UNDERSTANDING LAW AND SUSTAINABILITY IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE THROUGH THE LENS OF QUEER STUDIES IN ANIMATIONS AND CARTOONS FROM AMERICA

a Benasir Banu Mohamed Sadiq, b Evangeline Priscilla Baghavandoss

ABSTRACT

Objective: Queer Studies as a literary space explores the lives of non-heterosexual individuals. It developed as a literal theory in the 1990s with Teresa De Lauretis from her work Queer Theory Lesbian and Gay Sexuality. As the study develops, it covers the varied history of social acceptance faced by homosexuality in many cultures through a wide range of theories and concepts. Children’s literature profoundly shapes individuals from a young age and alludes to whose stories matter in a social setting.

Result: Understanding queer studies in children’s literature would provide an extensive picture of representation, equality, and perceptibility, highlighting their difficulties and struggles, coping strategies, and even validation for the queer community.

Method: On the same note, the researcher is aware that discussing queerness among children is sensitive; therefore, the paper will traverse through certain conjectures, such as the history of queer studies, Queer Law, the history of queer studies in children’s literature through cartoons, the political problems of studying queer people, and queer delineation among children in contemporary society.

Conclusion: Through these trajectories, the research aims to understand queer law and sustainable representation as part of human rights amongst queer children in America.

Keywords: queer studies, children’s literature, queer law, sustainability, human rights.

Received: 21/08/2023
Accepted: 20/11/2023
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i11.2268
INTRODUCTION

Queer theory in general talks about ‘heteronormativity’, where it questions and challenges the universal understanding of heterosexuals as ‘normal’. The theory substantiates its argument by looking into Queer Practices from the former epoch. On the same note, Queer Community includes Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgenders, Non-Binary, Asexual, Transgenders, and related identities among people. This paper will limit its study to the homosexual community, such as gays and lesbians, to maintain a focused review. The researchers aim to study queer theory under the concepts of law and sustainability with reference to children’s studies, as the queer community is predominantly portrayed as a marginalized community. This practice of marginalization continues to pass from one generation to the next without much remorse. The study aims to question this unjust position of the community in relation to American law and hopes to look for sustainable growth as part of human rights in the process of changing the societal mindset.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Queer means deviating from usual or expected. It became an extension of gender and sexuality studies as queer theory advocated disrupting binary gender in a social setting. The idea of gender fluidity studies was first introduced by Michel Foucault in his 1971 work *The History of Sexuality*, where he “analysed all sexual identities, whether perceived to be normal or transgressive, as constructed and reconstructed in various eras of social discourse under the impulse of the power-drive and power-competition” (Abrams and Harpham, 2012). In 1985, Eva Kosofsky Sedgwick, in her work *Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, introduced the term ‘homophobia’, which represents fear or disgust over a man sexually bonding with another man or a woman sexually bonding with another woman. In her other work, *Epistemology of Closet*, she introduced the term ‘closet’ for individuals who cover their homosexual identity either partially or entirely. In 1990, Judith Butler wrote *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, where she presents the term ‘performance’ and compares gender roles to performing in theatre. In 1991, Terresa De Lauretis’ work *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexuality* proposes that Queer theory could enquire sexual bias and rethink everything about sexuality.

Looking back at queer representation, it could be delimited through two schools of thought, such as the Western and the Eastern. For example, in Western society, the earliest evidence of gay relationships is from ancient Greece, where many historians claim that Socrates was in the ‘closet’.

In classical mythologies, male lovers were attributed to ancient Greek gods and heroes such as Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, and Heracles. Though Homer did not explicitly portray the heroes Achilles and Patroclus as homosexual lovers in *Iliad*, Greek dramatist Aeschylus casted both of them as pederastic lovers… Pederasty in ancient Greece was a socially acknowledged romantic relationship (Gaur, 2022).

