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NARRATIVES FOR CHILDREN: DOES GENDER MATTER?

Narratives, written for children, possess specificity on the level of their storytelling and story creating. Dynamic plots, child-characters, special setting and composition structure, as well as adult-narrator and child-focalizer – make a unique poetics of the texts, addressed for children. Though, does it matter, whether these texts are written for male or female readers? As a rule, characters are rather typical in fairy tales, male characters are brave and strong, female characters are weak and tender. Children believe, that the model of life, implemented in fairy narratives, is the ideal model, which they should follow in their life (Beauvais, 2015). Classical fairy tales focus on male physical and emotional domination, as their heroes are courageous and ready for adventures. The most famous English narratives, addressed to a child-reader are about young and smart male, who manage to struggle with global evil and enemies. We can just remember Peter Pan (J. M. Barrie), Harry Potter (J. K. Rowling), Charlie Bucket (R. Dahl), Frodo Baggins (J. R. R. Tolkien), characters, who are known and loved by children all over the world. On the one hand, male characters, being in the center of the narratives, reflect the specificity of English literature for children, on the other hand, such male-character domination provoked different feminist reinterpretations of well-known stories, including narratives about Cinderella, Snow White, Rapunzel and other. Given that, female authors started to create stories about different female characters, who are not passive any more, but rather strong and active (Rebel Girls, 2022). Such narratives are meant to demonstrate to young readers another model of life – a model of active and brave girl, who can struggle with evil and win. Famous narratives “Goodnight stories for rebel girls”, written by two female authors E. Favilli and F. Cavallo (Favilli & Cavallo, 2017) and illustrated by hundreds of women from all over the world became an icon of stories about women who are not afraid to overcome the obstacles and become who they want to be.

REFERENCES

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