Fiction as agentive force in child-adult relations played out in blogs: the role of touch and verbal encounters when fiction materializes

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Fiction materializes in complex ways in adult-child relations in varying contexts. In preschool, fiction can be used as inspiration in play practices involving children and adults. During such events, fiction materializes through artefacts manufactured to be part of the play events, and triggers interactions with pedagogical implications. The artefacts and other props — wigs, clothing, and makeup — serve to create a simulacrum of the fictive in the real world (Lindgren 2017). In addition, fiction materializes in child culture events; for example, at theme parks. The built environments translates the ideational, the fictive ideas, into a simulacrum that is 'material real’, thus providing a ‘fictional real’ space where child-adult interactions and relations can be played out (Lindgren et al. 2015). Engaging in child-adult activities in milieus where fiction materializes in different ways provides environments where children and adults can potentially engage in unexpected ways (Lindgren 2017). Moreover, children and adults can encounter the fictional real as a material real shared experience in real-life events. The fictive material real can thus be touched, talked to and observed. This is a different way to interact with the fictional than reading a book or watching a movie, either individually or together with other people (Lindgren et al. 2015). In this present paper, the empirical material analyzed consists of blogs posted after families’ visits to a theme park with iconic value in the Nordic child-culture context, namely Astrid Lindgren’s World. The analysis concerns how the bloggers, through photographs and textual comments, communicate a shared interest in how touch and verbal encounters are important features when children and adults interact with materialized fiction. It is also about how fiction becomes agentive in child-adult relations studied via blogs. The questions posed are: What child and adult competences are played out as important in the visual blogs, and what is the role of the fictive in these encounters? How can such competencies be understood as part of how child-adult relations are professed in today’s society, and hence for a conceptualization of childhood?

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