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Content Analysis of Archetypal Portrayal of Females in Picture Books Read in Preschool Classrooms

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Walden University

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

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Classrooms

by

Karen Lynn Ellefsen

MA, State University of New Paltz, 1993

BS, Dickinson State College, 1981

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Early Childhood Education

Walden University

May 2015

Abstract

Literature that depicts females in restrictive roles may limit girls' aspirations and success. Previous studies of award-winning books for young children have found gender-stereotypical role portrayal to be common. The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to female characters in picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom. The conceptual framework for this study was derived from feminist theory and Jungian archetypes. Data were collected in the form of teachers' logs of books they read aloud over a 2-week period. Data were analyzed by employing the 3-read method developed by Madsen, which was revised to assign Jungian archetypes to each female character in a sample of 20 books. According to study results, female characters were portrayed as passive and often silent. Most of the female characters in these books were assigned archetypes typified by low personal agency, passivity, and service to others (orphan, innocent, and caretaker) and none were assigned archetypes associated with innovation (magician, jester, and creator). Of the 106 female characters portrayed in this sample, only 26% were verbal, and of those who spoke, 46% were limited to the one or two words needed to ask for assistance or to offer to serve. Female characters who did advance the plot through dialogue were often in animal form. Gender stereotypes still exist in children's picture books, as evidenced by objectification of females, female servitude, and lack of positive agentic female roles. This study has potential to elicit positive social change, benefiting both boys and girls, through increased awareness of archetypal role portrayal of female characters in picture books and teachers' increased care in selecting read-aloud books with regard to the gender-based messages they send.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all my loved ones, especially the strong female ancestors from my Viking and Celtic roots. I also dedicate this dissertation to the young girls in all women. May they lead us on journeys that are truly our own. Mine led me here, with a little guidance from Amelia Earhart, for I too, could not resist this shining adventure.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge all the girls and women, past and present, who have been ignored, marginalized, abandoned, abused, or forgotten. I have learned a great deal from this journey, but nothing more powerful than this: we are all connected in this universe. Helping one girl helps not only the girl, but the world. Help just one girl. No. There is no “just” about it. Help one girl...today.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background	1
Children’s Literature as Part of Mass Media	2
The Power of Books.....	4
Historical Blindness to Gender Bias in Children’s Literature	6
Award-Winning and Everyday Children’s Picture Books.....	8
Problem Statement	10
Purpose of the Study	11
Research Question	11
Conceptual Framework.....	11
The Nature of Study.....	15
Definitions.....	16
Assumptions.....	17
Scope and Delimitations	17
Limitations	18
Significance.....	19
Summary	19
Chapter 2: Literature Review	21
Literature Search Strategy.....	22
The Conceptual Framework.....	23

Children’s Books	25
Children’s Books as a Teaching Tool.....	25
The Power and Value of Children’s Picture Books.....	27
The Importance of Picture Books in the Preschool Curriculum.....	29
The Portrayal of Females Historically in Children’s Literature	30
The Use of Gender Stereotypes vs. Jungian Archetypes	33
The Representation and Portrayal of Females in Current Children’s Literature	34
The Selection of Children’s Books for Read Aloud to Preschoolers.....	36
Summary and Conclusions	38
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	39
Research Question	39
Research Design and Rationale	39
Setting.....	40
The Role of the Researcher.....	42
Methodology.....	43
Participant Selection Logic.....	43
Instrumentation	44
Data Collection	45
Data Analysis Plan.....	46
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	48
Ethical Procedures	49
Summary.....	50
Chapter 4: Results.....	51

Setting	51
Demographics	51
Data Collection	52
Testing the Research Instrument.....	53
Analysis of the Sample of 20 Picture Books	55
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	55
Research Results	57
Presence or Absence of Female Characters	57
Speech or Silence	58
Agency or Lack of Agency	61
Animal or Human Form.....	62
Archetypal Roles.....	62
Themes	73
Silence.....	73
Objectification.....	75
Passivity	75
Servitude	76
Lack of Positive, Agentic Female Role Models	76
Summary.....	77
Chapter 5: Discussion	78
Key Findings.....	78
Interpretation of Findings	81
Limitations of Study	82

Recommendations.....	83
Future Research	83
For Practice	84
Implications for Positive Social Change.....	85
Conclusion	86
References.....	88
Appendix A: Letter to Administrators to Request Participation.....	101
Appendix B: Consent Form	103
Appendix C: Reading Log	107
Appendix D: Female Archetypal Portrayal Discussion Form	108
Appendix E: 12 Archetypal Role Guidelines.....	110
Appendix F: Annotated Bibliography of Picture Books Included in Analysis.....	112

List of Tables

Table 1. Speech or Silence in Female Characters.....	59
Table 2. Limited Speech for Verbal Female Characters.....	59
Table 3. Female Character Archetypal Assignment.....	63
Table 4. Silence, Low Agency, and Animal Form in Female Characters	64

List of Figures

Figure 1. Picture books link conceptual framework to children's understanding	14
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Girls are in crisis in many areas of their lives and development (Banet-Weiser, 2015; Brown, 2011; Farady, 2010; Fitzgibbons & O'Leary, 2012; Rand, 2009; Temin, Levine, & Stonesifer, 2009). Girls are being sexualized from earlier and earlier ages, with padded bras in stores targeted toward 10-year-old children (Banet-Weiser, 2015; Brown, 2011), revealing Halloween costumes (M. Warhaft-Nalder, personal communication, February 27, 2013), and messages from advertisers that focus only on the way a girl looks rather than the complexities that make up the entire person (American Psychological Association, 2007; Banet-Weiser, 2015; Brookes & Kelly, 2009; Fitzgibbons & O'Leary, 2012). Although adults have difficulty processing this bombardment of messages from the media, a young girl may have even greater difficulty trying to find out what kind of girl, and ultimately, what kind of woman, she wants to be.

In the arena of mass media, books seem to be the quieter, sometimes forgotten medium. The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to girls and women in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom.

Background

Educators are inquisitive about how girls are often limited or expected to be, act, play, and dress, as if there were only one way to be a girl. My inquisitiveness of girls and women and their role in society expanded with my interactions with a parenting teen population, who, incidentally, were all girls. The way society treated them (Gilligan,

1982, 2011), their honest stories about their teen-parent journey, and the absence of males at the center and in the child's life, broadened my views on how girls and women fit in society. This, coupled with the growing numbers of abused, relationally manipulated, and sexually exploited young girls in the news (Fitzgibbons & O'Leary, 2012) and in my classroom, led me to research more about how girls, at a young age, feel limited in their choices of who and what they can become (Fitzgibbons & O'Leary, 2012; Gilligan, 1982, 2011).

Children's Literature as Part of Mass Media

Among the classics of children's literature, girls are often portrayed in a sex role stereotypes (Ahlqvist, Halim, Greulich, Lurye, & Ruble, 2013; Law, McCoy, Olszewsky, & Semifero, 2012). In many books, when a young female character rebels against her traditional, often stereotypical, role, many adults in these stories characterize this expression of self as a stage ("tomboy") that the girl will outgrow (Law et al., 2012; Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972). By the end of most of these stories, girls have learned to conform to traditional societal roles established for females. The girl's acceptance of traditional social role expectations contributes to the resolution of the story line and is intended to be satisfying to a listener (Ahlqvist et al., 2013; Miskec, 2009). Steyer (2014) examined these marginalized views of girls and women and focused on media, in general, rather than solely on books. This pattern of limited roles recurred in the children's literature I shared with the many different age groups I taught.

In *Little Women*, Alcott (1868) reflected the pattern of limited roles by accepting the loveable and entertaining Jo as the tomboy, but portraying her as eventually

outgrowing this stage (Weitzman et al., 1972). The outcome is described as a relief to her family and friends and became the basis for the expanded book, *Little Women and Good Wives* (Alcott, 1871). *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952) also included what is considered “un-girly” behavior from the character of Fern. Fern’s mother is so concerned about Fern’s fixation on the piglet (Wilbur) that she calls the doctor. Concerns subside when Fern rides the Ferris wheel with a boy, behavior more in tune with being a girl. Miscek (2009) found that *The American Girl Book Series* depicted young girls who are accepted for their rebellious nature, with characteristics of courage, independence, critical-thinking skills, and fortitude, but only as a gateway to becoming a woman who is defined by a traditional societal paradigm. Each of these examples, from over a time period of almost 150 years, condoned the tomboy behavior as a period of transition into a more conventionally feminine role.

What I was experiencing in the classroom was mirrored in the literature discovered about gender bias in children’s books (Steyer, 2014; Taylor, 2009; Weitzman et al., 1972). Often girls and women in these books were not represented as frequently as their male counterparts. Many picture books excluded girls and women completely (Rajput, 2009; Randle, 2014; Taylor, 2009; Weitzman et al., 1972). If girls and women were represented, they were often silent or limited in the conversation, and they were often limited to traditional roles of mothers, wives, teachers, and never portrayed as professionals such as lawyers, doctors, or businesswomen. Other roles included fairy, fairy godmother, witch, or old woman (Rajput, 2009; Randle, 2014; Weitzman et al., 1972). Often these girls and women were portrayed as silent, passive, and observing of

activities rather than participating in them, serving others (often male), or performing domestic chores (Randle, 2014; Steyer, 2014; Taylor, 2009; Weitzman et al., 1972). Often female roles were peripheral. Picture book covers rarely included a depiction of a girl. The numbers of books with female protagonists were limited, and these girls and women usually relied on the assistance of male characters.

The Power of Books

How people are portrayed in children's literature matters. In addition to books being informative, picture books add value to a child's overall development, helping children make sense of the world around them (Chukhrai, 2010; Crisp & Hiller, 2011a, 2011b; McCabe, Fairchild, Grauerholz, Pescosolido, & Tope, 2011; Rajput, 2009; Shachar, 2012; Steyer, 2014; Taylor, 2009). Preschool children are introduced to literature through the picture books read aloud. Because books can help young children understand the world around them and see beyond that world, selecting books that provide limited views of girls and women can place restrictions on choices for children.

Books with a limited view of females may cause children to believe that girls and women are not so important as boys and men (Nair & Rosli, 2013; Ruterana, 2012; Temin et al., 2010). In many books for children, female characters are expected to conform to traditional gender stereotypes (Paynter, 2011) and spend most of their time indoors (Taylor, 2009). Other common themes found in current research is that girls and women often appear in positions of servitude (Paynter, 2011), act passively in the role of observer (Paynter, 2011; Taber & Woloshyn, 2011), or are valued for their physical attributes only (Taber & Woloshyn, 2011). Females in children's books are frequently

portrayed as emotional or indecisive (Nair & Rosli, 2013). Moreover, girls and women who do not conform to these role expectations are presented “less than” those girls and women who do (Brancato, 2011; Miskec, 2009).

Children’s literature that provides a variety of female role models may broaden the world of possibilities for girls and who they can become, with children offered choices rather than limitations (Chukhray, 2010; Crisp & Hiller, 2011a, 2011b; McCabe et al., 2011). This broadened view of girls and women may not only affect girls in a positive manner, but may help boys expand their views of girls and women (Temin et al., 2010). Examining these selections may have positive outcomes for both sexes so that the notion that “boys do, girls are” (Brancato, 2011, p. 1) is no longer the norm.

This topic has potential social implications. By receiving balanced messages about girls and women, girls and boys can see there are many acceptable types of girls or women, that girls and women come in all shapes and sizes, have different interests, choose different jobs, and are not seen in only a traditional gender-role stereotype. Balanced messages can also reveal that girls and women are equally as important as boys and men. This balance in children’s literature can help remove any perceived limitations of what girls or women can be and provide opportunities for girls to see themselves in the literature and broaden the possibilities for their future (Taylor, 2009). Boys can see that girls and women are not limited to traditional gender stereotypical roles, thereby broadening their view of the diversity in roles girls and women play. Because children connect with the characters they see and hear about in read-aloud selections (Brancato,

2011; Taylor, 2009), offering literature that expands the possibilities for girls and women is beneficial to all children and, ultimately, so society as a whole.

Historical Blindness to Gender Bias in Children's Literature

Weitzman et al. (1972) pioneered the examination of children's books for gender bias. Weitzman et al. examined award-winning and honor books, books on etiquette, and widely available books sold under the *Golden Books* imprint. Researchers examined gender bias in children's literature in response to a political climate of civil rights and a second wave of feminism in the women's movement (Kehily, 2012; McCabe et al., 2011). Weitzman et al. focused primarily on the relationship between picture books and sex-role socialization of preschool-aged children. Weitzman et al. stated, "Even girls and boys as young as four-years-old are socialized to understand what is socially accepted behavior for their gender and what is not acceptable in society" (p. 1,125). Gender socialization is the assignment of roles to people, even the youngest of people, based on their gender.

Numerous studies followed the seminal research by Weitzman et al. (1972). Nilsen (1971) reviewed a random sampling of picture books from library shelves and found an abundance of "apron wearing" females (both in and out of the home). Kolbe and LeVoie (1981) extended Weitzman et al.'s examination of award-winning books and found that although the ratio of female to male characters had increased, female characters were still limited to gender-role stereotypes. Kinman and Henderson (1985) found that award-winning children's books from 1977 to 1984 portrayed girls and women in less gender stereotypical roles. Grauerholz and Pescosolido (1989) sampled more than

2,000 books published between 1909 and 1984 and found that females were always underrepresented compared to males (2:1), with three times as many male central characters as female characters and four times as many male adult characters as female adult characters. Kortenhuis and Demarest (1993) reviewed 125 nonaward-winning books and 25 Caldecott Award winners and found more female characters than in past studies, but also that “girls are as passive dependent [sic] as 50 years ago” (p. 219).

Gooden and Gooden (2001) confirmed that although females were represented more often than in the past, even approaching equity in main characters, female characters were still limited to traditional gender role stereotypes. In their study, Gooden and Gooden examined 83 Notable Books provided by the American Library Association (Bird, 2014). Gooden and Gooden analyzed books for main character, illustrations, and title, assigning gender to each. If gender could not be clearly understood, they saw it as neutral. Although the representation of females as main characters was only slightly lower than that of males, males were portrayed less frequently in gender stereotypical roles than females. Males were never portrayed participating in housekeeping or child-rearing tasks. In contrast, most females were portrayed in gender stereotypical roles in the home, with a small fraction of women portrayed working professionally. Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2006) chose best-selling books as the focus of their gender-bias analysis and found that pictures of male characters outnumbered pictures of females, girls were usually sited indoors and boys were portrayed outdoors, and men were more likely to be portrayed in paid employment than women. Hamilton et al. argued that their results were similar to evidence of gender bias from 10 and 20 years previous.

Hamilton et al. revealed some progress in the direction of gender balance in children's books.

Many researchers found that although girls and women were represented more often (Shachar, 2012), they continued to be portrayed in gender stereotypical roles. Taber and Woloshyn (2011) found female characters to be portrayed as beautiful and passive, although boys were portrayed as active and heroic. This finding is supported by Kirkscey (2011) who found that portrayal of female characters in award-winning children's literature continued to "hold tightly to traditional social roles" (p. 94), rather than offering other less traditional roles for females.

Picture books selected to be read to children in classrooms were not included in any of these studies. Because the number of award-winning books is few but the numbers of books available for reading are many, it is unlikely that teachers select only award-winning books for reading aloud. A search on Amazon.com revealed the large numerical difference between these two categories. According to Amazon.com (2014), 12,341 children's picture books are offered for purchase but of these only 207 are award-winning children's picture books (search performed on February 23, 2014), revealing that the chances of children reading or hearing non-award-winning books is more probable than not, and worthy of attention.

