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READING FOR EQUALITY:
AN EXAMINATION OF GENDER-BIAS
IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading

by
Diane Estelle Railsback

June 1993

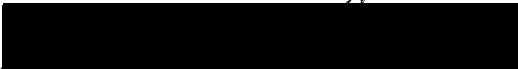
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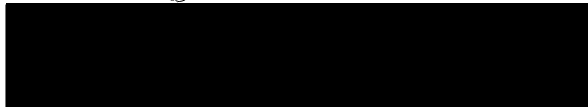
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Approved by:



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June 9, 1993
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Dr. Katharine Busch, Second Reader

Abstract

This project takes a look at surveys and research on gender-bias and sex stereotyping in children's literature and textbooks. It also assesses the effects of sex stereotyping on children and discusses teachers' influence in the classroom. This project examines ways in which teachers can evaluate gender-biased literature and select more appropriate reading materials and includes a criteria to determine gender-fairness in books. Examples of gender-fair picture and story books for children are provided in an annotated bibliography.

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Introduction

If the idea that "...literature not only mirrors a culture, it also has the power to shape and teach" (Tetenbaum & Pearson, 1989, p.381) holds any truth, then educators need to take a look at what children read in school. The answer to the age-old question, "Does art imitate life or does life imitate art?" goes around and around, the debate endless and futile. The same frustration applies to the dilemma of children's literature and the role of females in society. Does literature, as an afterthought, accurately reflect societal changes? Or does society take its ideas and cues from literature and evoke changes in the roles its members play? Whether these two forces work independent of each other as separate entities, or work in tandem, research has shown that a disparity exists between the roles that females currently play in our culture, and how they are treated and represented in children's literature.

Statement of the problem

Every school day across the nation, children sit and listen to or read for themselves a variety of literature. This literature is in some way provided and endorsed by the school district and its teachers. Unfortunately, not all literature accurately and fairly reflects the changing social values and diversity of our culture. Although current literature certainly shows improvement over past reading materials, according to many researchers it still lags behind in authentic portrayals of females in today's society. "... [Re-searchers] agree that there has been male dominance in picture books in the past, but the trend is toward sex equality" (Dougherty & Engel, 1987). However, "...[the Honor books of the 80s] are not enough. Other picture books must be sought to provide other vital images to supplement and to balance a program providing freedom of opportunity and a sense of reality" (p. 398).

Although the publishing process takes time, and requires both money and a publisher's approval, moving from creative idea to writing, from editing to printing, more attention and focus is needed to keep pace with changes in society. For a nation whose 1980 census shows 52.3% of its female population working outside the home, it seems reasonable to expect gender-representative literature that shows the important

diversity and varied roles that contemporary women play in the community and the labor force.

This project will address the issue of gender-bias and sex stereotyping in children's literature. The problem as addressed herein, is three-fold: educators overall may be unaware that females are underrepresented and poorly portrayed; educators interested in using gender-fair literature have access to few criteria to evaluate the existing literature and lack the resources to provide better examples; current literature that reflects women's roles in contemporary society may not exist in number and quality to provide better role models.

The purpose of this project will be to review the literature dealing with gender-biased literature and stereotyping in children's books. The rationale and need for selecting and using more realistic and equitable reading material will be discussed, as will the psychologists' views that support the worth of such beliefs. The project will provide suggested criteria for educators to use to evaluate children's literature for gender-bias and an annotated bibliography of contemporary children's picture and story books featuring female characters in positive, non-traditional roles that reflect changes from past literature. Because this writer's interests lie in primary education,

kindergarten through third grade, the focus will be in that area. However, brief mention will be made of general findings whenever applicable.

Theoretical Foundations

This project draws upon theories of affective development by psychologists Carol Gilligan and Nona Lyons. Their pioneering work serves as a counterpoint to classic developmental theories where male subjects have provided the basis for understanding moral, cognitive, and gender-identity development. In its search for identity and definition, the feminist movement of the 1970s began to challenge and question the validity of the existing research on moral development and gender-identity. Feminists began to believe that by establishing theories of behavior based on male-subject research only, an inherent sexual bias exists in the findings (Hyde, 1985). One of the first developmental models to be re-examined was Kohlberg's work on moral development (Kohlberg, 1969).

Models of Moral Development

Kohlberg's model of moral development was based on interviews with eighty-four male subjects who had been presented with a fictional moral dilemma. These individuals were studied over a period of twenty years for the ways and means they used to develop their set of values. The model subsequently developed describes three levels of moral development, each with two stages, from Preconventional to Postconventional morality (see Table 1).

Kohlberg's model stresses justice and rights, and

Table 1

Kohlberg's Model of Moral Development

| Levels and stages | Definitions |
|--|---|
| Level I Preconventional morality | |
| Stage 1. Punishment orientation | Obey rules to avoid punishment |
| Stage 2. Naive reward orientation | Obey rules to receive rewards |
| Level II Conventional morality | |
| Stage 3. Good-boy/ good-girl orientation | Conform to rules for others' approval/disapproval |
| Stage 4. Authority orientation | Conform to rules to avoid society's censure |
| Level III Postconventional morality | |
| Stage 5. Social-contract orientation | Understand rules as necessary for social order, but change- able |
| Stage 6. Morality of individual principles and conscience | Rules subject to violation if personal, internal principles dictate |

unfolds from an egocentric and male-centered point of view. Including and comparing female interviews to his already developed model, Kohlberg decided that his findings indicated gender differences (Hyde, 1985). In his model, females most

frequently reach only Stage Three, Good boy/good girl orientation, whereas most males reach Stage Four, Authority orientation. According to Kohlberg, few if any persons reach the top level of full Actualization (Hyde, 1985). However, since his work was based on an all-male population, other researchers questioned its value when applied to female moral development.

Gilligan (1982), a feminist psychologist, has critiqued Kohlberg's model and posed an alternative model that defines a pattern of moral developmental stages unique to women. As a result, Gilligan offers a feminist reformulation of moral development that centers on the belief that women reason differently about moral dilemmas. As summarized by Tetenbaum and Pearson (1989), Gilligan suggests that there are two moral orientations: a morality of justice, focusing on principles and rules that are tied to the logic of equality and reciprocity; and a morality of care, focusing on responsibility and relationships to others. Gilligan describes three levels of moral development for women, from Preconventional to Postconventional morality (see Table 2).

Models of Gender Identity

Extending her work to include gender development, Gilligan collaborated with Lyons (1983) to provide two contrasting perspectives of how females and males define themselves. Their work shows how a responsibility

Table 2

Gilligan's Model of Moral Development

| Levels | Definition |
|---|---|
| Level I Preconventional morality | Concern for the self and survival |
| Level II Conventional morality | Concern for being responsible, caring for others |
| Level III Postconventional morality | Concern for self and others as interdependent |

orientation is more central to those who see themselves as connected and related to others, and a rights orientation is more common to those who see themselves as separate and autonomous. (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). Although the theory is not gender-exclusive, Lyons finds that many more women than men define themselves in terms of relationships and connections to others (Belenky et al., 1986).

A further component of this study outlines and defines the self in relation to others. Lyons describes two characteristic modes of describing the self: a self that is separated or objective in its relations to others; and a self that is connected or interdependent in its relations to others (Tetenbaum & Pearson, 1989). An individual whose self is defined as separate/objective establishes relationships

based upon rules and equal exchanges. In contrast, a connected self experiences and responds to others with concern and welfare, and is a relationship grounded in interdependence.

Kohlberg has based his cognitive developmental theory on rules also. Again using all male subjects, Kohlberg (1966) did extensive research and work on gender-identity acquisition. According to his theory, children actively construct sex-role attributes and perceptions by organizing rules from the world around them, and through this process develop an appropriate gender role and a positive self-concept (Hyde, 1985). However, feminists find fault with this theory and point out that in order for a female to learn to value herself as a positive individual, her thinking must correspond to cultural valuations. Since in this culture the male role model is valued more highly than the female role, the process creates a conflict between a female's need for self-worth and cultural expectations. Instead, many feminists agree that the socialization process, involving imitation and reinforcement, more closely explains how gender roles are acquired (Hyde, 1985).

For other feminists, the key to understanding gender development lies in seeing status and power as determiners (Hyde, 1985). They perceive women as a class of society, unequal to their male counterparts. As a result, sexism and

discrimination exists across the spectrum of life: politics, academics, economics, and interpersonal relationships (Hyde, 1985).

