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THE LGBT-HEROES IN MODERN FOREIGN FAIRY TALES (HOW TO READ WITH CHILDREN)

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the LGBT-protagonists as a new type of heroes in modern foreign fairy tales. Such tales are becoming popular in the modern world. So, there is a problem to read or not to read them and if to read how to do it. The best thing is to analyze them not through the LGBT-base, but through the human being. The writers use traditional tale's plots and heroes and just change sexual nature. LGBT-relationships are typically avoided in children's books. Such tales put children towards understanding these relationships. They also show that protagonists' features and acts are more important for readers than their homosexuality. A human with his feelings and acts is the main thing in LGBT-tales.

Keywords: LGBT, LGBT-protagonist, tale, gay.

1. INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the XXI century characterizes by appearance of a number of children tales with "unusual" end for a tale – same-sex marriage or love. The most popular of these tales: "King & King" by Linda De Haan and Stern Nijland (2002), "The Princes and the Treasure" by Jeffrey A. Miles (2014), "The bravest Knight that Ever Lived" by Daniel Errico (2014). The writers try to find a way to talk with children about taboo without aggression. The most comfortable type – fairy tale, already known to children. With its typical structure and heroes.

"King & King" originally written in Dutch ("Koning en Koning"), but later translated into English. In the United States it was published in 2002; as of 2009, 20,000 copies have been sold in the United States [1, p. 19]. It has been published in at least eight languages. The tale follows two princes who married. The book has gained some prominence due to opposition from social conservatives who believe that children should not see LGBT themes; attention as a result to this opposition greatly increased sales of the book [2]. "King & King's" LGBT content is not just a plot. There is the first image of two men kissing, portrayed in a children's book.

"The Princes and the Treasure" is a picture book. It was published in the United States and has been translated into 26 languages and is available in over 137 countries [3]. The story follows two men tasked with saving a princess, only to discover their love for one another.

"The Bravest Knight Who Ever Lived" – the story follows a Cedric, a poor pumpkin farmer-turned fearless knight. He declines the rescued princess' advances, and marries the prince instead [4].

2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The studying of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) - culture is enough new. Nevertheless, its history dates back to the same-sex love and sexuality of ancient civilization. The terminology of homosexuality has been a contentious issue since the beginning of LGBT social movements. There were used such terms: sodomite, Sapphic, Uranian, homophile, lesbian, gay, two-spirit, same-sex attracted and homosexual. Homosexual people may also be identified under the terms "queer" and "LGBT". The term "homosexual" was used at first in 1869 by Australian author Karl-Maria Ertbeny. Psychology was the first to study homosexual as phenomenon. In 1886 Richard von Kraft-Ebing used the terms homosexual i heterosexual in his works ("Psychopathia Sexualis"). He tried to explain as a deviant sexual practice which is caused by either "congenital inversion" or an "acquired inversion". Henry Havelock Ellis presented homosexuality as a form of human being and described the sexual relations of homosexual male representatives ("Sexual Inversion"). It was the first objective to study homosexuality. Ellis explained homosexuality as genetic quality, which can be actualized by life experience.

Sigmund Freud believed that all human things were innately bisexual. The becoming them heterosexual or homosexual is a result of their experiences with parents and others. He wrote: "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime, and cruelty too... "If [your son] is unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts, inhibited in his social life, analysis may bring him harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency whether he remains a homosexual or gets changed..." [5].

Evelyn Hooker examined whether homosexuals and heterosexuals differed in their psychological adjustment. Berube's studies challenged the stereotype that homosexual recruits could not be good soldiers. Freedman used Hooker's research to study lesbian and heterosexual women [5]. Gonsiorek concluded that "Homosexuality in and of itself is unrelated to psychological disturbance or maladjustment. Homosexuals, as a group, are not more psychologically disturbed on account of their homosexuality" [5].

As we see, empirical evidence and professional norms do not support the idea that homosexuality is a form of mental illness or something like psychopathology. Therefore the aim of modern literature is to show the normal LGBT-hero without abnormality or deviations. The other important thing is to understand how to read and discuss such books with children.

