THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY THROUGH EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM: EXAMINING PICTUREBOOKS FROM A CRITICAL FEMINIST LENS

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Picturebooks are an important part of the classroom environment in early childhood education. They open doors to new experiences, nurture students' cultural identities, and invite students to explore connections across cultures. In the United States today, many of the picturebooks that are available to teachers and students in preschool classrooms come from the state curriculum that the school district has implemented. Shifting demographic trends have led many educators to recognize a need for more diversity of literature in classrooms. This study was conducted in response to this growing concern that books should better reflect the cultures and identities of the children who read them, with a particular emphasis on young female children of color. The research question guiding this study is: How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens? To investigate this question, I critically analyzed children's picturebooks from a current early childhood curriculum adopted by the state of Texas, focusing on representations of gender and race. The selected books were analyzed using critical content and critical visual analyses to consider how the text and illustrations together represent female characters of color. Although earlier studies of picturebooks have pointed out a deficit of authentic portrayals of female characters of color, this study found that books in the sample did show some attention to authentic cultural themes including motherhood, action and agency, and subjugated knowledge and culture. However, implications for practice and research included the need for more balanced representation of

diverse cultures within the curriculum to better reflect preschool demographics, as well as the need for more classroom instruction on books that give voice and agency to young female children of color as they develop their personal and cultural identities.

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Through the process of writing this dissertation, I have learned an abundant amount about revising and editing within the process approach to writing and about the benefits of rereading to clarify the meaning behind your writing. I have explored methodology and discovered how important it is to have in in-depth understanding of methods before implementing them. I learned about bridging theory and practice together to create a project. I faced many challenges through this process, such as being the first in my family to go through this process, balancing full-time work and school, and having two children during my eight years spent working toward this degree. I overcame these challenges by trying to stay focused on writing and taking one step at a time toward completing this body of work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Picturebooks are written artifacts that convey cultural messages and values about society and help children learn about their world" (Koss, 2015, p. 32). As a former bilingual early childhood educator, I have often used picturebooks to open doors to new and exciting adventures for my students. Like many educators, I also used picturebooks to encourage intercultural connections, as the stories and language used in the books enable students to identify with people from different cultures. According to the State of Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, teachers should be reading aloud at least twice per half-day session or three times per full-day session. Therefore, children in Texas prekindergarten programs are being exposed to a plethora of picturebooks which shape their sense of the world and themselves. The selection of picturebooks available to teachers and students in preschool classrooms is typically based on the state-adopted curriculum that their school districts have implemented. Due to current demographic trends, there is a need for more diverse literature in the classroom. The general purpose of this study is to critically analyze representations of gender and race in picturebooks from a current early childhood curriculum, with a particular focus on portrayals of female characters of color.

Purpose of the Study

This study employed a marginalized feminist lens, drawing upon a combination of Chicana and Black feminist thought, to analyze picturebooks from an early childhood curriculum. Marginalized groups and/or people of color, especially women and children, have

often been represented as inferior in children's literature (Rivas, 2010), if they are represented at all. One goal of this study was to examine whether these trends of underrepresentation and negative representation are evident in the book selection for early childhood curriculums. The study was guided by the following research question: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?*

Lehr (2001) explains that "language is power" and that it can be used as a means to control and gain power (p. 7). The main rationale for this study is to advance understanding of the underrepresentation of diversity and multiculturalism in the picturebooks used in early childhood education. As the U.S. population continues to grow more diverse, access to children's literature that represents diverse racial and gender identities should be growing as well. As a former early childhood educator, I often struggled to find accessible books that represented the identities and experiences of the children in my bilingual classroom. This study examines how picturebooks in a current Texas curriculum represent race and gender. To analyze the books, I employed critical content and critical visual analysis methodology.