Yet still other more radical feminists think that the message being sent to females should not be one of emulating the male role, but of challenging its validity. Feminists believe women need to create "some semblance of a collective culture and of common ideals" (Fox-Genovese, 1989, p. 34) that reflect the value of women's experiences.

In summary, gender roles serve to help children structure and understand the reality of the world around them. If these roles devalue and invalidate the connectedness of women's experiences, and restrict individuality by shutting off individual potentials and aspirations, then the feminists believe children would be better off without them, or that at the least they need to be radically revised (Hyde, 1985).

Literature Review

Overview

This literature review will present research on gender-bias and sex stereotyping in children's literature. This research covers readers of all ages, including undergraduate students and teachers. The studies deal with the nature and content of reading materials, effects of stereotyping on children, the role of teacher influence, and criteria for evaluating and choosing gender-fair literature.

Reading Materials

Weitzman's classic research in 1972 has served as a springboard for numerous studies since that date. His survey of picture books for preschoolers showed male and female characters in traditional stereotypical manner. Specifically he found that there were higher number of male characters than female, females were presented as less significant, and females were in more serving roles, with males in more adventurous roles (Doughty & Engle, 1987). Weitzman, in their text says:

Picture books play an important role in early sex-role socialization because they are a vehicle for the presentation of societal values to the young child...Through books, children learn about the world outside their environment...In addition, books provide children with role models---images of what they can be and should be when they grow up (Doughty & Engle, 1987, p. 394).

In an attempt to provide follow-up assessment on Weitzman's work, three research studies, two more current, have been

done surveying Caldecott Winners and Honors Books. Although Caldecott Winners and Honors Books are not a representative sample of children's literature, they do "constitute a good selection of the *most influential* children's picture books" (Williams, Jr., Vernon, Williams, & Malecha, 1987, p. 149).

The first of these studies, (Collins, Ingoldsby, & Dellmann, 1984), hypothesized that new assessments of children's literature would reflect the changes in women's work roles as evidence by titles, central roles, and illustrations. They found that more sexual quality had been achieved in titles, central roles and illustrations, and when in central roles, females took on non-traditional attributes. However, females reverted back to traditional roles when in shared or secondary roles.

Using Caldecott Winners and Honors Books from 1981 to 1985, the second of these studies (Dougherty & Engel, 1987) also focused on a numerical count of characters by gender. Both illustrations and text were counted, and animals were included when represented. They found that in the most current five-year period, 1981 to 1985, the percent of females in the stories was about equal to that of males, 43% to 57%. This contrasted with Weitzman (1972) who found women present only one fourth of the time. In attempting to achieve the most accurate gender-identification possible, Dougherty and Engel note that the distinguishing

characteristics used to label gender in their study differ from the criteria Weitzman used. In the Dougherty study for example: "...firefighters [in the book] at the fire scene had no observable sex characteristics, and since either males or females can be firefighters today, they were placed in the 'neuter' category" (p. 396). Whereas any illustration of an unspecified gender was considered male in the Weitzman study, Dougherty and Engel have attempted to avoid this. They concluded:

As a group [Caldecott Winners and Honors Books] represent a shift toward sex equality and provide some changing sex characteristics and roles. ... today's literature written for preschool-age children reflects a change in women's work roles, with more females present in central roles, illustrations, and titles (p. 398).

The third study of Caldecott Winners and Honors Books, 1980-1985, (Williams, Jr. et al, 1987) dealt with more specific attributes of the characters (i.e. dependent, co-operative, competitive, explorative, creative, passive). In addition to counting gender and number of appearances, such features as visibility, location and role models were considered. The researchers found that female and male attributes as acted out through the characters differed. Females were more often shown as "dependent, submissive, nurturant, and passive" (p.154) whereas males were more likely quite the opposite. They were independent, persistent, competitive, and active. Although the authors

concluded that there is more parity in male to female ratios in the current books as compared to the earlier books, they make the distinction that the current books contain no adult females to provide any ambition and that there is almost unanimity in conformity to traditional gender roles. So while quantity has changed, quality has not.

White (1988) analyzed children's and adolescent fictional books for situations involving characters helping one another and found several differences. Females were found to be more likely to receive than give help. Females needed to be rescued, required help by males to solve problems, and suffered more for physical conditions (i.e. overweight, and beautiful sisters). Males were depicted as providing more help and giving more emotional support or encouragement when dealing with other male characters, a stereotypical female virtue. White concludes "...[the female characters] reflect the cultural stereotype of the helpless female, the perennial damsel in distress in need of male protection" (p. 255).

Purcell and Stewart (1990) compared a 1972 survey of Dick and Jane books to current readers. In the newer readers, girls were pictured in a wider range of activities, but women role models did not display as wide a range of occupations as the male characters. The writers concluded that sex stereotyping in today's readers is less pronounced

than in 1972 but still more equitable representation could be achieved. They add:

How children learn to perceive themselves is in many ways dependent on the role models they are given. In our society many of these role models are given by official sanction in school materials...[It is] important to make sure the role models children are presented with coincide with social reality and are not based on out-dated stereotypes (p. 177).

The problem extends to textbooks as well. California history books suffer from a lack of accurate reporting of California women in history. Lothrop (1989) points out that even as publishers attempt to add more women to their historical surveys, the women are included as wives or former wives. "Since gender in our society is as much a social distinction as it is biological, it must be remembered that every issue, every trend, every historical process carries with it perspectives unique to women" (Lothrop, 1989, p. 9). Lothrop offers the explanation that women's history does not lie in the business transaction or war and peace treaty, but in the social ephemera of a culture. Thus lies the difficulty in gaining access to women's history.

Looking at other textbooks, a strong gender bias toward males exists in post-1960 science texts (Nilsen, 1987). The launch of Sputnik and the establishment of the National Defense Education Act began an alarming trend in science books. During the first few years of the NDEA, library funds went towards science and math books exclusively. Justified

by the belief that boys possess innate skills for scientific studies, publishers aimed their books at motivating boys to enter science-related jobs and fields (Nilsen, 1987). Many of these books are still on shelves.

In a study of these books and current editions (Nilsen, 1987), two areas of concern surfaced. First, in the older texts, the illustrations were judged to be male orientated on a ratio of five to one. Females in the illustrations were depicted as being dependent on bigger males. Secondly, the consistent and pervasive use of the pronoun "he" implied that science was a masculine field.

In contrast, newer science texts contain more photographs than illustrations, and these are more gender equitable and realistic. However, the illustrations still remain gender-biased towards males, indicating possibly that the artists maintain some personal biases. In terms of grammar, more authors are choosing to word their text in a way that utilizes the pronoun "they" in order to avoid the gender specific "he", which might preclude females (Nilsen, 1987).

Bazler (1990) was less optimistic. She found only one in seven text books of 1980 editions showing dramatic improvement in gender fairness as compared to 1973 editions. The survey measured illustrations for named historic and contemporary male and female figures, unidentified adult male

and female figures, and unidentified young male and female figures.

The same trend seems to apply to math books. Numbers of females and minorities are more adequately portrayed but representation of careers is less than adequate (Garcia, Harrison, & Torres, 1990). The authors state:

If the discipline of mathematics is to be perceived by female and minority children as a prerequisite for a potential career field, then illustrations in elementary textbooks should depict female and minority adults in a variety of occupational and professional roles (p. 3).

Gonzalez-Suarez and Ekstrom (1989) specifically focused their research on analyzing reading series textbooks, kindergarten through seventh grade, from four major U.S. publishers: Addison-Wesley, Houghton-Mifflin, Macmillan, and Scott-Foresman. By applying a coding system and rating the seven textbooks for occupations, personality traits, roles within the family, games, sports, and artistic activities, the researchers came to the conclusion that "reading textbooks in the U.S. still present a male-dominated scene" (p. 10). However, evidence exists that publishers are making some effort to remove sex bias from their texts. Females are shown more in non-traditional roles than before, which present a wider range of occupations appropriate for women (Gonzalez-Suarez & Ekstrom, 1989). Females also display a wider range of personality traits. The ironic discovery was that the same reversal of roles for males has not occurred.

Whereas some female stereotyping has been eliminated, male stereotyping has received less attention, and demonstrated little or no change (Gonzalez-Suarez & Ekstrom, 1989).

