





AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND IMAGINATIVE PROCESSES OF STORYTELLING CHILDREN

Experiência estética na educação infantil e processos imaginativos de crianças contadoras de histórias

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Mais informações da obra no final do artigo 

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the imaginative processes of young children present in narrative performances of creating/recreating stories. The research was guided by the Qualitative Epistemology of González Rey, whose principles are the constructive-interpretative methodology, dialogue and uniqueness as a value for the construction of scientific knowledge. As empirical material, narrative performances were used, which involved tales and retellings, dialogues and scenic expressions of two small children from a public institution of Early Childhood Education, located in the peripheral region of the Distrito Federal. Based on the aesthetic experience with the book "Brinquedos", by André Neves, the children who collaborated in the research created their own performances, in which there is a complex amalgamation of dimensions of human development, in which emotion, memory and imagination are essential parts of narratives that they recreate the history as a practice of producing cultures in childhood.

KEYWORDS: Early childhood education. Aesthetic Experience. Literature for children. Imaginative Processes. Narratives.

RESUMO

O artigo analisa processos imaginativos de crianças pequenas presentes em performances narrativas de criação/recriação de histórias. A pesquisa se orientou pela Epistemologia Qualitativa de González Rey, que tem como princípios a metodologia construtivo-interpretativa, o diálogo e a singularidade como valor da construção de conhecimento científico. Como material empírico foram utilizadas performances narrativas, que envolveram contos e recontos, diálogos e expressões cênicas de duas crianças pequenas de uma instituição pública de Educação Infantil, localizada em região periférica do Distrito Federal. A partir da experiência estética com o livro *Brinquedos*, do autor André Neves, as crianças colaboradoras da pesquisa criaram suas próprias performances, nas quais há um amálgama complexo de dimensões do desenvolvimento humano composto essencialmente por emoção, memória e imaginação, em narrativas que recriam a história como prática performativa de produção de culturas na infância.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Infantil. Experiência Estética. Literatura para crianças. Processos Imaginativos. Narrativas.

INTRODUCTION

Young children, from a very early age, are immersed in a universe of words heard and materialized in several stories that constitute and are conceived by them. This relationship between children and language has been studied in different fields of knowledge that converge to the ontological understanding of language as a founding dimension of the humanization process, articulated with other symbolic-emotional processes.

Thus, understanding that children's narrative production involves imagination and emotion in an articulated way, this article aims to analyze imaginative processes of young children present in narrative performances of creation/recreation of stories. This will be done through a constructive-interpretative analysis (GONZÁLEZ REY, 2005) of narrative performances by two young children from a public educational institution in the peripheral region of the Distrito Federal¹. This process allowed us to build indicators of elements of reality that constitute these imaginative processes, because "the way children manifest their creative expressions, whether through games, narratives or drawings, demonstrates not only their ways of thinking about reality, but to feel it and interpret it." (SILVA, 2012, p. 51).

The narrative tradition involves a triple competence "knowing how to do, knowing how to say and knowing how to listen" so that the community relates to itself and the environment, constituting social bonds through a set of pragmatic rules. Girardello (2014) highlights that narrative performance occupies a meaning in itself in traditional cultures, which are independent of their referential sense. In this sense, the concept of language present in this article is based on its dialogic and social principle, where verbal interactions are essential aspects for the interlocutors' development. This includes the practice of listening, telling and/or retelling stories, because in collaboration between peers there are moments of production and emotional, affective and social exchanges that allow those who experience them to produce differentiated and unique meanings for the same lived experience.

We emphasize that we were able to build, together with the children who collaborated in the research, an environment of significant aesthetic experiences,

¹ The forms of naming institutions for Educação Infantil (Early Childhood Education) – EI are part of the contemporary debate on conceptions of the identity of Early Childhood Education, in the search to particularize them in relation to other educational stages and overcome schooling perspectives for EI. Although aware of this issue, the authors chose to name the researched institution, using, as is usual in the city of Brasília, the acronym of its own name, CEI – Centro de Educação Infantil.

because when we get closer to listen to them and give the opportunity to speak and materialize the stories narrated by them, we break with the hierarchical relationships between adults and children, researcher and collaborating subjects. We became partners in narration (SMITH, 2006), where the stories imagined, told and retold intertwined the affective relationship established in the reading room called by us as 'Toca da Coruja'².

