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An Analysis of male and female roles in award winning children's literature of the 1980's

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literature of the 1980's**

Wasow, Judith L., M.A.

San Jose State University, 1989

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AN ANALYSIS OF MALE AND FEMALE ROLES
IN AWARD WINNING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
OF THE 1980'S

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By

Judith L. Wasow

May 1989

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Abstract

This study investigates the extent to which sex stereotyping and sex bias are found in the award winning children's literature of the 1980's. The work includes a review of the experimental literature which provides evidence for the effects of literature on gender socialization, and further provides a review of earlier investigations of children's literature. The present study analyzed Caldecott and Newbery winners and honor books, and evaluated these for a number of issues of gender representation. The study concludes that children's literature in this sample gives considerable evidence of sex stereotyping and sex bias, and only marginal improvement from that reported by earlier studies.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the primary responsibilities of parents and caretakers is to impart to children the values and features of the family, the society and the culture in which they live. Parents are, however, just one of many agents of socialization contributing to that arena of development, and their task is both helped and hindered by the input of the community at large. The child is continually exposed to the symbols, the artifacts and the media prepared and disseminated by the society as a whole.

While many, or even most, of these may make a positive contribution to the social growth of the child, the family has limited control over those influencers deemed objectionable. While it is possible to limit the exposure a young child may have to certain socializing agents, such as television or movies, it is not possible to completely shield a child from the impact of the community. As the child grows older the school, the peer group, and the media become increasingly salient agents of socialization.

One area in which it is possible to exercise some early control is in the selection of literature for children. Given what is available in the marketplace, parents may choose those books which most closely reinforce their own beliefs, and reject those which express ideas they may find inappropriate. In some homes, notably middle-class homes, children's books represent a major instrument for socialization. When a child enters school, furthermore, there is a uniform and systematic exposure to books. As the children grow, the use of books is a feature in all areas of curriculum. In schools, of course, the selection of books is the prerogative of the teacher or the administration. Books selected for children by their parents may be particularly salient in the socialization process because of the implied endorsement. That is, the child may be likely to believe that the parent, having chosen the book, agrees with what is expressed in it, and that, in turn, predisposes the child to agree with it also. Books read to or given to the child in school may similarly assume the authority of that important institution. It is reasonable to believe, therefore, that the books presented to children by parents and teachers constitute a non-trivial element in the way that they come to understand their world. This study will analyze children's literature, that reading material written

primarily for children, and will consider its significance as an agent of gender socialization.

Statement of the Problem

The intent of this study is to assess the prevalence of sex bias and sex stereotyping in current children's literature. The primary question to be answered is "do sex stereotypic portrayals of males and females exist in pre-school and/or elementary aged children's literature?"

Secondary questions include:

1. How many male and female primary characters are represented in the text and/or illustrations of the books?
2. How many male and female secondary characters are represented in the text and/or illustrations of the books?
3. What is range of occupational roles of males and females in the literature?
4. What is range of physical, intellectual, and emotive roles of males and females in the literature?
5. Is there a difference in the sex role portrayals in the books of the two age groups?

Significance of the Problem

The work of Jean Piaget on the cognitive development of the child, and subsequent application of his theories to issues of social development, provide a basis for establishing the significance of the problem under study in this research.

Piaget used the term schema to refer to the "cognitive structures by which individuals intellectually adapt to and organize the environment" (Wadsworth, 1971, p. 10). Children have a number of schemata, which are analogous to concepts or categories, and they are found to change with the development of the child. Piaget's theory describes the child between the approximate ages of two and seven as a preoperational thinker. The child's thinking is characterized as egocentric, unable to shift perspective. Further, children are found not to reflect upon their thoughts, not able to reverse their thought processes, not able to attend to transformations, i.e., sequences of changes, and not able to incorporate all aspects of a situation, rather than a single focus. Children from seven to eleven have reached the stage of concrete operational thought. Though their thinking is not fully mature, they are able to shift perspective, to reverse operations, and to attend to transformations. Kohlberg (1966) developed a theory, based on Piagetian principles, that young children are actively engaged in building a gender schema in much the same way as other cognitive schemata are constructed, through sustained and active interchange with the social world. A gender schema is a cognitively developed concept of sex role which changes developmentally (Kohlberg, 1966). The child subsequently applies these concepts of gender in

the interpretation of the social world (Bem, 1981). If children acquire an overly restrictive schema, one in which certain activities and roles are believed to be the domain of only one gender, Bem postulates that children will restrict their participation in those domains, thereby preventing themselves from acquiring the resulting skills. Books are one contributor to the development of the gender schema, and several researchers have documented the short term effects of books and stories on the sex role attitudes and activities of children. Their research largely compares the influence of gender biased or stereotypic literature to the influence of nonstereotypic literature on the behavior or attitudes of children. A review of that research is included here to establish the significance of the problem considered in the present study.

Ashton hypothesized that "children exposed to a stereotypic picture book would demonstrate stereotypic behavior, while children exposed to a nonstereotypic book would demonstrate nonstereotypic behaviors" (1983, p. 43). In her procedure, 32 pre-school children were videotaped in a laboratory setting, playing with their choice of toys, which included female stereotypic, male stereotypic and gender neutral toys. Following the initial play period, each child was read a book portraying a character of the same sex as the subject

playing with a stereotypic or nonstereotypic toy. A second play period was then videotaped with the same array of experimental toys. Tapes were coded to assess total looking and total manipulation time. Girls who were read the stereotypic book increased their play with female stereotypic toys and decreased their play with male stereotypic toys. Girls who were read nonstereotypic books decreased their manipulation of female stereotypic toys and increased their manipulation of male stereotypic toys. While scores for the boys were analogous, the effect was greater in the girls. The study confirms that sex role behavior as depicted in books does have a short term impact on the play behavior of pre-school children.

Knell and Winer conducted a study which attempted to demonstrate that "reading material can influence the child's tendency to associate a person's sex with a particular occupation" (1979, p. 79). Ninety pre-schoolers, 42 boys and 48 girls, were randomly assigned to one of four story conditions. In the traditional condition the story characters had traditionally male or female occupations. In the nontraditional condition the females had stereotypically male occupations and the males had stereotypically female occupations. In the mixed condition some characters had traditional roles while others had nontraditional roles,

and in the control condition no reference was made to sex typed or occupational roles. The stories were written for the procedure and were uniform in length. Each of the groups was read four stories per day for three days, two of which were about males and two about females. After the third session children were tested for vocational aspirations, story preference, projection of their own gender in the vocational world, awareness of adult roles, and toy preference. Girls in the traditional group showed more traditional responses than girls in the other three groups, particularly with reference to vocational aspiration, story preference and toy preference. The authors conclude from their analyses that there is clear evidence that reading material contributes to the development of stereotyped attitudes, and reinforces existing stereotypes. They failed to find indications that reading material is effective in countermanding existing stereotypes.

Scott and Feldman-Summers (1979) conducted a study to ascertain the effects of portraying a female main character in a traditionally male role on children's sex role perceptions and their evaluations of the stories. They also considered whether or not exposure to stories of this type would have differing effects on boys and girls. Third and fourth graders, 67 female and 44 male, were randomly assigned to one of three story conditions:

male majority, female majority, and equal proportion. Twice weekly for four weeks, the children were given individualized packets containing a short story and questions to be read and completed in 20-30 minutes. Each story portrayed a main character involved in a variety of competent roles. The questions assessed sex role perceptions and story evaluations. The study resulted in two findings of substantial interest. "First, exposure to female main characters engaged in nontraditional role activities increased children's perceptions of the number of girls who could engage in the same activities but did not affect perceptions of other sex role activities not presented in the stories. Second, although females evaluated the stories more positively than males across experimental conditions, story evaluations did not vary as a function of the sex of the main character (p. 399). It appears that acceptance and internalization of egalitarian roles does not generalize from the nontraditional role presented to other possible nontraditional roles. The authors offer a Piagetian explanation for this phenomenon. The subjects were at a concrete operational level of thought and therefore not yet capable of the abstraction necessary for the application of the principle. The authors also suggest that the more negative story evaluations offered by the boys could be accounted for by the boys' activity,

rather than their gender, preferences. This study strongly suggests that children of this age will not summarily reject reading material portraying nontraditional roles.

