1991

Sexism in children's picture books

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Sexism in children's picture books

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Abstract
This researcher analyzed thirty-eight Caldecott and New York Time Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year from 1985-1990 by means of a checklist to determine if 1) twice as many male characters will be pictured or referred to than females 2) female characters will exhibit twice as many passive traits than do male characters 3) male characters will be portrayed in three times as many careers 4) females will be shown twice as often in domestic/nurturing roles as males 5) male characters will be shown in twice as many instances caring for and protecting female characters than being cared for and protected by female characters 6) award-winning books from 1985 to 1990 will show twice as many characters of both sexes have the possibility to reach their full human potential than in the Weitzman et al. study of Caldecott Award winners done in 1972. Data results led to acceptance of Hypotheses 2 and 6 and the rejection of Hypotheses 1,3, 4, and 5.

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ABSTRACT

This researcher analyzed thirty-eight Caldecott and New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year from 1985-1990 by means of a checklist to determine if 1) twice as many male characters will be pictured or referred to than females 2) female characters will exhibit twice as many passive traits than do male characters 3) male characters will be portrayed in three times as many careers 4) females will be shown twice as often in domestic/nurturing roles as males 5) male characters will be shown in twice as many instances caring for and protecting female characters than being cared for and protected by female characters 6) award-winning books from 1985 to 1990 will show twice as many characters of both sexes have the possibility to reach their full human potential than in the Weitzman et al. study of Caldecott Award winners done in 1972. Data results led to acceptance of Hypotheses 2 and 6 and the rejection of Hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5.
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This researcher analyzed 38 Caldecott and New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year from 1985-1990 by means of a checklist to determine if 1) twice as many male characters will be pictured or referred to than females; 2) female characters will exhibit twice as many passive traits than do male characters; 3) male characters will be portrayed in three times as many careers; 4) females will be shown twice as often in domestic/nurturing roles as males; 5) male characters will be shown in twice as many instances caring for and protecting female characters than being cared for and protected by female characters; 6) award-winning books from 1985 to 1990 will show twice as many characters of both sexes have the possibility to reach their full human potential than in the Weitzman et al. study of Caldecott Award winners done in 1972. Data results led to acceptance of Hypotheses 2 and 6 and the rejection of Hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5.
Chapter 1

Introduction

"We are men and women in the second place, human beings in the first" (Kmetz, 1977, p. 94).

Equality between the sexes is not a new issue. The movement for equal rights for women got formally under way with the Seneca Falls (New York) Convention, called by two female Abolitionists, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and held on July 19 and 20, 1848 (Benton, 1968, p. 438). Kmetz (1977) found sexism was addressed in a speech as early as 1886 by South African novelist Olive Schreiner. During World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945), women in the warring countries took over many traditionally male jobs in order to free the men for combat. After both world wars, most women returned to their former jobs or their homes. Until the 1960's few women campaigned to extend women's rights. The major change in action related to sexual discrimination is due to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This prohibited job discrimination not only on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin, but also by sex.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 opened the doors to new job opportunities for women. In 1900 women made up 18.3 percent of the working force of our society (Department of Commerce, 1975, p. 129). By the year 1980 that had risen to 51.5 percent and continued to rise to 56.6 percent of the labor force by 1988 (Department of Commerce, 1990, p. 378). The prescribed patterns of behavior corresponding to an individual's sex, and the values and attitudes of our society are changing. Kuhn, Nash, and Brucken (1978) found that by the age of two
years children have knowledge of sex-roles, and this knowledge is positively correlated with children's comprehension of gender identity. The development of this sex-role identity influences how children view themselves as boys or girls, how they allow others to treat them, and how sex influences what peers and adults expect of their behavior (p. 449).

Since one of the most basic means for a society to pass its values and attributes from one generation to another is through its literature, it is imperative to analyze the literature that surrounds children at the impressionable ages between two and six. For many American children, the first introduction to literature is through fairy tales read to them by their parents or other adults (Moore, 1975, p. 1). As children begin to learn to read, many of their early readers' contents are based on fairy tales. Robert Moore analyzed the images and values in fairy tales and found an abundance of negative sex-role stereotypes and gross distortions of reality. According to his research, females are portrayed as princesses, fairy godmothers, witches and shrewish wives. Good female characters are always beautiful, and evil ones are ugly. Some force of magic or male characters save passive heroines from destruction. Male characters are portrayed as intelligent, courageous, resourceful, and powerful or at least modest and goodhearted. Regardless of what problems or tragedies occur in the story, things are made to work out so the characters live happily ever after (p. 1). The biggest problem is that at this young age, children take the stories at face value, not recognizing the difference between reality and fantasy.
When children are beginning to acquire and eventually set their attitude about sex-roles, it is very important that they be exposed to healthy, positive sex-role models. Children learn many of their attitudes from the books that they read or have read to them. Children's books are critical in the formation of values and self-concepts. For this reason children need to be exposed to books where sexual stereotyping is nonexistent.

Realistically, one can not hope to keep children from being exposed to fairy tales, nor is it wise to do so. Although many or most of them are extremely stereotypic in some way, they do provide a part of our cultural background of which we want children of today to be made aware.

We need, therefore, to assist them in recognizing negative concepts and values and in developing the skills to analyze whatever they read. For example, when reading "Little Red Riding Hood", the author of this paper suggest that children should be asked how the story would be different if Red Riding Hood were a boy. Red Riding Hood and her grandmother are saved by a hunter. Do all hunters have to be male? Do the children ever go visit their grandfathers or just grandmothers? In this way, fairy tales or any other sexist materials that abound in their world can become important tools for imparting more positive values and concepts.