The article is organized into three topics, as follows: a) "Who wants to tell a story? - a theme in multiple approaches" that deals with a multidisciplinary literature review about narrative, articulating the philosophical (BENJAMIN, 2021), linguistic (PERRONI, 1992), psychological (BRUNER, 1996, 2008, 2012; VIGOTSKI, 2012), anthropological (ROGOFF, 2005) and performative (BAUMAN, 2014; GIRARDELLO, 2014; HARTMANN 2014a, 2014b); b) "The methodological course: brief contextualization of the research" in which the assumptions of the constructive-interpretative method (GONZÁLEZ REY, 2005) and basic elements of empirical research are approached; c) "Episode Toys and narrated stories" that presents the narrative performances of two children who collaborated in the research and the interpretative constructions of indicators that the children's narratives made possible.

WHO WANTS TO TELL A STORY? - A THEME IN MULTIPLE APPROACHES

The act of listening to stories has been a cultural practice since antiquity, through which humanity wrote its history over the centuries and the more a story was heard, the more it integrated the life of that person or that community. The repetition of stories is a common practice among young children, when they like a certain story, ask to hear it countless times, and in this way these narratives start to compose the dialectical process of the narrative constitution of these children (VIEIRA; MADEIRA-COELHO, 2018). Benjamin (2012) attributes the continuity of the narratives to the collective work practice, because while people kept their bodies busy, their minds were populated by countless stories.

Telling stories has always been the art of telling them again, and it is lost when the stories are no longer preserved. It gets lost because no one else spins or weaves while listening to a story. The more the listener forgets about himself, the more deeply what is heard is recorded in him. (BENJAMIN, 2012, p.221).

² Owl's den

For, constituting yourself as a narrator starts from the principle of listening and listening to many, many stories, which little by little are constituting this being, which does not dominate only the linguistic code, but is filled with their own experiences and/or those of others, their own narratives. "The narrator infuses his innermost substance also into what he knows from hearsay. His gift is being able to tell his life; his dignity is to tell it all." (BENJAMIN, 2012, p.240).

In line with Benjamin's (2012) propositions, we emphasize that children's narratives are carried out in different ways in interactions with adults and their peers, so that children learn ways of saying in different contexts of life experiences.

Perroni (1992) carried out research in a longitudinal and observational study of the linguistic development of two Brazilian children aged 2 to 5 years. With this study, he identified stages in the development of narrative speech in children. For the author, language acquisition takes place through the solidary action of three factors: the child's interaction with the physical world, with the social world, or with the other that represents him, and with linguistic objects, that is, with effectively produced utterances. Based on Applebee's studies, Perroni (1992) states that telling a story is one of the many uses of language in our culture, an activity to which certain conventions are associated, such as opening with the words "Once upon a time...", and ending with "they lived happily ever after". According to the author, the young child soon perceives the difference between the story and other forms of speech. And initially it treats it as something that happened in the past and not as a construction of fiction, it accompanies this stage, the immutability of the stories with the rigidity of the plots.

Since the first attempts at narration, the interlocutors, adult and child, have defined roles in this process of verbal interaction. The adult plays an active role in this initial phase, asking children questions, which when answered help in the emergence of narrative discourse. Its function is to help the child remember, in the form of speech, what he intends to tell and, according to the author, this action of the adult is called elicitation.

The child's first attempts to narrate are named by the author as proto-narratives, as they do not yet constitute a narrative, but they already show their dialogic nature. They demonstrate a preparatory character of an emerging process in the following months, and they are perceived as embryonic structures of narrative discourse. Because, "they arise, therefore, in response to questions [...] that the adult gradually adds and that require the child to fill in elements within a typical structure of narrative discourse." (PERRONI, 1992, p. 53).