The main heroes of tales "King & King", "The Princes and the Treasure", "The Bravest Knight Who Ever Lived" are guys who suddenly understand their homosexual identity.

"King & King" as a childish tale critics accept negatively as book with information which children do not need [6]. In 2002 it got the award "Most Unusual Book of the Year". "On the tallest mountains above the town lived a queen, the young crown prince and the crown kitty" [7]. The Queen was tired to rule, so she decided her son has to marriage and rule after her: "When I was your age, I'd been married twice already" [7]. Modern tale starts out and lasts like a game to recognize old tales, where king's family is looking for a princess to their prince. However, except king there is "crown kitty". Next level of game – a play with corporeality: funny bodies and manners of foreign princess: "Boy, those long arms will certainly come in handy when waving to the people" [7]. The same we see in the illustrations (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. *King & King*.

Then prince met princess with her brother. His reaction on it such: "At last, the prince felt a stir in his heart... It was love at first sight. What a wonderful prince!" [7] The picture shows beautiful prince and princess. So, our prince takes the prince because of love, not because of beauty. The thing is in feelings. He is honest in it.

The tale has a happy end: "The wedding was very special. The queen even shed a tear or two". And the wedding was special of crying queen, not of the marriage of two princes. They became kings.

Other tale "The Princes and the Treasure" has such heroes: Earnest, Gallant, Princess Elena, Enchantress, King Rufus. Earnest "was a quiet, and shy, and preferred happy endings. He loved a great adventure, but only those in books". Gallant was the strongest and most handsome man in the kingdom of Evergreen. Elena was a beautiful, kindhearted girl. Her father wanted her to get marry, but it was not how she wanted to live her life. Elena made a wish and was whisked away by an old woman in a carriage, prompted her father to announce that he would marry Elena to any one that could rescue her. Earnest and Gallant went to save her. There are such characteristics of them: "The stongest man in Evergreen was named Gallant. He loved to compete, because he won every challenge. He was handsome, and dashing, and the most desired man in town. Many people tried to attract his attention, but no one succeeded. "I'll save the princess," boasted Gallant [8].

"Why don't you stop reading, and go help the princess", said Earnest's mother.

"But I can't save the princess", said Earnest.

"Yes, you can", she replaid. "Now go!"

So Earnest sadly left his cozy, little cottage, and he went to save the princess" [8]

The witch sent Earnest and Gallant to bring her the "greatest treasure in the land" in exchange for the princess. They seek out the land's five greatest treasures. Then they loved each other and understood that the greatest treasure isn't a physical good but rather their love for one another. They returned to the witch with this answer. An old witch transformed into a beautiful enchantress (it is symbolize that love makes everything nice) and Elena was freed. The King gave the two men gold, land, and made them both princes. The story ended with the marriage of the two princes: "Earnest and Gallant invited all their family and friends to their wedding. "I now pronounce you married", said the Vicar. "May you love each other forever. "Oh, Earnest has never looked happier", sighed Earnest's mother" [8].

The writer explained the appearance of these tale on this way: "As I stared at the handsome princes singing and dancing in front of me, I suddenly wondered, Why aren't there any gay princes or lesbian

princesses? Why can't the handsome prince marry another handsome prince? Why can't a damsel in distress be rescued by a beautiful princess? When I got home from the trip, I thought, I have to get busy and create my own prince and prince romantic adventure story" [9]. Therefore the main aim was to write unusual funny tale with the usual plot.

"The Bravest Knight Who Ever Lived" is another tale which ends by homosexual marriage [10]. Cedric grew up poor and honest on a pumpkin farm, and dreamt of becoming a knight. Once he showed his courage by tricking a would-be carriage thief. He got the chance to make his dream come true. Cedric set off to find an adventure of his own by battling a fire-breathing dragon to save a prince and a princess. Instead of marrying the princess he married the prince. "Cedric, the knight in the story, is a regular hero who happens to have a different idea for his happy ending than someone else might," Errico told Buzz Feed in an email. "I hope that readers see that there is a bravery and beauty in being true to yourself. I believe it's important to show kids different forms of love in a positive light instead of just one. Alternatively, avoidance could potentially put kids at a disadvantage towards understanding and acceptance later on in life" [11].