Children pick up books by themselves, however, and "read" them. It is at this point that the pictures and illustrations take over in the learning process. Frequently, a book will have a positive story text but is overshadowed by the illustrations or pictures. Although authors may use the word firefighter, the term will still convey a negative message if most of the firefighters pictured are
males. We must surround children with literature and illustrations that show the opportunities that are available to them, first as human beings and secondly as men or women.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to learn if young children are being exposed to sexism in their literature. The basic carriers of sex roles that this writer studied were the text or printed message and the pictures and illustrations. Studies of sexism have been done using Caldecott Award Books up to 1984 such as those by Dougherty, Engel, Heintz, Nilson, Schubert and Weitzman et al. included in the bibliography of this paper. This writer continued the study to discover if the more recent award-winning books show both sexes reaching their full human potentials through text and illustration.

Problem Statement

Do the authors and illustrators of award-winning children’s picture books published between 1985 and 1990 portray accurate role models for both boys and girls by providing characters with diverse abilities and opportunities?

Hypotheses

This writer believes that the direct victims of sexism in children’s picture books can be either male or female characters. Sexism occurs when text or illustration portrays inaccurate information or limiting attitudes which prevent both sexes from realizing their full human potentials. With this in mind, the writer predicts that:

1. In a character count, there will be twice as many male characters pictured or referred to than female characters.
2. Female characters will exhibit twice as many passive traits in the books than do the male characters.

3. Male characters will be shown in three times as many careers as female characters.

4. Female characters will be shown twice as often in domestic and nurturing roles than male characters.

5. Male characters will be shown caring for and protecting the female characters in twice as many instances than being cared for and protected by female characters.

6. Award-winning books from 1985 to 1990 will show twice as many characters of both sexes have the possibility to reach their full human potential than in the Weitzman et al. study of Caldecott Award winners done in 1972.

Assumptions

This research study is based upon several assumptions. The writer assumes that even though our society is almost evenly divided in the total number of males and females, there is still sexism in society. Next, the writer assumes that the research on sexism completed by Lenore Weitzman et al. (1972) is valid and correct. Since the writer is conducting the study by using award-winning books, it is assumed that the authors and illustrators of the selected books have a good understanding of their reading population. Further, the writer assumes that books listed as major award winners are ordered by a majority of children's libraries in the United States, and that children are encouraged to read them. The basic assumption this writer makes is that
picture books are a tool for developing a child's self-concept and his/her ideas of society.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study is twofold. First, it will determine whether characterizations and role models in children's books are reflective of our society today. Secondly, it will show if the number and roles of females as depicted in those books have increased since 1972 when a similar study was done by Weitzman et al.

Definitions of terms

**Aggressive** (Webster, 1971) - means forceful, energetic, pushy; taking the initiative or being in a leadership role (p. 41).

**Assertive** (Webster, 1971) - means being characterized by self-confidence, determination, and boldness in stating opinions or in otherwise making one's presence or influence felt (p. 131).

**Caldecott Award** (Jones, 1988) - refers to the award given by the ALSC Division of the American Library Association to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children published in the United States during the preceding year. In addition to the winner, an unspecified number of Honor Books are also cited (p. 36).

**Full human potential** (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1980) - means the possibility of lifetime options, opportunities, capabilities, and behavior is determined by innate abilities rather than by gender (p. 34).

**New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year** (Jones, 1988) - refers to the books chosen to be of the
highest quality illustrations in children's book during the preceding year. There are approximately ten books chosen per year (p. 142).

**Passive** (Webster, 1971) - means not acting but acted upon; subject to or produced by an external agency (p. 1651).

**Picture books for children** (Jones, 1988) - refers to the body of books that provide the child with a visual experience. A picture book has a collective unity storyline, theme or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is composed (p. 37).

**Positive sex-role models** (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1980) - refers to character roles that treat males and females primarily as people, not primarily as members of opposite sexes. Positive sex-role models stress humanity and common attributes, not gender differences (p. 33).

**Sexism** (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1980) - any attitude, action, or institutionalized practice which subordinates or limits a person on the basis of sex (p. 14).

**Stereotyping** (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1980) - defined as an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, which usually carries derogatory implications (p. 24).

**Limitations of the study**

The books analyzed in this study were limited to 38 award-winning children's picture books. Twenty-three of those books were the Caldecott Award Books and Honor Books chosen from 1985-1990. The remaining fifteen books were randomly selected from the New York Times Choice of Best
Illustrated Children's Books of the Year from 1985-1989. The researcher limited the study to these books assuming that award books are well read and that the illustrations would be considered the best available for children.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Of all the roles that individuals fulfill during their lifetimes, the role prescribed on the basis of one's sex perhaps is acquired the earliest and endures the longest. Research has shown that the acquisition of concepts about sex roles begins at an early age. By the age of 3, children can correctly apply gender labels (Thompson, 1975, p. 339).

Studies indicate that there is the possibility that male stereotypes might begin to develop somewhat earlier than female stereotypes because of the large proportion of male stereotypic traits with overt behavioral references (Williams, 1975, p. 636). In most cases young children develop gender identity remarkably consistent with the sex roles they observe around them. Children need to see lifestyles like their own in the books they read in order to validate their own lifestyles. In the past twenty years, society's attitudes toward sex roles have changed considerably. Many of the rigid boundaries that once established social roles are no longer acceptable to society. One of the fastest changing social norms in our society is the change in the family structure. The number of families in which both parents are in the labor force and the number of single-parent families are increasing (Kinman and Henderson, 1985, p. 885).