Other ancient Greek writers, such as Sappho (630 -570 BC) from the island of Lesbos, also wrote female erotica through their lyric poetry. The English words such as ‘lesbian’ and ‘sapphic’ to represent a woman’s sexual connection with another woman were derived from Sappho’s name and her place of birth. Similarly, many elements of homoeroticism are witnessed in the modern interpretations of Middle English literature. Some famous works would be *Piers Plowman* by William Langland, where the narration uses female allegorical personification for the main character Will, and *Canterbury Tales*...
by Chaucer, where critics view the pardon as homosexual as he was stigmatized for his personal appearance in the original text with reference to his unmanly beardlessness. On the same note, various examples of homoeroticism have been extensively researched in modern Shakespearean scholarship with reference to cross-dressing in many plots and much more (Gaur, 2022).

There are various theories and concepts used in this study, such as *Monsters in the Closet* by Harry Benshoff, *Death of the Author* by Roland Barthes, *Carnivalesque* by Mikhail Bakhtin, and *Visibility and Power* by Michel Foucault, which are discussed in a more detailed manner in the result and discussion section.

3 METHODOLOGY

The researchers have used qualitative research to further enhance the research through a descriptive approach. However, the arrangement of the study revolves around queer theory in children’s studies with reference to law and sustainability. The research begins with queer history and law, leading towards queer law in American television with reference to the Hays Code. The study takes several examples from cartoon characters such as Bugs Bunny, Disney movies, and animation shows such as “Adventure Time”, “Steven Universe”, etc. Children’s shows such as “Postcard from Busters” and movies like “Luca” including several references to articles from the Pan American Health Organization, non-profit organizations such as GLAAD, video essays, and similar literary theories.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 QUEER LAW

The practice of homophobia seems to have started in the church during the High Middle Ages. It became intense during the Renaissance era. The punishment for being gay during these historical periods was death, and that practice continued for some generations. In 1776, being gay in any Puritan colony was prohibited; the Puritan colony of that era included America as well. Homosexual practice is still punishable by law in many countries. In an article titled “Hating Gay: An Overview of Scientific Studies,” the writer contemplates the view of William James (1980), who states that there is inadequate in accounting for the particularly violent reaction against homosexuality displayed by the Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian religions. Their strong hostility exists, he said, because homosexual practices were
There were many people who revolted against homophobia across generations. On August 31, 1512, a group of young aristocrats from Florence protested for gay rights, which many people consider history’s first gay rights demonstration. Though the protest did not make much change, progress could slowly be recognised in the 20th century with the rise of Gay Bars across the major cities in the United States, which were frequently raided by the police because being gay was still illegal in every state except Illinois during the 20th century (Sykes, 2019).

4.2 QUEER LAW IN AMERICA

The historical milestone that many consider to be kick-started the American LGBTQ rights movement was the ‘Stonewall’ Riots on June 28, 1969. They started because the Cops were raiding a popular gay bar in New York’s Greenwich Village called ‘Stonewall’ and the patrons of the Stonewall Inn community fought back, opposing the Police. Thousands of people were out in the streets and fighting for days. Many people present that night were people of color. This clash led to many community organizers rallying to fight for safe spaces for these marginalized members of society. On the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in 1970, several celebrations were organized nationwide to commemorate that pivotal movement. Parades were held in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. These Pride Parades or Marches still continue in America and across the globe, representing and celebrating the Queer Community (MsMojo, 2017).

Other milestones for the queer community in America include the American Psychiatric Association removing homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in 1973. Before this research, a homosexual person will be given shock aversion therapy or go through rigorous treatment in the name of a ‘cure’ for being homosexual. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association called for a vote among its members on whether they thought homosexuality should be classified as a disorder, and a significant majority of members voted to remove it but ended up replacing it with a sexual orientation disturbance. Arguably, only in 1987 was it completely removed from the DSM known as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (MsMojo, 2017).
Despite some changes, the hatred for the gay community continued in the early 1980s as the world was affected by the AIDS epidemic and the Gay community was scrutinized.