Besides the issue of gender inequity, racial and socio-economic discrimination exists in curriculum and reading material. In addition to females being represented poorly in literature books, other minorities suffer bias in learning attitudes (Gay, 1990). Specifically, she says:

Curriculum and instruction for middle-class males have an academic focus, are oriented toward mastery, and are designed to promote personal autonomy and empowerment. Curriculum and instruction for low-income, minority, and female students tend to emphasize personal dependency, social conformity, and low-status knowledge and skills (p. 57).

With the advent of trade books being used in classrooms for social studies and history, Bruner (1988) issues this warning: "...there is a third level on which a story also may work, a detrimental one, which, being subtle, often goes unrecognized. Acclaimed texts may harbor insidious stereotypes of prevalent social attitudes" (p. 124). Bruner goes on to name popular trade books which she believes offer contradictory messages about Native Americans and negative portrayals of Blacks.

Effects of Stereotyping on Children

Just like any other form of discrimination, gender-bias in children's literature effects how children see themselves and others. Peterson and Lach (1990) see picture books as

offering young children "a macrocosmic resource through which they can discover worlds beyond their own life space" (p. 189). Children's books provide a reinforcement of cultural values and mores, and children learn from the models and images presented to them. If picture books and literature portray females in limited or devalued roles, then young females will see their own expectations as limited and devalued. In discussing a report from the Child Study Children's Book Committee (1980), Peterson and Lach (1990) summarize that if authors and illustrators intend to produce books that demonstrate democratic ideals, they will need to include appropriate and respectable characters of both genders, and of all ages and ethnic backgrounds.

Kenneth Goodman (1987), coming from a reading perspective, notes that children's literature presents the reader with the "universality of human experience" (p. 313) and that children get insights into human motivation and behavior. He states: "...literature also helps to develop children's imaginations by encouraging them to ask and to seek answers to 'what if' questions" (p. 313).

Building upon theorists who have researched how gender identity is acquired, Purcell and Stewart (1990) list four assumptions about how children perceive themselves:

1. Sex roles are learned behavior and are not solely biologically defined.

2. Sex-role definitions can be learned from role models including people presented in media such as picture books, story books, and films.

3. Role definitions that are too narrow or rigid can be harmful to a child's development.

4. Such narrowly defined sex-role definitions have been found by prior research in children's literature.

Frost (1989, as cited in Peterson & Lach, 1990) found that children's stereotyped attitudes about jobs and activities were influenced and became less stereotyped by reading stories about people who had successfully fought sex discrimination. Children's attitudes about peer and adult activities and personality characteristics showed decreases in gender stereotyping by exposure to non-stereotyped books.

Peterson and Lach (1990) refer to Braclay's (1974) findings which show how children exposed to non-sexist stories or books over long periods of time display reduced sex-role stereotyping. A study by Campbell and Wirtenberg in 1980 (as cited in Peterson & Lach, 1990) reports similar findings. The longer children are exposed to sex-biased or bias-free materials, the longer they hold sex-biased or bias-free attitudes.

Another area of study that measures the effects of stereotyped books on student behavior focuses on story interest and comprehension. Bleakley, Westerberg, and

Hopkins (1988) studied 540 fifth graders, asking them to read a selection of short stories involving adventure, mystery, and humor. They discovered that a reader's interest level is much higher when the gender of the reader and the gender of the main character are the same. They found no effects on comprehension levels.

A 1975 study by Jennings (Peterson & Lach, 1990) found a link between a reader's story recall and the main character's gender. Children preferred stories about characters in traditional role behaviors, but actually recalled more details and remembered longer the stories that were the same-gender character as themselves, in a non-traditional role.

Children's creative writing has also been analyzed for effects of gender stereotyping. Romatowski and Trepanier (1987) studied 180 first through sixth graders, and reported on their entries as completed for a "Young Author's Conference." It was found that both male and female writers assigned few occupational roles to female characters. Male characters were assigned roles with prestige, power, and authority. However, more female writers than male writers created female characters, and these female characters possessed more attributes than the male characters. This trend by female writers increased with grade level.

Peterson and Lach (1990) examined research by McArthur and Eisen (1976) that suggests children's actual behaviors

can be effected by themes in story material. After pre-school boys and girls listened to stories about characters who displayed achievement-oriented behaviors, the children showed longer persistence at tasks if the main character was the same gender as themselves, than if the main character was opposite-gender.

Coming from an author's perspective, Mem Fox (1993), creator of many popular children's books, discusses how she sees the effects of gender-stereotyping in literature:

"Gender stereotypes in literature prevent the fullness of female human potential from being realized by depriving girls of a range of strong alternative role models. I believe that male human potential is also stunted by such material" (p. 84). She questions whether literature might be partly to blame for denying girls in their womanhood excitement and power, and for trapping males in a "frightful emotional prison and demanding intolerable social expectations" (p.85).

Temple (1993), also a children's book author, recounts a conversation with a librarian turned author. This librarian discovered that boys start to lose interest in reading at about the third grade. In attempting to rescue that segment of the school population, she deliberately writes stories in the true-hero tradition with boys as the main characters. Temple asks: "How much is the cause of girl's empowerment being forfeited for the sake of stimulating reluctant boys

to read?" (p.90).

Fox (1993) describes her own personal motivation for writing books that present strong, alternative role models. One of her books, The Straight Line Wonder, tells of a young boy who succeeds as a dancer, despite family misgivings and objections. In her own childhood experience, it was her ten-year-old cousin Andrew who was taunted by peers to the point of abandoning his desire to dance ballet forever. She confesses to "storming their stories onto paper" (p. 85).

Defending her own attempts to write gender-fair literature for young people, Fox (1993) admits to embedding "counter-sexist attitudes intentionally" (p.85). She refers to creating character behaviors that give permission for both females and males to assume non-traditional attributes and says:

I hope I'm liberating males and therefore females, simultaneously. But I hope that no one has quite realized what I'm doing. I believe that subtlety has conditioned us thus far and that to undo its negative effect, writers have to be equally subtle in their approach...I labor desperately, but as quietly as possible (p. 85).

She hopes not to be the "shrill propagandist" (p.87) who is so extreme that she fails to see the "powerful good in so-called feminine attributes such as tenderness and compassion" (p.87).

Fox goes on to impose responsibility for making changes on children's book writers like herself. She challenges them

to acknowledge society's fast-changing attitudes about women, people of color, the elderly, and minorities. She says: "We who write children's books, and we who teach through literature, need to be sure we are opening the doors to full human potential, not closing them" (p.84).

Teacher Influence

Sex-role stereotyping begins in the hospital with pink and blue blankets, continues at home with sex-role typing toys, and is reinforced in the school system. Romatowski and Trepanier (1987) see the school, its curriculum and its activities as a major environmental influence. While Chandler and Pennington (1986) recognize that school is only one of the many institutions involved in the sex-role stereotyping of students, it is the educators who become responsible for planning for and providing bias-free, gender-fair, and socially reflective literature for students. Teachers create opportunities for students to learn to share leadership roles and work as partners regardless of gender.

Various studies indicate that teachers unconsciously respond differently to students of different gender. Chandler and Pennington (1986) report that teachers interact more with males and praise them more frequently for their academic behaviors, whereas females receive praise most frequently for non-academic behavior, and also receive more punitive messages for failures in academic performance. In

addition, males are talked to and listened to more than females, and allowed to interrupt more than females.

It appears that teachers pay more attention to students who "actively seek involvement in the learning process" (Bluestein, 1984, p. 111), a trait boys most often exhibit. Girls, in contrast, wait passively and patiently for teachers to notice them. Unfortunately, sex-role bias can be a double-edged sword. Males, discouraged from participating in activities traditionally thought of as female, miss opportunities to develop their selves, talents, and interest to the fullest extent (Bluestein, 1984).

Literature that children read promotes sex-role stereotypes. By the books that teachers choose to read, indirect messages are sent to students about what is important and valued in terms of sex roles (Smith, Greenlaw, & Scott, 1987). Smith et al. (1987) surveyed 245 teachers (kindergarten through 6th grade) in Texas and Kansas and asked for a listing of their most favorite books for reading aloud to children. By applying a number of mathematical manipulations they discovered that through 254 teachers, 78,000 students would be exposed to these teachers' read-aloud preferences, for an average per/student of 361 listening hours from kindergarten to 6th grade.

As for the listing of the favorite books read, the results were alarming. 43% had male protagonists, 21% had

female protagonists, and 13% had both a male and female protagonist. The remaining 23% had either a neutral protagonist or none (Smith et al., 1987). Worse than the actual gender-numerical count was the qualitative attributes of the female characters. The adult women were portrayed as mothers or homemakers only, with behaviors analyzed as neurotic, cranky, and brave but needing male help. This survey also found negative images of minorities and the elderly, with the disabled totally excluded.