Studies have found that the written word is one of the most powerful ways to transmit ideas and information. Flerx, Fidler and Rogers (1976) found that children as young as five years are positively affected by the use of egalitarian books and filmstrips. Nonsexist reading material is needed during those years when a child is establishing a sense of identity and social order (p. 1005).
Statistics of the United States show that in 1988 women made up 51.2 percent of our population and 56.6 percent of our labor force. Those statistics also show that 51.9 percent of new mothers (women who gave birth in the preceding 12 months) were in the work force (Department of Commerce, 1990, pp. 13, 378, 385). One might expect that if children's books are indeed reflective of our society, then one should be seeing women represented in leading roles that portray their function as more encompassing than mothers or housewives. Educators and parents know that books are socializing influences in children's lives. Children's books reflect cultural values and are an important instrument for persuading children to accept those values. In order to determine the quality of role models and the values being portrayed, several researchers have analyzed the content of children's award books. Data analysis indicates that, as early as 1930, young children's literature reinforced the traditional role of the active male and passive female (Collins, 1984, p. 278).

Alleen Pace Nilsen (1971) was one of the first to analyze Caldecott Award winners and Honor Books for sexism. Her original study examined the winners from 1951-1970, later adding a five year update -- 1971 through 1975. Nilsen found that male dominance in the number of characters increased significantly during those 25 years (p. 919).

In another study of Caldecott Medal Books from 1967-1971, Lenore Weitzman et al. (1972) found quite a discrepancy in the ratio of males/females represented. In their sample of 18 books they found 261 pictures of males compared to 23 pictures of females (p. 1128). Their study found that it was rather hard to project an image of females in those books since
the female characters were practically nonexistent. It was found that when the female characters did appear, they were very insignificant or inconspicuous. Weitzman et al. also found that in the world of picture books boys were portrayed in an active positive role and girls were portrayed in a passive negative role. Not only were boys presented in more adventuresome roles, but they engaged in more varied pursuits and demanded more independence. In contrast, most of the girls in picture books were passive and immobile. Another difference Weitzman et al. found was that girls were more often found taking part in an activity indoors. Perhaps the most significant finding in their study was that not one woman in the Caldecott sample had a job or a profession. At the time of their study 40 percent of the women were in the labor force, but yet all the women in the picture books remained mothers and/or wives (p. 1141).

The study made by Weitzman et al. made it clear that children were not being surrounded by a true representation of society. The picture books that were being read to preschoolers over and over again as award-winning books were not providing the children with good role models or positive images of what they could and should be like when they grow up.

As people became more aware of sexism in books and its influence upon children, society eagerly "jumped on the bandwagon" to examine other mediums such as television and basal readers. Eventually these mediums bent to society's pressure, and they made an active effort to lessen or eliminate sexism in their materials. The author of this paper made the assumption that the authors and illustrators of picture books would also work on making these
changes, but additional studies found that sexism was still flourishing in children's picture books.

Caldecott Books were chosen as the sample for this study because this award is the most coveted prize for illustrators of picture books. Teachers and educators encourage children to read the Caldecott Books, and many parents look for the gold seal that designates the winners. Weitzman et al. (1972) believe that other publishers in the industry look to Caldecott winners for guidance on what to publish (p. 1127).

Nancy Schubert (1980) examined forty-four Caldecott Award winning books published between 1937 and 1980. Schubert's study revealed seven major categories of blatant sex stereotyping. The first was that all of a female's achievements are directly related to her good looks. A female character could easily win the love of a prince if she were beautiful, regardless of any other quality. The second category was in the area of establishing norms which limit the aspirations and self-concepts of females. Boys could be professionals and girls could stay at home. Being limited to the home and domestic duties does not give female readers high hopes of what they could be if they desire to go beyond those roles. The third area of stereotyping was that the males perform all the brave and important deeds. Girls tend to always be afraid or crying and usually cannot make decisions for themselves. If a decision is made, it is only with the consent and approval of the male. This goes hand in hand with the fourth area of girls showing the strong emotions (p.2).

Schubert's fifth category addressed the domestic roles in books. In her study over half of the female characters were shown caring for a home or small
children, but this pattern takes on greater significance because there were no males cleaning the house (p. 3). The next problem category in the sample books was that males sit idly by while the females perform domestic occupations. Children are exposed to females busily cleaning, cooking, and wearing an apron, while the male sits, smokes a pipe, and reads the paper (p. 4). The last category was that only the males are depicted in a variety of occupations. In Schubert's sampling, males were portrayed in 59 occupations in contrast to women being portrayed in only eight occupations outside of the domestic role (p. 5). Schubert's research once again told us that life in picture books is not truly representative of society.

As a result of all of these studies, many publishing companies have set guidelines for improving the images of women in textbooks. Scott, Foresman has specified that sexist attitudes of the past should not be reflected in current publications (Adam, Laurikietus, 1976, p. 47). School districts across the nation have promulgated rules to require that a multicultural, nonsexist approach be incorporated in curriculums. These school districts' educational programs should reflect the wide variety of roles open to both men and women. Personnel in these schools should also select materials and books that reflect the nonsexist curriculum.

Katharine E. Heintz (1987) modeled a study after Weitzman et al's. Her study focused on numbers of male/female characters and the differences in activities and occupations between males and females. Heintz selected 14 books that had received Caldecott Medals from 1971-1984. This study found 751 pictures of males and 375 pictures of females, a ratio of 2:1 (p. 9). Does
that indicate that males are twice as important? While focusing on activities Heintz found that males outnumbered females almost 3:1 in the aggressive activities. Twenty-nine males were shown in leadership roles and only three females were shown in that role. In comparing occupations pictured for males and females, 139 males and only 44 females were pictured in occupational roles (p. 14). What a contrast to the statistics of today. A conclusion is that children are not getting an accurate view of society with those representations.

