

A Study of the Concept of Death in Children's Literature: An Analysis of Nine Story Books

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Abstract

Experts believe that the concept of death for children can be analyzed from three aspects of biological, emotional and cultural. The aim of this paper is to study the concept of death from biological (nonreturnable, unavoidable, nonfunctional and causal), cultural and emotional (fear, anger, distress, desire, sin, rejection, doubt and confusion) in children's story books. Thus nine books which had a theme related to death were chosen. In each book every sentence which had some connection to death was coded. Interrated coefficient was used to calculate reliability. The results showed that there is a significant difference between biological, emotional and cultural aspects of death in these books. In comparing biological and emotional factors there was a significant difference in the biological factor; and in comparing cultural and emotional factors there was a significant difference in the cultural factor. However, there was no significant difference between cultural and biological factors. It was concluded that in the biological aspect only nonreturnability and causality were mentioned in the books; none of the books mentioned anything about unavoidability and nonfunctionality of death. From the emotional aspect, books had only mentioned fear, anger, distress and rejection but not, desire, sin, doubt or confusion.

Keywords: Children's story books, Children's literature, Concept of death in Children's books.