At this stage, the child comes into contact with two different ways of accessing the structure of the narrative discourse: a) the counting game, a process in which the story is constructed from questions and answers; b) stories told by the adult, which, unlike the game, has a rigid structure. As the child progresses in the work of building narratives, his role changes from complementary to reciprocal, in the sense of his constitution as a speaker and later, as a subject of enunciation (PERRONI, 1992).

From this perspective, the child experiences different narrative structures, which will constitute him/her as a protagonist in the narrative process. According to the author, from 4 years onwards, the child gradually assumes an increasingly active and autonomous role in the construction of narratives, constituting, together with an adult interlocutor, situations that tend to be symmetrical, that is, they are not conditioned to adult intervention to build their narrative. However, this age delimitation proposed by the author cannot be understood in a categorical way, because the historical development the child's historical and social background should not be disregarded, and the contexts of interaction with adults and their peers decisively influence the development of children's narrative discourse (VIEIRA; MADEIRA-COELHO, 2018).

In this sense, it is emphasized that the child is concerned with the reception of the adult as an interlocutor, hence the concern with plausibility, which shows his maturity as a narrator. Creative freedom and imagination are configured as constituting factors of the child as the subject of enunciation, as the narrator of their own stories, whether true or invented.

Bruner (1996; 2008; 2012), in his theoretical construct, states that narrative is not simply a mental achievement, but an achievement of social practice that provides stability to the child's social life. Highlighting the importance of narrative action in human development, he conceptualizes: "a narrative is composed of a single sequence of events, mental states, happenings involving human beings as characters or actors." (BRUNER, 2008, p. 63). The definition of the narrative as real or imaginary does not diminish its power as a story, as the meanings attributed to it are individual. The author shows that stories help children create a version of the world in which, psychologically, they can find a place for themselves and create their personal territory. (BRUNER, 1996).

In this personal construction, highlighted by the author, the narrative is configured as a way of thinking and a vehicle for the production of meaning. Based on Dewey's studies, Bruner states that language offers a way to organize our thoughts about the world around us (BRUNER, 2008). This conception is heir to the cultural-

historical perspective of Vigotski (2012), who in his theoretical construct about the relationship between thought and speech, explains that the development of language restructures thought and gives it new forms. Thought and speech have different genetic roots, the two functions develop along different and independent trajectories, but emerge when the child enters the world of meanings and begins to communicate in their mother tongue (VIGOTSKI, 2012).

Cultural tools for storytelling are already present from a very early age, and it is in childhood that storytelling/listening to stories becomes a social practice. In this sense, as Bruner says: "building oneself through narrating oneself is an incessant and eternal process, perhaps more than ever before. It's a dialectical process, it's a balancing act" (BRUNER, 2012, p.95). The author explains that by configuring two planes, the individual and the social, the dialectical movement of narrative production is complex and represents more than the narrator's individuality, in the condition of being cultural, but also the culture in which he is inserted. As a human being, we produce narratives that constitute us and illustrate our human condition. As he explains to us:

Through narrative we build, rebuild, and somehow reinvent yesterday and tomorrow. Memory and imagination are amalgamated in this process. Even when we create the possible worlds of fiction, we do not desert the familiar, but we put it in the subjunctive condition what could have been or what could be. Memory and imagination are suppliers and consumers of each other. (BRUNER, 2012, p.103).

Rogoff (2005) explains that the process of human development consists of transforming people through continuous participation in cultural activities, and that these contribute to changes in their cultural communities. In this dialectical relationship, people constitute themselves with the cultural experience and constitute the cultural experience of their community. So, each community is organized in different ways, which advocates the construction of different meanings attributed to cultural productions. The human narrative production constitutes a cultural production for presenting the fundamental elements of materiality and meaning and its development takes place from the cultural practices that involve the act of listening and telling stories. In this sense, Rogoff (2005) reiterates the generational and transformative character in the production of cultures in childhood, according to:

For example, in telling, perfecting and listening to narratives, children and their partners engage in cultural practices built on structures provided by their predecessors. Likewise, children's participation in routines and toys involves them mutually with their partners, in cultural traditions that precede them and which they contribute to modifying, by developing playful activities and games. (ROGOFF, 2005, p.238).