The increase in ratio of female to male characters found in the Weitzman et al. study of 1967-1971 Caldecott Books to the ratio found in the Heintz study of 1971-1984 Caldecott Books makes it appear that authors and illustrators are trying to correct the imbalance of male/female characters portrayed in children's picture books. Today's children should be able to read books and find situations and people that are much like the world around them. The characters in the books need to provide children with positive images that help reinforce positive images in the reader. When children are developing and refining their sex roles at this impressionable age, they need to be exposed to the best models possible. Even though there may be sexism in society, adults need to be sure that children will not be misled about the possibilities that await them. Books are needed which provide positive role models to make children understand and believe that their potential lies in their innate abilities and is not limited by their sex. The children who are forming gender identities today are the adults who will set the guidelines for society tomorrow.
Chapter 3
Methodology

This study used the methodology of content analysis in order to examine and evaluate the roles and numbers of female/male characters and detect sexism in children's award-winning picture books. This method was chosen because the researcher had control over the books to be analyzed and was not dependent on the return or reliability of other's responses (Dale, 1989, p. 45).

Since the researcher was analyzing books for sexism, a true picture would not be tabulated if a list of books dealing with "sexism" or "non-sexist books" were to be used. Since there previously have been several studies done on sexism in Caldecott Books covering the years 1937-1984, it was decided to continue these studies with the Caldecott Medal Books of 1985-1990. During this period of six years, there have been 23 Caldecott Award winners and Honor Books selected.

The researcher, hoping to include more books in the population, chose another award list, the New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year. This list was chosen since it was established to honor the highest quality illustrations in children's books. The children's book editor of the New York Times, along with an artist and a critic, review all illustrated children's books published in the United States during a year. From among these, they choose the award-winning books. This list of books from 1985-1989 included 50 titles. Since the researcher chose to limit this study to a population of fewer than 40 total titles, 15 titles from the New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year list were selected. In order to get a balanced
number of books from the entire time span, it was decided to choose three books from each of the five years. Even though some of the contemporary winners were retellings of folk tales, they were included in the study with the expectation that the newer version would show some change and partially reflect the thoughts of contemporary society.

In order to eliminate duplications with the Caldecott list, any of the 50 books that were already on the Caldecott list were eliminated. The New York Times list of 1985 honors contained a Caldecott winner and Honor Book, so with the elimination of those two, there were then 48 titles. The books for each year were numbered and three numbers were randomly selected, making sure the numbers were returned to the choice box after they were selected and recorded to insure an equal selection. This method was repeated five times until three books had randomly been selected for each of the five years. At this point the 1990 Caldecott Honor Book, Color Zoo, a cut-out book of shape configurations by Lois Ehlert, was eliminated from the list. In order to choose a replacement for that title, one more book was randomly selected from all the titles on the New York Times list. The book selected to replace Color Zoo was Hazel's Amazing Mother by Rosemary Wells, a 1985 New York Times choice.

This now gave the researcher a population of 38 children's award-winning picture books to analyze. This sample of the population is listed in Appendix A.

All the titles to be used in the research and analysis were found in the Greene (Iowa) Community Elementary Library, Greene (Iowa) Public Library or through their Interlibrary loan arrangements, or the Youth Collection in the University of Northern Iowa Donald O. Rod Library.
The researcher then read and analyzed each book. A checklist (see Appendix B) whose categories directly correlated with the hypotheses was filled out for each book. The checklist consisted of five major categories with subcategories under each. The first category addressed character count. The number of male/female characters in the storyline was counted as well as the number in the illustrations. This allowed the researcher to accept or reject Hypothesis 1. The second category listed a wide array of possible personality traits that ranged from passive to aggressive. The list of traits used in the checklist was an accumulation of the traits that were most frequently found by the researcher in other studies. Hitchcock's (1987) research included lists of the occupations of female characters portrayed in basal readers. Research completed by the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1980) examined four textbook areas, characterization, language and terminology, historical background, and illustrations, for sexism; this research included lists of male/female traits. The author of the current study based the checklist on the above materials with the inclusion of other traits that consistently appeared in all of the studies in the literature review. The researcher indicated whether any female or male characters exhibited any or all of those traits. This checklist provided the data on which to accept or reject Hypothesis 2.

The third category gave the researcher the opportunity to test Hypothesis 3 by analyzing what and how many career opportunities were portrayed by the characters. With checklist Category 4, the researcher was able to identify which sex performed the majority of the domestic and nurturing duties. The data for this category allowed the researcher to accept or reject the fourth hypothesis.
The last category on the checklist correlated with Hypothesis 5 and dealt with the characters' abilities to take care of themselves. Do they need help, or do they rely on their own skills and instincts? Do the protagonist and the antagonist of the books vary? The last question on the checklist determined if there were stereotypic roles in the books. If a book's characters could be reversed without changing the entire book, then the book more than likely would be showing positive role models.
Chapter 4

Analysis of Data

A total of thirty-eight books was read and analyzed in this study. The data obtained from each of the books was recorded by completing a checklist containing five categories with twelve subcategories. The completion of the checklist provided specific data on each of the books. The data were then tabulated, and percentages were calculated for each subcategory. The results of these tabulations determined if the hypotheses would be accepted or rejected.

When examining the books for the gender of the main character, it was discovered that two of the books, Lesser and Zelinsky's *Hansel and Gretel* and Munro's *The Inside-Outside Book of New York City*, had both a male and female character that were equally dominant as the main character. Therefore those two books contained two main characters which gave the researcher forty main characters rather than thirty-eight which would represent one main character from each book in the population.