AIDS became known as the gay disease. In fact, it was originally called GRID, which means Gay-Related Immune Deficiency... Many people think that the government didn’t act quickly enough because it was considered a gay disease. So, the LGBTQ Community has to fight it themselves (Sykes 2019).

The community developed many activist groups for gay rights, which led to a huge cultural shift. In an article titled “Queer Theory: Background,” states that

Although Queer theory had its beginnings in the educational sphere, the cultural events surrounding its origin also had a huge impact. Activist groups pushed back in the 1980’s against the lack of government intervention after the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic. Gay activist groups like ACT-UP and queer Nation took lead force attention to both the AIDS epidemic and the gay lesbian community as a whole. These groups helped define the field with the work they did by highlighting a non-normative option to the more traditional identity politics and marginal group creations (Illinois University Library, 2020).

The cultural shift helped the general public view the gay community for who they are as individuals instead of judging them for their sexual orientation.

4.3 QUEER LAW IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

There are many policies that came up to support the homosexual community in America. In 2009, the ‘Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act’, otherwise known as the ‘Matthew Act’, was established to commemorate two victims of hate crimes on the basis of gender orientation in the United States. This Act severs an expansion on the United States federal hate crime law of 1969 by adding amendments for crimes based on perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. President Barack Obama signed the Act into law as he said, “No one in America should ever be afraid to walk down the street holding the hands of person they love” (Obama, 2009).

The most supported and welcoming policy was the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that the Same-Sex Marriage is legal in all 50 states on June 26, 2015, “With a 5-4 decision in Obergefell v. Hodges, the U.S. Supreme Court declares same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states” (American Express, 2018). The first state to legalize was Massachusetts on May 17, 2004, which was initiated by Vermont on July 1, 2000, introducing the Civil
Union and authorizing same-sex marriage by enacting a statute without being required to do so by a court decision.

4.4 QUEER LAW IN AMERICAN TELEVISION

In relation to queer studies in children’s literature, it is important to trace their history with reference to cartoons and animations. Though the spirit of queer studies began in the 1980s and was paved as a literary theory in 1991, its relevance to children could be traced back to 1934 with the ingress of the Hays Code by the Motion Picture Association of America. An article titled “The Hays Code Explained: History of Hollywood’s Hays Code” states that

During the Golden Age of Hollywood, the Hays Code censored and banned a wide variety of subjects. This included depictions of nudity, scenes of passion, lustful kissing, mentions of venereal diseases, profanity, crime, portrayed positively, disrespect toward religion or law, sexual perversion (code of homosexuality), and miscegenation (interracial relationships) among other subjects. Studios implemented the Hays Code to avoid government censorship and to restore Hollywood’s public image after several movie star scandals (MasterClass, 2021).

The U.S. government also established the Federal Communication Act and the first set of commercial TV regulations in the same year. The extent of queer representation before censorship would be very limited. After the censorship, the creators got creative in showcasing queer characters, especially with animations.

4.5 QUEER SUSTAINABILITY

In a video on “The Evolution of Queer Characters in Children’s Animation,” Chris Snyder and Kyle Desiderio had an interview with Melanie Kohnen, who is an assistant professor of rhetoric and media studies at Lewis & Clark College, where she stated that “People actually found ways of inserting queerness into cartoons and stretched the boundaries of the Production Code, because animation in itself is a medium that already lends itself to surrealness or strange situations” (Kohnen, 2021). For example, live-action movies cannot project two men kissing in the 1940s in fear of censorship but characters like Bugs Bunny could kiss Elmer Fudd which was televised in the same period (July, 1940) and could be overlooked as funny. Here, Bugs Bunny is a rabbit that personifies humans and was voiced by Mel Blanc, an American voice actor for more than 50 years, and Elmer Fudd is a hunter, a male character predominantly voiced by Mel Blanc and
Danny Webb. Bugs Bunny not only kisses other male characters on their mouths but also cross-dresses in many instances, but these characters did not blatantly call themselves gay or queer in their movies; there were certain speech patterns, mannerisms, costumes, etc., which became signals for queerness and queer-coding between the writers and the audience as the viewers could have their own interpretation.