In this complex movement, children are constituted and constitutive of culture, re-elaborating through play, through imagination and establishing creative ways of relating to culture. Children learn communally to use the preferred narrative format to recount the lived events, as "[...] practicing and playing with social routines and roles in their community." (ROGOFF, 2005, p. 240).

Hartmann (2014a; 2014b) highlights that Bauman's contributions to research about the ethnography of speech shed light on oral narratives, expanding the focus of the verbal aspects to all the communicative means that make up the narrative event. In the author's definition, performance is understood as a mode of verbal communication that consists of a performer taking responsibility for an audience, through the manifestation of a communicative competence. This competence is based on the knowledge and ability he possesses to speak in socially appropriate ways. "[...] the performer's act of expression is subject to evaluation, according to its efficiency. The more skillful, the more the experience will intensify, through the pleasure provided by the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression." (HARTMANN, 2014b, p.45).

We understand that the child develops fully and the narratives produced express their unique constitution in whose sonority the emotionality in the narrative is evidenced. Because, "all poetics is poetics in action, all poetics is performative" (BAUMAN, 2014, p.734), and among the intrinsic objectives of verbal art in performance is the enrichment of the subjects' aesthetic experience.

Narrative performance articulates two planes dialectically, that the storyteller who creates by narrating the story with his voice, presence and imagination, and the plane of the audience that creates by producing unique meanings about the aesthetic experience lived in listening to the narrated story. Thus, narrating is not restricted to linguistic, cognitive, mental aspects, nor only to productions that constitute sociocultural values of a group of people. Narrating as a lived performance involves the active symbolic-emotional production of those who live this experience and produce individually to make it their own.

THE METHODOLOGICAL PATH: A BRIEF CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

This article is part of the master's research about imagination in children's narrative production in Early Childhood Education (VIEIRA, 2015) by the first author under the guidance of the second author. Based on Qualitative Epistemology

(GONZÁLEZ REY, 2005), whose epistemological action is both theoretical and empirical, it is articulated in three principles: a) rupture with the positivist character of research and the validation of the interpretative construction as a form of knowledge production ; b) prioritization of the dialogical character in the relationships established between the researcher and subjects collaborating in the research; and, c) the understanding of the singular as an instance of knowledge production.

The empirical research was carried out during the 2014 school year in a public institution of Early Childhood Education, located in a peripheral region of the Federal District. The children who collaborated in the research were aged between 5 and 6 years old and were from the same class of the 2nd period of Early Childhood Education. Weekly meetings with the children were held in the reading room called 'Toca da Coruja', which was named after the large number of owls in the educational institution.

The use of literature for children as a methodological strategy for understanding processes of creativity, imagination, emotion and production of children's aesthetic senses, which together constitute subjective constructions, materialized in the realization of workshops with various recreational activities. Thus, face-to-face activities considered as research instruments constituted the process of empirical research, such as: storytelling, reading mediation of books selected by the researcher and books chosen by the children in the reading room collection, dramatization of the stories heard, retellings oral presentations, pictorial records of the stories and a lot of conversation with the young children who collaborated in the research. The workshop records comprised written reports in the field diary, audio recordings and video recordings.

The children's involvement with the literary universe, during the weekly workshops during the two semesters in which the research was developed, allowed their immersion in several works. In addition, the children chose the names by which they would like to be identified in the research, as the researcher had talked to them that, for ethical reasons (CAMPOS, 2008), their original names would not be revealed. At the end of the empirical research, the activities experienced in the workshops and the scope of the connection with different characters of children's literature allowed different choices of names that were not limited to the literary universe, also involving characters from movies and comics that became relevant for the interpretative analysis, since the opportunity for each child to choose another name that would represent them indicated to us about the potential of their option to be translating preferences and identification with characters.

