Children’s Evaluations of Villains in Children’s the Heroes and Literature

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Abstract

Literature plays a key role in shaping values, its foremost albeit controversial element being the concept of the hero. The hero, a central sign in the tale, leads readers towards many codified readings. It is a concept invested with a number of different semantic and value loads. With this in mind, this study aims to explore the value judgements made by children with regard to the literary heroes and heroines found in their narratives (stories and films). It is a study of ninety-seven children in the sixth year of primary school, from two urban centres in Greece, namely Veria and Thessaloniki. The children were asked to anonymously fill in a questionnaire, which included ten questions related to their favourite and least-liked heroes and heroines and an assessment of their preferences. The study aims to identify the traits that children use to signify literary heroes and heroines. The results indicated that the readings are codified with interesting elements related to the concepts of good and evil, beautiful and ugly.