4.6 QUEER CODING

Queer-coding in cartoons and animations led to queer presence in the public space, but in the initial stage, it was presented under heteronormative understanding, where homosexuality is side-lined as minor characters or as villains. Film historians such as Harry Benshoff state in his book *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* that “both the monster and the homosexual are permanent residents of shallow spaces: at worst caves, castles, and closets and at best a marginalized and oppressed position within the cultural hegemony” (Benshoff, 1997). There are many examples of homosexual characters in cartoons and animated movies being shunned as minor or evil characters; the most famous examples would be from Disney movies.

4.7 QUEER CODING IN DISNEY MOVIES

The first visible example would be Ursula from “The Little Mermaid,” movie who was inspired by a real-life Drag Queen named Divine. Today Magazine article by Sean Hickey states that

> Ultimately, the inspiration for the cauldron-stirring tentacled witch - voiced by Pat carroll - came from an unlikely place: Drag. Specifically, Divine, the drag alter ego of Harris Glenn Milstead. Rob Minkoff the original movie’s animator, told Vogue that it seemed like a “funny and quirky idea to “take (Ursula) and treat her more like a drag queen” (Hickey, 2023).

There are also similar Disney villains that are considered gay, such as Jafar from “Aladdin” (Hubbard, 2022), Gaston from “Beauty and the Beast” (Dockray, 2017), Scar from “The Lion King” (McHenry, 2019), and many more. In a heteronormative world, there would be a contrast between the ‘normal’ and the ‘other’. Benshoff, in his above-mentioned book, postulates that the ‘normal’ in this scenario refers to the hero and regular heteronormative code of conduct in society, and the ‘other’ refers to the monster and the marginalized group, such as homosexual behaviour. He states that
Identification with the monster can mean many different things to many
different people, and is not necessarily always a negative thing for the
individual spectators in question, even as some depictions of queer monsters
undoubtedly conflate and reinforce certain sexist or homophobic fears within
the public sphere. For spectators of all type, the experience of watching a
horror film or a monster movie might be understood as similar to that of
Carnival as it has been theorized by Bakhtin, wherein the conventions
of normality ritualistically overturned within a prescribed period of time in order
to celebrate the lure of the deviant (Benshoff, 1997).

Queer writers and writers who support queerness in relation to queer characters
did not have a safe space to express their opinions or feelings regarding homosexuality.
Similar to Bakhtin’s Carnival, which is a way of overcoming barriers, power inequalities
and hierarchy, writers and directors in the 1980s used cartoons and animations to portray
homosexuality with the above-mentioned characters, maybe as a way of defying the given
norm. Professor Melanie Kohnen states that the “Audience may, in fact, embrace the
villain over the hero because the villains offer an alternative vision of life or an alternative
life path, and one that doesn’t end in heterosexual romance” (Desiderio, et.al, 2021). In
the late 80s, Broadway lyricist Howard Ashman, who was openly a homosexual man,
started intentionally queering the Disney canon through the three films he worked on,
such as “Little Mermaid”, “Beauty and the Beast”, and “Aladdin” (The Take, 2021).

There is no direct statement that the above-mentioned Disney characters are
homosexual, nor do they blatantly call themselves homosexual or queer in their movies.
Similar to their precursors, such as Buggs Bunny and Hunter Elmer, from the 1940s, there
are certain speech patterns, mannerisms, voice modulation, etc., indicating that these
villains are gay.

Such as Jafar from “Aladdin” often seen “twirling his mustache and licking his
lips in a suggestive manner, and he also makes several references to taking
Aladdin’s “Heart and Soul” for himself. Additionally, Jafar’s pet snake, Iago,
is often seen as a phallic symbol, which could be another hint at Jafar’s hidden
sexuality (Hubbard, 2022).