In the episode analyzed in this article, we will have the presence of two among the collaborating children of the research, who, as we have just exposed, chose to be called: Pinocchio (6 years old) and Snow White (5 years old). Pinocchio is a black boy who liked to play and interact with his colleagues in the daily life of the CEI. He showed little inhibition in collective moments, however in the individual actions of the empirical process, he was a little withdrawn in the direct dialogue with the researcher. He is the youngest child in a family of four daughters. His father and mother came from Piauí to the Distrito Federal in the last decade, and he was the only child born in the federal capital. Snow White is a white girl who also got along well with her classmates, however she had an affinity and preferences for the company of some girls. She actively participated in the empirical process of collective and individual proposals, establishing a communicative and affective bond with the researcher. She lived with her mother and an older sister, and her entire family was born in the Distrito Federal.

We also emphasize that in research with young children, the researcher's creativity and imagination when developing instruments and methodological strategies used in the empirical process, as well as the construction of a dialogic relational space, constitute a practice of recognition and appreciation of the specificities of children and their unique childhoods.

For the purpose of this article, research strategies were selected from the book *Brinquedos*³ by the Pernambuco author and illustrator André Neves. The choice of the book *Brinquedos* was based on the following criteria: a) visual aesthetics of the work's illustrations; b) presence of children as main characters; and, c) diverse social context represented in the plot of the book.

Figure 1 - *Brinquedos* book cover



Source: <https://pt.slideshare.net/azulestrelar/brinquedos-andr-neves>

³ The book *Brinquedos* was published in 2012 by Editora Mundo Mirim and is currently out of print.

As an experienced illustrator, André Neves narrates the trajectory of toys without using a single word, thus it can be characterized as a picture book. The picture book is conceptualized by Belmiro (apud CEALE, s.d., s.p.) as: "[...] a book with images in sequence and that tells a story, generally selecting a situation, a plot and a few characters. It is constituted as a visual narrative, which brings together two basic conditions for its realization: the temporal dimension and the spatial dimension." In this way, the aesthetic experience proposed by the author in the work opens up a unique field of meaning and production of meanings for male and female readers, and above all, for children who are not yet literate, due to its high imagery appeal.

EPISODE TOYS AND NARRATED STORIES

The toy object is not intended to assert its centrality in children's play, because, according to Benjamin (2002), it is not the content of the toy that defines the child's play, but, on the contrary, it is the child, when playing, who transforms into a toy any object that his imagination can dispose of. Toys were consolidated in our culture as representative objects of childhood, highlighting class, gender and age relations in their materiality, and they are the central theme of the literary work focused on in this article.

The practice of literature, whether by reading or listening, consists of exploring the potential of language, of the word, and has no parallel with any other human activity. "Literature has the power to metamorphose itself into all discursive forms. It also has many artifices and holds within itself the present, past and future of the word." (COSSON, 2009, p.17). Antonio Candido (1995) tells us that literature is a universal need and a human right, as it must be experienced to guarantee its function of building and rebuilding the word that humanizes us in established relationships. The literary book, as an aesthetic and cultural object, presents children with invented worlds, inviting them to imagination, fantasy and to experience emotions in fiction through aesthetic experience, as part of the process of humanization in childhood.

Like any intense experience, aesthetic experience creates a very sensitive state for later actions and, naturally, never passes without leaving a mark on our later behavior. [...] every poetic experience acts as if it accumulates energy for future actions, gives them a new direction and makes the world to be seen with different eyes. (VIGOTSKI, 2003, p.234).

The episode analyzed portrays a strategy carried out in the Stories Workshop as a research instrument, in which the children collaborating in the research carried out the narrative production of the story of the *Brinquedos* picture book. André Neves'

poetics, as a place of passage, in which his ideas, conceptions and representations constitute this work materialized as an aesthetic gesture, evokes the creation of a powerful intergenerational symbolic space. The illustrations of the work *Brinquedos* stand out for the complexity of the author's characteristic trait, and for the combination of colors and shapes in the transposition of images that tell a moving story.