It is not being argued that teachers deliberately behave in gender-biased ways, but teachers do enjoy the unique position of effecting change and growth in the consciousness and mental attitudes of all young people (Chandler & Pennington, 1986). One of the first steps teachers need to take is to become aware of their behaviors and secondly, take an active effort to change them.

Bluestein (1984) provides a self-administered quiz for teachers that assesses their degree of sex-bias in the classroom. The questions are intended to uncover oral language habits, separatist tendencies, and attitudes towards student activities and classroom situations. The questions are answered with frequency rates for self behaviors in whole groups and towards "boys" or "girls". The quiz is self-scored and intended to arouse awareness. Bluestein adds that depending on that awareness, more personal commitment may be

necessary to eliminate gender-stereotyping behavior.

Taking a more intense approach, Schwister, Rich, and Hossman (1984) designed a three-day workshop. The program was specifically intended to meet three goals: first, to heighten teacher awareness of sex-role stereotyping; second, to stimulate teachers to examine their own value systems as they relate to sex-role stereotyping; and third, to provide teachers with resources and information which could be applied in the classroom. Twenty-five teachers from kindergarten through 12th grade participated in activities, dialogues, and processes through which they learned about sex-role stereotyping and their own vulnerability to media presentations.

Smith et al. (1987) draw conclusions that can be directed to all educators, those who work directly with children, and those who control and contribute to materials that children in our schools are exposed to:

A commitment to preparing all young persons to be capable of determining the quality of their own lives requires that educators not inhibit them in any way based on their gender (p. 407).

Criteria for Evaluation

By omission, the California State Framework for Language Arts (1987) is guilty of neglecting the issue of gender-stereotyping in children's literature. The framework draws attention to the value and need for multicultural literature that enables teachers and students "to explore and learn from

the differences among cultures and times" (p.7), but fails to mention the need to seek out and use literature that recognizes and validates one of the largest majority-minorities in the country---women.

The framework lists three goals, all of which pertain directly to answering the needs of a changing society in terms of gender roles: to prepare all students to function as informed and effective citizens in our democratic society; to prepare all students to function effectively in the world of work; and to prepare all students to realize personal fulfillment. In terms of standards for literature, the framework suggests "significant themes that broaden students' awareness of their own and others' societies", and a "literary heritage which connects students to political, social, and ethical issues central to our society" (p. 42). However, the suggestions are broad, undefined and ambiguous. The framework provides no guidelines or criteria by which an educator can evaluate and select materials other than what is already provided for on the core list. A single reference denotes the existence of women: "Some students may need help understanding feminist stories" (p.7).

Criteria by which educators can evaluate and assess literature for gender-bias comes from different sources, many times individuals who are sensitive to the need for change. Chandler and Pennington (1986) developed a comprehensive

handbook which discusses sex-bias and school-based stereotyping. Originally created for a vocational students' classroom, the handbook includes thirty-five classroom activities that extend from understanding and awareness of sex-bias and self-concepts to analyzing and reversing sex-bias in literature, advertising, humor and language. The lessons are designed to promote examination and discussion of certain aspects of sex-bias that occur across American culture.

One particular lesson looks at sex-bias in terms of the effects of reversing gender roles in story books. The lesson plan calls for fifteen to thirty minutes of interaction between students after reading a story book either in large or small group. Before reading, the students are instructed to read the story and substitute a female name for each male character, and a male name for each female character. After reading, the students respond to a variety of questions intended to uncover biases and promote examinations of feelings and reactions. Depending on the story line, the questions might attempt to identify particular character attributes such as decision maker, problem-solver, provider, rescuer, adventurer, and leader. Traditionally, these roles are assigned to male characters in children's literature. This lesson opens up student thinking to consider how females fill these roles and if those changes more accurately reflect

contemporary society.

Another lesson from Chandler's and Pennington's (1986) handbook provides an activity for analyzing textbooks. Students are divided into groups, assigned different texts, and given a different topic to research. The topics include analyzing both pictures and content for active and passive behaviors of both men and women, listing all activities for both men and women, and listing examples of hostility between sexes, generalizations about either sex, and family patterns. After ten to thirty minutes of reading, the students share their findings and determine how their texts hold up to questions about numbers of males and females pictured, whether the text reflects a realistic view of today, and whether or not the student recognizes subtle influence by the text to stereotype. This lesson encourages "students to analyze a book as they read it and to identify and reword biased language" (Chandler & Pennington, 1986, p. 83).

Ideally, avoiding books which display sex stereotyping and gender-bias would be much simpler. However, the sheer volume of gender-biased materials precludes that option. Temple (1993) has devised a process by which gender-biased books can be examined and evaluated, called "reading against the grain." It begins by asking readers to respond to the question "What is there in what we just read that you feel called upon to doubt?" (p. 92). Through conversation,

students critique, question, and debate the issues of roles, relationships, and power as presented in the material.

Temple offers this teaching technique as an alternative to banning books.

Chandler and Pennington suggest other ways to avoid sex-bias in education besides dealing directly with literature: avoiding the purchase of biased material and using audio-visual and other supplementary materials; inviting people employed in non-traditional occupations to visit the classroom and speak; presenting students with an actual picture of the work world and its realities; promoting discussion and activities which increase students' awareness of the problem. These strategies go a long way towards bettering the climate of equality between genders.

Goals

The goals of this project are to provide:

1. information that increases educator awareness of gender-bias and sex stereotyping that occurs in children's literature, and its effects.
2. a guideline and criteria to assist educators in evaluating children's literature for gender-bias and sex stereotyping.
3. an annotated bibliography of children's literature that shows female characters in positive, non-traditional roles.

Limitations

This project is limited by the following:

1. The annotated bibliography of children's literature does not include directions for any specific teaching method. It serves only as a suggested list of books. How these materials are used is left to the discretion of the teacher.

2. The annotated bibliography is considered incomplete in as much as this writer was constrained by time, and access to all new literature being published by the many companies. It also focuses primarily on picture and story books appropriate for kindergarten through third grade.

3. The annotated bibliography and guideline is subject to this writer's own personal, professional and subjective standards. Readers may agree or disagree with any of the selections on this list, or the criteria used to make those selections.

4. An emerging philosophy suggests a different approach to changing children's literature. It has been proposed, that in order to create a more equitable participation of both genders in society, that not only should female characters be presented with more positive attributes, but male characters should be portrayed with the more positive attributes associated with females. This philosophy has yet to be fully explored and accepted and the number of literature books supporting this idea is minimal.

Appendix A

Introduction to the project

Evidence exists through research to support the claim that gender-bias against females occurs in children's literature. Although not as prevalent as in the past, current literature is still male-focused and male-centered, with female characters playing traditional, out-dated, stereotypical roles. In picture and story books, male characters are depicted as independent and active, and having adventures. Female characters are shown as dependent and passive, and needing to be rescued. Role models that reflect women's occupations in contemporary society are not adequately represented. Textbooks do not depict, either through text or illustrations, equitable numbers of females, as corresponds to population census.

Developmental theories suggest that children gain a sense of gender-identity and learn appropriate gender roles from their reading. Values, mores, and cultural expectations are believed to be learned from models and images as presented through the literature, and then perpetuated through socialization. Reading materials that promote gender-bias and sex stereotyping can be harmful to children's development, whereas non-biased literature has been shown to improve children's attitudes.

Teachers influence gender roles by carefully choosing the literature they read aloud and assign to their students,

and by helping students recognize and evaluate gender-bias when confronted with it in their reading materials. By taking an assertive approach, teachers can actively teach themselves and their students how to deal with literature that attempts to stereotype by gender.

With guidelines, teachers can seek out and select literature that portrays females in positive and non-stereotypical ways. For example, illustrations need to profile female characters as active and involved in non-traditional behaviors. Appropriate themes and plots show female characters participating as adventurers and problem-solvers. Positive attributes such as courage, ingenuity, and enthusiasm should occur naturally in character descriptions. By selecting the best literature possible, and by teaching students to uncover gender-bias in existing literature, the issues of gender-bias can be debated and explored.

Appendix B

Criteria for Choosing Gender-Fair Literature

It is critical that, when evaluating children's literature, a reader judge the overall quality of the work. No single redeeming feature can make up for a poorly written book. On the other hand, even the best books can contain gender-bias in some form or another. The challenge is to find the best of both worlds: high quality stories, and positive female characters in work and family patterns that reflect the reality of today and tomorrow, not yesterday.