Koblinsky, Cruse, and Sugawara (1978) investigated children's memory for sex stereotypic and reverse stereotypic behaviors and traits in their literature. Two experiments were conducted. In the first, 29 male and 25 female fifth grade children were given lists of behaviors and traits and were asked to indicate which were typical of boys, of girls, or of both. The second experiment used the stereotypes revealed by the first to prepare four stories which were then presented to a second group of subjects made up of 24 male and 24 female fifth graders. The stories portrayed a male and a female character, each exhibiting both masculine and feminine traits and behaviors. Each subject was asked to read two stories and was subsequently given a choice-recognition test about them. The stories were controlled for length and difficulty, were scored using standardized measure at the fourth grade reading level, and were counterbalanced for order of presentation. Children were found to remember behaviors at a greater rate than traits, and to more consistently remember behaviors which reflect their stereotypes. They were found to be particularly poor in recalling the female traits of male characters. The

study suggests that it might be necessary to deal with the existing beliefs and cognitive structures of children prior to the introduction of egalitarian literature, as gender stereotypes are clearly in place and affecting retention of content by fifth grade.

Flerx, Fidler, and Rogers (1976) investigated whether a program of literature depicting nonstereotypic role models would develop more flexible and egalitarian gender attitudes in young children. Two experiments were conducted, involving 122 children. In the first, 76 pre-school children were pretested to discover their sex role stereotypes using a technique involving the selection of a doll or dolls for an activity. Subjects in the experimental group were subsequently read egalitarian stories for 30 minutes per day for five days, while children in the other group were read traditional stories. Children were posttested on the day following completion of the stories. The second experiment involved some refinement in assigning subjects to the egalitarian or traditional group and created a third group, which was exposed to egalitarian or traditional films, rather than stories. Subjects were pretested, and posttested both immediately and one week after completion of the procedure. "As predicted, brief presentations of illustrated stories involving egalitarian sex role models reduced stereotypic thinking" (p. 998). The authors

conclude that not only are media influential in developing sex role attitudes, they are potentially influential in changing those attitudes. They further consider that, if brief intervention created change, prolonged intervention may be expected to produce long term change.

Pre-school children have also been found to be aware of sex typing in literature, and to prefer stories in which the primary character displays typical and traditional sex role behavior (Jennings, 1975). Sixty-four subjects, 32 boys and 32 girls, were each read two stories. One depicted a character of the child's same sex who behaved in a stereotypic manner, and one depicted a same sex character who behaved in a nonstereotypic manner. Children were tested for recall and preference immediately after the reading episode. Subjects were found to significantly prefer the story in which the character behaved in a manner consistent with the child's idea of appropriate behavior for the sex. Recall, however, was significantly higher for the story depicting nontraditional behavior, probably due to the effect of novelty. The study suggests that pre-school children have established a rigid notion of gender appropriate behavior, and use this notion in their evaluation of books selected for them.

The research into the effects of gender stereotypical and nonstereotypical literature (i.e., that which portrays males and females in nontraditional roles) on children offers evidence to support a number of conclusions. Children have stereotyped notions of sex role behavior by age three and retain these notions at least through fifth grade. They recognize these notions in the reading material and use them in evaluating that material. Their retention of story content is substantially affected by these notions, at least with regard to short term retention. Moreover, it seems apparent that the reading material itself contributes to both the development of sex role stereotypes and to countermanding them. This provides compelling reasons for subjecting children's literature to close scrutiny for the sex role models it provides for our children. Examination of this type becomes even more critical in light of the growing role of literature in the education of young children. The State of California, in 1986, adopted an English Language Arts Framework mandating a literature based curriculum for public school children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. "If the end of English-language arts programs is developing a literate, thinking society, then surely the means to that end must be devising for students meaningful encounters with the most effective sources of human expression" (p. 6). It

seems obvious that this effort must include students of both sexes, and that educators must take care to ensure that the material used in pursuing this goal is meaningful to both boys and girls.

Definition of Terms

The present study will make repeated use of a number of terms which are defined in this section. Children's literature refers to any reading material written primarily for children. Sex bias is defined as prejudicial attitudes towards people because of their gender, while sex stereotypes are defined as rigid or biased attitudes in which persons are limited on the basis of gender. These definitions are those provided by the ERIC Thesaurus. In the discussion of the sample used for analysis reference will be made to the Caldecott and Newbery Awards for distinguished picture books and literature for children. The American Library Association provides the following definitions and criteria for those terms (ALA, 1987):

The (Caldecott) Medal shall be awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published in the United States during the preceding year.

A "picture book for children" as distinguished from other books with illustrations, is one that essentially provides the child with a visual experience. A picture book has a collective unity of story-line,

theme, or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is comprised.

The ALA further defines a picture book for children as one for which children are the intended audience, and children as being persons up to and including the age of fourteen. The artist is the illustrator or co-illustrator. Illustrations are said to be original if they are not reproduced from other sources. Only the illustrations of a specific book are considered, and not the entire body of the artist's work. The remaining definitions for the Caldecott Medal relevant to this study are those provided for "distinguished" (ALA, 1987).

- marked by eminence and distinction: noted for significant achievement
- marked by excellence in quality
- marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence
- individually distinct

It is important to note that the Medal is to be awarded primarily on the basis of the illustrations, but that other features, such as text or design, are to be considered if they are thought to diminish the book's effectiveness.

The definitions for the Newbery Award are analogous to those of the Caldecott Award, with certain important differences. The award is presented "to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American

literature for children..., " and is indicated by the text of the book, which may be fiction, non-fiction, or poetry, and which may be the retelling or reinterpretation of traditional work (ALA, 1987). The Medal is to be awarded primarily on the basis of text, though other features, such as illustration or design, may be considered if they detract from the book's effectiveness. Aspects of the text to be considered include "interpretation of the theme or concept, presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organization, development of plot, delineation of characters, delineation of setting, and appropriateness of style" (ALA, 1987).

Piaget's concept of pre-concrete operational thought is defined as that stage of cognitive development characterized by the development of language, egocentric thought and language, and the inability to solve problems of conservation. Children at this stage are pre-logical. It generally encompasses ages two through seven. The post-concrete level of cognitive development, which generally includes children from seven through eleven years of age, is characterized by logical thought, the ability to reverse operations and to solve conservation problems, and the inability to solve complex verbal problems (Wadsworth, 1971).

Delimitations of the Study

In order to assess the current level of sex role stereotyping in children's literature, this study will analyze Caldecott and Newbery Award winners and honor books for the years 1979 through 1988. It will rely on the published work of earlier researchers for analyses of gender bias or stereotypes for books appearing prior to 1979. It will analyze reading material for only two age groups. The Caldecott books are aimed primarily at pre-school through primary grade children, while the Newbery books are aimed primarily at fourth through eighth graders. These two age groups were selected in order to examine literature intended for children at both pre-concrete and post-concrete operational stages, as described by Piaget.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Beginning in the early 1970's, researchers from a variety of disciplines began to investigate children's literature and its function as an agent of gender socialization. The studies analyzed issues ranging from parity of representation to very specific types of behavior. Samples were drawn from several sources. This review will present and summarize much of that work. This study will accept that the analyses summarized here accurately reflect the character of children's literature prior to 1979.

The Caldecott books have been the most extensively examined, beginning with the seminal work by Nilsen in 1971. Nilsen investigated whether children's books accurately represented the real world with reference to portrayals of males and females. The study sampled eighty Caldecott winners and honor books, those from 1950 to 1970, and tabulated male and female names in the titles, male and female primary characters, male and female images in the illustrations, and male and female authors and illustrators. Nilsen found substantial

inequity in the numbers of male and female images in the text and illustrations of the books in the sample. The number of female primary characters, consistently smaller than the number of male, was found to have declined substantially between 1955 and 1970. Males were included in the titles of books in a ratio to females of 3-4:1. (This overrepresentation is significant in that title is often the basis for initial selection of a book for a child.) While the number of female authors was roughly equivalent to the number of male authors, women were underrepresented as illustrators.

