

Gender Stereotypes in Selected Fairy Tales: Implications for Teaching Reading in the Foundation Phase in South Africa

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KEYWORDS Gender. Stereotypes. Gender Equality. Critical Reader. Foundation Phase. Critical Literacy

ABSTRACT The purpose of this study was to investigate gender stereotypes in fairy tales in order to raise awareness of gender issues in learning and teaching, especially in the reading process. A purposive sample of two English and two IsiXhosa fairy tales were selected for intensive analysis among the popular fairy tales. The discourse analysis was used to analyze and deconstruct the texts with regard to how female and male characters were portrayed. The results indicated that both genders were frequently presented in stereotypical terms. The females were portrayed as submissive and dependent on men to rescue them. On the other hand, boys were portrayed as having power, bravery, strength and wit. This has implication for teaching reading in the Foundation Phase as this portrayal is stereotypical and not likely to be an accurate representation of many women today in the New South Africa.