The writers use such story elements in their tales:

- Characters: flat protagonists, good characters, young heroes;
- Setting: magic kingdom and fantasy time;
- Plot: simple and provoking to didactic, containing a single move; conflict resolved with deeds of positive hero;
- Theme: problem of young adults, happiness, kindness, friendship, love, loyalty.

All LGBT-protagonists have a journey in which they show themselves brave, courage, smart and kindhearted.

Tale	"King & King" – love is the base of marriage	"The Princes and the Treasure" – love is the main treasure	The Bravest Knight Who Ever Lived – to get your love you have to be courage and strong
LGBT-protagonists	Two princes	Two men	Knight and prince
	Make a journey where show themselves as the best		
Marriage	Between two princess. After that, they become kings	The king made them princes, after that they married	Between knight and prince
	Marriage gives them new status		
People reaction	People and family are happy because the main heroes whom they love are happy		

Tab. 1. LGBT-protagonists.

In all cases no matter heroes' homosexuality. These tales demonstrate to the small readers how to accept people: to value them for their features and actions and to be polite and delicate with somebody feelings.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Modern literature for children highlights modern life and modern society using famous or known plots with new heroes and context. LGBT-heroes is the new type of heroes in modern literary tale. They help to include children in new reality.

Omar Currie, a 25-year-old teacher of elementary school was criticized by parents for reading the book "King & King". The teacher decided to teach the book after "a boy in his class who acts" a little

feminine” was being called a girl and the word gay was used in a derogatory way” [12]. It means that our society is still not ready to accept new changes in literature, but have to. Reading such literature with children will help in adaptation of this: “I now read this book to my son among all of his other fairy tales, and he doesn’t make a distinction. It’s just normal to him. If every parent did the same, the next generation of kids would be well-educated on diversity, and homophobia might possibly become extinct. This book is important for many reasons, but it has a nonchalant quality in its charm. I am thrilled to have had this come into our lives, and I’m sure you will feel the same” [9].

LGBT relationships are typically avoided in children’s media or labeled age-inappropriate, putting kids at a disadvantage towards understanding later on in life. So, teacher has to be ready to talk about this with pupils. The best way is to read analyzed books and to talk about their protagonists. D. Errico told The Huffington Post: “It’s important for kids’ movies and TV to introduce the world in a nurturing and positive way, which means creating multi-dimensional LGBT main characters... I would like the kids to see courage and kindness in Cedric. This is a story about reaching your potential and being true to yourself. Regardless of whether kids grow up to relate to Cedric or not, I hope that they find a message of acceptance for themselves and others” [13]. Such tales demonstrate positive heroes: kindhearted, brave, ready to help and love. Using traditional tale’s plot they create the atmosphere of usual place and usual world.

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У статті проаналізовано особливості ЛГБТ-героя як нового типу персонажа сучасної літератури для дітей, зокрема у новітніх літературних казках. Такі казки набувають усе більшої популярності у сучасному світі. Відтак виникає питання: читати чи не читати їх, а якщо читати, то як саме. Найоптимальніший варіант у рецепції таких казок – акцент не на ЛГБТ-екзистенції, а людській екзистенції як такій. Автори звертаються до традиційних казкових сюжетів та героїв, лише змінюючи сексуальну орієнтацію персонажів. ЛГБТ-стосунки, як правило, належать до табуованих тем, про які дитяча література замовчує. Такі казки наближають дітей до розуміння різних міжособистісних відносин, що існують у сучасному світі. Вони також засвідчують, що вчинки та якості персонажів є важливішими для читача, ніж їхня гомосексуальна природа. У центрі таких казок – людина у її відчуттях та вчинках.

Ключові слова: ЛГБТ, ЛГБТ-персонаж, казка, гей, міжособистісні взаємини.