Nilsen did not analyze the roles or occupations of males and females in a systematic way, but does report an overwhelming impression of very limited and traditional roles for women. The author infers several possible causes for these inequities:

1. English does not have a gender neutral pronoun, and therefore coerces authors to attribute gender. Also, references intended to be gender inclusive, such as mankind, are interpreted by children as gender specific.
2. Male illustrators were overrepresented in the industry and were apparently uncomfortable depicting female images.
3. Publishers believed that, while girls would read stories about either girls or boys, boys would not read stories about girls.
4. Publishers believed, therefore, that more boys needed to appear in stories in order to encourage boys, who were thought to acquire reading skills with less facility than girls, to become more involved in reading.

5. Publishers encouraged the use of folktales or historic stories, which often portray outdated gender stereotypes, in order to avoid certain royalty or copyright costs.

While Nilsen's investigation involved an extensive sample, it was not rigorously conducted and it did not present evidence bearing on several of the conclusions. While it may have been the widely held belief that boys would not read stories about girls, for example, experimental evidence refutes this with regard to older children (Scott & Feldman-Summers, 1979). The Nilsen study, however, provided the springboard for subsequent investigations. It is cited in several of the studies summarized in the following review.

Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross (1972) analyzed the Caldecott winners and honor books for 1967-1971 for sex bias in the title, central roles, and illustrations, and for sex role stereotypes. They reported an 8:1 male to female ratio in names appearing in the titles, and a 7:2 male/female ratio in the numbers of central characters for their sample of 18 books. Prior to reporting the ratio of males and females depicted in the illustrations, the authors postulate that "Because women comprise 51% of our population, if there were no bias in these books they should be presented in roughly half of the pictures" (p. 1128). The actual ratio computed was 11:1 male to female. Several books in the sample depict no

female characters at all, while several others have females in insignificant roles. In examining the activities of boys and girls, the study found boys to be portrayed as active, while girls were shown as passive. Male activity was more often located outdoors, and female indoors. Girls were more often portrayed as dependent and in need of rescue. Boys were frequently depicted sharing adventures and experiences with other boys, while girls were rarely shown working or playing together. Adult females were depicted primarily as nurturers or in service roles, while adult men were portrayed in a wide range of roles and activities. Among the most startling of their findings, Weitzman et al. report that, although 40% of women were in the labor force at the time of the analysis, the Caldecott sample did not contain a single example of a woman working outside of the home. The authors concluded that the children's literature of the period studied not only failed to provide positive role models for girls, but also failed to reflect the reality of time.

Czaplinski (1972) sampled several groups of award winning children's literature, using a total sample of 60 picture books. Each book was analyzed to obtain a numerical count of male and female images in the illustrations and references to males and female in the text. The sample included books published between 1903

and 1971. The following tables summarize the results of these analyses:

Czaplinski Table 7

Total Percent of Males and Females in Caldecott, Carroll, and Bestselling Books Presented Pictorially

Categories	<u>Pictorial Presence</u>					
	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>		<u>Both</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Caldecott Winners	1283	52	1156	48	2439	100
Carroll Winners	2143	82	489	18	2632	100
NYT Bestsellers	806	85	138	15	944	100
Entire Sampling	4232	70	1783	30	6015	100

Czaplinski Table 8

Total Percent of Males and Females in Caldecott, Carroll, and Bestselling Books Presented in Text

Categories	<u>Text Presence</u>					
	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>		<u>Both</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Caldecott Winners	870	63	517	37	1387	100
Carroll Winners	2641	82	569	18	3210	100
NYT Bestsellers	1135	91	117	9	1252	100
Entire Sampling	4646	80	1203	20	5849	100

Note. From Sexism in Award Winning Picture Books (pp. 42, 43) by S. Czaplinski, 1972, Pittsburgh, Pa.: Know, Inc.

In examining the numbers of male and female primary characters, broken down into time periods roughly analogous to decades, the data indicated that sex bias decreased during the 40's and 50's, and increased during the 60's and early 70's. In the period from 1900 to 1929 none of the books examined had female central characters. In 1950-1959 40% of the analyzed books had male protagonists, 40% had female, and 20% had both male and female protagonists. The 1960-1969 sample had 80% male protagonists, 20% female, while the sample representing 1970-1972 had 100% male lead characters. The percentages of males and females presented pictorially and in the text for the above periods were analogous, if somewhat less dramatic. The author theorized that this may have reflected the increased autonomy and range of activity available to women during and immediately following the war years, and the limitations which subsequently returned.

The final analyses conducted in the Czaplinski study consisted of rating the activities of males and female characters according to ten-point scales of emotional, intellectual, and physical behavior. Tabulation of the ratings indicated that greater emotional, intellectual and physical strength was attributed to male characters in the majority of the books. She concludes that "Past cultural mores of a physically active, emotionally

controlled, and intellectually superior male are being maintained over the portrayal of a passive, emotionally dependent, and conforming or nonassertive female" (p. 69).

Engel (1981) tallied the number of male and female characters in the text and illustrations of the Caldecott Medal and honor books of 1976-1980. The study reported a ratio of males to females of 3:1 in both counts. This figure suggests some movement toward gender parity in comparison to the earlier cited research. Collins, Ingoldsby, and Dellman (1984) hypothesized that the Caldecott winners and honor books from 1979-1982 would better reflect the recent increase in women in the labor force. They calculated a ratio comparison for males/females in the title, males/females in central roles, and male/female images, both human and animal. Additionally, a content comparison was done on stories with a male central character, a female central character, and shared male and female central characters. Each category was analyzed for active or passive central character, indoor or outdoor locus of activity of the central character, and traditional or nontraditional roles for women. Their data reflect considerable movement toward gender parity in children's literature. A ratio of male to female images in illustrations, including gender designated animals, of 1.8:1, calculated

in the Collins, Ingoldsby, and Dellmann study contrasts sharply with the 11:1 reported by Weitzman, et al. for a 1967-1971 sample (1972). Collins et al. (1984) also report that female roles in their sample reflect nontraditional characteristics in those stories in which there is a female in the central role. Females portrayed in stories in which a male is the central character continue to reflect traditional characteristics.

Dougherty and Engel (1987) analyzed 25 Caldecott winners and honor books, from 1981 through 1985, for total numbers of male and female characters and total images, in text and illustrations, of males and females (Dougherty & Engel, 1987). The study reported 57% of the characters were male, and 43% were female. Males were found to comprise 63% of the total images, and females, 37%. The data indicated continued movement toward gender parity.

Picture books for young children could be characterized as heavily gender stereotypical prior to 1979, especially those books which were published in the late 1950's through the early 1970's. The trend since 1979 has been toward a more equitable portray of males and females. This trend has been evidenced, however, largely by the analysis of award winning children's literature, that which represents the best available to

youngsters. Other research offers examination of less selective samples.

Rinsky (1972) selected 200 books at random from three sources, Children's Literature in the Elementary School, Children and Books, and book lists from the children's literature classes at Xavier University in order to tabulate the number of female authors writing children's stories. The author accepted the hypothesis that females were stereotypically represented in children's literature and sought to determine the level to which women authors were responsible. It was determined that men and women authors were equally represented in the sample.

Hillman (1974) also selected the research sample from reviews in periodicals and journals. Three hypotheses were considered in this analysis of the literature of two distinct periods. First, she hypothesized that there would be a greater number of males characters than female in the children's literature of both the 1930's and the mid 1960's to mid 1970's. Second, males were hypothesized to be represented in a wider variety of occupational roles in both periods. Last, it was hypothesized that sex roles would remain unchanged in the children's literature of the two periods. Sixty books for each decade were analyzed for numbers of males and females, diversity of occupation for

each gender, and range of behaviors and emotions for each. Results were compared for the two time periods, indicating little change in number and occupational diversity, but some decline in stereotypical behavior of females, i.e., female characters were found to have adopted roles previously considered masculine.

Stewig and Knipfel (1975) selected 100 books, published between 1972 and 1974, in order to replicate a 1972 Stewig and Higgs study investigating women's roles in children's literature, and to assess what changes had taken place in the intervening years in this area. The sample was chosen at random from the 503 books in the Current Collection of the cooperative Children's Book Center of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, a non-circulating examination library, contributed to by more than 90 publishers. The role of each female character was noted, and the domestic, professional, and recreational roles were tallied. Professional and recreational roles of male character were tallied for comparison. Women were found to be portrayed in many fewer and more limited professional and recreational roles than men. They were most frequently presented in domestic roles, particularly passive and sedentary domestic roles. Men were rarely portrayed in domestic roles. The data suggested, however, that, while neither males nor females were accurately represented in the

sample in terms of societal roles of the time, the 1975 sample showed "significant improvement over those used in the earlier study" (p. 155).