There are four distinct areas of children's literature that can be examined for gender-bias and sex stereotyping: illustrations, content, character traits, and text language.

When looking at **ILLUSTRATIONS**, ask these questions:

1. Is there a balanced number of females and males and not just a token number of females?
2. Are female characters shown outdoors and not indoors and house-bound?
3. Are female characters shown in active and not passive ways? What are they doing---climbing, building, riding or sitting, watching, daydreaming?
4. Are female characters shown in non-stereotypical occupations and activities and not only in secondary roles? (i.e. firefighter, supervisor, driver---NOT clerk, homemaker, caretaker).

5. Are female characters shown with physical attributes that depict the population realistically and not as mini-beauty models? (i.e. in an array of sizes, shapes, clothing styles--NOT paper doll minitures in dresses).

When reading for **CONTENT**, check the theme and plot for these features:

1. Is the main character a female? If not, are the female characters who are included in the story playing integral and valuable parts and not belittling or serving roles? (i.e. siblings/playmates/friends working as a team---NOT females as followers, bystanders, errand runners).

2. Is the female character involved in an active, non-stereotypical way and not as a passive recipient? (i.e. adventurer, leader, rescuer, provider---NOT passenger, helper, victim, tag-a-long).

3. Is the female character playing a non-stereotypical occupational role and not a conforming role? (i.e. builder, business owner, pilot, mechanic---NOT waitress, secretary, bank teller).

4. Is the female character participating in non-traditional activities and not typical female tasks? (i.e. soccer, camping, hiking, repairing---NOT babysitting, cooking, cleaning).

5. Is the female character written into the story line in a way that portrays her as a positive, non-stereotyped,

credible individual and not a victim of consequences beyond control? (i.e. assuming leadership of a group to solve a problem, believing in herself to attain a goal despite odds, being a hero, going on an adventure, speaking as a Senator---NOT needing rescue, asking for protection, waiting for others to make decisions).

When analyzing the character, assess these **PERSONAL**

ATTRIBUTES:

1. Is the female character exhibiting positive, non-stereotypical behaviors and not typical, expected actions? (i.e. courage, ambition, independence---NOT fright, submission, dependence).
2. Is the female described in positive and not negative ways? (i.e. assertive, competent, clever, inventive, creative---NOT timid, serving, stupid, boring).
3. Is the female character developed for her personal abilities and not her physical features? (i.e. strong, capable, inventive, enthusiastic---NOT beautiful, petite, prissy, doll-like, delicate).
4. Is the female character portrayed as emotionally strong and not weak? (i.e. calm, brave, decisive, quick witted---NOT crying, helpless, distressed).
5. Is the female character's overall profile reflective of contemporary society's view of women and not based on outdated expectations? (i.e. self-sufficient individual,

intelligent thinker, fully functioning member of society--- NOT social trophy, possession, financial burden, unskilled worker).

When examining the **TEXT LANGUAGE**, watch for these areas:

1. Does the text use shared and generic pronouns when possible and not specific maculine pronouns? (i.e. he and she, they, their---NOT he, his).
2. Does the text use generic and not gender-specific nouns? (i.e. police officer, sales person, firefighter, chairperson ---NOT policeman, salesman, fireman, chairman).
3. Does the text contain appropriate adjectives and not disparaging words? (i.e. smart boss, quick player, bright accountant---NOT cute secretary, pretty helper, sweetie, gal-Friday).
4. Does the text use titles appropriately and not focus unnessessarily on gender? (i.e. Dr. Lucy Jones a surgeon, Captain Mary Smith a pilot---NOT woman doctor Lucy Jones, woman pilot and mother of two Mary Smith).

Appendix C

Annotated Bibliography

This bibliography is designed to provide teachers with a selection of picture and story books that display female characters in positive, non-traditional, non-stereotypical roles and activities. At the same time, the characters maintain a sense of "connectedness", a trait that feminist psychologists contend is the basis of the female psyche.

The list is divided into four sections, each section representing a particular set of attributes: a) occupations; b) plots; c) activities and; d) personal attributes. Each section has a description of the attributes being displayed. Following that, each annotation includes a summary of the book, and an analysis of the character's behaviors. The books include all information necessary to locate them at a library or bookstore: author, date, title, publisher, and ISBN number. Also included are page numbers and whether the book is a picture book, one with a small amount of text usually following and describing the pictures, or a story book, one with more of a plot and interacting characters. As a bonus, some of the books are multi-cultural, which is noted.

Non-traditional occupations

This area of gender-stereotyping in literature is one that seems most slow to change and does not currently reflect

the diversity that exists in contemporary society. It appears that female characters in books are wearing fewer aprons, a change from past literature, but at the same time, not donning clothing or roles that depict them in any authentic, identifiable career. Here are some exceptions.

Field, R. (1988). General store. ill. Laroche, G. NY: Doubleday.

ISBN 0-316-28163-8, 26 pages, picture book.

Summary: Using her imagination and conjuring up pictures in her head, a young girl imagines what it would be like to own and run her own store. Originally written in 1926, these illustrations carry through with a rural motif, and the text is in rhyming verse.

Analysis: This story shows our female as goal-minded and ambitious. She is depicted as independent, responsible, and yet still concerned about her customer's needs.

Nixon, J. (1988). If you were a writer. ill. Degan, B. NY: Fourwinds Press.

ISBN 0-02-768210-2, 30 pages, story book.

Summary: Melia's mom is a writer, and she tells Melia how to write too. "Think of words that make pictures", and Melia thinks "sparkling" and "shimmery" when she sees the stars. Melia's thoughts become the illustrations as she follows her mother's directions, "Ask yourself what if?" and "Invent an imaginary character and a problem to solve."

Analysis: This is a good example of a mom at home, but definitely not doing the traditional housework. Mom sits behind a typewriter, and is excited when the postal carrier brings the first copies of her new book. Daughter is encouraged to believe she can write too, and there is a relaxed and loving relationship between them.

Pearson, S. (1978). Everybody knows that!. ill. Paterson, D. NY: Dial Press.

ISBN 0-8037-2417-9, 32 pages, story book.

Summary: A not-so-subtle story of what little girls can do. Patti and her best friend Herbie start kindergarten, and their friendship/equal partnership suffers when his peers convince him that she cannot do everything they can do. Patti turns the tables on Herbie when he comes to visit and wants to help bake cookies.

Analysis: Rather blatant in it's point, it is a good book to begin a class discussion about gender roles and activities. This female character is determined she is not going to be

second best, and that girls can be airline pilots too. However, she also is worried about losing Herbie's friendship and is happy when the problem is resolved.

Young, R. (1991). Daisy's taxi. ill. Sewall, M. NY: Orchard Books.

ISBN 0-531-05921-9, 32 pages, picture book.

Summary: Daisy is the local seaside taxi driver---rowing a boat across the channel between mainland and a small island community. She is trusted with packages, people, animals, all sorts of passengers and their things. Through calm and storm, Daisy does her job.

Analysis: This female character is brave and dependable, and is quite self-sufficient. She does her non-traditional job well, taking responsibility for other's safety. She is depicted as a vital part of the community, a good example of the "connectedness" that feminist psychologists describe.

Non-stereotypical plots

These books show female characters playing parts that depict them as problem-solvers, decision makers, and leaders. They participate fully in reaching their own resolutions, and carry major responsibility for themselves and sometimes for others.

Brett, J. (1990). The wild Christmas reindeer. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-44908-7, 30 pages, story book, multicultural.

Summary: Teeka is in charge of getting Santa's reindeer ready for Christmas night. In her haste, needing to hurry, she neglects their feelings while herding, grooming, and training. She learns that gentle persuasion is better than bossing.

Analysis: This female character is charged with great responsibility, and succeeds in meeting her goal after introspection to solve her problem. Her love for her animals is apparent, and it is her sensitivity that enables her to understand them.

Bunting, E. (1989). Wednesday surprise. ill. Carrick, D. NY: Houghton-Mifflin.

ISBN 0-89919-721-3, 30 pages, story book.

Summary: Grandmother and 7-year-old granddaughter diligently work together on Wednesday evenings preparing a surprise for Dad's birthday. They read together and practice for the big

night, as one of them reads for the first time.