Award-Winning and Everyday Children's Picture Books

The Caldecott Award has been given each year since 1938 in recognition of excellent picture books. One main award and runners up (which was changed to Honor Books in 1971) are bestowed annually. The award was named after 19th-century English

illustrator Caldecott. It is “awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children” (Association for Library Services to Children, n.d., para 1). One book is given the award each year, with a number of honor books (from one to five) also given yearly. The total number of Caldecott Awards given to date is 321. One of the most well-known and referenced children’s book awards concentrates on pictures rather than text. The book’s message is discounted. Crabb and Marciano (2011) and Taylor (2009) described the power of pictures in children’s books, in that the message is sent through the pictures and not the text alone. Indeed, there are many “wordless picture books” on the market, including five Caldecott Award Winners (more if the Caldecott Honor Winners are counted).

Awarding-winning children’s books are a subset of the all children’s books available. Preschool classroom libraries can include award-winning books, but may also include a variety of other books. These classroom libraries often include donated books of many shapes and forms: *Little Golden* books (the popular series often found at grocery stores and drug stores), classics, borrowed books from the school or public library, books from teachers’ own collections, as well as other books that are not necessarily award-winning books. In addition, young children often bring books from home for the teacher to read in class. It is unlikely, given the large number of picture books available, of which so few have won awards, which preschool teachers select only award-winning books for reading aloud in their classrooms.

Although earlier researchers discussed the frequency with which teachers read aloud in the classroom (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000), the use of informational

text read-aloud books (Pentimonti, Zucker, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010), or the advantages of read-aloud discussions to children (Hoffman, 2011), only a few have discussed book selection (Morgan, 2009; Rajput, 2009). Those who did limited the discussion to choice of informational or narrative books, or how to choose books to assist with vocabulary development or to assist in comprehension. However, the study of the representation of girls and women in picture books has been confined to award-winning titles and has not included the everyday picture books that teachers read aloud in the classroom. Although both foci are worthy of research, in this study I addressed the gap in the literature related to examining the portrayal of girls and women in picture books that teachers report having read to preschool children.

Problem Statement

Researchers (Hamilton et al., 2006; Shachar, 2012; Taylor, 2009; Weitzman et al., 1972) have confirmed that girls and women are not portrayed in realistic ways in picture books available for reading aloud in the preschool classroom. Because female characters in children's picture books have been found to be portrayed in gender stereotypical ways, girls' views of whom and what they can become may be skewed. In addition, because girls and women have been found to be absent or minimally represented in picture books, young girls and young boys may believe that expectations and potential are different for girls than for boys. A gap in the current literature arose because no researchers have indicated what teachers read aloud to preschoolers in their classrooms. The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to girls and women in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom. This

study contributes to the existing body of knowledge needed to address the problem of limited portrayal of female characters by identifying and analyzing children's picture books that are read aloud to preschoolers in the classroom.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to girls and women in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom. I collected picture book titles from logs of books read over a 2-week period, provided to me by preschool teachers working in a major city in the northeastern United States. I analyzed a random sample of these books to discern the portrayal of girls and women.

Research Question

A single question guided this study: In what roles are girls and women portrayed in books selected by preschool teachers to read aloud to their classes? Previous scholars suggested that female characters are absent from many picture books and that, in books where they are present, they often inhabit a limited range of roles.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from the work of Gilligan (1982) and the work of Jung (1959). Jung provided archetypal roles that form the foundation for the analysis of how girls and women are portrayed in the picture books used in this study. Gilligan described moral reasoning and decision making. Gilligan worked with and was influenced by the work of Erikson (1959), often associated with the term *identity crisis*. Gilligan also worked as a research assistant for Kohlberg (1981).

Gilligan noticed that women were not represented in Kohlberg's research because Kohlberg's participants were all White men. Kohlberg (1981, 1989) believed women were deficient in moral reasoning. Gilligan took issue with Kohlberg's focus on justice as the basis for morality, believing that women were not deficient in moral thinking but used an ethic of caring, rather than justice, as the basis for moral decision making. Gilligan believed women view moral problems in a different way than did Kohlberg's men. Gilligan discussed the voice of girls and women through the exploration of relationships (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), social pressures (Gilligan, Lyons, Hanmer, & Bardige, 1990), resistance (Gilligan, 2011), and development (Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). Gilligan (1982) stressed the understanding of self and the vulnerability of young girls at the crossroads between adolescence and adulthood. Without understanding themselves, Gilligan believed girls may feel they need to limit themselves, stop asking questions, and conform to a role or image that is not necessarily true to them (Taylor et al., 1995). Gilligan (year) found that females often came to moral decisions in different ways and for different reasons than their male counterparts, bringing "a different voice" (p. 2) to the topic and to other discussions as well. This absence of female voice, revealed in Gilligan's research, led me to believe that children's literature may also lack the female voice and also may portray girls and women in limiting ways.

Jung (1938, 1959) founded analytical psychology (also referred to as Jungian psychology), the concepts of extraversion and introversion, and the notion of archetypes in the collective unconscious. An archetype, according to Jung (1959), can be an image, pattern, or character seen consistently throughout literature and generally recognizable

and acknowledged by its name, picture, or description (pp. 4–5). Jung (1959) explained that archetypes are inherited tendencies or patterns seen throughout the world, regardless of place or time. Archetypes can be in the form of a human, animal, or object. For example, a story that appeared in Asia hundreds of years ago can have characters such as the wise woman, the hero, the jester, and the rebel that are recognizable across the world and in the United States, where similar characters appear in other stories. The portrayal of these humans, animals, or objects is similar across time and space. Although the number of archetypes is unlimited, Jung (1959) identified 12 main patterns: the innocent, the orphan, the hero, the caregiver, the explorer, the rebel, the lover, the creator, the jester, the sage, the magician, and the ruler. The power of such archetypes, buried in humans' unconscious thinking and portrayed in the books children hear and read, connect what listeners understand about heroes and rebels and other archetypes and direct their thinking about people in their own lives, including about themselves (Jung, 1959).

Archetypes reach beyond the bounds of culture, and are universal to all human beings, because they are included in the collective unconscious that is part of the human species (Jung, 1959). This contrasts with the notion of gender stereotypes, which are particular to specific social groups and eras (Taylor, 2009). Previous studies on the roles of females in children's literature used gender stereotypes as their basis (Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Weitzman et al., 1972). Many also used gender role stereotypes to gauge characters in children's literature (Crisp & Hiller, 2011a; McCabe et al., 2011; Ruterana, 2012). Few scholars discussed archetypes in children's literature. Mills, Pankake, and Schall (2010) used only four archetypes to guide their

analysis (great mother, wise old man, hero, and trickster). Although Mills et al. argued for a trend toward more female heroes with strong leadership traits, their use of only four archetypes, three of which are positive or heroic, suggests a limitation to the validity of their work.

I focused on 12 of Jung's (1959) archetypes to analyze how girls and women were portrayed in the books read aloud in preschool classrooms. I chose the use of archetypes, rather than gender role stereotypes, to analyze the portrayal of females in current literature because stereotypes are limited to specific social or cultural contexts, whereas archetypes are universal and inherited. Further explanation of these archetypes will be presented in the discussion of methodology in Chapter 3. To further illustrate the connection between Gilligan and Jung in the study, Figure 1 shows how picture books are the nexus between theorists and children's understandings of the roles of females.

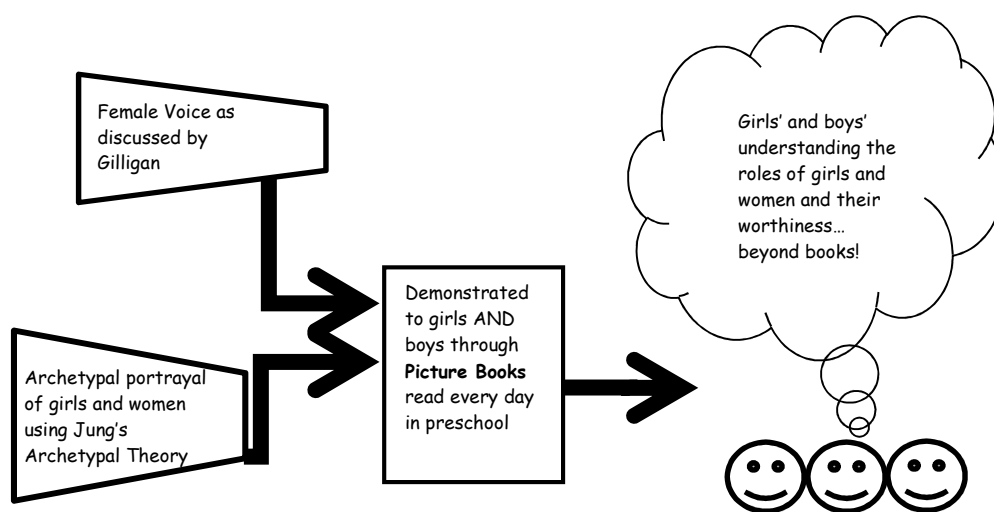


Figure 1. Picture books link conceptual framework to children's understandings

The Nature of Study

Because the purpose of this study was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to girls and women in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom, a content analysis of the text and illustrations was a logical choice for a research design. According to Mayring (2000), content analysis is an approach that can be used, unobtrusively, across disciplines when searching for meaning within write text and, as in this case, illustrations. The research study met Mayring's components of being worthy of content analysis for the following reasons:

- The text and illustrations are already in a model of communication. Each picture book analyzed for the portrayal of girls and women met this criterion.
- The rules of analysis are systematic, step by step, thereby forming the information into conceptual units. Any information found in the picture books relating to the portrayal of girls and women was recorded and coded following an established protocol.
- The data were coded according to theme. The themes, in this study, were the categories that were used were archetypal roles (Appendix E), as established by Jung (1959).

The study was guided by the analysis of the archetypal portrayal of female characters in the sample of picture books. I examined the text and illustrations in picture books selected from the list of titles read by preschool teachers to children in their

classrooms. The basic premise of content analysis was to examine the chosen documents for latent and manifest themes (Berg, 2011; Mayring, 2000; Taylor, 2009).

The books came from a selected sample of fiction picture books that 13 preschool teachers chose to read aloud to 3- to 5-year-old children over a 2-week period in three preschools and child care centers in a major city in the northeastern United States. I determined the archetypal role each female character portrayed using the Character Critique Tool designed by Madsen (2012). I analyzed the resulting data to determine which archetypal roles were portrayed by the female characters.

Definitions

The following terms are defined operationally as they are used in the study.

Archetype: A term used to refer to a pattern, model, paradigm, or motif in literature which occurs universally in the form of characters, situations, or symbols (Frye, 1951).

Female voice: The point of view of girls and women (Gilligan, 1982).

Gender bias: In literature, recognized as at a disadvantage based solely on being female (Murthi, Guio, & Dreze (1995).

Gender role stereotype: Believing that differential outcomes in life for women and men are due to natural or innate differences (particularly differences related to biology) rather than the processes of socialization and social forces (Taylor, 2009).

Portrayal: For the purpose of this study, portrayal referred to how the females in picture books are characterized as a specific Jungian archetype.

Representation: For the purpose of this study, representation referred to how often female characters appear in picture books, in text, or in pictures.

Role model: Adults or peers to whom children or adolescents relate and who set norms of behavior and achievement to which young people aspire (Haveman & Wolfe, 1995, p. 1834).

Sexualization: When the worth of an individual is reduced to the person's value as a sexual object to be admired by others, they are sexualized and, subsequently, devalued (Choate & Curry, 2009).

Stereotype: When characteristics of a few are assumed to be characteristics of all (Rajput, 2009).

Assumptions

This study depended on certain assumptions. I assumed first that the teachers were honest when completing the log of books they have read aloud to their preschoolers. My second assumption was that participating teachers read books aloud to children at least once a day so their logs of titles read offered a wide range of literary material. I also assumed that these books were primarily story books that presented fictional tales of people or anthropomorphic animals or machines and not primarily works of nonfiction. In addition, I assumed that the books read by teachers during the period of this study were representative of the books they read on a daily basis.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was comprised of each teacher's unique 2-week read-aloud book log. If this study were implemented during another 2-week period, teachers

would most likely have read different books. Multiple factors may have influenced teachers' book choices, including current events, holidays, thematic units, and children's own book preferences. Teachers may have read aloud to the entire class and also may have read aloud to individual children or small groups of children. I included in this study all the books included on each teacher's book log that were works of fiction (including original picture books, folk tales, and retelling of film or television scripts) and excluded books that were nonfiction, concept books (e.g., books of shapes, colors, ABC books, counting books, and the like), chapter books, and books of poetry.

Data recorded included textual references to female characters, dialogue with or about female characters, implied presence of female characters not explicitly depicted, and illustrations of female characters. Animals and machines that were referenced using female pronouns or typically female proper names or are depicted wearing stereotypical female attire or cosmetics (reddened lips or cheeks or exaggerated eyelashes) were included among the data as if they were human female characters.

Limitations

This study was limited to a population of only preschool teachers within three urban, private, and public preschools in the northeast area of the United States. This study was limited to schools I was able to access in the timeframe of this research study. Finally, this study was limited to fiction books read to children within a 2-week period and may have been affected by outside events that influenced the number of books read and the sort of books chosen.

Significance

Children's literature as a whole, and the question of gender in this literature, is appropriate to the field of early childhood education because children learn what is socially acceptable or expected for their sex through the literature that is made available to them (Chukhray, 2010; Crisp & Hiller, 2011b; McCabe et al., 2011; Rajput, 2009; Shachar, 2012; Taylor, 2009). Because books teach children about themselves and their place in the world, examining the picture books that are read aloud to preschoolers may offer insight into how girls and boys develop notions of the salience of females as central literary characters, how they determine the appropriateness of social roles for females, and how gender roles are perpetuated or informed by the books teachers read.

Summary

The power and value of children's books derives from the fact that children can learn a great deal about themselves and others through this medium (Taylor, 2009). Historically, children's books have portrayed girls and women in more limited numbers and roles than boys and men (Paynter, 2011), and gender bias in children's literature has been studied in waves consistent with continued resurgence of women's rights and under the broader umbrella of civil rights (McCabe et al., 2011). Some progress reduced gender bias in children's literature since the Weitzman et al. (1972) study, particularly in picture books that are awarded the Caldecott Medal. The question remains, however, about the portrayal of girls and women in those books that teachers read aloud to children every day, most of which are not award winners. This is the gap in the literature this research study addressed.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation provided a description of the problem that drove this study. Chapter 2 will follow with the discussion of current research in children's literature, focusing on the portrayal of females in these books, as well as the effects their characterizations can have on girls' and boys' views of girls and women. The methodology chosen for this study will be presented in Chapter 3. This will be followed by the results of the study in Chapter 4, concluding with social change implications and suggestions for further research in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to girls and women in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom. Although there is an abundance of literature focused on gender bias in award-winning children's books, few researchers have assessed how girls and women are portrayed in the sorts of books preschool teachers read aloud every day.

Chapter 2 begins with the strategies used to search the literature, and when limited results occurred, how the search was expanded. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the conceptual framework of Gilligan and Jung, and their place in the research study; the power of children's literature to the development of young children; the importance of picture books in the preschool curriculum; and how girls and women are portrayed in picture books historically and currently through the discussion of themes and trends. Finally, I discuss how girls and women are portrayed in current read-aloud picture-book selections, ending in the nexus of these themes and trends in the archetypes designed by Jung (1959).