Jafar from “Aladdin” is just one instance of the hidden identities of Disney
villains; there are various readings with several other characters. Critics such as
McCullough et al, claim that many have read the song “Kill the Beast” from the animated
movie “Beauty and the Beast” as an allegory for homophobia and the AIDS pandemic.
These readings and re-readings lead to various interpretations among the readers for queer
coding and queer baiting.
Queer coding and queer baiting in Disney characters and similar cartoon and animated movies could be comprehended through the theory “Death of the Author”, a postmodern theory first devised by Roland Barthes that proposes that in terms of analysing a text, the reader’s interpretation is more important than the writer’s intent or the ending of the story. As Barthes claims “we know that to restore to writing its future, we must reverse its myth: the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author” (Barthes, 1986). Birth or the readers elevate writing to several trajectories, such as fan-fiction, fan-writing, etc., where the readers reclaim the story or the plot as their own and transcribe from their perspective. In an article titled “Queering Classic Hollywood: Girls Are A Girl’s Best Friend,” Elyce Rae Helford postulates that reading various characters as queer is not because they are but because we, the readers, can explicate a work as we see fit. The homosexual community, as a minority, may want to be represented in the mainstream like any other individual. Though these cartoons and animations were meant for kids, Alexander Avila said in his video “Luca is Obviously Gay. Here’s Why” states that Queer people once were also kids. It is important to provide equal representation for the queer experience because, even though kids might not completely understand sexuality or heteronormative code, they still witness the tension between the gay community and the heteronormative society they live in, and it is important to educate them on the various dynamics of the world.

4.8 HUMAN RIGHTS AND QUEER VISIBILITY

Disney and similar production companies provided awareness and visibility to the homosexual community by incorporating various queer coded characters. On the other hand, awareness is not synonymous with acceptance, and not all visible images could be positive. Though many gay creators incorporated queer characters in their productions, they were either villains or side characters. Despite the fact that the symbol of the monster gay with reference to Bakhtin’s Carnival is defiant, it still addresses homosexuals as ‘other’ and as the enemy. In an interview with ‘Insider’ creator Rebecca Sugar, who worked in famous kids’ shows such as “Adventure Time” and “Steven Universe,” Cartoon Network states, “If you can only exist as a villain or a joke, I mean, that’s a really heavy thing to be saturated with as a kid” (Desiderio, et.al 2021). The conventional body still rejects queer community and identity. For instance, in a Children’s Show in February 2005 called “Postcards from Buster” faced several adverse reactions because of an
episode it planned to air featuring two Lesbian parents from Vermont in a children’s television show. The episode received thousands of letters in backlashes, was pulled from various PBS stations, and was condemned by the U.S. Government. The show “Postcards from Busters” was originally a spin-off show from “Arthur” from the Aardvarks family. Buster, a cartoon character and an animated rabbit is a friend of Arthur. He will go around the world with his dad and meet new people, have various adventures, and experience different cultures while making video postcards. In an episode called “Sugartime”, Buster comes to Vermont, learns how maple sugar is made, and visits the home of a real-life child who invites him for dinner and introduces him to his parents, who are a lesbian couple. This episode took place during a time when gay and homosexual marriages were legal in Vermont. Buster meeting a lesbian couple in Vermont was not unusual or out of the ordinary. But the episode faced several scrutinise.

PBS has pulled an episode of the children’s show Postcards from Buster that includes children with lesbian mothers. The episode was yanked the same day that PBS received a letter from new Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings condemning the episode and asking PBS to “strongly consider” returning the federal money that went towards its production (Fair, 2005).

The backlash that the episode received was amplified when the U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, asked PBS to return the federal funding. “Her reasoning, parents shouldn’t have their kids exposed to the lesbian and queer lifestyles in the programming that they expect to be safe” (Night Owls, 2021).