Figure 2 – Comics with a sequence of images from the *Brinquedos* book



Source: Authors' elaboration with images available at <https://pt.slideshare.net/azulestrelar/brinquedos-andr-neves>

The representation of children in works of children's literature is present, from classic tales to contemporary literature produced for children. However, in this work by André Neves we can perceive different imagery representations of childhood (SARMENTO, 2007), as it is articulated with our understanding that there is no universal childhood, but children geographically, politically and culturally situated, with class distinctions, race and gender that intersect with the generational category. In this way, the children's relationships with the toys portrayed in the book materialize these aforementioned distinctions, the multiple possibilities of being a child, and the unique childhoods.

The diversity of the social context represented in the work, which includes a middle-class house, a sanitary landfill and a wooden shack, allows the reader to follow the path that toys have taken during history and materializes, through images from different social contexts, to the children. In the administrative region, where the CEI

and the research was carried out is located, there is a solid waste recycling cooperative, so that the community's view of garbage is different, which can favor affective approximations of children with the narrated story in the book.

The illustrations present in the book offered the children the plot of the story, but we could see that this did not prevent them from imagining and producing new aesthetic meanings for the adventures of children who found two toys in the garbage dump near their house, because the aesthetic experience is not differs from an intellectual experience, since the intellectual experience to be complete must be aesthetic. (CAMPOS, 2016).

The activity described was carried out with the children individually, while the other children who collaborated in the research handled books at another table in the "Toca da Coruja" reading room. In general, the children used the images as a reference for the narrative production and, in this way, we chose to select two narratives that we consider to be creative in carrying out the activity: the narrative production of Pinocchio and Snow White, as already informed previously.

Pinocchio: Is it to see the story?
Researcher: Yes. It's to tell the story too.
Pinocchio: But I don't know...
Researcher: (Wait in silence for the child to start narrating.)
Pinocchio: Once upon a time there was a girl and a boy who loved to play. They asked Dad for a deal. When they went to school, he was playing every day, playing, playing. The two of them fought just over this doll. And then they were watching cartoons. They were playing and the toy was going to the trash. They were picking up trash. The garbage truck was passing, passing and even picking up the garbage. The boys were working, working until the garbage truck arrived. There her friend found a doll for her and she was happy, happy. They went there and really enjoyed picking things up. They became friends, collected everything from the trash and walked. In the house they were happy, happy, playing, playing, playing. They liked to play everywhere, everywhere. And they slept. They put his toys away to be quiet. Ended.
Researcher: Very good! Who said you can't tell stories, huh? Congratulations!
Pinocchio: (Smiles and puts the book on the table.) (VIEIRA, 2015, p.104).

In Pinocchio's narrative production, we can highlight the initial refusal to narrate the story, representing the little space for narrative authorship for children in institutionalized learning and development contexts. For him, seeing himself as a person capable of narrating a story with the support of an illustrated book was not possible, and in the face of his initial refusal, the researcher waits in silence that challenges the child's attitude, and so, in the face of the situation experienced, he assumes the word and develops himself as a narrator. The ideas of how this narrative performance should

be put Pinocchio in front of the choices of words in the textual construction, the tone of voice used and the materialized presence in the narrative act.

The use of the stylistic resource of word repetition, to imprint cadence in his narrative performance, as he vocally altered the rhythm of his narration with each new repetition, orally reproducing the performative action of some storytelling aimed at children that bring the repetition of words. Pinocchio remained attentive to the spectator's reaction, in this case, the researcher, to his narrative performance. The narrator did not name the characters in the book, we infer that due to the presence of the illustrations he used to guide his narrative creation, so that the children who found the toys in the dump had more actions narrated than the children who appear at the beginning of the story, indicating a possible preference for the characters.