The gender of the main character found most frequently in the population was male. When adding the male human and male animal characters, 52.5% of the books contained a male as the main character. If the female human and female animal characters are combined, the total percent of female main characters is 37.5%. Only 10% of the books were written with a main character that was neutral or undetermined.

When looking at the secondary characters referred to or made mention of in the books, neutral characters became dominant. Out of 335 supporting
characters, 123 (37%) of them were neutral, while 117 (35%) were male and 95 (28%) were female.

The balance by gender roles identified in the illustrations in the books, however, contained a greater discrepancy. When each character pictured in the book was counted, a total of 2,579 characters were found. From that total 1,335 (52%) of the visual images were male, while 843 (33%) were female, and only 401 (15%) were neutral images.

Each book in the population was tabulated individually for the number of visual characters by gender. Thirty-five (92%) of the books did not contain equal numbers of images of males and females. Only 3 (8%) of the books presented numerically equal images of males and female.

Table 1

Number and Percents of Characters in Text and Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Character/Text</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male Human</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Human</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Animal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Animal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral Character</td>
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<td>10.00%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male Characters</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Characters</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>37.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Characters/Illustrations</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Characters</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Characters</td>
<td>1135</td>
<td>52.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Characters</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2579</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the data found in Table 1, the first hypothesis in this study (In a character count, there will be twice as many male characters pictured or referred to than female characters) was rejected.

The second area of this study focused on the roles males and females played in the books. In order to collect data for this area, the checklist contained thirty-eight character traits ranging from passive to aggressive. There was also an opportunity to note additional traits that were not available on the checklist. After tabulating the results for all the books, fifty-five traits had been found. Some of these character traits such as controlling anger, mechanical, and silly/illogical, were found in only one book or character and did not seem to be truly representative of the population. In order to make the calculations easier to interpret and to make a more accurate representation, the researcher decided to report only on the character traits that were found in at least 4 (11%) of the books. This gave the researcher twenty-five character traits on which to concentrate.

Of the twenty-five traits, four became most dominant being found in at least 50% of the books. These most frequently found traits were active, brave, independent and to work/play outdoors. These four traits are all considered to be aggressive character traits. Upon closer examination, the calculations for active show that 31 books (82%) contained this character trait and of those 31 books, almost half (45%) of them contained both active males and females.

Both active males and females were found in Stanley's Shaka: King of the Zulus. This is the story of a boy in South Africa during the 1700's. As a
male he is competitive and hardworking in order to eventually become the king of the Zulu tribe. Despite his hard work and eagerness, his mother's actions and determination form the foundation for all of his accomplishments. Early in the book, Shaka is being reprimanded by his father for allowing a sheep to be killed while he was tending the herd, but soon his mother becomes assertive:

"It might have ended with a scolding, though, if it hadn't been for Shaka's mother, Nandi. She took Shaka's side, something the chief's other three wives would never do. The chief did not like the way she talked back to him. He became so angry he ordered her to leave Bulawayo and return to her own clan. Of course, her family would have to give back the lobola of cattle. Nandi would be shamed in front of all the people she had known from childhood. And she would have no man to stand up for her and her son." (p. 3)

In the books that shared active female/male characters, there was a natural cooperation between the two. Both genders would take an active leading role at some point, but would not limit the potential of the other sex. In Lesser's *Hansel and Gretel*, Hansel takes the active role in devising plans to return home, while later Gretel becomes active and saves Hansel from the oven. The characters work together rather than against one another.

In 13 books (42%) where the males dominated the action, there usually was a female character that was shown to be supportive but not nearly as active as the male characters. In Cohen's *Olson's Meat Pies* Mr. Olson, his grinder boy Hugo, and Strom, the bookkeeper, buy the meat, make the pies and take care of the accounting for the money. His wife is sometimes standing in the background but becomes active only in emergencies:

"When the factory is really busy, Mrs. Olson and the children help out." (p. 4)
It should be noted here also that under this text there is a picture of the men in the foreground cooking and planning while the mother and children are in the background wrapping the sandwiches.

In the 4 books (13%) where only active females were found, there was not the supportive male shown in a lesser role. In these books the females and neutral characters were usually the only ones in the storyline. In San Soucci and Pinkney's *The Talking Eggs* all the characters in the book are female. In storylines like this one, there was an active female and supporting female characters were not necessarily active:

"The mother made Blanche do all the work around the place. She had to iron the clothes each morning using an old iron filled with hot coals, chop cotton in the afternoon, and string the beans for supper. While she'd be doing these chores, her mama and sister would sit side by side in rocking chairs on the shady porch, fanning themselves and talking foolishness about getting rich and moving to the city, where they could go to fancy balls wearing trail-train dresses and lots of jewelry." (p. 1)

Another aggressive character trait, bravery, was found in 20 (53%) of the books. Only 5 (25%) of the books showed both male and female characters being brave and an additional 25% showed only brave females. In these five books there did not seem to be male characters. In Steig's *Brave Irene*, Irene braves the snowstorm, but there are no males to compete with. The dominant gender for bravery was found to be male with 10 (50%) of the books portraying only a brave male character. Gerrard's *Sir Francis Drake: His Daring Deeds* is a good example of a brave male character:

"He fathomed ways of wind and tide, in storms he just brushed fear aside. He learned to steer and read a map--lion-hearted little chap." (p. 2)
While books like Yorink and Egielski's *Hey, Ali* and Kimmel and Hyman's *Herschel and the Hanukkah Ghost* portray only brave male characters, it must be kept in mind that those books contain only male and neutral characters. There are no female characters in the story being slighted by the male's test of courage and bravery.