An examination of current literature led to the discovery that although gender bias and gender role stereotypes in children's literature continue to be researched, and some progress has been made in these areas, girls and women continue to be represented less often than boys and men, or are not represented, and the portrayal of girls and women is limited to gender role stereotypes. Additionally, the portrayal of girls and women limits the view of girls and women seen by both girl and boy readers. This chapter will

conclude with a summary of the current literature and an introduction to the methodology that will be employed in Chapter 3.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search began with reference sections of books and articles that pertain to gender bias in children's literature. I chose to use the Walden University Library as a primary resource to locate peer-reviewed articles, electronic dissertations, and chapters of textbooks. ERIC, Academic Search Complete, and Education Research Complete were the primary search engines used. Walden University librarians assisted in locating other resources beyond the Walden library. Google Scholar.com was also used to review electronic articles, studies, early childhood education syllabi, and dissertations. The Wellesley Centers for Women's Research Department also offered helpful suggestions in the search for gender-balanced children's books lists.

Words used in the search included *gender bias, sex roles, gender and children's literature, girls and children's literature, gender equity, female role models and role models in children's literature, characterization of girls, and representation of girls*. An expansion of the search to focus on read-aloud selections led to limited research on teacher guidelines in the selection of read-aloud books for the classroom, and when found, research focused on read-aloud process, special needs children, and vocabulary. A continuation of the search included voice, point of view, book heroines, stereotypes, and read-aloud stories. Exploration of girls' empowerment programs, girl activism, and women's studies programs led to details in support of the need for such programs. In efforts to trace the lack of reading selection guidelines for children's literature, an

appointment with a Walden Library Research Specialist led to a search of Early Childhood Education syllabi, and syllabi from courses in children's literature syllabi.

Periodic searches continued throughout this study and still no current research was found on picture books being read in preschool classrooms. Walden Librarians offered search guidelines, and these searches continued to reveal only replications of past studies examining award-winning, popular, or randomly selected picture books. Hollis-Sawyer and Cuevas (2013) reviewed children's books for sexism; however, the study was linked with ageism and the books examined were not taken from classrooms.

The Conceptual Framework

The current, peer-reviewed literature pertaining to the portrayal of girls and women within children's literature and the work of Gilligan was the foundation for this literature review including read aloud picture books within the preschool classroom. The foundation for Gilligan's (1982) work with girls and women is based on the concept of voice, but not based in the physiology of voice, but discussed as related to females of all ages finding the courage and confidence to voice their opinions honestly. Gilligan found that young girls would often hesitate when asked questions, offering "I don't know" or struggling with "I mean" because it was safer to say that than to say what they were actually feeling, thinking, or believing. The possibility that their opinion would differ from their peers, romantic partners, or, in their eyes, be thought of as wrong was not worth speaking up about. It was easier or at least seemed less painful to remain silent. This can create an internal struggle for the girl, a struggle between her own true voice and possibly keeping her relationships (Gilligan, 2011) and increased feelings of isolation.

Gilligan (year) also discussed another barrier for girls when struggling with finding the confidence to see value in their own voice, and this barrier came from the convention of feminine goodness. The age old ideal that girls need to be quiet, behave, and act like ladies causes conflict within girls whose thoughts and beliefs may not conform to the status quo (Gilligan, 1990, 2011). This marginalization of girls and women can create turmoil for a girl who has feelings, interests, and beliefs that would be considered atypical to those that society has outlined for her.

Gilligan's (1982) theory about girls and voice was the basis for this literature review. Sharing Gilligan's vision of voice for girls and women and finding that voice within children's literature and offering book selections that reach beyond traditional gender bound guidelines can assist girls in their individual development and self-esteem. Vandergrift (year) discussed the importance of offering children book selections which included female characters that denied the traditional gender role stereotyping of girls and women, revealing to girls there is more than one path to becoming a woman; they have many choices, and they are not as limited as many traditional books often present them. Gilligan's theory about giving voice to women offers girls role models to assist in building their confidence, the development of their true identity, and the development of their positive self-esteem. Because girls continue to be in crisis, as discussed in Chapter 1, and gender balance has not been met, the need for positive female role models in life and in literature is still an issue (Houdyshell & Martin, 2010; Ruterana, 2010; Taylor, 2009; Verden & Hickman, 2009).

The work of Jung (1959) as it pertains to archetypal roles was foundational to the study due to the lack of historical or current research assigning archetypal roles to female (or male characters) in children's literature, except for the work by Mills et al.(2011), which was limited to using only four archetypes to assign to female characters in children's literature. Because there is little research focusing on what teachers are actually reading in the classrooms, determining what archetypal roles are portrayed by females in children's books can offer teachers and parents insight into how to affirm these roles or expand upon the books through discussion about such books as needed. These two theorists provide the conceptual framework for this research study. In addition to Gilligan, the use of Jung's (1938, 1943, 1959) archetypes was employed as an analytical tool to measure how girls and women are portrayed in the picture book selections specified in the research study.

Children's Books

Children's Books as a Teaching Tool

Taylor (2009) argued that language has the power to shape the values of young children. Books, especially in the form of pictures books for young children, reflect reality to children. Through these images and text children try to understand the world and their place within it (Crabb & Marciano, 2011; Taylor, 2009). Because young children have such limited life experiences, media help shape their gendered identities, which, according to Taylor (2009), is "the most basic dimension through which children perceives their social world and their place in it" (p. 308).

Children's literature offers guidelines for children's behavior through gender representation. Through picture books, children can hear and see what girls do and what boys do, basically what is acceptable for either gender, therefore teaching gender roles (Nair & Rosli, 2013). Vandergrift (1995) expanded on the knowledge of this power of children's literature by focusing on children's books that include female characters beyond the traditional gender role stereotypes often found in classic children's books, revealing a *voice* for these characters and argued that picture books were a place to start teaching girls to use their voice to express themselves authentically.

Rajput (2009), Shachar (2012), and Taylor (2009) echoed the importance of children's books in a child's development, confirming the value of children's books as vehicles to learn more about ourselves and others. As Rajput suggested, "mirrors and windows—books can be both" (p. 63). Just as Rajput argued the need for both mirrors and windows in everyday lives, books can help children see into themselves to help with the development of their own identities, as well as being able to see others and what their lives are like. Books, as simple tools, can provide clarity for children to find out that others often feel the way they do and offer a diverse glimpse into the lives, families, and world of others. The books selected by teachers and parents can confirm the value of their own individuality and development or limit their growth in these areas (Madsen, 2012; Rajput, 2009; Taylor, 2009). The books read to children can help them find their authentic voice, reach their true potential, or limit children within their world. When books provide characters children can see themselves in, they can reflect on these characters, feel less alone when unsure about things they are going through, and help

construct their self-identity (Taylor, 2009). Including only classic books selections to read to children can limit children because of the amount of gender bias found in these versions (Rajput, 2009; Taylor, 2009); however, reading these classics with discussion about the representation of girls and women can heighten critical thinking skills and teach children, boys and girls, how to discern what may be contradictory in the stories and information they hear, gather, and collect.

The Power and Value of Children's Picture Books

Language has the power to shape the values of young children (Taylor, 2009). Books, especially in the form of pictures books for young children, reflect reality to children. Through images and text, children try to understand the world and their place in it (Crabb & Marciano, 2011; Taylor, 2009). Because young children have such limited life experiences, media help shape their gendered identities, which is “the most basic dimension through which children perceives their social world and their place in it” (Taylor, 2009, p. 308).

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The Importance of Picture Books in the Preschool Curriculum

Children's books are a significant part of a child's growth and development (Madsen, 2012; Taylor, 2009). For preschool children who have not yet learned to read, this connection is made through the frequent reading of children's books in the classroom and home. In picture books, illustrations are as important as the text, giving children visual clues to process the story (Crabb & Marciano, 2011). The experience of being read to can offer children a chance to experience different concepts at a level they can understand, from information books about science or weather, to stories about families (*A Tale of Two Mommies* by Oelschlager & Blanc, 2011), crises (*When a Pet Dies*, Rogers, 1998), or learning something new (*The Berenstain Bears Learn about Strangers*, Berenstain & Berenstain, 1985). This expansion of their world can be used as an opportunity for teachers and parents to assist children in sorting out a complicated and ever-changing world (Madsen, 2012; Taylor, 2009; Verden & Hickman, 2009). Reading aloud also gives teachers and parents opportunities to talk about social issues that may be difficult to discuss (Lesnik-Oberstein, 2013; Meller, Richardson, & Hatch, 2009). Eve Bunting offered book selections about homelessness (*Fly Away Home*, 1993), war (*The Wall*, 1992), and language barriers and love in families (*A Day's Work*, 1997). Counterproductively, depending on the book selections, books can also limit a child's world, imposing limitations through fear or stereotypes.

In the read-aloud process, teachers can use questions, predictions, discussion, reflection, and follow-through activities to assist in learning and processing what has been read (Verden & Hickman, 2009). Reading aloud also offers teachers an opportunity

to teach students to look at traditional tales through a new lens (Rajput, 2009; Taylor, 2009), offering questions about what princesses can look like, do all families look like this one, or can a girl be a firefighter, to name a few. The discussions that accompany read-aloud story time offer teachers a way to keep traditional books, especially in a limited classroom or school library, but discuss them in an updated way to which children in that classroom can relate (Verden & Hickman, 2009). These activities that expand the reading process also teach children critical-thinking skills when reading on their own (Collins, 2011; Morgan, 2009; O'Neil, 2010). The discussion of the importance of picture books leads to a discussion of what these books have looked like historically.

The Portrayal of Females Historically in Children's Literature

The Civil Rights Era brought women's rights to the forefront of discussion in the areas of politics, workplace, and opportunities (Duke & McCarthy, 2009). Women's inequality was mirrored in children's literature (Taylor, 2009). Girls and boys were portrayed in activities reflective of stereotypical roles: girls, neat and tidy, inside at tea parties or helping the stay-at-home mother with the dishes and boys outside, getting dirty and having adventures beyond the boundaries of home (Hamilton et al., 2006; Weitzman et al., 1972). For example, in the children's book *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine* (Ness, 1967), Sam (a woman? An age-mate girl?) sends a little boy off on adventures as she sits and watches from the window. Another example is Greene's (1961) *I Want to be a Homemaker*, which reveals only one career choice for girls. These were typical scenes in children's books when the Civil Rights Movement brought attention to the world that many people, specifically women, were not treated fairly. Although these books are over

40 years old now, classrooms often contain books that are outdated, and teachers and parents continue to buy books they remember from their own childhoods that may contain gender bias (Taylor, 2009). However, the idea of girls having limited roles and limited voices is still apparent in children's books today (Rajput, 2009). Rajput (2009) found that books were still being used that were specifically designed for girls or boys with stereotypical career paths for them such as airline hostess, teacher, or homemaker for girls, and airplane pilot, policeman, or doctor for boys. Children who are reading these books (or have them read to them) may believe that girls do not have a voice in what careers are available to them. If a girl does not believe she can be a doctor or scientist, that she does not have a voice in selecting her career, limitations are created. This can also encourage boys to believe that girls have limitations they do not have.

Weitzman et al. (1972) initiated many studies on gender-role stereotypes in children's books, primarily children's picture books. Weitzman et al. believed that children's literature is an important part of learning and learning to read, as well as a component to "developing [children's] own sexual identities" (1972, p. 1126). The researchers chose picture books as the main focus of their study because these books are geared toward the preschool-age child. In addition to picture books, some Newbery Award-winning books (chapter books) were also represented in the study. Although Newbery Award-winning books are not considered picture books, because they are geared toward the school age child, they do include some pictures. The books were primarily examined for the representation of female characters with respect to male characters (Weitzman et al., 1972).

Although Weitzman et al. (1972) chose frequency counts and further analysis of the characteristics found in the included books, they did not present a formal statement of their methodology. In fact, most of the data found in the study are listed in the article's footnotes, rather than as a main focus of the article itself. The omission of the discussion of the methodology is a criticism of this study described by Hamilton et al., who expanded on the study in 2006. Weitzman et al. found gender bias in three categories of books: the Caldecott award winners from 1967 to 1972, *Little Golden Books* that had sold over three million copies at the time of the study, and Newbery award winners from its inception in 1922. Whether it was characters, titles, pictures, animals, or central characters, girls and women were consistently underrepresented in the children's books. Girls and women were characterized in traditional stereotypical roles. In all categories, girls and women were shown in service roles more than were boys and men, girls and women were shown in fewer leadership positions than were boys and men, girls were rescued more often than were boys and men, and girls and women were seen indoors more often than were boys and men (Weitzman et al., 1973). Other studies followed (Kolbe & LaVoie, 1981; Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993; Turner-Bowker, 1996) with similar results. Although girls and women were seen a bit more frequently, the progress toward equitable representation was superficial.

Melnick (2002) questioned the female role models the author identified or was unable to find in the media, including children's literature. As a young teen, Melnick was puzzled by the limitations in female characters in children's literature. Melnick's curiosity led to later interview teenage girls about females in children's literature. The

study revealed that 66% of the teenage girls had found positive female role models in the books they were reading, however the girls surveyed sought books with female characters they could relate to or strive to be, confirming the power of children's literature. This connection between books and readers can be used as a vehicle to assist or hinder girls (and boys) through their developmental years. Furthermore, positive role models in children's literature can assist girls on their life's journey, even amid larger, louder, and sometimes more inviting media (Melnick, 2002).

Hamilton et al. (2006) found that gender bias continues, with titles focused on boys published twice as frequently as titles focused on girls. Subtle sexism also occurs in the form of occupational stereotypes (Hamilton et al., 2006), with women rarely portrayed with a professional job, whereas men usually were portrayed in that way. Hamilton et al. analyzed 200 popular children's books and found that females were represented almost 50% less frequently than their male counterparts in children's books' titles, main characters, and pictures.

The Use of Gender Stereotypes vs. Jungian Archetypes

The use of gender bias to guide research in children's literature is prevalent, utilizing gender stereotypes as a frame of reference, continuing to find girls and women portrayed in traditional roles. Utilizing gender stereotypes to analyze female roles in children's literature is limited to geographic location, culture, society, time, and often, politics. Jungian archetypes reach beyond time and location, with a more universal framework (Jung, 1959). According to Campbell and Moyers (2011), there are different categories of archetypes, such as ideas, symbols, images, dreams, and character types.

For the purpose of this research study, the archetypes discussed were limited to those related to character types.

The use of archetypes to examine female characters in children's literature is minimal. Mills, Pankake, and Schall (2011) used four Jungian archetypes to analyze female characters in children's literature: the great, good mother, wise old man, hero, and trickster. This methodological approach using only four archetypes may be limiting, obliging the researcher to force characters into one of these four archetypes simply because no other choices were available. The use of 12 common Jungian archetypes offered the opportunity to examine these female characters in children's literature on a more universal level.

The Representation and Portrayal of Females in Current Children's Literature

Current research suggests that gender bias is still apparent in children's literature (Madsen, 2012; Rajput, 2009; Taylor, 2009), although gender was not always the main focus of these studies. Researchers often analyzed children's books through a multicultural lens (Lesnik-Oberstein, 2013; Madsen, 2012; Morgan, 2009; Pentimonti et al., 2011); searching for themes of diversity and inclusion in children's books, with gender a component of those underrepresented populations. Other researchers replicated or expanded earlier studies of gender bias in children's literature (Rajput, 2009; Taylor, 2009) and although minimal progress was found, gender bias continued.