Analysis: A true sense of family emerges from this story, as two different generations work at a goal, persistent, caring, and proud of their final achievement. This is a good example of quiet yet determined resolution.

Burton, V. (1943). Katy and the big snow. NY: Scholastic. ISBN 0-590-04792-2, 40 pages, story book.

Summary: This is an old classic! This female animated tractor is essential to the city's survival after a major snowfall. She clears the roads for the police department, fire department, telephone and electric company, hospital, airport, and post office.

Analysis: The text in this story identifies only the doctor by gender, a male. All the other characters are named by position and not gender. The pictures are small, and the figures are in uniforms, so that gender identity is ambiguous. Great! This tractor does her job well, to the best of her ability. She is reliable, strong, and a leader as she says "Follow me" to everyone stuck in the snow.

Cooney, B. (1982). Miss Rumphius. NY: Viking Penguin. ISBN 0-670-47958-6, 32 pages, story book.

Summary: A story as told by her niece, reminiscing, Miss Rumphius had three goals: go to faraway places, live by the sea, and make the world more beautiful. Her visits to faraway places take her camel riding, mountain climbing and beach combing. As she finally settles by the sea, her lasting contribution is to plant the soil with flower seeds.

Analysis: This independent woman definitely did not live the traditional life style. She explored the world and made sure she experienced it fully. Her annually blooming lupines attest to her appreciation for and "connectedness" to the cycles of nature, a rich lesson not lost upon her niece.

Flournoy, V. (1985). The patchwork quilt. ill. Pinkney, J. NY: Dial.

ISBN 0-8037-0097-0, 32 pages, story book, multicultural.

Summary: Living in a multi-generational family, Tanya learns about the almost-lost art of quilt making from her grandmother. Her appreciation for the fine work encourages her mother to take an interest also. When grandmother falls ill, it is Tanya who picks up the quilt to finish it, and in doing so, brings her family even closer.

Analysis: This is a beautiful story about family, especially across the generations. Tanya takes initiative and shows persistence by working on the quilt. All three female characters are presented as strong individuals. The illustrations are superb!

Gill, S. (1984). Kiana's Iditarod. ill. Cartwright, S. Homer, AK: Paws IV Publishing.
ISBN 0-934007-00-4, 56 pages, story book, in verse.
Summary: This is a book dedicated to all the lead dogs of the Iditarod, the famous dog sled race across Alaska. Written in subtle rhyme, it details Kiana's training and eventual trek across the snow, ice, and barren terrain of the arctic. The journey is a confrontation with the dangers and hazards of the Alaskan frontier.
Analysis: This personified dog is shown as a strong leader who is responsible for not only the other dogs in the team, but the human behind the reins. Although the driver is a male, he seems secondary to the animal, and depends on his lead dog to meet the challenges of the elements.

Hoffman, M. (1991). Amazing Grace. ill. Binch, C. NY: Dial.
ISBN 0-8037-1040-2, 26 pages, story book, multicultural.
Summary: Grace likes to dress up and act out stories: Joan of Arc, the Trojan horse, a pirate, Mowgli, Aladdin. She's somewhat discouraged when her classmates tell her she cannot play Peter Pan because she's not a boy, and she's black, too. With support from Mom and Nana, she practices for the part and wins the admiration and respect of her peers.
Analysis: This young female character discovers she can do anything she sets her mind to do. The illustrations are delightful! This is a good example of persistence and determination, and self-esteem as instilled by other strong female family members.

McKissack, P. (1986). Flossie and the fox. ill. Isadora, R. NY: Scholastic.
ISBN 0-590-45884-1, 32 pages, story book, multicultural.
Summary: Author McKissack relates this "yarn" as told by her grandfather. Told in easy-to-read dialect, a young girl outwits a fox as she attempts to travel to the neighbors with a basket of eggs. Despite his tricks, Flossie outsmarts him and makes it safely to her destination.
Analysis: A great reversal of Red Riding Hood! This female character uses her intelligence and wits to confuse and distract the wolf, but without the usual gory ending. This finish is much more in align with ecology and contemporary society's attitude about the environment.

Morgan, A. (1985). Sadie and the snowman. ill. Clark, B. NY: Scholastic.
ISBN 0-590-41826-2, 32 pages, story book.
Summary: A young girl builds, rebuilds, and builds again a snowman, each time using different foods for the features. Each time as it melts, the animals eat the food and she is left with a small amount of snow to begin again. As spring

approaches, she finds a way to save a small amount of snow to save for next winter.

Analysis: This character cleverly creates faces for her snowmen, as the illustrations show. Respecting nature, she does not begrudge the animals their treats, but continues to rebuild after each melt. She solves her problem, and looks forward to a change of seasons.

Olson, A. (1987). The lighthouse keeper's daughter. ill. Wentworth, E. Canada: Little Brown.

ISBN 0-316-65053-6, 32 pages, story book.

Summary: This story is based upon old stories told about the lighthouse keepers in the 1850s, along the Maine coast.

According to this version, young Miranda is left in charge of the lighthouse when her father goes for supplies. With a mother who is uncomfortable with heights, Miranda takes full responsibility for lighting the candles, cleaning the glass and maintaining the beacon as a major storm hits the coast. Falling ill, she still completes all necessary chores to prevent disaster to ships and sailors.

Analysis: The hero here in this story takes on tremendous responsibility for the care of others. It becomes an incredible challenge as she fights off her illness, yet she persists with determination, making the decision to keep the lights going. A nice period piece, it would be useful from a social studies perspective.

Polacco, P. (1992). Chicken Sunday. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-46244-X, 32 pages, story book, multicultural.

Summary: Told in first person, this young Russian girl shares about being part of a neighborhood black family with two boys. Working together, they find a way to buy a special Easter hat for the boys' grandmother, Miss Eula. They make and sell "pysanky" eggs, decorated with wax patterns and dyed in the old Russian style.

Analysis: It is the girl's idea that enables the kids to make some money, and she, along with her mother, teaches the others how to decorate the eggs. She also shows courage when approaching the suspicious Russian store owner who sells the hats. This is a wonderful story of ethnic diversity and cooperation.

Samton, S. (1991). Jenny's journey. NY: Viking Penguin.

ISBN 0-670-83490-4, 32 pages, picture book.

Summary: Sensing loneliness in her best friend Maria's letter, Jenny decides to write herself "into" a letter and send it across the ocean to her friend. In the process, Jenny takes a journey in which she meets up with dolphins, an enormous ocean liner, and a storm. Playing her guitar as she travels, she finally "greet" Maria with a promise to really come and visit someday.

Analysis: Brightly creative illustrations portray this female character actively working to help out a friend in need. She is brave when necessary, bold because it pleases her. Although just an imaginary trip, Jenny is still on an adventure.

Schwartz, H. (1989). How I captured a dinosaur. ill.

Schwartz, A. NY: Orchard Books.

ISBN 0-531-05770-4, 32 pages, story book.

Summary: Liz is intrigued by her teacher's lesson on dinosaurs and begins research on her own. On a family camping trip to Baja, she discovers dinosaur footprints and sets out a hamburger for bait. After capture, the dinosaur provides some unpredictable entertainment.

Analysis: This is one ambitious character. Liz shows initiative as she sets out to explore, and is efficient in its capture. She shares it with her school mates, and is quite flexible and sensitive in response to her dinosaur's needs.

VanAllsburg, C. (1981). Jumanji. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-42233-2, 30 pages, story book.

Summary: Sister and brother find a dice and board game that brings wild African animals into their home with the roll of a die. Concerned with their own safety and with what their parents will say when they arrive home, the children work together to reach the end of the game and shout "JUMANJI!".

Analysis: This is a terrific, imaginative story, so well written and the parts of the female and male character so equitably divided, that the reader pays no attention to gender lines. Both characters share responsibility as leader, helpmate, and partner. Excellent example of family ties, intelligence, and problem-solving. The "all shades of grey" illustrations won this book a Caldecott Medal.

Non-stereotypical activities

These books show female characters participating in non-traditional, yet natural activities. These female characters hunt bears, paddle canoes, take off in balloons, and have adventures. A not unusual feature in many of the adventure stories is the consistent use of the "day dream". This writing technique seems to allow the female character to overcome many stereotypical expectations and limitations, and

permits her to participate more fully.

Alexander, M. (1988). Even that moose won't listen to me. NY: Dial Books.

ISBN 0-8037-0188-8, 24 pages, story book.

