

Femininity in Fairy Tales

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Abstract

The research investigated the prints of Fairy Tales in the formation of children's femininity notion in the 4th grade of elementary school. Therefore it was sought to investigate how femininity appears in different versions of three predefined Fairy Tales. In addition, three children's activities of a 4th grade classroom in an elementary school were analyzed. Thus it was observed how the notion of femininity present in the group's mind and thereby investigated the prints of Fairy Tales on it.

Key words: Femininity. Fairy Tales. Infancy.

Introduction

The main goal of the research was to investigate the possibility of children's notion of femininity be printed by Fairy Tales, in particular: "Snow White," "Red Riding Hood" and "Beauty and the Beast". That way several versions of these three tales were analyzed concerning the way that the female protagonists are presented, emphasizing their femininity according to the theoretical framework discussed during the research.

A small survey was organized with 4th grade classroom's children of an elementary State's School from Campinas. The data gathering was accomplished by the development of three activities: the production of a collective text, the creation of an individual character and an individual production of a narrative using the created character. Analyzing such activities, along with oral children's productions, it was observed the existing notions of femininity in the group's mind and thereby investigated the prints of Fairy Tales on it.

Results and Discussion

In spite of some current theorists' argue, femininity has its peculiarities and, far from being negative, they are extremely positive characteristics, which should be encouraged even for boys. Hence, starting from the raised theoretical support and the information brought by the participating children's texts, it can be said that the Fairy Tales prints the notion of femininity constructed by children.

Both girls and boys sighted femininity features presented by Cipollone (2003)¹ and Chodorow (2002)². Throughout the study the most highlighted qualities were: sentimentality, easiness/necessity for social interaction, cooperativeness, care and concern for the others. Such characteristics were the same found in the three Fairy Tales analyzed, demonstrating that these histories print the children's idea of femininity.

Conclusions

Based on the theoretical framework (in particular Cipollone (2003) and Chodorow (2002)) and the analysis realized along the work, it was possible to outline certain recurring characteristics of the female essence. Such characteristics are presented differently in the three Fairy Tales studied, as well as in productions of the participating children, which demonstrates the prints of Fairy Tales in the formation of children's idea of femininity.

Having in mind that this research displayed possible answers for the objectives proposed by the study, several questions about the subject have emerged for future postgraduate studies and the deepening of this theme.

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¹ CIPOLLONE, Laura. Diferença sexual, dimensão interpessoal e afetividade nos contextos educacionais para a infância. Pro-Posições (14), Campinas, 2003.

² CHODOROW, Nancy. Psicanálise da maternidade: uma crítica a Freud a partir da mulher. Rio de Janeiro: Rosa dos Tempos, 2002.