Where Weitzman et al. (1972) revealed that a theme of female invisibility was woven throughout children's books, Taylor (2009) confirmed this finding of invisibility, and added the notion that children cannot hear from female characters if they are not

included. Taylor (2009) focused on children's book series that were familiar to a college-student population. The students were all familiar with Disney books and the *Berenstain Bears* book series. Students' analysis of these books revealed what many thought were inaccuracies: that girls were frequently portrayed as pristine (Disney's *Cinderella*, 2005, and other princess books), boys were frequently portrayed as badly behaved (Disney's *Peter Pan*, 2007), mothers were frequently portrayed as housewives engaged in cooking or cleaning (both Disney and the *Berenstain Bears* series), and the adventures frequently seemed to happen to the male characters (Disney's *Jungle Book* (2003), Disney's *Peter Pan* (2007), and Disney's *Lady and the Tramp*, (1997) but not to female characters. Female characters were almost always depicted as shorter than male characters (Taylor, 2009).

Girls were seen as meek and mild (Taylor, 2009), suggesting that girls do not voice their opinions. Miskec (2009) found the "good girl" theme throughout children's literature. Taber and Woloshyn (2011) used critical discourse analysis to examine award-winning books and found authors presented girls and women as beautiful and passive, whereas boys were seen as heroic and active. Girls and women were so limited in representation and characterization that girls would believe that they were only allowed to watch activities, not participate in them. They were seen as voiceless to the reader (Taber & Woloshyn, 2011).

When the focus of female voice was found in research, studies continued to center on award-winning or best-selling books, rather than books that were currently read to young children, and no research specifically isolated the female voice in children's

literature. Although little recent research was found that focused on heroines in currently read picture books, heroines in Newbery books were characterized in a limited, passive way, suggesting that girls may see themselves as only spectators of activities rather than participants (Houdyshell & Martin, 2010). The female characters in these books are not seen as main characters, do not possess assertive personalities, and are not encouraged to explore the world around them.

Lastly, historical or current research directly related to examining what teachers are actually reading in the classroom as everyday practice is limited to genres of books read (Pentimonti, Zucker, & Justice, 2011), rather than content, let alone the discussion of female portrayal in those books. This study did confirm that narrative books were read most often, supporting the need for further research to examine the female characters in these narratives. Further searches for read aloud book selections offered discussion of the benefits of the combination of reading aloud and discussion (Worthy, Chamberlain, Peterson, Sharp, & Shih, 2012), yet ignored the issue of book selection. When searching for criteria for book selection, studies were found about the value of children self-selecting books (Allington & Gabriel, 2012; Reynolds, 2013), but the discussion of everyday practice in the classroom pertaining to what books are actually being read to children is non-existent.

The Selection of Children's Books for Read Aloud to Preschoolers

Limited research is available on read-aloud children's literature selections at the early childhood level. I found no specific guidelines for read-aloud book selections, although many authors expressed support for read-aloud time (Meller et al., 2009;

Morgan, 2009; Verden & Hickman, 2009). Some research focused on guidelines for book selection when reading to children with emotional or behavioral issues (Verden & Hickman, 2009). These suggestions included making child-focused selections, knowing the students' interests, and finding books that will assist with them to stay focused and enthusiastic about read-aloud sessions. Other suggestions included giving students opportunities to select books for the teacher to read during story time; teachers selecting books they have read and enjoyed so they can pass along their enthusiasm; including chapter books for read-aloud purposes so time can be set aside for a chapter per read-aloud period; if students are interested in a certain topics, series books build enthusiasm; and similar books in the same genre may keep their interest (Verden & Hickman, 2009, p. 6). Although these guidelines suggest ways to select read-aloud books, the authors made little reference to content and how characters are represented and characterized in the books selected. Researchers consistently valued and supported read-aloud practices (Meller et al., 2009; Morgan, 2009; Verden & Hickman, 2009), although the support was not focused on gender, role models, or sex-role stereotyping.

Although acknowledgement of the book-selection process was limited in the read-aloud research studies reviewed, the common theme about the importance of developing critical-thinking skills through the read-aloud process was clear. Many studies stressed the importance of reading aloud linked to the development of critical-thinking and critical-reading skills, because reading aloud to children offers opportunities for discussion, prediction, and reflection about the content of the book and how it relates to the child's own life (Bullen, 2009; Meller et al., 2009; Morgan, 2009; Thompson, 2010).

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2 I began with a discussion about the literature search involved in discovering current literature on the portrayal of girls and women in children's literature. The discussion of the power of children's literature as part of children's development followed, including a discussion of how children's literature can assist children to better understand themselves, as well as how they can process the world around them. By learning about the differences and similarities in each of us, children can begin to understand diversity. Discussion included how females and the voices of females, fit historically in children's literature and the minimal progress made in current children's literature. A short presentation followed about the minimal amount of research that focuses on read-aloud selections of teachers, primarily focusing on preschool teachers.

The discussion of book selection and lack of guidelines or criteria for read-aloud book selections led to the discussion of the power behind the book selections preschool teachers make, as well as the books teachers choose not to select and read aloud in the classroom. With minimal research available on read-aloud book-selection guidelines for preschool teachers, current preschool teachers were asked about their read-aloud book-selections guidelines; these informal anecdotal responses were added in the form of a narrative. Chapter 2 ends with a discussion of the proposed current study, how it relates to the conceptual framework of Gilligan and Jung, and how this research study addressed a gap in the current literature. A discussion of how this study relates to previous studies on the portrayal of girls and women in current children's literature followed. In Chapter 1 I describe the methodology used in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to girls and women in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom. Although scholars have focused on award-winning children's books, minimal peer-reviewed research have been conducted on how girls and women are portrayed in picture books read aloud to children by preschool teachers.

This chapter begins with a restating of the research question and the selection of the qualitative research design and rationale. This will be followed by discussion of my role as the researcher and methodology. The chapter will end with issues of trustworthiness and a summary.

Research Question

In what archetypal roles are girls and women portrayed in books selected by preschool teachers to read aloud to their classes?

Research Design and Rationale

Content analysis, according to Berg (2011), and confirmed by Taylor (2009), is a process of collecting and analyzing data using a coding scheme. Artifacts that can be examined are documents, books, music lyrics, television programs, or other forms of social communication. Children's books have also been used to analyze content. To analyze the content of artifacts, researchers need to examine for themes which are manifest, latent, or both. Berg, Mayring (2000), and Taylor concurred that examining for both manifest and latent themes provides a depth of data. When performing content analysis, researchers must begin by reading the text without a critical lens. A second

reading of the text is for a more critical purpose, generally looking for themes, point of view, and use of pictures, topic sentences, and dialogue. The third reading is used to look at the minute details of text, and in some cases, pictures, to examine the meaning behind the choice of certain words or pictures.

This three-read design mirrors the instrument created by Madsen (2012). The books chosen were read once through with no objective in mind. They were read a second time to examine the female characters and female pictures. The last reading was used to assign each female character a Jungian archetype (Jung, 1959). I chose content analysis as a way to understand the messages sent to girls and women through picture book texts and pictures and through what text and pictures are missing. Critical discourse analysis was considered as a method; however, it was discarded because this method usually focuses on the comparing of two or more populations, revealing an imbalance of power. In this study, I focused on the portrayal of girls and women in picture books and there was no intention to complete a similar analysis of male characters in these books and find balance or imbalance of power (however, that is a possibility for future research). Document analysis was also considered and discarded due to the same limitations (Bowen, 2009). Although some scholars used content analysis, none were focused on gender bias in children's literature, Jungian archetypes, or read-aloud picture books.

Setting

The setting from which picture books were gathered was comprised of three independent child care centers in a large, northeastern urban area in the United States.

One was affiliated with a governmental institution, one operated in a church building, and one was part of the public school system. All of the centers served community families. All three centers had at least one classroom with 3- to 5-year-old children. I chose these three child care centers primarily for convenience and accessibility. I have a professional relationship with the directors of the three child care centers. I had no professional or personal relationship with any of the teachers in the three sites. Each of these three centers was licensed through the local department of health, which means that their head teachers met the standards necessary to lead a class.

Center A was a large child care center with 10 preschool (3 through 5 years) classrooms in its two sites. The children all attended full-day sessions at this center. This study included teachers from all 10 classrooms at the center.

Center B was a small child care center with the capacity for 39 children aged 3 through 5 years. The center had two classrooms, each with morning and afternoon sessions. The two teachers at this center provided logs of their book choices for their classes, for a total of two classroom settings for this research study.

Center C was a small child care center with the capacity of 25 children aged 2 through 5 years. The center had two classrooms, one of which was for 3- to 5-year-old children. The teacher in the preschool classroom (aged 3 through 5) participated in this research study; therefore, only one teacher from this center was included in this research study.

The Role of the Researcher

I was the sole researcher. As an early childhood educator for over 30 years, I understand the preschool classroom and the rigors of being a preschool teacher. This understanding provided me with a respect for the teacher participants, knowing this added one more task to their already busy schedules. I made their participation as simple as possible in order to not burden the teachers with additional paperwork.

Center A was a large child care center directed by colleagues. The director and I participated in an early childhood coalition group in our centers' neighborhood that met several times a year. Although I knew this director professionally, we had no personal relationship, and she knew little about my research endeavors. I did not know any of the teachers, either professionally or personally.

Center B was a small center in a church building managed by a religious organization where a friend was the executive director. I met the child care director two or three times, and we did not have a personal relationship. I had never met either of the two lead teachers in this center.

Center C was the smallest center, with only 25 children total. I was the director of this center approximately 20 years before the time of this study. A former assistant teacher there advanced to the director's position and is still a friend, although the director knew minimal information about my research endeavors. The teacher of this preschool classroom (the other classroom is for children under 3 years of age) was teaching when I was the director of this center; however, the teacher and I had no personal or professional relationship.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Participants in the study were partitioned into two sets: the teachers keeping the logs and the books themselves. The teacher participants were chosen using purposeful sampling, which, according to Simon (2006), “will allow for the most insightful data collection in answering a particular question or exploration” (p. 98). To discover what books preschool teachers read aloud, teacher participants met the following requirements:

- Employed as a preschool teacher in a licensed child-care center.
- Meet the requirements of the Department of Health (licensing agency) for lead teacher in a preschool classroom. If the child care center is currently licensed, each lead teacher in that center meets the Department of Health requirements as either a certified teacher or study plan teacher, capable of leading the preschool class. Experienced and novice teachers may be included.
- In child care centers, administrators interested in participating in the study gave me access to meet with the teachers, explain the study, distribute read-aloud logs, and be available for questions about the procedure.

I contacted each director, shared the purpose of the research study and what it would entail, and shared the prepared documents. The documents included an introductory letter (see Appendix A), an implied consent form for teachers (see Appendix B), and a sample of the reading log (see Appendix C). This original contact was made by phone, with follow-up by e-mail so all attachments were available for the administrator to review. If

the administrator preferred, I offered a face-to-face meeting to discuss the documents; however, each director declined such a meeting. Each director contributed a letter of cooperation to participate in this research study.

The decision to limit the sample of books to 20 (and three books to test the tool) was based on my estimate of the length of time needed to review each book. Based on a practice review, I estimated that analysis of each book would take approximately 30 minutes to read three times through to complete the documentation (see Appendix D) and by selecting the archetypal roles assigned to each character (Appendix E).

Instrumentation

The analysis for this research study was guided by the research tool, the Female Archetypal Portrayal Discussion Form (see Appendix E), to determine how girls and women are portrayed in the selected picture books, and to assign each of these characters an archetypal role based on their characteristics. This tool was a modified version of a tool developed by Madsen (2012) who gave me permission to use it. Originally, Madsen created her tool to analyze children's books for diversity, using a multicultural lens. Using a 3-read method, Madsen read each book, determined lead characters, and assigned characteristics to those characters. Once characteristics were established, Madsen was able to use a self-created chart to distinguish diversity and, if it applied, whether characters were given traditional stereotypical roles based on age, race, religion, or gender. Using Madsen as a guide, I also employed the 3-read method, designated all female characters, and assigned characteristics to each female character. Following Madsen's protocol, I completed these steps:

1. The first read was to understand the general theme and plot of the story through the text.
2. The second read asks the reader to look more deeply at the portrayal of each character through text and illustrations. These characteristics were outlined in the scope of Jung's (1959) archetypal roles.
3. The third reading focused more deeply on the understanding of the plot of the picture book and the discussion of empowerment in the story (pp. 8–17).

Once characteristics were established they were used to designate how a character portrayal fits a particular archetype, using the 12 Archetypal Role Guidelines (Appendix E) to determine which archetype is most pronounced. The data collected from completing this section was then be compiled to reveal which Jungian archetypes were represented by the female characters in the literature examined.

Data Collection

I asked preschool teachers selected from the three child-care centers to keep a 2-week log of all the books they read aloud in the classroom during that time. There were 13 teachers keeping a total of 13 logs (Center A 10 classrooms, Center B two classrooms, and Center C one classroom). I assumed most preschool classrooms incorporate read-aloud story time several times each day; one book read aloud per day is the minimum recommendation of the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC; Koradek, 2014).

At the end of Week 1, I sent an e-mail to the administrator and the teachers reminding them of the logs and thanking them for their participation thus far. At the

conclusion of the 2-week period, teachers were asked to use the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided to mail their reading logs. The titles were compiled and the duplicate titles and titles of books that did not fit the eligibility criteria were discarded. Eligible books included those that are fiction picture books; excluded were books that were nonfiction, alphabet, number or other concept books, and chapter books. I assigned a number to each of the titles and using Research Randomizer (n.d.) on line. The total number of book titles was entered, followed by the sample number chosen and sample of 23 books was created. A list of these 23 books and their assigned numbers are available in the appendices (Appendix F). The first 20 titles were used for the research. Three additional titles were chosen for testing the tool. One copy of each title was obtained. All titles were available from a combination of sources: my personal children's book library, the child care center where I am currently the director, and from the library of parents of the children at my child care center.

Data Analysis Plan

The process of data analysis began by organizing the data retrieved from the 23 books. Excel was used to organize a master list of titles. Once the books were examined and reviews concluded, open-coding began. According to Berg (2011), coding takes place by reviewing data to, first, determine if any themes emerge, and secondly, in this case, to assign archetypal roles to each of the female characters analyzed in the picture books.

The data were analyzed through a content analysis lens. Content analysis offers researchers an opportunity to look for written words (and images) for overt and hidden

meanings (Taylor, 2009). In this study, I was searching the data for examples of characterization by descriptors of female characters, occupations, and dialogue (or lack of dialogue). This supports content analysis since Berg (2011) stated that content analysis is performed by a thorough review of the literature, followed by analysis for themes. In this case, the 3-read method by Madsen (2012), modified for this study, supported a thorough review of the literature.

From the 23 titles randomly selected from the teacher logs, I used the last three titles selected for use in testing analysis process. To do that, I read each of the three books three times, following the 3-read method. I completed the Female Archetypal Portrayal Discussion Form (see Appendix D) using the 12 Archetypal Role Guidelines From (see Appendix E) to determine which archetype correlates with each female character in each book. The data from this analysis was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

A peer reviewer read each of the three sample books and completed the archetypal assignment form for each of the same three books. I chose a colleague who has an education background and is interested in children's literature. She read each book and reviewed my reports on characteristics and archetypal assignment and then compared them to her results. The peer reviewer agreed with my analysis, and we both chose the same archetypes for each female character in these three books.

Following this test of the analysis method, I read and analyzed each of the remaining 20 books according to the same procedure. This process required three readings. I kept a record of the findings and recorded these data in an Excel spreadsheet.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The definition of validity in research is being able to answer the question: does the study measure what it intended to measure (Simon, 2006)? The intention of this research study was to measure how the reviewed picture books portray girls and women. This was accomplished through credibility (internal validity) and transferability (external validity).

Credibility can be established through the use of different strategies (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). For the purpose of this study, I employed reflexivity, the issue of self-awareness on behalf of the researcher. The study cannot be duplicated exactly; however, it can be replicated with another population, setting, or artifact choice. This study can serve as a model for other researchers to follow and can be extended to other grades, other school populations, other reading levels, or with males instead of females. The goal is for the study to yield the same results, regardless of the researcher.