Occupational roles and models were also studied using a sample of primary grade reading books (Women on Words and Images, 1975). Early readers were found to include 147 different occupational possibilities for males and 26 for females. Many of those 26 female options could be classified as service or nurturing positions. Furthermore, while adult males were frequently portrayed as having dual roles, i.e., at home and in the workplace, adult women were shown in only one milieu. The study also reported a numerical imbalance in the representation of males and females. There were 1,765 stories in the sample which featured males in central roles, and 356 which featured females.

Pottker (1977) also investigated occupational role models in elementary reading books, and compared the results of the analyses with actual occupational statistics for 1977. While 39% of American women were full time homemakers in that year, the sample portrayed 57% of adult women as housewives. Those women in the stories who were depicted in the labor force were inaccurately characterized. The books depicted 42% of the women in salaried occupations as elementary school teachers, while in the actual labor force only 6% of

women are teachers, elementary or secondary. Other occupations were similarly overrepresented, such as nurses and bakers, while waitresses and clerical workers were greatly underrepresented.

First and eighth grade reading books were examined to compare the level of sex bias in those published before and after 1971 (Marten and Matlin, 1976). The sex of the central character, the numbers of males and females per illustration, and the range of activities for males and females were tabulated. The data showed a significant increase in the percentage of female images in illustrations, but this increase occurred almost exclusively in the sixth grade books. A slight, but not statistically significant, increase was reported in the number of female central characters. Males were found to be active to passive in a ratio of 5:1, while females were equally active and passive, indicating no change in the predominant sex roles.

Stevenson (1976) examined literature published during the 1930's and during the mid to late 1960's to consider whether stories of the more recent period would represent men and women in a greater variety of roles than in the earlier period. The sample of 120 books was chosen at random from those reviewed in the designated years by acknowledged expert sources. Each book was coded for attribution of professional, managerial,

proprietary, or manual labor roles to male or female characters. The findings of the study did not support the hypothesized greater equality in the later period. Occupations were attributed to males at a 5:1 ratio to females in the early period, and a 4:1 ratio in the more recent period, indicating minimal improvement. Furthermore, while male roles were found to reflect social and technological change from the early to the recent period, female roles remained largely unchanged and primarily traditional, thus failing to reflect the reality of the more recent decade.

Yawkey and Yawkey (1976) analyzed 52 picture books, selected from the collection of the Madison, Wisconsin Public Library, which were published before or after 1965. Using a numerical coding scheme, the books were rated for sexist, racist, and socio-economic stereotyping and story location. While statistically significant differences were found between the pre and post 1965 publications with regard to race, socio-economic status, and location, no statistically significant difference was found with regard to the sex of the main character. Central characters were predominantly male in both time periods.

In a 1977 review article, Key summarized the analyses which appeared in the mid 1970's of the roles of males and females in children's literature, and concluded

that they "overwhelmingly document discrimination and prejudice against females in children's books" (p. 423). Though some of the research conducted prior to 1979 indicated at least minimal movement toward gender parity, the majority of the work uncovered substantial gender inequity regardless of the sample used for analysis.

All of the Newbery winners and honor books from 1977 through 1984, a sample of 27 books, were read and reviewed for evidence of sexism by Kinman and Henderson (1985). The results of their analyses were compared to those of the 1971 Feminists on Children's Literature study. The 1985 study reported a substantial increase in the number of books with female primary characters, and of books portraying positive, rather than negative, images of females.

Barnett (1986) reviewed an extensive sample of children's picture books to determine whether male and female characters in the books were depicted in helping behaviors at different rates and in different ways. Eighteen readers each read and rated 125 picture books, analyzing them for incidents of helping behavior, gender and age (adult or child) of helper, gender and age of the character helped, and the level of instrumental or expressive behavior in the helping incident. Behavior was rated using a seven point scale, one indicating no evidence of the behavior and seven indicating extreme

behavior. Instrumental behavior was defined as involving action, while expressive behavior was defined as providing comfort, support, etc. The sample included all the picture books in the children's section of the local library, with those not including a helping incident discarded. Male characters were found to give help more frequently, and boy characters were found to receive help more frequently, than female. Males were generally found to offer instrumental help, while females were generally found to offer expressive help. Slight differences were found in both rate and style of helping acts in books published pre and post 1970.

Smith, Greenlaw, and Scott (1987) surveyed 254 kindergarten through sixth grade teachers to ascertain their preferred read-aloud books for children. The survey yielded a sample of 631 books which were then examined to determine the sex of the protagonist. In the overall sample, 43% of the books had male protagonists, 21% had female protagonists, and the remaining 36% had a gender neutral, or no protagonist. Of the ten most frequently selected books, 80% had male protagonists, 10% had female, and 10% had both male and female protagonists. In analyzing the sample by grade level, the researchers found a substantial imbalance at each level, but with a slight movement toward parity occurring between the fourth and sixth grades. "In sum, this study

found that teachers in Kansas and Texas have read aloud preferences that include twice as many books with male protagonists as female protagonists, and the most popular books include very few female protagonists; the images of the female characters are narrowly defined and frequently negative; and the images of the boys are positive but limited to the traditional male stereotype" (p. 407).

Summary of Research

An overview of the research literature to date suggests the following conclusions. Substantial inequity with regard to gender was found in all samples analyzed prior to the mid 1970's. Movement toward gender parity began to be noted in studies examining children's books published in the late 1970's and early 1980's. This trend, however, was reflected primarily in quantitative, rather than qualitative measures. Women and girls began to appear in greater numbers in children's stories, and to be increasingly featured in central roles, but their actions, occupations, and range of behaviors remained limited and largely traditional. They continued to be depicted as dependent, less competent, less adventuresome, physically smaller and less active, and often servile. These characteristics were communicated to readers through text and illustrations. Even the language used by female characters was found to indicate

secondary status (Holzman, 1983). Females were found to use a more tentative and polite style of speech, and make frequent use of tag questions and qualifiers, for example, "This is a nice party, isn't it?" or "I think this is a nice party." Other consistent syntactic differences found between male and female speech included the more frequent use of the subjunctive mood, and more frequent interrogative statements.

The 1970's were the years in which the Women's Movement gained definition and momentum, and brought the issues of women's rights to public awareness. Most of the research on sexism in children's literature was done during that decade, and examined the literature up to and including those years, and noted a shift toward equity in the latter years of the period. Societally, substantial progress was made in the late 1970's and 1980's in insuring equal opportunities and options for women. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider whether these strides are reflected in the books provided to young children. The remainder of the present study will be concerned with analysis of the children's literature of the most recent decade to determine the degree to which it depicts qualitative and quantitative gender equity.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the present study is to evaluate current children's literature in terms of sex bias and stereotyping. The initial step in this inquiry was to identify the sample to be analyzed.

The ten year period preceding and including the year the study was undertaken, i.e., 1979 through 1988, was chosen for focus. Most of the published research on this issue considered the literature up to this decade and will provide the comparative data.

Caldecott and Newbery selections were chosen to constitute the sample for analysis because they are generally acknowledged to be the best available examples of children's literature. All have been subjected to scrutiny by accepted experts in the field, and selected from a large pool of nominees. The designation of Caldecott or Newbery distinction insures a wide audience for this literature. The books are assured of purchase by libraries and bookstores, and will be given wide publicity and recommendation. Teachers often incorporate

Caldecott and Newbery books into their reading curriculum.

The Caldecott and Newbery Award winners from 1979 through 1988 comprise a sample of 20 books, 10 of which are picture books. In order to examine a larger and more robust sample, an honor book from each award group and for each year was added, bringing the total sample to 40. Honor books are named at the discretion of the award committee, which may name none, or as many or as few, as it chooses. Between one and four honor books were named for each of the years included in the study. Honor books were selected at random for inclusion in the study. Tables 1 and 2 list all of books by year and designation. It is perhaps important to remember that the prizes are awarded for books published in the previous year. The 1979-1988 awards, therefore, represent books published from 1978 through 1987.