Another action caught our attention, as when flipping through the book along its narration, he skipped the final page of the story and went straight to the page where was the photo of the author André Neves and a brief biography, and on this page there is also the illustration of the sitting toys, next to the photo from the author. As he continued his narration, Pinocchio quickly looked at the page and ended the story: "They put his toys away to keep quiet. Ended." We can see in this sentence a creative action in solving the problem that was put before him, as he needed to create the end of the story quickly, since he had skipped the page that ended the story, and had only those visual elements. When considering that the toys were placed to be quiet, he evidences his imagination in the construction of his plot of the story. The fact that the toys are sitting, unlike how they appeared, in movement, throughout the book, was interpreted by him as an act of body control, so they were forced to be still and then ends the story. Through Pinocchio's narrative production we perceive his imagination in the creation of the story that unfolded in a linear plot until the end, so that the ability to understand the narrative production of the story was well marked by the creation of the ending, which filled the gap that emerged, between the penultimate page and the final page of the book.

In turn, Snow White promptly started the narrative as soon as the proposal was explained and when she picked up the book, she already assumed the body posture of an experienced storyteller, and begins her narrative production with the classic opening words "It was a once...", just like Pinocchio did.

Snow White: Once upon a time there was a boy and a girl. The girl had a doll and the boy had a clown. But his father and her mother wanted to give them a present. And later. But suddenly they went to school with their little things. But his father and their mother saw that they won't notice. They put the toy in the backpack so Dad wouldn't see it. They fought just because

the doll was all pretty. He wanted to give her the clown and she wanted to give him the doll, but she didn't. But, she didn't want to give more. The doll and the clown were all sad. And they threw the toys in the trash. And in the garbage truck, they just wanted their stuff back. The doll's hair was just combed and it was just a matter of gluing the doll. And suddenly, they wanted to go to school and they found people in the garbage. And the boy wanted to date the girl. The two of them, just comb. And they lived... and they slept... and they stayed. Ready! Ended! (VIEIRA, 2015, p.105).

In Branca de Neve's narrative production, we noticed two elements that aroused our interest in the text: the centrality of toys and the presence of the school. When Snow White attributes feelings such as "they were sad" and wishes "they wanted their things back", "they wanted to go to school" to the toys, they stopped being inanimate beings and became characters like the other children in the story. Snow White produced a different aesthetic meaning for that set of illustrations that made up the book, in which the toys were just objects. To the action of the toys going to the garbage, because after all "her hair was just combing and the doll was just glued." We can understand this action as an attempt to preserve, in their own history, the main characters, who were chosen by her, but it also relates to how she would handle the situation if she had been given a damaged toy.

The fundamental presence of stories as a pedagogical instance across cultures: they make a bridge between abstract values and beliefs and the materiality of the context experienced by children. The contact with stories in culture means for children the symbolic re-encounter with an organizational-temporal and even rhythmic pattern-that they already live in their experience with the succession of events in time. (GIRARDELLO, 2007, p.41).

Another highlighted element was the presence of the school in its narrative production, as there are no school illustrations in the book, but the relationship established between the backpack, a school object and the school itself is clear to the child, including in the clandestine action of children from take toys to school hidden from family members. This reproduces a situation experienced daily in school contexts, as conventionally there are days established to take toys to the kindergarten institution they attend, and on other days it is not allowed. This transgression materialized in the children's actions is in line with the representation that Snow White has of the institution she attends as a happy place, a meeting place and a place to play, because when the toys were alone in the trash "suddenly they wanted to go to school".

Each creative event points to a revolutionary, restless dimension of subjective experience. Since childhood, the imaginative universe populates the daily creations of the little ones. Drawing, telling stories, playing, are situations that demonstrate the ways in which children express themselves and interpret the real, the lived and (in) their cultural dynamics. (SILVA, 2012, p.50).

In this sense, understanding the uniqueness of the child subject in human development reaffirms that he is a concrete subject, with essential and permanent characteristics of his condition, current, interactive, conscious, intentional and emotional and related to the social contexts in which he participates. Experiencing emotions, expands the look on their creative processes, which do not take place in a linear way and isolated from the lived context. In this way, the toys, the clown and the doll portrayed in the work of André Neves and in the narrative productions of Pinocchio and Snow White, assume an essential role for us to reflect about the representations and the imprint production activity of playing in their narrative performances, directly linked to the creative powers of their childhoods.