Transferability or the concept that the results of this study can be generalized (Creswell, 2008) to other populations is limited. Another researcher could conduct this study in a different location, different setting, different time of year, or with a different age group and have completely different results. However, additional research similar to this study can be performed in other settings and age groups and a conclusion of those combined findings can be discussed, thereby applying “replication logic” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 256).

Dependability (the qualitative counterpart to reliability) was established through the use of direct examples taken from the picture books themselves so the reader can

understand fully my interpretation. Confirmability (the qualitative counterpart to objectivity), is the ability of the researcher to demonstrate that the conclusions found do not represent the view of the researcher; rather, the results represent the view of the collective participants (Creswell, 2008). In this research study, confirmability was accomplished through use of the peer reviewer, who confirmed, during the three-book testing phase, that my process conformed to the protocol and that my conclusions were reasonable and unbiased.

Ethical Procedures

The topic of ethics in research pertains to the treatment of participants and the behavior of the researcher. The identity of participants (teachers) was kept anonymous since no names of teachers or classrooms appeared anywhere on the reading logs. The schools where they are employed were kept confidential, with only the authorization letters of directors known by me, the sole researcher. In addition, participation in the research study was optional and participants were informed they could have left the study at any time. I completed an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application for Walden University, requesting permission to perform the study. The IRB application included detailed steps describing the research study and interaction with participants. Research did not begin until authorization from the IRB was received. In addition, participants had an opportunity to attend a meeting about the research study, review research materials such as the research questions, time commitments, and a copy of the researcher-prepared implied-consent form to make an informed decision before committing to participate in the research study.

I am a teacher and realize the time constraints and responsibilities of the position; I was respectful of teachers' time and effort. The read-aloud book logs were prepared for each teacher, with dates included so teachers only need to include the title of the books for each day. At a short meeting, at a time and day that was most convenient, in the time frame of the study, I explained the study. All follow up took place by e-mail communication. The implied-consent form reinforced the commitment on the part of the participant and researcher.

Summary

This chapter provided the rationale behind the research-design choices with detail on how this research study attempted to answer the research question posed concerning the portrayal of girls and women in current read-aloud selections in preschool classrooms. Appendices were provided and shared with participants. Further detail was included in the approved IRB submission #12-01-14-0055674. This chapter is followed by Chapter 4, which includes the results of this research study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to female characters in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom. One question drove this analysis: In what roles are females portrayed in books selected by preschool teachers to read aloud to their classes? In this chapter, I begin with a description of the setting and demographics of the child care centers whose preschool teachers participated in keeping logs of children's books read aloud for a 2-week period. Discussion of data collection and data analysis follow. Evidence of trustworthiness, first discussed in Chapter 3, will be revisited. The results of the study will then be shared, concluding with a summary of the chapter and transition to Chapter 5.

Setting

Teachers at three child care centers in a northern city in the eastern United States participated in this research study. The data were collected in December, 2014. Preschool teachers at Centers B and C completed their logs mid-December, a week before the centers closed for winter holidays. Preschool teachers from Center A, the largest center, completed their logs directly before closing for Christmas and New Year holidays. Although Christmas-themed books were included in the sample, they did not dominate the reading choices.

Demographics

All child care center teachers returned reading logs. Center A was the largest center in the study and is located in an area in the city that is designated as mostly low

income. All children at this center do not pay tuition, are included in the free meals program, and are in homes where English is a second language. Center B is located in another area of the same city; yet, has the same demographics of Center A, although is quite smaller. Center C is located in a more affluent area of the city, with most parents of the children working as professionals, English is the first language, and do not qualify for food assistance programs.

Data Collection

Nine of the teachers from three centers completed their reading logs, which included the titles of the picture books they read aloud for a 2-week period. The reading logs were returned to me upon completion. Because of the impending holidays, I waited 10 days to ensure all reading logs had adequate time to arrive before analyzing data. Once data analysis began, no further reading logs arrived.

I then compiled all of the reading logs into a master list and reviewed the titles before entering them into an Excel spreadsheet. The list was limited to fiction picture books included in the teachers' reading logs. If I found books that I questioned with regard to eligibility on this requirement, I read the publisher's description and product description on Amazon.com. All fiction books were recorded and duplicates were noted, but only listed one time in the sample. Each of the titles received a number. The final list contained 68 fiction picture book titles. I used a research web site (Research Randomizer, n.d.) to randomly select the 20 titles for my sample, plus three more for vetting the data analysis instrument. Only one title from the sample could not be determined and was replaced. *Babybug* was listed as a book read in one of the reading logs, but no author was

listed. Because *Babybug* is also a magazine-like book for infants, of whom many issues exist, this book was eliminated and an alternate was chosen. Once again, I chose this alternate book through the random sampling website (Research Randomizer, n.d.).

The titles *A Pocket for Corduroy* (Freeman, 1978) and *Llama, Llama, Holiday Drama* (Dewdney, 2010) did not have authors listed. I am familiar with the *Corduroy* books by Freeman. To confirm, I typed the title into Amazon.com and the first two books on the search were *A Pocket for Corduroy* and *Corduroy*. These titles were followed by other *Corduroy* titles in the series. I am also familiar with the *Llama, Llama* series by Dewdney and repeated the same process, finding *Llama, Llama, Holiday Drama* (Dewdney, 2010) and other books in the series.

The final list of 23 titles is presented in the form of an annotated bibliography in Appendix F: Annotated Bibliography of Picture Books Included in Analysis. Once the list was finalized, I started collecting the picture books. I used my personal children's books library as my first source, and when I exhausted my library, I reached out to the teachers at the child care center where I am the director so they could look in their classrooms. I also reached out to parents at this center. The last few book selections were purchased as e-books on Amazon.com.

Testing the Research Instrument

Once all the books were collected, I started the analysis on the three books chosen to test the instrument. Using the tool I modified from Madsen (2012; Appendix D), I read each of three books three times. The first read was to understand the storyline. The second read was to record all of the female characters and adjectives describing these

characters. Example selections from the books were also recorded. I also recorded observations about the pictures of these female characters. The last read-through was to assign a Jungian Archetype to each female character using the descriptions based on Jungian archetypal roles (Appendix E).

Once I read and analyzed all three books, I asked an outside reviewer to do the same. My outside reviewer was an educator at the center where I am the director. She has 10 years' experience working with young children. I provided her with each of the three books, as well as the appropriate forms from the appendices. Upon completion of her analysis, we met to compare our findings. We agreed completely on the number of female characters in the first book; however, when we started comparing archetypal choices, our choices did not match on the first two. I reviewed my notes and realized that I had become so familiar with the material and archetypes that I chose an archetype based solely on its name rather than how many of the descriptors accurately fit each female character. Upon analyzing a second time, I confirmed that my reviewer's choices in the first book were more accurate and embodied more of the descriptors of that archetype than my previous choice. We continued this process and came to an agreement on archetypes for all the female characters in each of three books.

The last part of the analysis was to answer the question about the illustrations and if the female characters were portrayed in a real way or in a stereotypical way. The outside reviewer and I agreed that two of the three books had pictures that were characterized as real. We both agreed the final book had pictures that seemed cartoonish and stereotypical.

Analysis of the Sample of 20 Picture Books

I then employed the same method by reading each of the 20 books three times and recording the information as designed in Appendix D. As I recorded descriptors for the female characters, I sometimes wrote down dialogue from each character to assist in choosing an archetype. I started to realize that many of the books had few female characters, sometimes none. I also realized that many of the female characters in each book did not have any dialogue. With this discovery in mind, I went back through the books I had already analyzed and added a notation of NV (nonverbal) next to each female character that did not speak. I continued the analysis until each of the 20 books was completed.

The next step in the analysis was to review the number of nonverbal female characters. A total of 72 of the 106 female characters were nonverbal (68%). I then reviewed dialogue of the verbal female characters and recorded all the dialogue. I then assigned each female character a Jungian archetype, guided by the descriptions of archetypes (Appendix F). Once each female character was assigned an archetype, I counted the female characters in each archetypal category. Once totals for each archetype were established, I analyzed each female character by archetype.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

This study measured what it intended to measure, specifically, answering the research question driving this study: In what archetypal roles are girls and women portrayed in books selected by preschool teachers to read aloud to their classes? This was

achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in the form of replication logic.

Credibility was achieved through reflexivity, that is, my self-awareness as the sole researcher. During the process of vetting the instrument, I became aware of my lack of objectivity when choosing archetypes based on their archetypal name alone. I believe this lack of objectivity stemmed from being too close to and familiar with the topic and material. Once I focused on using the descriptors for each archetype, and was not focused on the archetypal name alone, I was able to support each of my archetypal choices through descriptive data. This self-awareness helped guide the analysis of the books that were included in the 20-title sample.

Transferability, the concept that the results of this study can be generalized (Creswell, 2008), is possible since the study is based on a random sample of books read during a randomly-selected period, by typical preschool teachers to typical preschoolers; it is reasonable to imagine that the study is therefore generalizable to the population of fiction picture books read by teachers at other times and places. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), “naturalistic generalization” (p.256) applies here because this study can be replicated “on the basis of similarity” (p.256).

Dependability was established through the use of direct examples taken from the picture books. Confirmability (the qualitative counterpart to objectivity), was established by the use of an outside peer reviewer in the vetting process of the data analysis instrument. This step helped confirm the need to examine the archetype in terms of the

descriptors provided for each archetype. This process conformed to the protocol and led me to believe that my conclusions are reasonable and unbiased.

Research Results

This research study focused on examining picture books read aloud in preschool classrooms to see how female characters are portrayed and assign archetypal roles to each of these female characters. The data revealed that the majority of the female characters in this book sample represent the archetypal roles of Orphan-Regular Gal, Innocent, and Caregiver. The roles that were absent were those of Magician, Jester, and Creator. Before discussing archetypal roles, with a brief description of each archetype, it is important to notice the number of female characters present in these books and their contributions to moving forward the plot of their respective books. Therefore this section will be divided into five components to discuss female characters: presence or absence, speech or silence, agency or lack of agency, animal or human form, and finally archetypal role.

Presence or Absence of Female Characters

Four of the books (20%) did not have any female characters. In the remaining 16 books, only five are in the central role of the book (31%). These characters included Little Red Riding Hood in book of same name, the grandmother in *Wheels on the Bus* (Kolvasiki, 1987), Emma in the *Twelve Days of Christmas* (Jeffers, 2013), Little Red Hen in book of same name (Muldrow, 1982), and the narrator in *My Family is Forever* (Carlson, 2006). The central character roles are crucial to the plot of the story by either narrating, reaching out to the other characters to join in an activity (and when all decline,

executing the activity herself), or standing up for themselves when approached by a scary character. The plot was advanced through their words or actions, often both.

The nonverbal female characters either minimally enhanced the plot or were unnecessary to the plot at all. These female characters were often part of a crowd scene (passengers on the bus hushing babies), were depicted performing a dance or a chore (maids a-milking, ladies dancing), or were identified because a descriptive label indicates them as female (cows, hen, maid). Others were identified through stereotypical clothing (mother pig, grandmother), pronoun descriptors (her ducklings), or title (Queen Duck, Old Woman).

Often an illustration of a female character was used only once, in the periphery, to establish a setting (a mother crying and waving good bye to her sons, grandmothers and mothers in aprons situated in kitchens, females folding laundry), as part of a crowd (on a bus), or as animals. There were a total of 106 female characters in the 16 books that included female characters.

Speech or Silence

As I recorded descriptors for each female character, I also recorded dialogue, to use as examples when discussing archetypes. Many of the characters did not have any dialogue. As seen in Table 1, the majority of the female characters (74%) found in these books was nonverbal.

Table 1

Speech or Silence in Female Characters

# Books	# Female Characters	# Nonverbal	# Verbal	% Nonverbal
20	106	78	28	74%

Next I examined the dialogue in the 28 verbal female characters. Of the 28 verbal female characters, 46% had limited speech (said only one or two words, sang a song, called for help, offered to bake, made only a sound [shhh or hush], answered a question, called a name, or made an accessory choice). None of this 46% contributed more than one sentence as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Limited Speech for Verbal Female Characters

# Verbal Female Characters	# Limited Speech	% Limited Speech
28	13	46%

Although the remaining 54% of verbal females (n=15) had more to say, their contributions were minimal. In *Louie* (Keats, 1975), Louie's mother calls his name, asks what he is doing, and reads a note to him, totaling three sentences (n.p.). The mother in *Little Red Riding Hood* (Ernst, 1998) says "great idea" (n.p.), in response to Little Red Riding Hood suggesting she take muffins to her grandmother. Her mother also tells Little Red Riding Hood to go straight to her grandmother's house and do not talk to strangers. Little Red Riding Hood's mother's contribution totals 17 words and offer little sustenance.

There were few characters who offered sustenance to the story line. Those characters that did extend the plot of the story through their dialogue were depicted in possession of problem-solving skills, courage, and self-confidence. These traits were revealed through their dialogue by offering opinions, giving guidance, speaking out against injustice, and not conforming with stereotypical roles traditionally assigned to females.

For example, the nontraditional grandmother in *Little Red Riding Hood* (Ernst, 1998), leaves a note for Little Red Riding hood, explaining that she is in the field, on a tractor. When the wolf tries to grab the grandmother, the grandmother says “Hold it right there, scoundrel. What do you think you are doing?” (n.p.). When the wolf responds that he is looking for the frail, old grandmother who lives there, the grandmother responds, “Well, Sherlock, you’re talking to her” (n.p.). In response to the wolf’s “What big eyes you have,” the grandmother responds, “All the better to see you skulking around my fields” (n.p.). The grandmother continues to respond to his questions and comments by explaining that her ears are good to hear him coming and her hands are strong enough to defend herself. This grandmother continues by saying they should sit and think about what to do next and then decides to open a bakery and hire the wolf to bake muffins. Out of the 16 books examined with female characters, this character has the most substantive dialogue, showing courage, problem solving, and speaking up for herself, and she models these characteristics for her granddaughter.

Agency or Lack of Agency

Since the majority of the female characters were nonverbal, I questioned the presence and relevance of all the female characters in the stories. I wondered if the female characters were an integral component in the story and, therefore, moved the plot along. In *A Pocket for Corduroy* (Freeman, 1978), the Laundromat is filled with mostly women and little girls. Lisa, the owner of the teddy bear, Corduroy, and her mother, discuss helping with the wash, instructions to Corduroy to wait while females do the wash, washing instructions from mother to daughter, and distress from Lisa when she finds that the bear is missing. Meanwhile, after Lisa and her mother leave, the male artist finds Corduroy, washes him, and is found to be creative in his chores and active in assisting Corduroy on his adventure, resulting in finding inspiration in the swirling clothes in the dryer and painting a picture of them. Corduroy, the protagonist in this story, chooses adventure, problems solves, and takes an active role in the story.

In contrast, the grandmother in *Little Red Riding Hood* (Ernst, 1998), reveals through her dialogue and actions that she is in total control of her decisions, correcting the wolf for assuming she was a male farmer, and not letting him take advantage of her. Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother takes further action by having the wolf wait while she decides what to do, plans to open a bakery, and hire the wolf as her employee.

The two characters in *No More Hitting for Little Hamster* (Ford, 2011), Lambkin and Ducky, each stand up for themselves when Little Hamster asks if they want to play with him. They each say no, inform Little Hamster that he hits, that hitting hurts, and that is why they will not play with him. Although their dialogue and presence in the story is

limited, each character shows agency by speaking up and not participating in the activity. Unfortunately, these characters were depicted in animal form, too often the case of female representation in children's books.