Independence was the third aggressive trait to be found most frequently. Independent characters were found in 31 (82%) of the population. Only 7 (23%) of those books shared independent male and female characters and 9 (29%) portrayed an independent female. The most frequently found independent character was male. This independence was seen in Williams and Williams' two male characters in *Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea*. Stringbean and his brother, Fred, leave Kansas in a pickup to travel by themselves to the Pacific Ocean. King Bidgood's independence is shown in Wood and Wood's *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub*. The king takes it upon himself to make the decision to stay in the bathtub regardless of what it does to his kingdom because he is having a good time. Al in *Hey, Ali* (Yorinks and Egielski) also displays his independence by living alone with only his dog Eddie for companionship.

The fourth trait found most frequently was to play and/or work outdoors. Outdoor settings for both male and female characters were found in 24 (63%) of the books. These outdoor settings ranged from the remote hills of the Cameroons in Central Africa in Grifalconi's *The Village of Round and Square Houses* to a Pennyslyvania mine in Hendershot and Allen's *In Coal Country*.

The breakdown of character traits by gender (see Table 2) indicates that there is not an equal distribution of passive and active traits between the sexes.
### Table 2
Number and Percent of Male/Female Character Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active/Positive Traits</th>
<th>Found in # books</th>
<th>% of books</th>
<th># of both m/f</th>
<th>% both m/f</th>
<th># only male</th>
<th>% only male</th>
<th># only female</th>
<th>% only female</th>
<th># only male</th>
<th>% only female</th>
<th># only female</th>
<th>% only female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brave</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>53.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing anger</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>82.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48.00%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innate need for adventure</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventive</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>64.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical involvement</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>82.00%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play/Work Outdoors</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive/Negative Traits</td>
<td>Found in # books</td>
<td>% of books</td>
<td># of both m/f</td>
<td>% both m/f</td>
<td># only male</td>
<td>% only male</td>
<td># only female</td>
<td>% only female</td>
<td># only male</td>
<td>% only female</td>
<td># only female</td>
<td>% only female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frightened</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for marriage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play/Work Indoors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrewish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research shows some passive traits such as emotion are being given to male characters. In Ackerman and Gammell's *Song and Dance Man* Grandpa leads his grandchildren down the stairs:

"At the bottom he hugs us, and we tell him we wish we could have seen him dance in the good old days, the song and dance days. He smiles, and whispers that he wouldn't trade a million good old days for the days he spends with us." (p. 26)

The research shows that a larger number of nonstereotypic traits are being assigned to male and female characters, but the final calculations (see Table 2) show that female characters do play significantly more passive roles in the books than male characters. Therefore the second hypothesis (Female characters will exhibit twice as many passive traits in the books than do the male characters) was accepted.

The third part of this study centered on the occupations being assigned to male and female characters. The checklist contained forty-four occupations to be identified male or female and allowed for additional occupations to be added as they were discovered in the readings. Upon completion of the checklist, seventy-seven occupations had been represented. These occupations were then divided into three categories, jobs portrayed exclusively by males, jobs portrayed exclusively by females, and jobs portrayed by both (see Table 3). Even though the occupations assigned to male and female characters were basically traditional, the third hypothesis (Male characters will be given three times as many careers as female characters) was rejected since males were portrayed in fifty-eight career choices, females portrayed in thirty-one and twelve careers were portrayed by both sexes.
Table 3

Career Choices

Career Portrayed Exclusively by Females
1. Braiding maids 11. Newspaper publisher
2. Dressmaker 12. Princess
3. Dutchess 13. Proprietor
4. Enchantress 14. Queen
5. Fortune teller 15. Secretary
7. Grandmother 17. Teacher
8. Homemaker 18. Widow
10. Mother

Career Portrayed Exclusively by Males
1. Aristocrat 24. Juggler
2. Artist 25. King
3. Author 26. Knight
4. Banjo Player 27. Maitre d'hôtel
5. Blacksmith 28. Mechanic
6. Bookkeeper 29. Miller
7. Bus Driver 30. Miner
8. Butler 31. Minister
9. Captain 32. Orchestra Conductor
10. Carpenter 33. Paddyman
11. Cattle Herder 34. Page
12. Chief 35. Plasterer
13. Dragon Slayer 36. Police
15. Elephant Trainer 38. Rabbi
16. Engineer 39. Sailor
17. Explorer 40. Santa
18. Factory Worker 41. Surgical Assistant
19. Father 42. Train Conductor
20. Footman 43. Uncle
21. Grandfather 44. Warrior
22. Hermit 45. Woodcutter
23. Janitor 46. Zookeeper

Career Portrayed by Males and Females
1. Clerk 7. Musician
2. Clown 8. Physician
3. Cook 9. Servant
4. Dancer 10. Student
5. Elves 11. Vendor
6. Farmer 12. Wizard
The fourth hypothesis in this study addressed domestic and nurturing duties. The distribution of household responsibilities and nurturing duties was analyzed to determine if these responsibilities and duties were shared equally by both genders. The checklist offered twelve basic household/child care responsibilities and invited unlisted activities. After the checklist data had been tabulated, fifteen responsibilities were found in the study, and they were divided by male and female.

Table 4

Domestic/Nurturing Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>#Male</th>
<th>%Male</th>
<th>#Female</th>
<th>%Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for injured</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing dishes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding/Rocking child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry/Ironing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing food</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting child to bed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing, Weaving, Knitting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking with child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm chores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing child</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing stroller</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Females were shown performing domestic duties 65 times while males performed such duties in 34 instances. Females were shown almost twice as often in domestic and nurturing roles. The researcher was surprised at the
manner in which domestic/nurturing responsibilities were handled in these books. Very few books actually showed both males and females sharing domestic responsibilities.