A video essay titled “LGBTQ+ Representation in Children’s Media – A Video Essay” by a YouTube channel named Night Owls states that Spelling’s rationale regarding the Buster episode backlash is bad. The narrator also further explains why queer representation is so hard to come by on children’s television. She highlights that anti-LGBTQ propaganda revolves around sexual deviancy. There are certain stigmas attached to being queer. Such queer people are more likely to engage in inappropriate sexual activities, spread STDs, or have a higher probability of becoming sexual predators. But these are stigmas and discrimination against the queer community on the conservative spectrum. In an article titled “LGBT Advocates Say Stigma and Discrimination Are Major Barriers to Health,” by the Pan American Health Organization states that “Research shows that stigma against homosexuality and ignorance about gender identity are widespread, both in society at large and within health systems. Discrimination can result in outright refusal to provide care, poor-quality care, and disrespectful or abusive
treatment, among others” (PAHO, 2016). These stigmas and discrimination continue to intertwine with kids’ cartoons and animation by de-normalizing the queer lifestyle, such as with backlash in the “Postcard with Buster” episode featuring queer couples, and miscreants gay characters by making them Villains with reference to Scar, Jafar, etc.

The focus of these films is not on genuine queer representation. It is about heteronormative people’s perspective on queer people, and that perspective is an extension of the consequences of coming out and the backlash that a queer person would get for being queer. To a certain extent, queer representation in these shows focuses on tolerance rather than acceptance. This ostracism from the homosexual media could be the result of a fear of normalizing queer presence. Another stigma attached to the queer community is that if we introduced homosexual identities to young people, then they might become confused with their own sexuality. The narrator of “LGBTQ+ Representation in Children’s Media – A Video Essay” postulates that this stigma is a myth and completely untrue. Being homosexual is not a choice that someone could make. They are naturally attracted to people of the same sex, in the same way, heterosexual people are attracted to their opposite-sex. Being homosexual is not a disease. Gay people do not have control over their sexual orientation. The narrator continues to state that if a person is born queer, then they are queer. The faster and less stressfully they could figure that out is a welcome gift and representation can help in understanding their identity. The representation that the narrator describes in this scenario is an authentic representation which is from the perspective of the homosexual experience and not a portrayal of a monster or villain from the heteronormative perspective.

4.9 QUEER REPRESENTATION

Representation could be very crucial in understanding homosexual identity, especially among children.

Normalization matters for both queer and non-queer kids. Queer kids deserve to see their identities represented and respected on screen and oftentimes they need to have their existences normalized to themselves. At the same time, non-queer kids are more likely to be accepting queer identities of they see them on screen (Night Owls, 2021).

Similarly, a non-profit, non-governmental organization called GLAAD, which was originally founded as a protest against defamatory coverage of gay and lesbian demographics and their portrayal in the media and entertainment industry, released their
annual “Where We Are on TV” report for 2017-2018. In that report, there was a survey of queer and non-queer Americans. They state that LGBTQ representation is at an all-time high. They also “found that people who aren’t queer but are exposed to queer media images are increasingly accepting of and comfortable around LGBTQ+ people”. (Night Owl, 2021). One might argue that discussing sexuality among kids could be inappropriate, but it is important to understand that homosexual people were once kids as well. The researcher empathizes with the sensitivity behind the topic and assures that understanding queerness among children is not a discussion of sexual activities but of the sexual acceptance and social experience of homosexuals, which would help in understanding their position in society, promoting representation and visibility, creating a platform to recreate their identity, and reaffirming that they matter despite their sexual differences. It is also important to not be bystanders for queer cruelty. An article titled “An Explication of Anthropogenic Climate Change in Anuradha Roy’s An Atlas of Impossible Longing” states that if we are bystanders to our environment, then it might bounce back on us. (Karen Augustus, 2023).