Animal or Human Form

Twenty-eight of the 106 female characters were depicted in animal form (26%). Much of the influential dialogue came from these female animal characters in their respective books. As stated above, in *No More Hitting for Little Hamster* (Ford, 2011), two female animals tell Hamster that they will not play with him because he hits them and that hitting hurts. These two animals, Ducky and Lambkin, are both female.

Another is the female protagonist in *The Little Red Hen* (Muldrow, 1982), who goes out of her way to include her friends in making bread but since they decline, she tells them they may not partake in eating the bread once it is ready. The hen is depicted as courageous, ambitious, and assertive. The data reveal that all animal female characters that have agency also are verbal. The ability for these characters to advance the plot is based not only on their dialogue but by following through with their dialogue with action.

Archetypal Roles

Archetypes were assigned to each of the 106 female characters, as shown in Table 3. Assignment was based on reviewing each character's actions and dialogue and guided by archetypal descriptors (Jung, 1959). Since many female characters have little or no dialogue, actions were also interpreted using these guidelines. Three of the archetypes were not represented by any of the female characters: the archetypes of Jester, Magician, and Creator.

The archetype occurring most often was the Orphan (Regular Gal) since 50 of the 106 females (47%) matched the descriptors of that archetype best. This was followed by the Innocent, with 22 of the 106 females (21%) matching those associated descriptors. Next was the Caregiver, with 19 of 106 females (18%) matching the descriptors assigned to that archetype. The Hero and Explorer archetypes were each represented by four of the 106 females (4%), followed by the Ruler by three of 106 females (3%). Two Sages out of the 106 females (2%) were represented, leaving the Rebel and Lover each with one out of 106 females (less than 1%). Once each female character was assigned an archetype, I analyzed each archetype separately, reviewing commonalities between them. The distribution of female characters across Jungian archetypes is portrayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Female Character Archetypal Assignment

Archetype	# Female Characters
Orphan (Reg. Gal)	50
Innocent	22
Caregiver	19
Explorer	4
Hero	4
Ruler	3
Sage	2
Rebel	1
Lover	1
Jester	0
Creator	0
Magician	0
TOTAL	106

Silence, agency, and animal form were also distributed across archetypal categories, as pictured in Table 4. Silence included all female characters that did not speak, sing any song, or make any sounds. Low Agency included the female characters that did not advance the plot by their actions or their words. Finally, all female animals were counted.

The Heroes, Sages, Rulers, Lover, and Rebel all contributed to the story line by actions or words and were all considered high agency. Approximately half of all the Orphans-Regular Gal, Innocents, and Caregivers possessed low agency. Exactly half of the female characters were of low agency.

Table 4

Silence, Low Agency, and Animal Form in Female Characters

Archetype	Total #	#Silent	#Low Agency	#Animal Form
Orphan (Regular Gal)	50	47	23	20
Innocent	22	19	10	0
Caregiver	19	9	10	1
Explorer	4	1	0	0
Hero	4	0	0	3
Ruler	3	1	0	2
Sage	2	1	0	0
Rebel	1	0	0	1
Lover	1	0	0	1
Total	106	78	43	28

Note: Only 9 archetypes are listed because no female characters represented the Jester, Creator or Magician archetype.

A more detailed examination of each archetype follows in order to show examples of each archetype more clearly.

The Orphan (Regular Gal). Only three of the 50 female characters identified as the Orphan or Regular Gal were verbal. The first two were the grandmother and the

granddaughter in *The Enormous Turnip*. The grandmother called the granddaughter for help and the granddaughter, in turn, called the cat for help. Neither character had any additional dialogue. The third verbal female character in this category was the puppet, Gussie, in *Louie*. Gussie told the audience to sit down so the show could begin, addressing her comments to Louie. The rest of the dialogue in the puppet show, including anything more Gussie might have said, was not included as part of the story.

Since most characters of this archetype did not speak, archetype selection was based on the descriptors Jung (1959) provided for Orphan-Regular Gal. The Orphan-Regular Gal archetype is one who does not want to stand out in a crowd, dutiful, realistic, and wants to do the right thing. Unlike the Innocent archetype, the Orphan-Regular Gal is not happy or optimistic; rather, she is focused on being good: the good neighbor, worker, wife, or citizen. Examples of the Orphan-Regular Gal archetype are found throughout the book sample. In *A Pocket for Corduroy* (Freeman, 1978), the woman behind the counter and the woman in line at the counter fall into this category. In *The Wheels on the Bus* (Kovalski, 1987), there are similar Orphan-Regular Gal archetypes, such as the women waiting in line at the store, sitting on the bus, and crossing the street. They are not carefree, happy, or optimistic like the Innocent archetype; rather, they are dutifully doing what is required of them, being realistic, and lacking of pretense. Many of the Orphan-Regular Gal archetype were found in the book *The Twelve Days of Christmas* (Jeffers, 2013), and many are in animal form: geese, hens, and cows. The female animals are only known as female by their gendered name (hen, cow) or by their ability to reproduce (“geese a laying” n.p.). Each of the Orphan-Regular Gal archetypes lacks the happier,

“free to be you and me” characteristic listed in the archetypal descriptions that would associate them with the Innocent archetype.

The Innocent. All three female characters identified as verbal Innocents are from the book, *The Wheels on the Bus*. The granddaughters, Jenny and Joanna, choose coats that their grandmother buys for them and then sing a song with the grandmother for the rest of the book. The last vocal Innocent is the baby on the bus who is crying. In the story *Wheels on the Bus* (Kovalski, 1987), based on the popular children’s song, there is a girl with a monkey on the street. She, too, seems happy, wholesome, and naïve, however, if removed from the story, the story remains unchanged.

The distinction of Innocent versus the Orphan-Regular Gal is that the Innocent is generally naïve, happy, optimistic, and wholesome. She wants to do the right thing. The granddaughters do as instructed and follow along with the game and appear to be happy. The infant is naïve to the world around her, and generally is happy when fed, changed, and held.

The nonverbal Innocents comprise the majority of this archetypal category. Nine of these female characters were included in a book based on the song, *The Twelve Days of Christmas* (Jeffers, 2013), where the women are dancing happily and are happy with being the center of attention (contrary to the Orphan-Regular Gal). These characters are a space holder in the song, only present to be counted off from one to 12, otherwise of low agency.

The Caregiver. The caregiver archetype included 10 verbal female characters and 9 nonverbal female characters. The dialogue for verbal females representing this

archetype was primarily limited to short responses or sounds. Some examples of females' entire verbal contributions to their books' conversations are these:

- *The Wheels on the Bus* - two female characters said “ssh” to babies.
- *The Mitten* - the grandmother's told her grandson “if you drop a white mitten in the snow, it will be hard to find.”
- *The Gingerbread Man* – the woman says “if we cannot have a child I will bake one for us.”
- *The Gingerbread Baby* – the grandmother responds “yes” to her grandson that she can bake a gingerbread baby. At the end of the book she asks the grandson “did you make that beautiful gingerbread house?”
- *Little Red Riding Hood* – the mother says “good idea,” in response to Little Red Riding Hood's suggestion to bring muffins and lemonade to her grandmother. The mother adds the directive, “now don't forget, go straight to Grandma's, and whatever you do, don't talk to strangers.”

These six characters contribute minimal dialogue that nonetheless often advances the plot of the story.

From the remaining four verbal Caregivers, I found more instructive, valuable dialogue.

- In *Pocket for Corduroy* the mother reminds her daughter to empty the pockets in clothes that are about to be washed. She then tells her daughter the Laundromat is closing and they need to leave. She reassures her daughter that she can come back tomorrow to look for her missing teddy bear, Corduroy. These instructions are

valuable because the daughter does find Corduroy upon their return to the Laundromat the next day and designs a pocket for him to hold his name, which completes the story.

- The other verbal female in this book is the little girl, Lisa, who tells the teddy bear, Corduroy, to sit and wait while she helps with the wash. A bit later she informs her mother that Corduroy is missing. Lisa returns the next day and asked the owner if she could look around for something she left and responds that Corduroy is her best friend. Lisa scolds Corduroy and asks why he wandered away and later explains she could have made him a pocket if he would have told her he needed one. Once Corduroy's pocket is in place, Lisa tells him she made him a card with his name on it to tuck inside the pocket. However, Lisa is not the main character who goes off on the adventure; problem solves, and rescues himself. This is left to her teddy bear, Corduroy.
- The mother in *Louie* calls Louie's name, asks him what he is doing, tells him there is a note for him, and reads him the note. This may seem minimal; however, it is crucial for Louie to hear what is in the note in order to find and possess the puppet that comforted him enough that he could finally speak.
- The mother in *Llama, Llama, Holiday Drama* offers some directives throughout the story and the story ends with the mother sharing wisdom about learning to wait for something special and reminding her son that being together is more important than material gifts.

These six female characters in the role of Caregiver advance the plot of the story through their dialogue. Although, these characters primarily perform stereotypically female chores like doing laundry, baking or caring for children, characteristics associated with the Caregiver archetype, these characters' dialogue made their roles important.

The Explorer. The Explorer archetype was identified four times in the picture book sample. All of these female characters were verbal. The first is the protagonist in *Little Red Riding Hood* (Ernst, 1998). This rendition of the story is quite different from the traditional telling of this classic children's tale. In this version, Little Red Riding Hood suggests to her mother that grandma would like muffins and lemonade and offers to take them to her on her bike. When approached by the wolf, Little Red Riding Hood warns him that he could get hurt startling people. She tells him what is in the basket, how her grandmother's muffins are award-winning, and that she lives just over the bend. When the wolf suggests that she pick flowers for her grandmother, Little Red Riding Hood says that is a good idea and asks the wolf's opinion on which ones, although he is already on his way. When Little Red Riding Hood arrives at her grandmother's house, she asks Grandmother if she is okay.

In this nontraditional version of *Little Red Riding Hood*, there is no woodsman who comes to rescue either female character. Instead, the grandmother stands up to the wolf, employs him to bake for her and opens a bakery, offering to Little Red Riding Hood a role model who uses her voice, solves her own problems, and becomes a business woman. This grandmother is active, verbal, and part of the adventure, as opposed to

more gender role stereotyped grandmothers who have been portrayed as feeble, in need of rescuing, passive, and not part of an adventure.

The other two verbal female Explorers both narrate their stories. In *The Twelve Days of Christmas* (Jeffers, 2013), the protagonist, Emma, tells the story through the popular Christmas song lyrics. The reader may believe the words are just sung in the background for Emma, however, at one point, the word “I” is introduced, informing the reader that Emma is narrating. This takes place, for the most part, while Emma is dreaming. The same narration takes place in the book, *My Family is Forever* (Carlson, 2006). The entire story is narrated by “me,” since the name is never given. “Me” is dressed in traditionally female clothing (bathing suit) and what appears to be a traditional girl’s hair style with ribbons. Throughout the story, the girl explores how she became part of this adopted family, what things they do together, and questions she has about her birth family.

The nonverbal female character in this category is the mother of one of the narrators. In *My Family is Forever* (Carlson, 2004), the female narrator tells about the mother as being open to new things, adventurous, and enjoys playing sports.

The Hero. All four female characters identified as the Hero were verbal. In a modern version of Little Red Riding Hood (Muldrow, 1982), Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother demonstrates her heroic role when, approached by the wolf, calls him a scoundrel and asks them what he is doing there. When the wolf says he is looking for the frail granny living there she responds sarcastically that he has found her. When responding to the wolf about her eyes, ears, and hands she has, the grandmother responds

about how well she can see him in her fields, hear him coming, and hurt him with her hands if need be. The grandmother later confirms to Little Red Riding Hood that she is fine, calls the wolf a bully and reminds the wolf that she has got rid of other bullies before, and tells the wolf to eat while she decides what to do next. The grandmother then announces that the wolf can work for her making muffins.

The second Hero identified is the *Little Red Hen* in the book of same name (Muldrow, 1982). Most of the dialogue in this book is from the Little Red Hen as she asks each of her animal friends to help in each step of making bread, which they all decline. At last, when the bread is made she asks who will help eat it with her and although all her animal friends say yes, she says no, she would eat it all herself.

The last two heroes are female animals in *No More Hitting for Little Hamster* (Ford, 2011). Ducky and Lambkin, when each approached to play by Little Hamster, say that they will not play with him because he hits and being hit hurts. These two female characters (although in animal form) are seen having an opinion, speaking up to a bully who has hurt them in the past, and not giving in to someone who hurts them.

The Ruler. All three rulers were found in the story, *The Ugly Duckling* (Anderson, 2010). Two of the three female characters who were found in this category, a hen and a girl, were nonverbal; however the narrator describes their actions as aggressive (kicking or shunning the Ugly Duckling, showing total control over him). The royal duck is the verbal female character who told the Ugly Duckling he should not stay, he is too ugly, and his mother should be able to do something to help him. She relays this message to the rest of the ducks, informing them how inferior the Ugly Duckling is.

According to the archetypal guidelines (Appendix F), a ruler is one who searches for power and control. In the cases above, the rulers identified in the book sample are cruel and autocratic, rather than benevolent and in control of such power. No examples of kinder, more generous rulers were found.

The Sage. Two female characters were identified as the Sage. One was verbal and one was not. The verbal character, Susie, in the book, *Louie* (Keats, 2004), is a puppeteer who offers a nonverbal boy, Louie, an opportunity to speak. Through the puppet, and later on as herself, Susie comments on the large crowd, starts the puppet show, speaks to Louie so he understands what to do, speaks often as part of the puppet show, and solves problems out loud. After the puppet show, Susie offers Louie one more time to speak to the puppet, before surprising him at the end of the story by surrendering the puppet for Louie so he can continue to speak with it.

The other Sage is a female counselor in the book *My Family is Forever Carlson*, (2006), who assists the family in adoption. Although the counselor does not speak, the adopted child narrating the story referred to her as wise and helpful, as well as providing a positive experience for the family.

The Rebel. Only one of the female characters was identified as the Rebel. The grandmother in *The Wheels on the Bus* (Kovalski, 1987) suggests to her granddaughters that they sing a song while waiting for the bus. She sings the song as they wait, get on the bus, and get off again at the end of the book. Although other passengers and bus driver do not join in, even though the grandmother and girls sing loudly, this grandmother goes beyond traditional role stereotypes, and is even considered a bit eccentric by others.

The Lover. The one female character identified as representing the Lover archetype is the mother duck in *The Ugly Duckling* (Anderson, 2010). The mother duck said her need to sit on the last egg, even though it is different from the rest, said this duckling is not like the others and expresses worry about what others will think, and supported the duckling so that he can try to fit in with the rest of the ducklings. As presented in the archetypal guidelines (Appendix F), the lover is seen as passionate, committed, and relationship oriented.

The Jester, the Creator, and the Magician were not represented in the book sample. The lack of the representation of these three archetypes reveals that many of the qualities of these archetypes are not written for female characters. The Jester is often seeking and spreading joy, as well as playful and full of good humor. The Creator is often a visionary who is creative, imaginative, artistic, and innovative. The last of the three missing archetypes, the Magician, is characterized as having charismatic leadership qualities, none seen in the female characters examined.

Themes

The examination and analysis of the 20 picture books led to the developing of certain themes. The main theme throughout the books is one of silence. Additional themes included objectification, passivity, servitude, and lack of positive, diverse, female role models.

Silence

The main theme woven throughout the analysis of female presence in these books was that of silence. The absence of female characters in almost a quarter of the books

shows silence through invisibility, with 20% of the books having no female characters at all. In those books, females are not even represented so they could not be assigned archetypal roles.

