were magically transformed into human beings.
5. The readers may be interested in a local folk version of ‘The ugly duckling’, which I serendipitously discovered on one of my field trips to Pequi’in, a Druze–Muslim–Christian–Jewish village. This local version provides a true happy ending to the fairy tale: the ugly duckling arrives at a lake where different kinds of fish, butterflies, birds, turtles, and other creatures all live together. They collectively welcome him and say: ‘How wonderful that you have arrived here. We don’t have another bird like you in our lake,



- please stay with us.' Actually, this oral version transformed the happy ending of 'The ugly duckling' to the happy ending of 'Raspberry Juice'.
6. In 'The wild swans' (Anderson 1832) Anderson also depicts the beautiful white swan as being blessed with virtue and righteousness, yet falling innocent prey to evil. This tale is reminiscent of traditional Northern European folktales, dealing with the victimization of swan and wish maidens. *Swan lake* is a late example of this genre. These tales draw a tight correlation between European standards of beauty and moral values: creatures which are white and beautiful are also good, and those which are dark represent evil. It is probable that the moral connotations of 'black' and 'white' stem from ancient Norse mythology in which the eternal battle between benevolence and vice – between light (good) and darkness (evil) – is never resolved. It might be that the swan maidens, the wish maidens, and the Valkyries, were intermingled in the past, and thus became so heavily loaded with moral significance. This subject is expansive, and would require deep research to fully comprehend. Let it suffice to say that the white swan is not merely representative of aesthetic physical attributes, but it also carries deep ethical and metaphorical meaning in the European tradition. The desire to carry out an analytical study of the historical implications of that moral perspective is what motivated this article.
  7. M. Baruch has claimed that the pleasant-sounding features of Shenhav's story have melodic significance that attaches a feeling of lighthearted enchantment to the text (Baruch 2007).
  8. 'Raspberry Juice' reflects the Israeli cultural context, which encourages a high degree of dynamic social interaction and informal relations.
  9. Thanks to Ms Sylvia Saba Sa'adi from the Academic College of Education, Gordon in Haifa, Israel; she turned my attention to the significance of the hide-and-seek game.
  10. Dr D. Amir analyzes 'Raspberry Juice' from a psychologist perspective and discusses how the therapist can use this story to aid the child in searching for his/her own identity through a slow and careful process of discovery.
  11. The attitude towards 'the Other' is expressed in different languages by the linguistic choice each to describe the idea of 'tolerance'. The English and Danish term for this are both derived from the Latin '*tolerantia*', which means to endure. In Hebrew, the word '*sovlanut*' and its etymological root is S.B.L. which means to suffer. In Arabic, the root stems from '*tsimach*', or S. M. CH. which means to forgive. The idea of a conflict and suffering is the basic concept that describes intercultural relations in the four languages mentioned here. Thanks to Dr Lars Bo Jensen from the H.C. Andersen center for providing this helpful information regarding the concept of 'tolerance' in English, Danish and Latin.

### Notes on contributor

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