

Angela Yannicopoulou

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece)

### **Two-dad families in nonfiction picturebooks**

Picturebooks with two-father families have been in print for nearly thirty years –*Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin* (1983, originally in Danish, 1981). Although they are currently growing in numbers (Naidoo, 2012), they are still underresearched (Sunderland & McGlashan, Mark, 2012). Those ‘gay-friendly’ books are highly controversial (Young, 2011): They have been accused of homosexual propaganda, and are not published or translated, and also they are removed from libraries, banned, or even pulped. In sharp contrast, at the same time, they are greeted as inclusive books that promote tolerance and acceptance and are awarded with various prizes. Although the vast majority of children’s two-dad picturebooks are fictional, nonfiction is also included, causing discussions whether the reliability towards nonfiction is extended to the ideology of the books concerning same-sex couples, and the new type of fatherhood and masculinity. Since nonfiction is considered to depict reality, two-dad picturebooks employ an array of verbal and visual strategies, such as recognizable settings, photographs, authors’ notes, in order to stress their connection with reality. Also, the story is not confined to book-format, but continues in other media, such as newspapers, television programs, internet sights, and even visits in real life circumstances. The nonfiction two-father picturebooks tend to challenge heteronormativity and naturalize same-sex parenting. For two-dad stories generic issues –Is it fiction or nonfiction?– seem to acquire an ideological significance and become an issue of controversy.

**Keywords:** two-dad family, fatherhood, nonfiction, picturebook, ideology

### **References:**

Naidoo, Jamie C. (2012) *Rainbow family collection: Selecting and using children’s books with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer content*. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited.

Sunderland, Jane and McGlashan, Mark (2012). The linguistic, visual and multimodal representation of two-mum and two-dad families in children’s picturebooks. *Language and Literature*, 21, 189-210.

Young, Craig (2011). Creating a controversial picturebook: Discussions with the creators of “And Tango makes three”. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 37 (2), 30-38.

**Angela Yannicopoulou** is a professor at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. Among her research interests are children's literature (especially picturebook) and literacy. Her books: *Aesopic Fables and Children: Form and Function* (Liverpool: Manutius Press, 1993, in English), *Towards Reading* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2005, in Greek), *Playing with Phonemes* (Rhodes: Aegean University, 2006, in Greek), *Literacy in Preschool Education* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2005, in Greek) and *In the Colourland: The Contemporary Picturebook* (Papadopoulos, 2008, in Greek).