Information was compiled on a data sheet for each book in the sample in the same categories as information compiled in earlier studies.

Table 1

Caldecott Award Winners and Honor Books

Year/Prize	Title	Author
1988 Award Honor	Owl Moon Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters	Jane Yolen John Steptoe
1987 Award Honor	Hey, Al Rumpelstiltskin	Arthur Yorinks Paul Zelinsky
1986 Award Honor	Polar Express The Relatives Came	Chris Van Allsburg Cynthia Rylant
1985 Award Honor	St. George and the Dragon Have You Seen My Duckling?	Margaret Hodges Nancy Tafuri
1984 Award Honor	The Glorious Flight Ten, Nine, Eight	A. & M. Provensen Molly Bang
1983 Award Honor	Shadow When I Was Young In the Mountains	Blaise Cendrars Cynthia Rylant
1982 Award Honor	Jumanji Outside Over There	Chris Van Allsburg Maurice Sendak
1981 Award Honor	Fables The Bremen-Town Musicians	Arnold Lobel Ilse Plume
1980 Award Honor	Ox-Cart Man The Garden of Abdul Gasazi	Donald Hall Chris Van Allsburg
1979 Award Honor	The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses The Way To Start a Day	Paul Goble Byrd Baylor

Table 2
Newbery Award Winners and Honor Books

Year/Prize	Title	Author
1988 Award Honor	Lincoln: A Photo- biography Hatchet	Russell Freedman Gary Paulsen
1987 Award Honor	The Whipping Boy On My Honor	Sid Fleischman Marion Bauer
1986 Award Honor	Sarah, Plain and Tall Commodore Perry	Patricia MacLachlan Rhoda Blumberg
1985 Award Honor	The Hero and the Crown Like Jake and Me	Robin McKinley Mavis Jukes
1984 Award Honor	Dear Mr. Henshaw The Wish Giver	Beverly Cleary Bill Brittain
1983 Award Honor	Dacey's Song Homesick	Cynthia Voigt Jean Fritz
1982 Award Honor	A Visit to William Blake's Inn Ramona Quimby, Age 8	Nancy Willard Beverly Cleary
1981 Award Honor	Jacob Have I Loved The Fledgling	K. Paterson Jane Langton
1980 Award Honor	A Gathering of Days The Road from Home	J. Blos D. Kherdian
1979 Award Honor	The Westing Game The Great Gilly Hopkins	Ellen Raskin K. Paterson

Cover Information

First, the sex of the author and illustrator was noted. Numbers of male and female authors and illustrators will be tallied to determine if one or the other is overrepresented in the industry. The title of each book was noted for the use of male or female names (ex. Hey, Al) or referents (ex. The Whipping Boy). The assumption behind this analysis is that children or parents will scan the titles of books on a shelf or a reading list in order to select the book they want. If, as the research suggests (Jennings, 1975; Knell & Winer, 1979; Koblinsky et al., 1978) children, particularly boys, prefer stories written about their own sex, a gender referent in the book title may be an extremely salient cue in the selection of the book. Gender referents in the title were scored as such even if the referent had no character counterpart in the text (ex. Jacob Have I Loved), as the child scanning a title would not have access to that information prior to reading the book. Similarly, a gender referent was not scored if it was not likely to be recognized as such by a child. For example, several ten year old girls, none of whom had read the book, were asked if Mufaro, of Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, was the mother or father of the children. While the character was actually the father, all of the children believed the name to refer the mother. The same children reviewed the

titles of all the books in the sample, and ambiguous titles were not scored.

Primary and Secondary Characters

Each book was identified as to the sex of the primary character or characters. If the book did not have a clear protagonist (ex. The Relatives Came), or if the sex of the protagonist was not identifiable (example, Shadow), the book was not included in the tally for this category. No distinction was made between human and animal characters, i.e., if the animal was clearly identified as male or female by the use of proper name, pronoun, or style of dress, it was counted as male or female in the tally along with humans. Secondary characters were similarly tallied. A character was included as a secondary character only if that character contributed to the advancement of the plot. Casual reference was not considered sufficient for inclusion as a secondary character.

Images and References

Engel (1981) strongly suggested that "the total number of male and female images a child receives from a book may be more influential on the child's developing concepts of sex roles than just the number of different characters" (p. 648). For this reason, the picture books

were reviewed to tally the numbers of males and females appearing in the illustrations, and the numbers of references to males and females in the text. Each male and female figure in an illustration was counted if it was unambiguous and identifiable. Male or female animals were tallied as male or female if identified as such by name, pronoun, or style of dress. Large crowd scenes which contained only figures of one sex were tallied as one male or one female image. No weighting was done for the relative size or prominence of an image in an illustration. Gender neutral characters were not tallied. References in the text of the picture books were tallied in a similar procedure. Each reference to a character was counted, including name, pronoun, or descriptor (Jane, she, the girl), when that character was the subject of an independent clause. The same constraints with regard to animals and ambiguous characters applied to referents as to images.

The majority of the Newbery books are not illustrated, but those that are were reviewed for images in illustration in the same way as the picture books. Because of the nature of the Newbery books, i.e., full pages of text, and up to several hundred pages long, they were not reviewed for numbers of references to males and females in the text.

Occupations

Notation was made in each book of every reference to an occupation, and these were named and tallied according to the sex of the character to which it was attributed. In general, occupations were activities which constituted the livelihood of adult men and women. In those cases where the livelihood was earned by at-home activities, the full range of those activities was listed. These were primarily stories with historical settings, in which the family was self-sufficient, and pursued a variety of crafts and labors in order to meet its own needs. Farmer did not seem an adequate designation for an individual variously described as raising crops, raising livestock, making furniture, harnesses, candles, etc., and, therefore, each of these sorts of activities was listed as an occupation. If children participated in life supporting activity, their occupations were listed as well. The tally of occupations was included to reveal the number and range of occupations attributed to each sex in this sample of literature.

Behavioral Scales

All of the measures described to this point have been quantitative measures of sex bias. In order to accumulate some qualitative data about stereotyping in children's books, Czaplinski (1972) devised a scale for

rating the physical, intellectual, and emotional behavior of the characters (pp. 51-53). The measures resulted from her extensive investigations into sex bias and stereotyping in picture books for young children, and were independently validated in the course of her study. She selected six books at random for analysis to establish inter-coder reliability using the behavioral scales. Mean scores were calculated for males and females on each of the three behavioral scales. The means as measured by Czaplinski were compared to the means as measured by the independent judge. The scores were found to be highly similar. The Czaplinski scales are the only validated and tested behavioral scales, available for the purpose of evaluating the attributes and activities of story character, that the current study was able to locate. "These scales are not meant to imply clear-cut differentiations of activities but rather a pattern of strength versus a pattern of weakness" (Czaplinski, p. 51). A numerical score was therefore assigned to behavior in each distinct episode or activity in which a character participated, rather than to each action. If, for example, one physical behavior was alluded to several times in describing a single segment of an event, it would receive a single numerical score. In The Garden of Abdul Gasazi, the following event was described: "The duck flew out ahead and grabbed the hat

in midair. But instead of landing he just kept on flying, higher and higher, until he disappeared in the afternoon clouds." This segment of the entire event was scored for the physical activity of flying, receiving only one score for that activity even though it was mentioned more than once. This procedure yields a quantitative representation of qualitative data sufficient to provide a strong sense of the relative behaviors of the sexes. The scales are presented here as Tables 3-5.