This discussion of the invisible female is not a new one. Weitzman, et al. (1972) first discussed the idea of the absence of females from picture books. Decades later in 2009, this theme of invisibility was still prevalent in children's picture books (Taylor, 2009). As recent as 2013, Nair and Rosli confirmed that in the picture books they examined, there was an absence of females. The data from my research study confirm that the lack of female characters in picture books is still an issue.

Seventy-four percent of the female characters did have dialogue. Out of those female characters who did speak often had few, often only one, word or sentence in the entire book and frequently this minimal dialogue did not contribute to the plot of the story. In these instances where female characters had little influence on the story line, the female characters asked for assistance, were worried about conforming and what others might say, and were occupied in tending to a child, baking, doing laundry, or tending to other chores.

Of the 26% of female characters who were verbal, many of which were limited to one word ("shhh!"), called for assistance, sang, or made one accessory choice. Once the dialogue of each archetype was analyzed separately, patterns began to emerge, with certain archetypes having more dialogue than others. The typically nontraditional archetypal roles for girls and women often had more dialogue, more action, and more influence on the plot; whereas characters in more traditional archetypal roles (for

females) spoke less, observed more than participated, and needed to be rescued or have their problems solved for them (often by a male character).

In the book, *The Twelve Days of Christmas* (Jeffers, 2013), 24 of the female characters were ladies dancing, maids a milking, and the maids' cows (who are only recognized as female only by their name). Six more of the female characters come from this book in the form of geese, who are only recognized as female because they are laying eggs. Examples of nonverbal females from other books include women on the bus, women doing laundry, women walking on the street, or waving goodbye to children.

In the few female characters that have the opportunity to add worth to the storyline, contributions of strength, wisdom, problem solving, courage, and independence are displayed. Unfortunately, many of these characters were animals, not humans.

Objectification

Since most of the female characters in these books are silent and observant of the activities around them, it seems as if they are included as if they were objects. Without dialogue or action, the female characters could be replaced with an object or are simply a place holder. For example, in *The Twelve Days of Christmas* (Jeffers, 2013), the dancers hold a place in the song, as do the maids milking cows and the cows they milk. The granddaughters in *The Wheels on the Bus* (Kolvaski, 1987) make clothes selections but if they both were eliminated from the story the plot would change scarcely at all.

Passivity

Most of the female characters in this book sample are observers of activity, rather than participants. The teddy bear, Corduroy, in *A Pocket for Corduroy* (Freeman, 1978),

goes off on the adventure while his owner, Lisa, helps with laundry and goes home, only to return the next day to find him. In *The Mitten* (Brett, 1996), the grandmother knits at home while her grandson has adventures in the snow. The women on the street and in the bus in the book *Wheels on the Bus* (Kolvaski, 1987) are either waiting for the bus, waiting for a child to stop crying, or waiting for their stop.

Servitude

Whether it was baking gingerbread cookies, knitting socks, sewing, or doing laundry, many of the female characters in these books were doing domestic chores. Although there is also a male artist doing laundry in *A Pocket for Corduroy* (Freeman, 1978), according to the story he is an artist and found ways to be inspired by the clothes swirling in the dryer and to create a painting from his inspiration. In contrast, Corduroy's owner, Lisa, sews a pocket for Corduroy, once she found him again. The mother in *Little Red Riding Hood* (Ernst, 1998) bakes muffins for Little Red Riding Hood to take to her grandmother. Since so many female characters were seen performing service to others (cooking or baking, folding laundry, or taking care of children), it is not surprising to see that the majority of the archetypes assigned to female characters are in the categories of Innocent, Caregiver, and Orphan-Regular Gal, since these archetypes are defined by their concern for others more than concern for themselves.

Lack of Positive, Agentic Female Role Models

The majority of the female characters in these books represent traditional gender role stereotypes of girls and women. There are no professionals among these female characters, few stand up for their convictions, and few use critical thinking skills to solve

problems. Those that do serve as role models, like Ducky and Lambkin in *No More Hitting for Little Hamster* (Ford, 2011), who stand up to a bully, or the grandmother in *Little Red Riding Hood* (Ernst, 1998), who drives her own tractor, stands up to the wolf, and starts her own company, are rare and often in animal form.

Summary

Chapter 4 described the data collection and analysis processes used, as well as the evidence of trustworthiness in my research study. The results were then shared, culminating in a discussion of emergent themes. The main theme that emerged was one of silence; other themes included objectification, passivity, servitude, and lack or positive, agentic female role models.

Most of the female characters were nonverbal and those that did speak did not advance the plot by those contributions. Many of the female characters were passive, in action and voice, observing adventures rather than participating in them. Finally, the distinct lack of positive, agentic female role models was apparent in the book sampling. In Chapter 5 I will discuss the interpretations of these findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, implications for positive social change, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to identify the archetypal roles assigned to girls and women in everyday picture books read aloud by teachers in the preschool classroom. The foundation of this study was based on the theories of Gilligan (1982, 1990, 2011), primarily focusing on female voice and the value of females offering their opinions. These opinions may be different than that of their male counterparts, but nonetheless valuable. This study was also based on archetypes described by Jung (1959), as they appeared in picture books being read in preschool classrooms. The choice of archetypes over gender bias was made to offer a more universal view of girls and women in children's literature without the limitations of time and geography. The method used in this study was based on Mayring's (2000) necessary components for content analysis. First, the analysis of the female characters was conducted within a model of communication, in this case, a sample of picture books read to preschool children by their teachers. Second, information about these female characters was recorded in the form of dialogue, illustrations, absence, and agency. Next, the data were coded with emergent found. These themes included silence; objectification; servitude; and a lack of positive, agentic, female role models.

Key Findings

The most apparent finding was the lack of female characters in the picture book selections. Twenty percent of the sample of picture books included no female characters. This invisibility echoes findings of previously discussed research of award-winning, best-selling, or Little Golden Books (Taylor, 2009; Weitzman, et al., 1972).

In the books that included female characters, 74% of these characters were nonverbal. This theme of silence recalls the work of Gilligan (1982). Gilligan claimed that girls' and women's voices (perspectives) are different from those of their male counterparts and are interpreted by male gatekeepers, such as book authors and publishers, as peripheral and unimportant. The lack of female voice in such a large portion of the picture books signals that the female characters are not as important as the male characters.

Of the female characters that did speak, most said only one word or one sentence in order to call for assistance, hush a crying child, or serve the male characters. The females who demonstrated characteristics like problem solving, wisdom, courage, and a willingness to speak up for others included only 14 (13%) of the entire population of 106 female characters. When female characters embodied some of these agentic qualities, often these characters were in animal form rather than human form. In comparison, most female characters in these books were depicted as interested in conforming, not standing out in a crowd, displaying selflessness, and taking care of others.

Because many of the female characters were seen but not heard and demonstrated only limited action or adventure makes these characters replaceable with an object or capable of being eliminated completely with no significant change in the story line. This suggests an objectification of females. Portraying females as if they are objects is a continuing problem in modern media and especially so in media intended for children. When boys and girls are read stories in which females are so still and silent that their

presence scarcely matters, children are confirmed in the notion that females are unimportant or are valuable only in supporting roles.

The archetypes most prevalent in this study are the orphan-regular gal, the innocent, and the caregiver. These archetypes are bound by the stereotypical “good girl” characteristics discussed by Gilligan (1982, 1990, 2011) of wholesomeness, virtuousness, acceptability, faithfulness, helpfulness, and conformity. In contrast, the least prevalent archetypes portrayed by these female characters were the hero, the rebel, the sage, and the explorer. These archetypes are described as competent, heroic, authentic, true, investigative, nonconformist, autonomous, courageous, and revolutionary.

The archetypes that were not represented at all by females in the books included in this study are that of the magician, the jester, and the creator. These archetypes embody the characteristics visionary, creative, imaginative, artistic, innovative, truth seeking, intelligent, and self-reflective.

The overall findings confirm what past researchers (Crisp & Hiller, 2011a, 2011b; Hamilton et al., 2006; Taylor, 2009; Weitzman et al., 1972) found when examining female characters in children’s literature. Girls and women are limited in both dialogue and action and are often restricted to observing the activity of men and boys, serving male characters, performing menial chores, being rescued by males, or just shopping. The archetypal representations of females in these books are limited to the dutiful regular gal, the harmless innocent, and the supportive caregiver. Instead of portraying the hero, explorer, rebel, sage, or ruler, the women and girls in these books respond to male

characters that hold those more active roles. When female characters were portrayed in proactive roles, they often were illustrated not as humans but as animals.

Interpretation of Findings

Most of the female characters in the books selected for this study, if females are present at all, are portrayed in a marginalized manner and, therefore, are portrayed as unimportant, powerless, and incapable of influencing events. The findings confirm the limited data found in current peer-reviewed literature about the existence of gender bias in children's literature and contribute to that literature by offering a discussion of archetypal portrayal that transcends the geographical and time-based constraints associated with gender bias. I recommend future research begin with examining children's literature internationally, continuing to use the lens of Jung's (1959) archetypes, to conduct a similar examination of picture books' archetypal portrayal of males and to extend this study beyond the realm of picture books into chapter books and books for young adult readers.

These findings echo the theory of voice provided by Gilligan (1982, 1990, 2011) as a theoretical foundation of this study and confirm that diverse and dynamic female role models are absent in picture books intended for young girls and boys. Almost entirely missing from these books is the notion that there is more than one way to be a girl, and ultimately a woman, and that all roles are valuable, important, and influential for both males and females. The effect of how women and girls are portrayed is not limited to preschool girls who are read these stories. Both boys and girls absorb the subtle messages inherent in picture books and learn, through the story and the pictures, the roles expected

of women and girls. There is no reason why boys and girls would not delight in the heroism and boldness of dynamic female characters as much as they might in the agency of dynamic male characters, and there is no reason to exclude these roles for female characters in the books teachers read to children.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited to a population of preschool teachers within three urban, private, and public preschools in the northeast area of the United States. This study was limited to schools I was able to access in the timeframe of this research study. The time of year (mid-December) was a limitation because some the books included Christmas themes that would not have been read to children at another time of year. However, because the preschool curriculum often focuses on seasons and holidays throughout the year, any time period might have included books relevant to current events. Fall may have included more books about being new at school and school buses, November may have included stories about Native Americans and Thanksgiving, and February may have included stories that center on hearts and presidents.

Finally, this study was limited to fiction books read to children within a 2-week period. A longitudinal study, spaced over a school year instead of a 2-week period, may offer a more nuanced view of the portrayal of girls and women in picture book selections read aloud in preschool classrooms.

Recommendations

Future Research

Because most studies, past and current, focused on gender bias in award-winning or best-selling books, I recommend that researchers focus on children's literature that is actually read in the early childhood setting. Mills et al. (2010) used Jungian archetypes when analyzing children's literature; however, they used only four archetypal roles. The expansion in my study of their methodology to encompass 12 archetypes offered greater insight into female characters in children's literature and might be replicated in the future.

This qualitative content analysis could be replicated using the same 20 books, but with a focus on portrayal of male characters rather than female characters. Archetypal guidelines as described by Jung (1959) are universal and should apply to an analysis of male portrayal as well as female. My focus on girls in crisis leading to the analysis of female characters in no way suggests that boys could not value from similar research. A third study, comparing and contrasting the findings from both studies, could offer more insight into the overall portrayal of males and females and how these portrayals might affect girls and boys. I stopped reviewing here due to time constraints. Please go through the rest of your chapter and look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at your references.

As discussed briefly previously, a longitudinal study where teachers log the books they read throughout the school year may offer more of an overall view of how the female characters are portrayed, rather than a snapshot of the two-week period used here.

Finally, the same methodology could also be used in primary grade classrooms, possibly with chapter books instead of picture books.

For Practice

On an individual level, teachers can question their picture book collection (Rajput, 2009) in order to see that a variety of females is represented and these characters portray a multitude of archetypal roles. This reflection is not only limited to what books are read but to the discussion of books that present a marginalized view of girls and women. My suggestion here is not that teachers discard all books that lack strong female characters but to include a discussion that extends beyond the book itself.

Many young girls embrace the princess motif, often seen through many Disney characters. If a child asks a teacher to read a book about princesses that has been brought from home, the teacher does not have to decline because of the content, however, a discussion about princesses can be offered by asking questions about who can be a princess, could we make up our own princesses, and other conversations to assist in critical thinking. This kind of discussion assists children in learning how to be critical consumers of literature and to question limitations found in some children's books (Chukhray, 2010). The same critical discussion of books can occur in the home, with parents questioning the books they read to their children, and in school and public libraries, as collections are examined with an eye to archetypal balance and new purchases vetted through the same lens.

College personnel who prepare future teachers should examine their curricula through a critical thinking lens, especially in courses devoted to children's literature, so

preservice teachers can be prepared to question their read-aloud choices. These critical thinking skills can assist future teachers in two ways. First, preservice teachers can be guided to examine their own children's literature selections and to give appropriate attention to female characters that expand the traditional gender role stereotypes of female characters. Second, these future teachers can encourage their students to be critical thinkers by asking questions about picture books where female characters are limited in the characteristics associated with the more assertive and vocal archetypes (ruler, explorer, hero, rebel, and sage). Students who begin to learn critical thinking skills at a young age through the use of children's literature can expand these skills to be critical thinkers in life (Chukhray, 2010). Teachers with this effective preparation will be able to use the books in their collections in such a way as to expand views of the female characters and also teach children to have critical literary skills.

College students and faculty can also question their personal and professional collections. The college student who develops critical thinking skills may question why there are no female authors on the reading list in a literature course, or why all the female characters in an children's literature class are limited to fairy godmothers, old women, witches, princesses, and fairies. The faculty and administrators of colleges with early childhood curricula can also question how much is taught to preservice teachers about book selection and criteria that are used in those selections.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Social change implications can be seen on several levels: individual, family, organizational, and societal. A more global social change implication is the opportunity

for more awareness to all forms of media as they pertain to girls and women. This awareness can take the form of research with social applications implemented on educational, financial, and political levels, with an objective of social equality for women. This can be grounded in an education or reeducation of feminist theory for what it is, a striving for a more egalitarian society, not a society where anyone is thought of as less than, afterthoughts, secondary, or peripheral.

The overall positive social change that can take place when female characters are given voice, purpose, action, agency, and not afraid to reveal their wit and intelligence, will benefit all of society, not just the girls hearing these stories. The boys hearing these stories will begin to see a more expansive view of the girls and women in their life and in the world. Again, grounded in feminist theory, where everyone is considered equal, these expanded views, where females and males are both valued, can begin to create a world of equality in children's literature that can, one day be expanded to other forms of media and ultimately, society.

Conclusion

In this qualitative, content analysis, I reviewed fiction picture books read to children in preschool classrooms in an urban area in the northeastern United States. Thirteen classroom teachers were approached, and nine participated. After removing nonfiction titles and duplicates, 68 books remained and a random sample of 23 books was chosen for analysis. I applied Madsen's 3-read method to determine the archetypal roles (per Jung) of each female character in all of the books. The results of this study reveal that most of the female characters in these books were

assigned the archetypes which are typified by low personal agency, passivity, and service to others. Moreover, the majority of the female characters in these books were either silent or limited in speech. Of the 106 female characters portrayed in this sample, only 28 were verbal (26%).