Childhood has been conceptualized by several authors in the field of Social Studies of Childhood, as Qvortrup (2010, p. 636) tells us as "[...] a specific structural and cultural component of many societies" (PROUT; JAMES, 1990, p. 8), "a component of the structures of society" – not a preparatory phase" (MAYALL, 1996, p. 58), "inserted in the context of social development" (ZEIHER, 1996, p. 37), "a cultural pattern in the historical changes of generational relationships" (HONIG; LEU; NISSEN, 1996, p. 21)." Qvortrup (2010) understands it as a structural social category and indicates that the approach to childhood as a period is linked to the perspective of child development.

Sarmiento (2007) warns that there are different representations of childhood, in the sense of lack or incompleteness. Our challenge is to understand childhood not based on the absence of adult characteristics, but on the presence of unique characteristics of children, related to social class, gender, geographic space where they live, culture of origin and ethnicity, but not as their determinants. For the author, the possibilities of the child's development overlap what would be considered as absence, if taken in relation to the adult. Farias et al (2022, p. 166) evoke the concept of children's agency when discussing Brasilia's childhood and advocate that "[...] it refers to their ability to construct and create meanings in addition to making decisions about the that concerns you. This perspective overcomes the idea that they would just be passive in socialization processes, or incompetent members of society." In line with the argument defended by the authors, Sarmiento (2007) reiterates that children speak, think, work and are children, regardless of other factors and the denial of these actions in childhood becomes a mistake in understanding this period of human development, denying them the role of protagonists in their life stories.

ENTERED BY ONE DOOR AND LEFT BY THE OTHER, WHO WANTS TO TELL ANOTHER

In this article we seek to analyze the imaginative processes of two small children present in narrative performances of creation/recreation of stories from the aesthetic experience with the literary work *Brinquedos*, by the author and illustrator André Neves. We perceive indicators of elements of reality that constituted imaginative processes materialized in their narratives, such as: the reproduction of the performative action with the opening phrase "Once upon a time"; use of the stylistic resource of word repetition; the insertion of new narrative elements, which were not originally represented in the work, such as the presence of the school in Snow White's narration.

As developments of this brief study, we continue with questions such as: How to promote the development of narrative practice with young children? How and where to offer this collective moment for children to hear and, above all, tell their stories? Would it be at home, where TV, computers and smartphones occupy the centrality of the narrative? Would it be in Early Childhood Education institutions where often no story is even read to children and their voices are constantly silenced? Would it be in public spaces, where children are systematically made invisible? Such questions help us to think about the tensions and challenges of promoting and enhancing narrative practices in childhood and the aesthetic and humanizing meanings that emerge from this narrative action in the daily lives of young children, whether in educational institutions or in other spaces of coexistence.

Although it was not present in the article, since the research was carried out before the period of the pandemic, for all that has been stated, we consider that, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, in which the sanitary measures of social isolation generated the restriction of circulation of young children in public spaces, remote teaching in Early Childhood Education, excessive exposure of young children to electronic device screens, and physical and emotional losses, we ask with great regret: how did this complex situation impact children's narrative development small, as well as their imaginative processes?

Future research on this topic will tell us countless other stories, and in this sense, we conclude by reaffirming that, in the ways in which young children create and (re)create the stories narrated with authorship, there is evidence of a complex amalgamation of dimensions of human development. It is an essential part of emotion,

memory and imagination, not dissociated from the intellectual and bodily character that are evident as a performative practice of producing cultures in childhood.

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NOTES

TITLE OF THE WORK

AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND IMAGINATIVE PROCESSES OF STORYTELLING CHILDREN

Experiência estética na educação infantil e processos imaginativos de crianças contadoras de histórias

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Review and approval: D. C. S. C. Vieira, C. M. Madeira-Coelho

RESEARCH DATA SET

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study was published in the article and in the "Supplementary Materials" section.

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