It is important to note that the ratings were applied to the behaviors of all the characters in the book simply by gender, and not individually by character. They provide an overview of male behavior and female behavior, and not an evaluation of any single figure. They are limited in scope, and many actions were depicted in the stories which were not scorable using this scale. Panic, for example, may be emotionally chaotic, but is not an inability to act. Its attendant physical behavior might be scorable, but it cannot be scored as an emotional behavior. Lastly, the scoring system itself reflects largely traditional, Western values. Crying, for example, is a low scoring emotional behavior, while inhibiting emotion is a high scoring behavior, despite the fact that, in some situations, crying may be the healthier reaction, in terms of authenticity, stress

Table 3
Rating Scale for Physical Behaviors
(after Czaplinski, 1972)

Score	Behavior
10.	Exerting great power over other beings, i.e., war, magic, etc.
9.	Taking great physical risks, i.e., leaping from cliffs, climbing to top of tree, etc.
8.	Taking adventurous trips
7.	Building, inventing, planting
6.	Exerting self actively, i.e., running, swimming, flying, carrying heavy loads, etc.
5.	Exerting self moderately, i.e., dancing, sailing, climbing to low branches, sweeping, etc.
4.	Walking and other slow physical movements
3.	Making small hand movements, i.e., knitting, sewing, stirring, etc.
2.	Watching while standing or sitting
1.	Sleeping, fainting, or complete physical inactivity

Table 4
Rating Scale for Intellectual Behaviors
(after Czaplinski, 1972)

Score	Behavior
10.	Inventing, composing, fantasizing creatively
9.	Controlling others through intellectual superiority
8.	Solving problems by deducting from facts and events
7.	Growing intellectually with signs given such as reading, writing, etc.
6.	Reasoning with others or self
5.	Intuiting with little deduction
4.	Fantasizing unproductively, escaping
3.	Stating the commonplace--showing little originality
2.	Giving inaccurate solution or advice
1.	Being intellectually duped or portrayed as stupid

Table 5
Rating Scale for Emotional Behaviors
(after Czaplinski, 1972)

Score	Behavior
10.	Showing mature understanding of self and others
9.	Acting decisively-showing firmness
8.	Aggressively expressing anger-controlling others
7.	Inhibiting emotional reactions such as sadness and sheltering other's emotional reactions
6.	Feeling empathy for others
5.	Expressing strong feelings with some emotionality--articulating clearly joy, sadness, etc.
4.	Articulating some overconcern, fearfulness, or hurt feelings
3.	Continually expressing nervousness, hypochondria
2.	Expressing emotional state nonverbally and weakly, i.e., crying, moaning, pouting, etc.
1.	Collapsing emotionally--inability to act

reduction, etc. The present study scored only the described behaviors, adhering as rigorously as possible to the scales, and did not take into account situation or context, as that seemed to invite too subjective an analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The sample of Caldecott books and the sample of Newbery books will be analyzed separately, as somewhat different analyses were required by the two types of books, i.e., picture books and reading books. Each sample contains 20 books.

Caldecott Findings

Authors and Illustrators

The first analysis consists of a comparison of the numbers of male and female authors and illustrators. Ten of the books were written by females, nine by males, and one by a team of male and female. They are essentially equal, suggesting that neither has greater responsibility for influencing that gender socialization which may occur via these books. Males outnumbered females as illustrators, (twelve of the books were illustrated by males, seven by females, and one by a team of male and female). As with the authors, neither sex exerts greater influence over the pictorial content of the books.

Male and Female Words in Titles

Eight of the books contain words in the title recognized by informants as male or female proper names, or male or female referents. (Six 10-14 year old girls served as informants for this judgment.) The mean number of male words or names in the book titles is .31, and the mean number of female words or names is .10. The difference between the means is significant ($t(19)=2.04$, $p < .05$).

Primary and Secondary Characters

The mean number of male primary characters per book is 2.3 and the mean number of female primary characters per book is .86. Though the difference between the means does not achieve statistical significance ($t(19)=1.45$, $p > .10$), it nonetheless seems a non-trivial finding when one considers that children are nearly three times more likely to be hearing about a male than a female in the central role of the book.

The books contain a mean of 1.6 male secondary characters and a mean of 1.1 female secondary characters. There is not a significant difference between the means of the two groups ($t(19)=1.20$, $p < .10$), and the impression of male dominance is much less robust.

Images and References

The illustrations of the 20 books contain a mean of 28 male images and a mean of 18.3 female images. The difference between the means is statistically significant ($t(19)=2.51$, $p < .05$). Children are therefore significantly more exposed to pictures of males than females when looking through their picture books. Similarly, they are more likely to be hearing male names, words, and pronouns than female. The books had a mean number of references to males of 49.8, and a mean number of references to females of 20.2. This is again a significant difference ($t(19)=2.22$, $p < .05$).

Occupations

Occupations of male characters are specifically referred to a mean of 4.2 times in the Caldecott books, as opposed to a mean of 1.8 times for the female characters. This difference is between the means is statistically significant ($t(19)=4.84$, $p < .01$). Tables 6 and 7 provide the range of male and female occupations encompassed.

Table 8 provides a comparison of the mean number of representations of male and female characters in the Caldecott sample books.

Table 6
Caldecott Books
Occupations of Male Characters

1. aide-de-camp	23. musician
2. animal handler	24. packer
3. aviator	25. parent
4. buyer	26. photographer
5. candle maker	27. plowman
6. carver	28. police
7. collector	29. protector
8. driver	30. roofer
9. farmer	31. sailor
10. fisherman	32. Santa Claus
11. guide	33. school principal
12. hermit	34. shearer
13. housepainter	35. shepherd
14. hunter	36. shopkeeper
15. janitor	37. sugarer
16. king	38. thief
17. knight	39. train conductor
18. laborer	40. tribal leader
19. magician	41. vendor
20. metal worker	42. villain
21. miller	43. waiter
22. miner	44. watchman
	45. whittler

Table 7
Caldecott Books
Occupations of Female Characters

1. ballet dancer
2. candle maker
3. collector
4. cook
5. embroiderer
6. farmer
7. knitter
8. maid
9. musician
10. parent
11. princess
12. queen
13. seamstress
14. shearer
15. spinner
16. sugarer
17. weaver

Table 8
Representations of Male and Female Characters
in the Sample of 20 Caldecott Books

	Male	Female
Mean number of words in titles	.31	.10
Mean number of primary characters	2.3	.86
Mean number of secondary characters	1.6	1.1
Mean number of images	28.0	18.3
Mean number of references	49.8	20.2
Mean number of occupations	4.2	1.8

Behavioral Scales

Each behavior performed by a male or female character was scored, and the mean male and female behavioral scores for each book was calculated. These scores were then averaged, yielding a mean score for males and females. Table 9 summarizes the mean scores for males and females on the behavioral scales.

Table 9
Mean Behavioral Scores

Caldecott Books			
	Physical	Intellectual	Emotional
Males (N=20)	5.07	6.38	5.89
Females (N=20)	3.77	4.48	3.73

Male characters in the various books have a mean score of 5.07 on the scale of physical behaviors, while female characters have a mean score of 3.77. This is a significant difference between the two groups ($t(19)=3.93$, $p < .01$).

The mean score for male characters on the scale of intellectual behaviors is 6.38, while the mean score for females is 4.84. While not statistically significant ($t(19)=1.65$, $p=.14$), this is a fairly substantial discrepancy.

Similarly, the mean score for males on the scale of emotional behavior is 5.89, and for females, 3.73. While this, again, is not a statistically significant difference ($t(19)=1.87$, $p=.12$), the discrepancy remains fairly substantial and in favor of the males.

In summary, males scored higher than females on each of the behavioral scales, though the scores were not consistently significant. Comparison of the two shows a strong trend to male behavioral superiority. Mean scores for males were approximately two points higher on each scale than mean scores for females, and were above 5.0, while female mean scores were below 5.0.

In addition, there is no correlation among the three scores for either males or females. A high score on the physical scale did not predict a high or low score on the intellectual or emotional scales.

Newbery Findings

Authors and Illustrators

Fifteen of the Newbery books were written by female authors, and ten by male authors. Seven of the 20 books had illustrations other than photographs. Of these, five were illustrated by male artists, one by a female artist, and one by a team of male and female. Male illustrators are clearly more represented in the sample.

Titles

Fourteen of the Newbery titles contain proper names or words that indicate gender. Eight of the titles contain male proper names or designators, and six of the titles contain female proper names or designators. The mean number of male words is .57, and the mean number of female words is .42. There is no significant difference between the mean number of male and the mean number of female words in the titles ($t(19)=.52$, $p > .5$).

Primary and Secondary Characters

The mean number of male primary characters is .65, and the mean number of female primary characters is .80. While it is the case that more of the protagonists are female, this finding is at chance level ($t(19)=.55$, $p > .05$).

The mean number of male secondary characters is 3.45 and the mean number of female secondary characters is 3.0. This difference between the mean numbers of male and female secondary characters is not significant ($t(19)=1.04$, $p > .05$).