Summary: Because no one listens, Rebecca has trouble convincing her family that the garden is being consumed by a moose. Using three different strategies to chase it away, she finally succeeds with a face-to-face command to "CLEAR OUT!".

Analysis: Good illustrations! Rebecca is building a box "rocket ship" on her own, with carpenter tools. Her strategies are clever and creative, and she is persistent. Concerned about protecting the garden, she is not destructive in her methods to remove the animal.

Bang, M. (1988). Delphine. NY: Morrow Jr. Books.

ISBN 0-688-05636-9, 28 pages, picture book.

Summary: On her way to the post office to pick up her gift from her Grandmother, Delphine worries about how hard it's going to be to steer the new bike. In the meantime, she travels downhill full speed in a buggy, across a rope bridge, down a waterfall, through a lightening storm, oblivious of her already acquired skills.

Analysis: The young lady in this story is active and definitely not traditional in her movements and actions. Seemingly unaware of the danger she might be in, she continues confidently on her way.

Berry, C. (1990). Mama went walking. ill. Brusca, M. NY: Holt.

ISBN 0-8050-1261-3, 28 pages, picture book.

Summary: Mama and daughter play a special game. "Imagining" wonderful adventures, Mama finds herself in trouble, and daughter rescues her by solving the problem: lions in the jungle, flashfloods in the Ropacactus canyon, snakes in the river, and bears in the caves. Mama in turn rescues daughter in the Gonagetcha forest.

Analysis: The illustrations depict a loving and close relationship between mother and daughter. They have a wonderful time together, being brave and frightened together in their shared storytelling. The text is repetitious with vocabulary like "need" and "love". Daughter exhibits clever ingenuity to overcome the dangers.

Blos, J. (1989). Lottie's circus. ill. Trivas, I. NY: Morrow Jr. Books.

ISBN 0-688-06746-8, 32 pages, picture book.

Summary: While reading to her cat, Lottie makes-believe she has a circus. She becomes all and everyone---ringmaster,

carpenter, painter, ticket seller, clown, trapeze artist, pop corn and hot dog vendor. The story ends when her cat runs away from "center ring", and Lottie finishes reading with Dad.

Analysis: The illustrations are terrific, as this female character wears all kinds of costumes, uniforms, and fabulous hats. She is totally responsible for her circus, quite inventive, and thoroughly active in entertaining the audience.

Burningham, J. (1978). Time to get out of the bath Shirley. NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Books.

ISBN 0-690-01378-7, 28 pages, picture book.

Summary: While mother talks over her shoulder to Shirley, telling her to get out of the bath tub, Shirley shrinks down to drainsize and mischievously rides her floating duck to a different place. She meets a king and queen and plays water sports, abruptly returning when mom offers her a towel.

Analysis: This is another example of a "day dream" adventure, but a delightful one. Shirley confronts danger in her quest for excitement, and solves several problems on the way. A great example of how children entertain themselves in the tub, this female takes a non-traditional trip.

Burningham, J. (1992). Come away from the water Shirley. NY: Harper.

ISBN 0-06-443039-1, 24 pages, picture book.

Summary: While Shirley's parents talk to her from their beach chairs, "Don't get tar on your shoes", Shirley takes off across the water and jumps on a pirate ship. After walking the plank and fighting pirates, she finally succeeds in stealing a treasure map, sailing the sea, digging for the trunk, and returning back to the beach without her parents even aware of the journey she has undertaken.

Analysis: This female character has a great time! She is adventurous, brave, and creative. Because she is at the beach already, it does not seem unreasonable that this adventure could be "real", and is not written up as a day dream.

Butler, D. (1988). My brown bear Barnery. ill. Fuller. E. NY: Greenwillow Books.

ISBN 0-688-08567-9, 22 pages, picture book.

Summary: A young preschooler takes her bear every place she goes, shopping, gardening, to the beach, to bed, to grandma's house. Even to school on the first day, although Mom says there's no room for him there.

Analysis: This female character is self-confident and active. The text says "I do..." and shows the character being responsible for her actions, even to making the decision to take Barney to school.

Carlstrom, N. (1987). Wild wild sunflower child Anna. ill. Pinkney, J. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-44346-1, 30 pages, picture book, multicultural.

Summary: A wonderful book for the senses! Anna romps barefoot through the fields, exploring nature and discovering the many things hidden from ordinary view. Along the way, she becomes a "ship's captain", hops like a frog, and tastes wild berries.

Analysis: This female character is quite carefree, active and curious about all the creatures and facets of nature she encounters while exploring. Bright colorful illustrations complement her discoveries in the outdoors.

Cooney, N. (1989). The umbrella day. ill. Mathis, M. NY: Philomel.

ISBN 0-399-21523-9, 26 pages, picture book.

Summary: Missy turns her mother's old ordinary umbrella into other creative things when it starts to rain. As a toadstool, it provides cover for a tea break; as a tent, Missy can train animals; as a boat, she can ride the strong waves with frog and squirrel.

Analysis: A "day dream" adventure, Missy has a wonderful time in the rain with her dog and cat. Braving a storm and protecting a butterfly, she fully experiences the weather.

Hughes, S. (1979). Up and up. NY: Prentice-Hall.

ISBN 0-13-93826-6, 32 pages, picture book.

Summary: A wordless picture book, in black line sketches and yellow mustard color, details a young girl as she tries to fly, first with wings, and then balloons. She finally succeeds after eating her way through a chocolate egg. Amazing her family and disrupting the town, she flies over the village, despite attempts to catch her.

Analysis: An imaginative story and adventure, the pictures do not indicate a dream state. On the contrary, the faces of the other characters indicate the trip is genuine. The female character appears rambunctious and inventive and having the time of her life.

Krause, U. (1989). Nora and the great bear. NY: Dial Books. ISBN 0-8037-0684-7, 28 pages, story book.

Summary: After hard training for strength and bow shooting, Nora accompanies the village hunters on their trip to catch the "Great Bear", a creature long talked about but never seen. Persisting even after the others have given up, she becomes lost, and only then does the bear appear.

Analysis: This female character is persistent and confident she can succeed where others have failed, a goal she meets. The illustrations show the bear as a beautiful part of the forest, a point not lost on Nora. A good example of an

adventure with out the usual "day dream" requirement, although it is evident the male characters doubt her story, gently, with a chuckle. Still, Nora feels special that she has seen the bear, whereas no one else has.

Poe, E. (1989). Staying with grandma. ill. Rogers, J. NY: Bradbury.

ISBN 0-02-777371-X, 32 pages, picture book.

Summary: A young girl visits grandma in the country and has all sorts of fun, from running through the sprinklers, swinging in a tree, catching frogs, planting in the garden, to watching the fireflies from the porch before bedtime.

Analysis: This book is a nice balance between active and quiet activities, some traditional while not negatively stereotypical. Even grandma gets into the creek and tries to catch a few frogs. Grandma is shown as self-sufficient and independent, keeping her own house and garden.

Ringgold, F. (1991). Tar beach. NY: Scholastic, ISBN 0-590-46381-0, 30 pages, picture book, multicultural.

Summary: In her mind, Cassie flies free over the city, claiming all below as her own. The illustrations are spectacular, as Cassie describes the city that she lives in, that her father works in, and that her family helped to build. She lands and takes off from the black asphalt roof of her tenement where on hot nights the family eats their meals.

Analysis: This female character has herself a wonderful adventure, but she also expresses some ambitious wishes and hopes. Concerned for her family, she envisions them in better living conditions, and sees herself as instrumental in helping them.

Smith, L. (1991). The big pets. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-46097-8, 30 pages, picture book.

Summary: A girl and her cat take an imaginary trip to the "milk pool" to play for a while. While traveling, they see other kids and their pets, at places like the "Bone Patch", "Hamster Holes" and "Cricket Creek".

Analysis: Another "day dream" adventure, there is no doubt that the female character cares alot about her pet. There's a sense of community between all the kids as they accompany their pets on a vacation of sorts.

Williams, V. (1981). Three days on a river in a red canoe. NY: Greenwillow Books.

ISBN 0-688-04072-1, 30 pages, story book.

Summary: A young girl, her mom, auntie and cousin Sam take a river trip. They completely plan the route, outfit themselves, and pack their supplies. While camping out, they experience numerous hazards and disasters, meeting each one

head on and dealing with it. They finish their trip and plan another.