Hendershot and Allen's *In Coal Country* was a perfect example of shared duties in a household:

"Papa cut a fresh tree up on the ridge, and we pulled it home on a tin sled. Mama placed a candle on the end of each branch. Papa spent the whole day basting the roast goose for Mama. Our stockings bulged with tangerines and nuts and hard cinnamon candies. The house smelled of Christmas tree and roast goose and the good things that Mama had made. No whistle called Papa to the mines."

"Mama worked hard like Papa. She planted our garden and she canned vegetables for the winter. She stored her quart jars of beans and tomatoes and peas in the earthen room in the cellar. Every other day Mama baked her special rye bread in the oven of the iron stove."

In the books in which males had a domestic/nurturing role, it was shown as very mundane and small. The text did not go into detail, usually there was only a picture of the male performing the task. In some books like Browne's *Gorilla*, the male was alone with a child and left to take care of these responsibilities. No mention or reference to a mother was made. The text and illustrations made the male appear very cold and uncaring:

"He went to work everyday before Hannah went to school, and in the evenings he worked at home. When Hannah asked him a question, he would say, 'Not now. I'm busy. Maybe tomorrow.'" (p.3)

Even though the domestic/nurturing duties of females were described more explicitly and more often, the fourth hypothesis (Female characters will be
shown twice as often in domestic and nurturing roles than male characters) was rejected because females were not shown twice as often.

The fifth area of concern in this study was the role of care and protection. The need to analyze this area came from the portrayal in fairy tales that women need to be rescued and protected by males and women "shouldn't worry their pretty heads." The first subcategory on the checklist analyzed which gender in the book was being confronted by a problem. Since three of the thirty-eight books contained no problem, the total finding will be based on thirty-five books (see Table 5).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care and Protection Roles</th>
<th># Books</th>
<th>% Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem confronted by male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem confronted by female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem confronted by neutral character</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solved by male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solved by female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solved by neutral character</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data show that in 19 (54%) of the books the male is the character to confront a problem. The next subcategory analyzed which person, by gender, actually solved the problem in the book. Thirty-five books had problems, but three were not solved, so the total for this category was only thirty-two books (see Table 5). Those data show that problems in 15 (47%) of the books were solved by males and that problems in 13 (41%) of the books were solved by females. The numbers on Table 5 show the percentages are close to being
balanced for confronting and solving problems by male and female characters. Even though male characters did confront and solve a larger number of problems in the books, the fifth hypothesis (Male characters will be shown caring for and protecting the female characters in twice as many instances than being cared for and protected by female characters) was rejected because males were not shown caring for and protecting the female characters in twice as many instances.

The final area of focus in this study was to determine if changes had actually been made since the Weitzman et al. study was done in 1972. While the study done by Weitzman et al. included only Caldecott Award Books, the author of this paper included Caldecott Award Books and New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year; therefore exact comparisons can not be made. It is possible, however, to make conclusions about these recent award-winning books. If a book is truly nonsexist, then the same story could be told if the male/female roles were reversed. Out of the 38 books, 31 (82%) of those books the roles could have been reversed without altering the story. Only 7 (18%) of the books would have had the storyline changed by reversing the roles. When the books were analyzed to determine if they represented a gender identity that was consistent with the actual sex-roles in our society, 27 (71%) of the books did, and only 11 (29%) of the books did not. Several of those books could not be consistent with our sex-role standards because they involved a much earlier time period when our current standards were not relevant, or they were folk-tales that involved a culture other than ours.
In Grifalconi's *The Village of Round and Square Houses*, an African folk tale:

"Every evening, after a day of work in the fields-Uncle Domo and Gran'pa Oma came to our round houses for supper. We children would hurry to put out the low, wooden stool for Gran'pa Oma (For he was the eldest, and closer to the ancestor spirits.) Then we would unroll the grass mat for Uncle Domo, the next oldest, As was proper and respectful." (p. 3)

Even the books that were retellings of earlier stories such as Marshall's *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, there is evidence of improvement. When a neighbor saw Goldilocks and commented how sweet she looked, another neighbor only rolled her eyes:

"But to tell the truth Goldilocks was one of those naughty little girls who do exactly as they please." (p. 2)

Readers of children's stories are not continually being confronted with "sugar and spice." The fact that four of the hypotheses had to be rejected shows that improvements have been made and therefore the sixth hypothesis (Award-winning books from 1985 to 1990 will show twice as many characters of both sexes have the possibility to reach their full human potential than in the Weitzman et al. study of Caldecott Award winners done in 1972) was accepted.
Chapter 5
Conclusions, Recommendations and Summary

Conclusions

Some conclusions can be drawn from the data gathered in this study, but such conclusions are limited to the 38 books used in the study and not to children's picture books in general. Authors are attempting to reduce sexism in children's picture books by equalizing the number of male and female characters in the story. Readers are able to identify with a more balanced number of males and females in the storyline, but illustrators continue to show more males. Population statistics of the United States show roughly 50:50 male:female; and when examining books for storyline, the ratio 56:44 is closer to being balanced than ever before. Illustrations, however, still continue to show a ratio of 62:38. This does not give the young viewer who can't read the storyline a very balanced view of society. Many illustrators tend to try to balance the number of male and female characters, but then resort to showing all the girls wearing dresses and frilly socks and the boys wearing pants. A male and female out fishing need not be portrayed differently so that the female is in a safe boat wearing a dress and the male is balancing on the bridge railing wearing overalls. Those types of differences send just as strong messages to the viewer than had the illustrator overloaded the book with pictures of male characters. Some current authors appear to be avoiding the sexism issue completely by turning to the use of neutral characters.
This study shows that there has been change in the writing and illustrating of children's award-winning picture books since Lenore Weitzman et al. conducted their study of Caldecott Award Books. Weitzman et al. found a female:male ratio of 23:261 in their study. This study showed a ratio of 95:117. More authors are focusing on non-sexist images for their books. In Weitzman et al.'s study boys were found to be active and outdoors, and girls were passive, inconspicuous and always indoors. Results of this study showed girls and boys exhibiting both active and passive traits and both being a major factor in the storylines. Results of this study also showed 63% of the books took place in an outdoor setting. The biggest change since the Weitzman et al. study was that where not one female character had an occupation other than wife and/or mother, in this study males were portrayed in 60 careers and females were portrayed in 33 careers.