Images in Illustrations

Nine of the 20 books were illustrated by either drawings or photographs. These illustrations had a mean number of 34.6 male images per book in the sample, and a

mean of 13.1 female images. This result shows a clear trend, and is nearly significant ($t(19)=2.11$, $p < .10$). Children are considerably more likely to be looking at a male image when looking at the illustrations in these books.

Occupations

Occupations of male characters specifically referred to had a mean of 10.2 times per book as opposed to a mean of 5.5 for female characters. This is a significant difference ($t(19)=3.10$, $p < .01$). This finding does not represent the number and range of different occupational roles available to male and female characters, however. Tables 10 and 11 provide a complete list of the different occupations as they were attributed by gender.

Table 12 provides a comparison of the mean number of representations of male and female characters in the Newbery sample books.

Behavioral Scales

The mean score for physical behavior for male characters in the Newbery sample is 5.8, while the mean score for female characters is 3.7. Males have statistically significantly higher scores than females ($t(19)=5.53$, $p < .0001$).

Table 10
Newbery Books
Occupations of Male Characters

1. actor	42. hay maker	83. student
2. animal care	43. innkeeper	84. sugarer
3. author	44. interpreter	85. surveyor
4. aviator	45. inventor	86. tailor
5. baker	46. janitor	87. thief
6. banker	47. judge	88. ticket seller
7. bathhouse mgr.	48. king	89. track star
8. birdwatcher	49. lawyer	90. train conductor
9. blacksmith	50. legislator	91. trucker
10. boatman	51. logger	92. tutor
11. bodyguard	52. magician	93. undertaker
12. bookie	53. messenger	94. waiter
13. businessman	54. miner	95. warehouseman
14. cabbie	55. mover	96. weaver
15. cabinet sec'y	56. musician	97. woodcarver
16. carpenter	57. newsman	98. wrestler
17. checker	58. nurse	99. YMCA director
18. commissioner	59. paperboy	
19. consul	60. photographer	
20. cook	61. piano tuner	
21. coolie	62. podiatrist	
22. counterman	63. poet	
23. cowboy	64. police	
24. delivery boy	65. postmaster	
25. dentist	66. preacher	
26. doctor	67. President	
27. doorman	68. prince	
28. dowser	69. private eye	
29. driver	70. professor	
30. engineer	71. psychiatrist	
31. entomologist	72. rat catcher	
32. explorer	73. relief worker	
33. farmhand	74. restaurateur	
34. fisherman	75. school principal	
35. flight stew'd	76. servant	
36. food vendor	77. sheriff	
37. footman	78. ship captain	
38. fur trader	79. soldier	
39. God	80. sportscaster	
40. harness maker	81. stationmaster	
41. hawker	82. stenciler	

Table 11
Newbery Books
Occupations of Female Characters

1. actress	26. millhand
2. animal care	27. minstrel
3. author	28. missionary
4. babysitter	29. musician
5. bathhouse manager	30. nurse
6. berry picker	31. pediatrician
7. bus aide	32. postmistress
8. bus driver	33. professor
9. butcher	34. quilter
10. caterer	35. real estate agent
11. cook	36. receptionist
12. factory worker	37. rug maker
13. fieldhand	38. school principal
14. hostess	39. seamstress
15. housecleaner	40. secretary
16. housemother	41. shop assistant
17. housepainter	42. social worker
18. interior decorator	43. spinner
19. judge	44. stewardess
20. knitter	45. student
21. laborer	46. surgeon
22. lawyer	47. vendor
23. librarian	48. volunteer
24. maid	49. waitress
25. midwife	50. witch

Table 12
Representation of Male and Female Characters
in the Sample of 20 Newbery Books

	Male	Female
Mean number of words in titles	.57	.42
Mean number of primary characters	.65	.80
Mean number of secondary characters	3.4	3.0
Mean number of images	34.6	13.1
Mean number of occupations	10.2	5.5

Male characters had a mean score on the intellectual behavior scale of 6.5. Female characters had a mean score of 4.9. The scores for males are significantly higher ($t(19)=2.31$, $p < .05$).

On the scale of emotional behaviors, male characters received a mean score of 5.9 and female characters received a mean score of 4.5. The score for males was significantly higher ($t(19)=2.75$, $p < .05$).

As is the case in the Caldecott sample, male characters scored higher than female characters on all three of the behavioral scales. Mean scores for males are above 5.0 for each of the ratings, while mean scores for females are below 5.0, as seen in Table 13.

Table 13

Newbery Books

Mean Behavioral Scores

	Physical	Intellectual	Emotional
Male (N=20)	5.8	6.5	5.9
Female (N=20)	3.7	4.9	4.5

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Caldecott Sample

The Caldecott winners and honor books of the last ten years were written and illustrated equally frequently by men and women. This finding is consistent with the findings of earlier studies (Nilsen, 1971; Rinsky, 1972), and suggests that neither male nor female authors and illustrators are more responsible for the gender depictions in children's literature. The extent to which gender stereotyping persists, and the following discussion will indicate that it indeed persists, cannot be attributed to there being either more male or more female authors and illustrators.

It is in the analyses of the books themselves that the imbalance becomes clear, beginning with the analysis of the use of gender words in titles. Male names and/or words were part of the title of a book in a ratio to female names and/or words of approximately 3:1. This is virtually identical to Nilsen's 1971 finding, though not nearly as dramatic as the 8:1 ratio reported by Weitzman et al. in 1972. The Weitzman study, however, encompassed

only a five-year period, 1967-1971, while the Nilsen study examined the literature of a 20-year period, 1950-1970, and the present study has a ten year sample, 1979-1988. Comparison of the current ratio to that reported by Weitzman et al. would lead to the conclusion that considerable movement toward gender parity in book titles has been made, but comparison to the larger sample indicates a consistent overrepresentation of males. The Weitzman et al. study may have been distorted by too small a sample of books, or, more likely, an anomalous time period. It seems more accurate to use the range of broader based studies as a basis of comparison.

The issue of gender words or names in the title is important because the title is usually the basis for initial selection of a book. It is mildly encouraging to note, however, that although there are significantly more male words/names than female in those titles containing gender word/names, the majority of the books in the sample (12 of 20) have gender neutral titles.

This tendency to gender neutral titles would be more positive if it reflected a parallel tendency to gender neutral or gender equal content, but it is apparently not the case. Lobel's Fables, for example, while it has a gender neutral title, portrays 21 male primary characters in its stories, and only six female.

The data on numbers of male and female primary and

secondary characters are similarly subject to multiple interpretations. Statistically, there is not a significant difference between either the number of male and female protagonists, or the number of male and female secondary characters. This would appear to support the research indicating substantial movement toward gender parity (Engel, 1981; Collins, Ingoldsby, & Dellman, 1984; Dougherty & Engel, 1987). In spite of there not being a statistical difference, it remains the case, however, that males are nearly three times more likely to be featured in the primary role of the book, and they outnumber females as secondary characters as well. This finding is even more important when coupled with the results of the analyses of images in illustrations and references in text.

The data show that children are encountering significantly more images of males than females, and significantly more references to males than females. It is the case, therefore, that children are confronted with male images and references substantially more often than female even though there are not significantly more male than female characters. It is hard not to assume that this communicates information about the relative importance of certain characters. Male characters are simply brought to the foreground more often than female characters. The data on images and references are

consistent with those of earlier studies, with the exception of Weitzman et al., 1972, which reported much more dramatic differences.

Much of the analyses post 1972 compared their data to those of the Weitzman study (Engel, 1981; Collins, Ingoldsby, & Dellman, 1984; Dougherty & Engel, 1987). It is certainly plausible that the Weitzman study reported figures that were inflated, perhaps because of the narrow time period covered, and that subsequent reports of considerable improvement in certain areas reflect this distortion. The current data are consistent with those reported by Nilsen (1971) and Czaplinski (1972), and seem to indicate only marginal improvement.

Given that males are more often the focus, it is perhaps important to consider under what guise they are featured. Males were described as participating in an occupation approximately four times more often than females. This ratio is virtually identical to that reported by Stevenson (1976) for a sample of children's literature published in the mid to late 1960's. Forty-five different occupations were attributed to males over the sample of 20 books, and 17 were attributed to females. The male occupations included both intellectual and physical activity, and represented work done in and out of doors. The female occupations were much more limited, more traditional, and more sedentary. They

focused more heavily on nurturant behaviors. This again does not represent a departure from earlier analyses, unless it is compared to the Weitzman study, which reported no instances of women working outside of the home.