Analysis: This is probably the best example of a book that shows female characters in natural, non-traditional roles. These women and children take an authentic adventure, not a dream, and realistically and intelligently assume responsibility for their actions and ultimately their own good time. They experience wonderful moments with nature and animals while respecting the environment, and overcome some dangerous complications. Some of the illustrations are presented as journal entries with separate text narration describing the trip, and even includes some recipes for camp cooking.

Non-stereotypical personal traits

These books are examples of female characters with positive personal attributes. Characters who are brave but gentle, inquisitive yet careful, and clever, smart and creative. They are described as independent and responsible.

Aragon, J. (1989). Salt hands. ill. Rand, T. NY: Dutton. ISBN 0525-44489-0, 22 pages, story book.

Summary: A young girl wakes up in the night to find a deer standing in her yard. Slowly, gently, carefully, she approaches after rubbing salt on her hands. The elegant deer eventually licks her hands before walking off into the night.

Analysis: Text is told in first person, with vocabulary like "I sang softly", "I whispered", and "It tickled my hands". The beautiful pictures show the female character gently drawing near, bravely doing her best not to frighten the animal, and being rewarded for her cautious curiosity.

Blegvad, L. (1985). Anna Banana and me. NY: Aladdin Books, McMillan.

ISBN 0-689-71114-X, 32 pages, story book.

Summary: Anna Banana keeps company with a small young boy who is continually impressed with her abilities and daring demeanor. She's not afraid of anything, and at one point gives credit to a bird feather for her bravery. A lesson not lost upon the small boy, he remembers the value of the feather when he needs it to be brave himself.

Analysis: This is one busy, curious and bold female character. Dressed in jeans and t-shirt, she romps around, carefree and spontaneous, almost looking for a challenge to her tenacity.

Bourgeois, P. (1987). Big sarah's little boots. ill. Clark, B. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-42622-2, 29 pages, story book.

Summary: Sarah outgrows her rain boots, and is determined to make them fit again. After many attempts, she resigns herself to new boots, and with mixed feelings finally passes her old ones on to her brother.

Analysis: Sarah is quite creative in her attempts to make her boots big again. At first unwilling to give them up, she finally works through her problem to make a decision that shows concern for her brother and shows growth on her part.

Downing, J. (1989). White snow, blue feather. NY: Bradbury. ISBN 0-02-732530-X, 30 pages, picture book.

Summary: Upon first glance, the unnamed young child in this story could be either gender, although the jacket summary states "boy". The child walks through snowy forest to feed the birds, and finds a blue feather. Bringing it home as a gift to the mother, he calls it a "piece of the sky."

Analysis: Despite the gender ambiguity, or in favor of it, this is an excellent example of exploring the environment in an acceptable way. The character is shown in responsible interaction with ecology, and in awe of its beauty.

James, B. (1990). The dream stair. NY: Harper & Row. ISBN 0-06-022787-7, 30 pages, picture book, multicultural.

Summary: Putting her granddaughter to bed, grandmother leaves a candle for her to dream by. In her dream, the young girl goes up stairs and down stairs, passing by fanciful visions of creatures, places, and things. She awakes in anticipation of sharing with her grandmother.

Analysis: These illustrations have a definite Latin American style, in colors, clothing, and art forms. This character has a strong bond with her grandmother, and creates wonderful sights and experiences in her dream state. Her dream is a soft, gentle adventure in imagination.

Jonas, A. (1985). The trek. NY: Greenwillow Books.

ISBN 0-688-04799-8, 30 pages, picture book.

Summary: This is a book where the illustrations are of major importance. A young girl and her friend walk to school, and unbeknownst to all others, it's a trek through a jungle. Gorillas in the shrubs, alligators on the walk, elephants in the park, and lizards on the school building! There are amazing animals in this city.

Analysis: Two female characters with vivid and terrific imaginations, bravely get past the dangers of their jungle. This is a good example of an adventure, and although it is not "real", there is no "day dream" scenario that immediately invalidates it.

Mayer, M. (1988). There's something in my attic. NY: Dial Books.

ISBN 0-8037-0414-3, 32 pages, picture book.

Summary: Convinced that there is a monster in the attic of her new farm house home, a young girl takes up her lasso and starts her search. Alas, just before dragging it into Mom and Dad's room, the nightmare gets away.

Analysis: The hero here is a little nervous at first, but decides that if something is going to be done, she'll need to do it herself. Brave, quick on the throw, she succeeds to a point, but then determines she will have to try again tomorrow.

Reeves, M. (1989). I had a cat. ill. Downing, J. NY: Bradbury Press.

ISBN 0-02-775731-5, 32 pages, picture book.

Summary: Told in simple rhyming text, an ambitious girl claims ownership of a cat and then begins to conjure up an array of other animals. Realizing she has a problem when the house is completely full, she heads for the zoo, the farm, and the neighborhood to find new homes for them. Returning home, she finds herself pleased to have just a cat again.

Analysis: The illustrations are terrific! This female has skinned knees, swings a baseball bat, rides on the whale's tail, and sits on the horns of a bull. Definitely not the traditional little girl, this one's creative and rambunctious.

Ryder, J. (1985). Hello, tree!. ill. Hays, M. NY: Dutton Books.

ISBN 0-525-67310-5, 32 pages, story book.

Summary: A young girl finds a tree to call her own, and the narrative text tells her the many things it can offer. A cool shadow, a song in the wind, a tall hiding place, a stopping place for travelers, and a place to play with friends are all illustrated beautifully. The trees change as the seasons do, and as the girl grows.

Analysis: A wonderful example of the cycles of nature, this female character interacts with her environment, sharing it with others, in an active yet gentle way. The illustrations show her participating fully, thoroughly enjoying a sense of freedom outside in the summer.

Steele, M. (1989). Anna's garden songs. ill. Anderson, L. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-43639-2, 32 pages, poems.

Summary: Anna, barefoot and dressed for summer, romps through her garden, planting seeds, tending vegetables, harvesting and selling her produce. Each page is a poem about a particular vegetable. The illustrations show Anna sometimes larger, sometimes smaller than her vegetables.

Analysis: This female character is actively engaged in her gardening, fully enjoying and experiencing it. She is shown braiding onions, wearing lettuce leaves, and sharing with her friends and ever present pet rabbit.

Turkle, B. (1981). Do not open. NY: E.P.Dutton.
ISBN 0-525-28785-X, 32 pages, story book.

Summary: Miss Moody collects treasures from the beach after storms have washed them ashore. When she discovers a mysterious bottle that talks, she ignores the scratched "DO NOT OPEN" warning on the side and opens it anyway. The evil creature who escapes attempts to scare Miss Moody, but she outwits it.

Analysis: This female character is an independent, self-sufficient individual, who is also decidedly smart. Wearing beach comber's clothing, and pushing a wheelbarrow, she collects artifacts which she repairs and puts to good use, an ecologist before her time. Although her curiosity gets her into trouble, she relies on her own intelligence to get out of it.

Williams, L. (1986). The little old lady who was not afraid of anything. ill. Lloyd, M. NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Junior Books.

ISBN 0-690-04584-0, 16 pages, story book.

Summary: Text is repetitive and cumulative. A woman walking through the woods is followed by a pair of shoes, shirt, pants, gloves, hat, and pumpkin head. Bravely walking on, she finally makes a mad dash for her home, only to hear a knock on her locked door. The "parts", who are disappointed because they cannot scare her, take her suggestion and become something useful instead.

Analysis: This story shows the character as bold and smart, in addition to being self-sufficient and independent. Her idea provides a clever solution to the problem.

Williams, V. (1986). Cherries and cherry pits. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-41238-8, 40 pages, story book, multicultural.

Summary: Two young girls, one of whom is an expert at drawing with colored markers, spend their days making up stories about family, neighbors, and themselves. Every story centers around cherries and cherry pits. The stories tie together and end with their city block covered with a forest of cherry trees.

Analysis: The brightly colored illustrations develop along with the story line, and show the female character as a creative artist, in touch with her neighborhood and its peoples. Her goal of enriching the neighborhood is a worthy one, despite the fact it goes no further than her stories.

Young, E. (1989). Lon po po: A red-riding hood story from China. NY: Scholastic.

ISBN 0-590-44069-1, 32 pages, story book, multicultural.

Summary: Left alone while mother visits grandmother Po Po, three sisters find themselves with a wolf in the house. After classic exclamations like "Po Po, your foot has a bush on it!", the girls discover his identity and devise a plan to eliminate him.

Analysis: These three female characters are clever, wise and tricky as they carefully lure the wolf into a trap and then spring it. Brave they are, yet calm and composed.

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