The findings concur with past literature which examined award-winning and bestselling books: Female characters are portrayed in a marginalized way in the picture books teachers read in preschool classrooms. These findings also reveal that the invisibility and passivity of female characters are a problem. The media portraying females in this limited capacity established social norms and therefore perpetuate differential perception of the importance of males and females. The invisibility of girls and women in this study reflects and continues to perpetuate the invisibility of girls and women in modern U.S. society. Literature that provides dynamic portrayals of female characters may offer some girls a chance to see themselves in these characters, realize they are not alone, and that other girls are struggling to find role models who share the same aspirations they do. This offers opportunities for girls to think outside the more traditional and often stereotypical box. This impact is not limited to girls. Boys can also learn that diversity in the characteristics of girls does not mean girls are valued less than males or are unimportant; rather it may offer them an opportunity to see girls and women as equal, to regard them more completely as people instead of as objects, and realize girls and boys together should be active co-creators of a better, more inclusive perspective on life.

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Appendix A: Letter to Administrators to Request Participation

Karen Lynn Ellefsen

Walden University Doctoral Program

Karen.ellefsen@waldenu.edu

xxx-xxx-xxxx

Date _____

Dear Child Care Administrator:

My name is Karen Lynn Ellefsen, and I am currently a doctoral candidate at Walden University. My dissertation topic is focused on what picture books are being read aloud in current preschool classrooms. Although there is a great deal of research about award-winning and best-selling children's books, little research exists on what preschool teachers are actually reading each day in their classrooms.

For my study I am asking four child care centers to participate in a research study where a reading log is kept for the two week period of _____ to _____. This data will be collected and analyzed and the results will be shared with each of the four participating child care centers. The child care centers, administrators, and teachers names will be confidential.

If you are interested in having your teachers participate in this proposed study, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with them, share the goals of my research, show them the reading log, and ask them to consent to the study if they are interested. I have attached a copy of the reading log and the consent form that I would present to the teachers at the established time of the meeting. I would return the Monday after the

completion date of the logs to collect the logs for analysis. Upon your decision to participate in this study, we would ask you to provide us with letter from you, on your child care center's letterhead, accepting the terms of your participation. A sample letter can be provided for you as well.

I want to thank you for your attention and time to consider your participation in this study and welcome any questions you may have. You may contact me by email or phone, whatever is most convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Karen Lynn Ellefsen

Walden University Doctoral Student

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study on what picture books are currently being read aloud in the Preschool Classroom. Three other schools will also be participating in this study. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Karen Lynn Ellefsen who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know this researcher as the director of Isabella Child Care, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore what picture books preschool teachers are reading aloud in their classes. Similar research has been conducted using award-winning and best-selling books, but as teachers of young children, we know that often other books are included in the curriculum (books brought from home by a child, for show-and-tell, and from the public and school library to name a few) cannot always be categorized as such. Research on what is actually being read in classrooms is limited.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in keeping a read-aloud log for the two week period beginning X and ending Y. A copy of this form is attached.
- We ask that you include any picture books that are read aloud in your classroom, whether it be in small or large groups, formally or informally.

Since centers differ in size, length of day, and schedule, the log offers many more spaces than you may need.

- At the end of the designated two week period, please return this form to your administrator so it can be collected on the Monday directly following the designated logging period.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at your center will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety, your wellbeing, or your time. Results will be used to determine how girls and women are represented and portrayed in current read aloud picture books in preschool classrooms and how teacher can use this information to provide discussions about so children understand that girls and women are as important and valuable and boys and men. Personal benefits will include a reflective review of how the picture book choices of teachers may send messages to the children hearing them.

Payment:

No form of payment or gift will be provided by the Walden University student or the faculty, staff, and administrators of your child care center if you choose to participate in this study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. Your classroom and log will be assigned a letter and number throughout the study. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by Karen Lynn Ellefsen in a locked file cabinet of her private home. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via telephone at XXXX or email at XXXXX or Karen.Ellefsen@waldenu.edu .

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-01-14-0055674 and it expires on November 30, 2015.

The researcher, Karen Lynn Ellefsen, will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix C: Reading Log

SCHOOL CODE: _____ CLASSROOM CODE: _____

DATES: _____ to _____

Day # _____

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

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8.

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11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

Appendix D: Female Archetypal Portrayal Discussion Form

Three Reads Method

Book Citation:

First Reading: initial reading (to familiarize the reader with the story)
Second Reading: Portrayal and depiction of female characters in text and illustrations. Step 1: Reread book. Step 2: Identify female characters in story and place them in the chart below. You may not need to use all the spaces below, however, if you do need additional space, please continue on the back of this page. Step 3: Look back at the book and take notes on the chart below on the portrayal (descriptive words) of characters based on the text and illustrations
Character 1:
Character 2:
Character 3:
Character 4:
Character 5:
Character 6:
Do the pictures provide: (place an X by one) ____ accurate, real illustrations of the females the story is about OR ____ stereotypical, cartoon images of the females the story is about.

Third Reading: Using the attached guide (Appendix E) and the female character list you developed in the second reading, chose a Jungian Archetype that best describes each female character and enter it below:

Character 1:

Character 2:

Character 3:

Character 4:

Character 5:

Character 6:

Appendix E: 12 Archetypal Role Guidelines

An archetype, according to Jung (1959), can be “an image, pattern, or character seen consistently throughout literature and generally recognizable and acknowledged by its name, picture, or description” (pp. 4-5). Jung explained that archetypes are inherited tendencies or patterns to experience things in a different way, even in the youngest of infants (1959). These archetypes reach beyond the bounds of culture, universal to all human beings.

Although there are many versions of these archetypes, the following 12 archetypes described by Jung (1959) will be used to access the portrayal of female characters in currently read-aloud picture books.

1. **The Innocent:** wholesome, happy, free to be you and me, does things right, faithful, optimistic
2. **The Orphan (Regular Girl or Guy):** connects with others, wants to belong, does not want to stand out in a crowd, down to earth, virtuous, realistic, lack of pretense, solid citizen, the good neighbor
3. **The Hero:** courageous even when difficult, proves worth through these courageous acts, fears being considered weak, competent, arrogant, the rescuer.
4. **The Caregiver:** protects people from harm, helps others, selflessness, compassionate, generosity of spirit.

5. **The Explorer:** learns through experiencing the world, free spirit, authentic path, nonconformist, seeking out new things, wanderer, autonomous, ambitious, true to one's self.
6. **The Rebel (Outlaw):** revolutionary, vengeful, rule breaker, enjoys shocking others, seeks power, outrageous, radical.
7. **The Lover:** relationship oriented (with work, friends, love ones), wants to be wanted, worries about outward appearance, passionate, committed.
8. **The Creator:** visionary, creative, good imagination, perfectionist, artist, innovator.
9. **The Jester:** enjoys life fully, playful, jokester, joy seeking and spreading.
10. **The Sage:** wants to discover the truth, seeks knowledge, use intelligence to understand the world around her, self-reflective, wise, intelligence, often thinks more than acts.
11. **The Magician:** catalyst, charismatic leader, healer, manipulative, inventor.
12. **The Ruler:** ultimately searching for power and control, responsible, controlling.

Appendix F: Annotated Bibliography of Picture Books Included in Analysis

The following are the publishers' descriptions of each picture book included in this study. The source of each description is the book's publisher.

Three Trial Books Used to Test the Modified Research Tool

Eastman, P. D. (1960). *Are You My Mother?* New York, NY: Random House.

This is the classic from which many of our staff first learned to read, starting us on a path of unremitting bibliophilia. *Are You My Mother?* follows a confused baby bird who's been denied the experience of imprinting as he asks cows, planes, and steam shovels the Big Question. In the end he is happily reunited with his maternal parent in a glorious moment of recognition.

Freeman, D. (1976). *Corduroy*. New York, New York: Puffin Books.

Don Freeman's classic character, Corduroy, is even more popular today than he was when he first came on the scene in 1968. This story of a small teddy bear waiting on a department store shelf for a child's friendship has appealed to young readers generation after generation.

Seibert, P. (2002). *The Three Little Pigs*. Columbus, OH: School Specialty Publishing.

Each little pig is confident that his house is the strongest. But the real question is, whose will survive the big bad wolf? Beautifully illustrated, this classic tale will capture children's interest and spark their imagination page after page, encouraging a love of reading that is vital to success in school and life.

Twenty Books Used as the Research Sample

Anderson, H. C. (2010). *The Ugly Duckling*. Toronto, Canada: Ripple Digital Publishing Corporation.

A classic story by Hans Christian Andersen presented with modern illustrations. The story of how a little bird endures the abuses and miseries as he was growing up not realizing he would mature into a beautiful swan. It's a great tale about personal transformation for the better.

Asch, F. (2014). *Moonbear's Shadow*. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks.

Moonbear tries to outwit his troublesome shadow in this charming reissue of a beloved classic by award-winning author and illustrator Frank Asch. One sunny day Bear decides to go fishing, but his shadow keeps scaring the fish away, time and time again. Bear tries everything he can think of to get rid of this pesky nuisance. And at last he succeeds—or so he thinks!

Brett, J. (1999). *The Gingerbread Baby*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Remember how the Gingerbread Boy is eaten by the fox? Well, not this Gingerbread Baby in a delicious twist to a favorite old tale. It all begins when Matti opens the oven too soon and out jumps a cheeky little Gingerbread Bay. He leads Matti's mother and father, the dog and the cat. And a whole colorful cast of characters on a rollicking chase through the village and into the forest, staying just out of reach, daring them to catch him along the way. But Matti's not with them. He's at home in the borders making what turns out to be a gingerbread house into which the Gingerbread Baby runs.

Only Matti knows he is safely inside. And readers will too when they look under the lift-the-flap gingerbread house at the end of the story, and there he is!

Brett, J. (1996). *The Mitten/El Miton*. New York, NY: Penguin Young Readers Group.

Grandmother knits snow-white mittens that Nikki takes on an adventure. Readers will enjoy the charm and humor in the portrayal of the animals as they make room for each newcomer in the mitten and sprawl in the snow after the big sneeze.

Carlson, N. (2006). *My Family is Forever*. New York, NY: Penguin Group Publishing.

Some families look alike, some don't. Some families are formed through birth, and some families are formed by adoption. But as the little girl in this heartwarming book makes clear, being a family isn't about who you look like or where you were born—it's about the love that binds you together. Adoptive families are sure to delight in the special story of the narrator's adoption—from her parents' excited preparations and long journey by airplane to meet her, to their life together as a family. Nancy Carlson's thoughtful, straightforward text and cheerful illustrations combine to create a reassuring look at how one little girl came into her parents' world—and made them a family forever.

Dewdney, A. (2010). *Llama, Llama, Holiday Drama*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Llama Llama holidays. Jingle music. Lights ablaze. How long till that special date? Llama Llama has to wait. If there's one thing Llama Llama doesn't like, it's waiting. He and Mama Llama rush around, shopping for presents, baking cookies, decorating the tree . . . but how long is it until Christmas? Will it ever come? Finally, Llama Llama just can't wait any more! It takes a cuddle from Mama Llama to remind him that "Gifts are nice, but there's another: The true gift is, we have each other."

Ernst, L. C. (1998). *Little Red Riding Hood*. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks.

It's the story of the girl in the red hood--with an unpredictable plot twist. She pedals over to Grandma's with a tasty treat a hungry wolf wants for himself. But, he soon discovers that broad-shouldered, sharp-eyed, tractor-driving Grandma has no patience for pesky predators.

Fleming, D. (2012). *The First Day of Winter*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co.

A cozy, cumulative book to warm a cold winter day. Alive with swirling snow and lots of outdoor fun, the first ten days of winter bring special gifts for a special friend. This cumulative tale will have children chanting along as they discover all the trimmings needed for the most perfect snowman ever!

Ford, B. (2011). *No More Hitting for Little Hamster*. New York: NY.

Little Hamster's very upset! None of his friends will let him join in any of their games. That's because when Little Hamster gets mad, he hits HARD-and that hurts. Will he learn how to play nicely? This gentle, endearing story in the NO MORE! series helps toddlers understand why it's so much better-and more fun!-to treat others with kindness and respect.

Freeman, D. (1978). *A Pocket for Corduroy*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

In this sequel to the original "Corduroy" tale, the little furry one accompanies Lisa and her mom to do the family wash. As he overhears Lisa's mom telling her to clean out the pockets in the clothes, Corduroy realizes his overalls don't have pockets and he thinks he'd better go remedy that situation right now. The rest of the book is a "bear's eye" view of the sights, smells, and sounds of an inner-city laundromat.

Gainer, C. (2013). *I'm Like You, You're Like Me*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

“It’s fun to find ways I’m like you and you’re like me. It’s fun to find ways we’re different.” In this colorful, inviting book, kids from preschool to lower elementary learn about diversity in terms they can understand: hair that’s straight or curly, families with many people or few, bodies that are big or small. With its wide-ranging examples and fun, highly detailed art, *I'm Like You, You're Like Me* helps kids appreciate the ways they are alike and affirm their individual differences. A two-page adult section in the back provides tips and activities for parents and caregivers to reinforce the themes and lessons of the book.

Jeffers, S. (2013). *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Oh no! Emma is in trouble! In this new version of the classic song, Santa comes to the rescue. Susan Jeffers's artwork sparkles with the excitement of a magical journey, revels in the fun of the twelve preposterous gifts, and brings us home in time for a joyful Christmas morning.

Keats, E. J. (2004). *Louie*. New York, NY: Puffin Books.

Susie and Roberto are putting on a puppet show and all of their friends have come to see it, including Louie. As the show begins, Louie becomes fascinated by the smiling puppet Gussie and shouts "Hello!" in front of a silent audience. After the show, Louie goes home and dreams about Gussie. When he wakes up, he discovers that his friends

have left a gift for him. This classic Ezra Jack Keats story of love and generosity is as meaningful today as when it was first published more than twenty years ago.

Kovalski, M. (1987). *The Wheels on the Bus*. New York, NY: Little Brown and Co.

While a grandmother and grandchildren wait for the bus, they sing the title song with such gusto they miss their bus.

McCafferty, C. (2002). *The Gingerbread Man*. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa Publishing, LLC.

In this beloved tale, the Gingerbread Man escapes from the oven and has to outrun all the creatures that try to catch him! Children will eagerly continue reading to see if he is able to avoid the clever fox or if he will end up as an afternoon snack. -- Between the pages of the Brighter Child(R) Keepsake Stories books are the classic tales of magic, imagination, and inspiration that will delight children again and again. From the hard-working Red Hen to the foolish Gingerbread Man, these stories will capture children's interest and spark their imagination page after page, inspiring a lifelong love of literature and reading.

Muldrow, D. (1982). *The Little Red Hen*. New York, NY: Random House Publishing.

Beloved illustrator J. P. Miller's graphic, colorful farm animals seem to jump right off the page—but they aren't jumping to help the Little Red Hen plant her wheat! Young children will learn a valuable lesson about teamwork from this funny, favorite folktale.

Rohmann, E. (2007). *My Friend Rabbit*. New York, NY: Square Fish Publishers.

When Mouse lets his best friend, Rabbit, play with his brand-new airplane, trouble isn't far behind. From Caldecott Honor award winner Eric Rohmann this is a picture book about friends and toys and trouble, illustrated in robust, expressive prints.

Tafari, N. (1996). *Have You Seen my Duckling?* New York, NY: Greenwillow Books.

An anxious mother duck leads her brood around the pond as she searches for one missing duckling.

Tolstoy, A. (2003). *The Enormous Turnip*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Inc.

They pull and pull again, but will they *ever* pull that turnip up? Scott Goto breathes new life into this classic Russian folktale with bright colors and bold illustrations, making it accessible for even the earliest reader.

Vase, C. (2006). *The Penguin Who Wanted to Fly*. New York, NY: Scholastic Books.

Flip-Flop is a little penguin with a big dream. He wants to fly! But even his snow plane can't give him wings. Then he discovers that wishes can come true -- sometimes in an unexpected way.