The final set of analyses of the Caldecott sample concerns the behavioral representations of the male and female characters. The scores of physical behavior of males and females evidence a clear and significant difference between the two. Males are portrayed as stronger and more powerful, as well as generally more active.

The scores of intellectual and emotional behavior do not evidence as compelling a difference, though on both scales the males scored higher than the females. These scores represent a tendency to portray males as more creative, having greater problem solving skills, having greater self understanding and control, and being less prone to displays of emotion. It is important to remember that these scores were obtained by considering scorable behaviors of all male and female characters, not only primary characters. It appears that, while some of the books featured a strong and able female character, the positive impression created by that character was diluted by the more negative portrayals of other female characters. The male characters were more uniformly

depicted. The mean scores reported in this study are highly similar to the mean scores reported by Czaplinski (1972, p. 62). Table 14 provides the comparative figures.

Table 14
Comparative Behavioral Scores

	Physical		Intellectual		Emotional	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1972 (N=32)	5.4	2.9	6.9	4.6	6.9	3.8
1989 (N=20)	5.0	3.7	6.4	4.5	5.9	3.7

The Czaplinski figures represent an analysis of behavioral characteristics of males and females in the Caldecott winners from 1940 through 1971, a total of 32 books. The comparison to these data strongly suggest that no substantial movement away from gender stereotypical portrayals has been made. Males and females continue to be treated in highly traditional ways despite the substantial changes in American society realized over the past decade.

The Caldecott Award winners and honor books are thought to represent the best in picture books available to young children. As such, they are widely distributed and frequently selected by parents and teachers. Their

audience, children between the ages of two and seven, are youngsters who have not yet built a stable gender schema. They are rigid and inflexible in their ideas about sex roles, and unable to shift perspective in their thinking. Through interaction with the environment, and developmental maturation, pre-schoolers are working toward a more concrete and reasoned view of the world. Psychologists and educators claim that children's literature is one of many influencers of this process of acquiring a stable notion of gender role, and so it is doubly sad that the literature continues to evidence substantial bias and gender stereotyping. If the 1972 Weitzman et al. study is excepted from the body of research, which seems appropriate because of its small sample, the data clearly show little or no movement toward gender parity from 1940 to the present, and the traditional portrayals of males and females represent an ever increasing departure from reality. Returning to the primary question to be answered by this study, it is apparent that the answer is that sex stereotypic portrayals of males and females do indeed exist in pre-school children's literature.

Newbery Sample

Women wrote very many of the 1979-1988 Newbery winners and honor books, significantly more so than men.

It would appear, therefore, that, if the books are stereotyped, women are responsible for perpetuating that bias. The same is not true for illustrators in this sample. Of the 20 books, only nine are illustrated, and, of these, two are illustrated with historical photographs, leaving only seven books in the sample which have artist produced illustrations. Men are more heavily represented in this area, but not significantly so.

Unlike the books in the Caldecott sample, the Newbery books do not contain significantly more male names/words than female names/words in their titles. As these books are intended primarily for children who are already reading, it is encouraging to know that children scanning the shelves will see virtually equal numbers of male and female names and words in these titles, as well as a number of gender neutral titles.

This initial impression of gender parity is supported in examination of the numbers of male and female primary and secondary characters. There are roughly equal numbers of male and female primary characters in the books in the sample, and roughly equal numbers of male and female secondary characters also. As males and females in the general population are nearly equal in number, it appears that the numbers of male and female characters reflect reality and offer young readers equal representation.

Further examination of the data, however, reveals that this apparent gender parity is superficial. Despite the appearance of males and females equally in titles, as primary characters and as secondary characters, the male characters are imaged more frequently and presented as participating in occupations more frequently than female characters. In those books in the sample having illustrations or photographs, males were pictured in a ratio of 3:1 to females. Male characters were portrayed in occupations nearly twice as often as female characters, and a tally of those occupations reveals twice as many different occupations attributed to males as attributed to females. As in the Caldecott sample, the occupations attributed to females are more limited and cluster around nurturant behaviors, but the list of Newbery female character occupations is more extensive and does include some non-traditional and some professional roles. This reflects the fact that the subject matter is more varied in these books for older children. It is possible also, that grade school children, having reached the level of concrete operational thought, are less rigid thinkers and more willing to accept the notion that a woman can be a surgeon or a lawyer. The professional women depicted in these books were seldom also depicted as mothers, however. Though children reading these books are largely

capable of shifting perspective and considering dual roles, they are not challenged to do so in this literature.

The behavioral characteristics of the males and females represent the strongest evidence of sex stereotyping. In all three areas, physical, intellectual, and emotional, males scored significantly higher than females. This is despite the fact that many of the books in the sample featured a female protagonist who gave the impression of strength and ability. As in the Caldecott group, the scores for females may have been depressed by the lower scores of the secondary and incidental characters. The role of the female protagonist as a positive model is offset in this manner. The current analysis, therefore, does not support the Kinman and Henderson (1985) finding of a movement toward positive images of females, though it does concur in the report of greater numbers of books with female primary characters.

An additional phenomenon was noted in analyzing this sample which is noteworthy, though it was not coded and does not feature in the analysis. In several of the books a female protagonist was developed as a competent, strong, and independent character, and then was allowed to retreat from her role as a non-traditional female at the least pretext. For example, the protagonist in

Katherine Paterson's novel Jacob Have I Loved was painstakingly developed as an unconventional and physically and intellectually able individual, albeit one plagued by self doubt. The plot evolves logically to resolution of those doubts and eventually shows the reader a well integrated young woman preparing for medical school. Then, in a single paragraph, the character retreats from her planned career as a doctor, and decides to study nursing and become a midwife. This reversal is adopted instantly when a male professor suggests to her that her entry into medical school is unlikely because the places will be needed by men returning from the war. Similarly, the magically powerful Aerin, the female protagonist of Robin McKinley's The Hero and the Crown, is denied the monarchy of her kingdom, though both her heredity and her actions entitle her, in favor of a male. These sorts of reversals may be highly suggestive to the young reader. The implication is that, though an individual female may be strong and independent, she will ultimately revert to her traditional role in a male dominated society.

Conclusion

The intent of this study was to assess the prevalence of sex bias and sex stereotyping in current children's literature. The data provide clear and

unambiguous answers to the secondary questions initially posed. Though there is no significant difference between the numbers of male and female primary or secondary characters in either of the two samples analyzed, the male characters dominate. They are brought to the foreground of the stories more frequently in both text and illustration. They are accorded the more varied and the more potent occupational roles. And they are depicted as physically, intellectually, and emotionally superior to the female characters. The data, though they vary somewhat in order of magnitude, are consistent in direction over the two samples, which represent reading material for two age groups. In all cases, where a discrepancy between the male and female characterizations was found, the males were more frequently and more favorably portrayed. The answer to the primary question of the study, therefore, has to be that sex stereotypic portrayals of males and females do indeed exist in pre-school and elementary aged children's literature.

Though it is females who are accorded an inferior position through the stereotypic and biased portrayals, it is important to remember that stereotyping one gender in effect stereotypes both. If stereotyped portrayals communicate limited options to girls, they must also limit options to boys. For example, the books in the

sample largely communicate that males ought to control, rather than express, emotion.

It has not been suggested, nor will this study suggest, that any book, and certainly not books of the caliber represented by these samples, be censored or eliminated from children's choices. Rather, adults involved in the production and selection of books for children are encouraged to insure the availability of books which will provide a balanced view (DeFilippo, 1976). Furthermore, teachers of elementary aged children are encouraged to include in their curriculum activities and exercises which will help children to develop critical thinking skills with reference to sexist language and ideas, as well other social issues (Schulwitz, 1976; Shackford, 1978; Winkeljohann & Gallant, 1980). The consistent level of sex stereotyping and sex bias in our children's literature certainly warrants that concerned adults select books carefully and critically, editorialize and teach children to evaluate what they read, provide perspective on historical and current situations, and demand of the industry redoubled efforts toward the communication of gender parity in books for our children.

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