Queer representation promotes normality, which in turn could promote visibility among the queer community. In an article titled “Why Visibility Matters” by Jennifer O’Brien states that

There are many important reasons why visibility matters. One factor to consider is that when more LGBTQ people are included in the media this means that they are actually seen by the society as opposed to being rendered unseen or invisible. When people are able to see something represented, they are better able to understand and grasp who those people are, and this creates an important shift in the social consciousness to include people from a range of different background (2017).

The visibility of queer minorities helps non-queer people understand them and accept them for who they are, irrespective of their sexual orientation. Because with the heteronormative narration, queer being a ‘monster’ and looking at queer people as ‘other’ would destroy queer people’s congruity, which might create difficulties for queer communities, especially for queer kids to accept their own identity. The article “Why Visibility Matters by O’Brien continues to suggest that

Another crucial piece to consider is that when people see representations of themselves in the media, this can foster a great sense of affirmation to their identity. Feeling affirmed with one’s own sense of self can boost positive feelings of self-wort, which is quite different that feeling as if you are wrong or bad for being who you are. The message that can come from a society in
which LGBTQ people are invisible, especially through the lens of the media, is that “you don’t exist and you don’t matter” (2017).

The researcher aims to break the unjustly marginalized position of the queer community in society by providing a platform in academia, as visibility would create power for the queer community and recreate their identity.

4.10 QUEER NORMALIZATION

In an article titled “On Visibility and Power: An Arendtian Corrective of Foucault” Nave Gordon discusses the relationship between power and visibility in which he states

Visibility is essential to power not only because it is put to use by power in order to control people, but perhaps more importantly it is power’s condition of possibility. Discursive practices, for instance, are meaningless and powerless if they are not visible… Visibility, accordingly precedes the process of internalization. Put differently, discursive practices are actually created, reproduced and upheld through visible citation and repetition of their normative fiats. Conversely if a discursive practice ceases to be articulated by constant repetition, it loses its power and may eventually disappear. Thus, the practice maintains its power only insofar as it is visible (Gordon, 2002).

Through the assertion of the article, the researcher does not call being homosexual a discursive practice but wants to highlight the psychological effects of the association of homosexuality with the ‘monster’, which is the only visible homosexual representation among children, and the importance of recreating a narration where homosexuality is considered normal. An article called “Multiculturalism in Indonesia: How Does Literature Affect the Development of Diversity” speaks about how diversity encompasses the point of normalization. (Arif Prasetyo Wibowo, 2023). This normalization of homosexual existence will help them create allies to discern that they are not alone in their struggle.

5 CONCLUSION

Many animation creators who are from the queer community attempted to normalize queerness through their shows but were always faced with backlash. But in 2010, things started to slowly change for the queer community as Disney released the movie "Frozen,” where the main character Elsa is queer coded as a lesbian. This shift of queer coding characters from the side-lines to comedy to villains and to the main protagonist is a huge milestone for the queer community. This positive influence
continued as in 2018, when “Steven Universe” had the first lesbian wedding in a kids’ animated show, followed by “Kipo and the Age of Wonder Beasts” (2020), where they had the first kids’ animated character named Benson to directly identify himself as gay. The movie “Strange World” (2022) by Disney also has a queer main character. The happy ending in queer television for children came in an episode of “Arthur” (2019), which featured the anthropomorphic Aardvark attending the wedding of his teacher, Mr. Ratburn, to his partner Patrick fourteen years after the “Postcard from Busters” controversy (Chris Snyder and Kyle Desiderio, 2021), promoting sustainability among the queer community.
REFERENCES


2%80%9Cqueer%20theory%E2%80%9D%20itself,theory%3a%20refusing%20hetrosexuality%20as%20the


The Take. (2021, April 15). Queer Coding, Explained | Hidden in Plain Sight. Retrieved from Youtube: https://youtu.be/K5-6UXGmeGA?si=5U3LxBQG40n3HheM