Recommendations

Another possible methodology may give a broader picture of sexism in picture books. Rather than selecting the population by choosing award books, it might be more beneficial to randomly choose picture books that are labeled "Family Life-Fiction" in the catalog. This process might very well eliminate the books that had neutral characters and focus more on books with human family life settings.

Studying the pictures and storylines separately might also give the study new meaning. Studies could be done on the illustrations of wordless books compared to the illustrations of picture books with text.
Sexism is not a new issue in our society. Children need to be surrounded by literature and picture books that reflect gender identity that is consistent with the standards of our society. When examining books for sexism, special attention must be given to the illustrations as well as the text and storylines.

Summary

The analysis of the content of thirty-eight selected children's books revealed the following results. First, there were not twice as many male characters pictured or referred to as female characters. Second, female characters continue to play a more passive role in the books than male characters. Third, male characters were not portrayed in three times as many careers as female characters. Fourth, female characters were not shown twice as often in nurturing and domestic responsibilities as male characters. Fifth, male characters were not shown caring for and protecting the female characters in twice as many instances than being cared for and protected by female characters. Finally in the thirty-eight books in this population consisting of Caldecott Award Books and New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year, there was a definite improvement for both sexes reaching their human potential than in the 1972 Weitzman et al. study of Caldecott Award Books.
Bibliography


Heintz, Katharine E. "An Examination of the Sex-Role and Occupational-Role Presentations of Female Characters in Award-Winning Picture Books." Paper delivered at Mass Communication Division of the International Communications Association Conference, Montreal, Quebec, May 1987.


Kmetz, Gail Kessler. "Olive Schreiner - Woman of the Karroo." Ms. 6 (August 1977): 90-95.


Appendix A

Titles used in Analysis

Caldecott Award Books and Honor Books


**New York Times Choice of Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year**


Appendix B

Checklist For Evaluating Sexism or Sexual Stereotyping In Children's Picture Books

Title: ________________________________

Author: ______________________________

Illustrator: ____________________________

Publisher/Date: _________________________

Honor and Year: _________________________

Summary:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

I. Character Count
   A. The main character in the story is:
      ___ male human
      ___ female human
      ___ male animal
      ___ female animal
      ___ neutral character

   B. Balance of characters:
      ___ number of female characters
      ___ number of male characters
      ___ number of neutral characters

   C. Book presents numerically equal images of males and females:
      ___ yes   ___ number of males
      ___ no    ___ number of females
                  ___ number of neutral characters
II. Roles
A. The book showed the following traits (mark M/F - male/female - before trait):

Active/Positive

____ brave                 ____ loyal
____ competitive           ____ mechanical
____ controlling anger    ____ messy
____ decisive, problem solving ____ physical involvement
____ expressing anger     ____ play/work outdoors
____ independent          ____ strong
____ innate need for adventure ____ tall
____ innovative
____ intelligent
____ inventive
____ leader

Passive/Negative

____ dependent             ____ play/work indoors
____ emotional
____ follower, conformer    ____ primping
____ frightened
____ gentle
____ giving up easily
____ inept
____ neat/tidy
____ need for marriage
____ not physically involved
____ short
____ shrewish, nagging
____ silly, illogical
____ submissive
____ unemotional
____ weak
____ (any others)  

III. Career Opportunities
   A. Mark the characters' occupation or role (M/F)
      _____athlete
      _____author
      _____babysitter
      _____banker
      _____butler
      _____carpenter
      _____clerk
      _____computer programmer
      _____coach
      _____conductor
      _____construction worker
      _____cook
      _____dancer
      _____dressmaker
      _____elevator operator
      _____father
      _____firefighter
      _____grandfather
      _____grandmother
      _____homemaker
      _____king
      _____legislator
      _____librarian
      _____maid
      _____mechanic
      _____mother
      _____nurse
      _____phone repair person
      _____photographer
      _____physician
      _____pilot
      _____police
      _____prince
      _____queen
      _____scientist
      _____secretary
      _____stewardess
      _____student
      _____teacher
      _____truck driver
      _____t.v. producer
      _____veterinarian
      _____volunteer
      _____(others) __________________

IV. Domestic/Nurturing
   A. Are the characters involved in: (mark M/F)
      _____caring for injury
      _____cleaning
      _____doing dishes
      _____feeding children
      _____holding/rocking child
      _____laundry/ironing
      _____playing with children
      _____preparing food
      _____putting child to bed
      _____sewing, weaving
      _____knitting
      _____shopping
      _____vacuuming
      _____(others) __________________
V. Care and Protection Roles
   A. Problem in book is confronted by:
      _____ male
      _____ female
      _____ other

   B. Problem in book is solved by:
      _____ male
      _____ female
      _____ other

   C. Could the same story be told if the roles were reversed?
      _____ yes
      _____ no

   D. Does this book represent a gender identity that is consistent with the
      appropriate sex-role standards of our society?
      _____ yes
      _____ no