

BIN-Nordens och Nordiska Ministerrådets konferens den 25-28 oktober 2007, Island

Children and Culture – the meaning of the aesthetic?

Abstract

The meaning of the aesthetic in media, art and culture for children – from working with my thesis on the picturebooks about Alfie Atkins (Alfons Åberg) and how they have been transmediated to film, music, computergames, homepage and exhibitions.

What is Alfie Atkins? A not to good looking little fellow, a picture book figure or a megastar, perhaps all in one seen from different angles. The books on Alfie Atkins by Gunilla Bergström and all the different transmediations and products made from the books are simply a good way into discussing aesthetics as a concept in connection with culture for children. What does aesthetics mean in relation to a pedagogical-, cultural and media perspective. What criteria does the “grown-upish” world (my translation of “vuxlig” which is used as a juxtaposition of childish from the book Flyg! sa Alfons Åberg) set to define the meaning of the aesthetic and is there a “childish” perspective? How important is it to define the meaning of the aesthetic when it comes to newer media as for example computergames and homepages? How and what do you choose to show when you make an interactive exhibition from visual and conventional signs. What place does Alfie Atkins hold in children’s culture and does it differ from the place he is given in a more “age”neutral culture from an aesthetic perspective?

I will discuss the above mentioned questions, taking the books on Alfie Atkins as a startingpoint, to try to show how the border between aesthetic criteria from a more qualitative perspective can look different, when seen from an artistic production that also includes bi-products from a trademark perspective. When does culture pass from being only aesthetic to being accustomed to the market (if you make a distinct border)? Will there be positive and/or negative consequences for the overall reception of the picturebooks, which by common standards are seen as aesthetic objects. I will also look further into how Alfie Atkins has been transmediated into film, music, computergames and homepage to see how the term aesthetic works in connection with what is specific for each media, but also in connection to the primary mediations in the picturebooks.

My focus is to give a varied picture of the meaning of the aesthetics in literature, art, film and music and in its role when children get in contact with media, art and culture. The picture of Alfie Atkins can also be seen as a social product, as each and everyone who gets in contact with him create content to the narrated form.

Language of presentation: swedish

Way of presentation: PowerPoint on a USB-memory

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