Rationale for the Study

Lehr (2001) asked an important question: How often do young girls see their potential and agency reflected in children's literature? With this question in mind, it is very important for educators, publishers, curriculum writers, administrators, and researchers to consider gender and race in the picture books used for teaching. Through my review of the literature, I found that many studies focused on either gendered characters or multicultural characters, but not on

both. Michael W. Apple and Linda K. Cristian Smith explain that books are mediums for ideas (cited in Roy, 2008). Through books, these ideas can become implanted into young children's minds. Based on Michael Foucault's (1975) analysis of how techniques of power can be used to manage people, Walkerdine (1997) argued that gender representations in children's literature can be used by males to control women/girls. She also cited theorist Homi Bhabha, who argued that stories of the colonial subject are used to create truths (e.g. about how each gender is supposed to act and behave). These truths are created in a "complex psycho-dynamic" through discursive practices such as gender representations in children's literature (Walkerdine, 1997, p. 35). Children at this age are beginning to develop their identity and concepts of self-esteem and self-worth. Picturebooks can contribute to this identity formation in monumental ways, both positively and negatively.

Louise Rosenblatt is a lead researcher in this discussion of reader/text connections. In an article titled "From Literature as Exploration and The Reader, the Text, the Poem," she explained theories from her major books *Literature as Exploration* and *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*. According to Rosenblatt (2005), "Whatever the form—poem, novel, drama, biography, essay—literature makes comprehensible the myriad ways in which human beings meet the infinite possibilities that life offers" (p. 26). Every time a reader engages with a text, she makes a personal connection as she brings her past experiences, insights, and beliefs to the reading process and creates meaning. Through these encounters, she imagines new experiences and, often, strengthens her identity. Additionally, literature makes readers aware of diverse ways of being in the world and life experiences beyond their own. Rosenblatt (2005) explained the semiotic relationship of the text/author and the reader: "The finding of meanings involves both

the author's text and what the reader brings to it" (p. 30). Examining the picturebooks offered in a preschool curriculum may give some insight into how early childhood education can contribute to the identity formation of young children, especially for girls of various races and ethnicities.

Rationale for Theoretical Lens

Marginalized feminist epistemologies allow for the self to be critical and reframe the constructed boundaries of dominant theory and research (Saavedra & Pérez, 2012). Clark, Kulkin, and Clancy (2000) critiqued the heavy influence of liberal feminism on the analysis of gender in children's literature. These researchers also called for more multicultural feminists to examine aspects of gender in children's literature by focusing on non-biological parenting, a wider range of story structures, and sources of personal value for women beyond their roles in the capitalistic workplace. For that reason, marginalized epistemologies are essential to the design of this study. Dillard (2000) stated that "all research is a social construction and a cultural endeavor" (p. 662). This emphasis on social construction is central to my rationale for using marginalized feminist epistemologies in the design of this study; marginalized epistemologies refuse to use positivist research methodologies or dominant paradigms to construct new realities or "truths" for people. Marginalized epistemologies guided my research design plan by allowing the space to write in non-linear ways and to express how my experiences as a woman of color relate to the research. In her book, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, bell hooks (1994) wrote:

> The call for recognition of cultural diversity, a rethinking of ways of knowing, a deconstruction of old epistemologies, and the concomitant demand that there be a

> transformation in our classrooms, in how we teach what we teach, has been a necessary revolution—one that seeks to restore life to a corrupt and dying academy. (p. 29-30)

Chicana feminist epistemology depicts power relationships that are not always seen by the dominant research (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Marginalized feminist researchers aim to reposition the "other" to the center of research and challenge how they have traditionally been represented, if at all. I used this approach to analyze the representations of younger girls of color in selected picturebooks. Dillard (2000) wrote that research is a responsibility; one key aim and responsibility of this project is to give voice to the lived realities of marginalized groups of young girls in early childhood and describe the intersecting oppressions that they face. I seek not only to deconstruct the dominant discourse that is often seen in children's picturebooks about girls of color, but also to reconceptualize this discourse, develop new possibilities and voices, and reveal information in a new way.

Lubeck and Post (2000) state that research is always a human construction, presenting a particular view with a focus on the researcher's subjective experiences of what is being studied. Consequently, the research presented in this dissertation uses a marginalized feminist lens, including reflections on my own positionality as a woman of color in academia, a mother, and an educator. I used feminist critical analysis to elucidate the discourses embedded within the texts and illustrations, and yet this study does not have "results"; nor does it seek to "prove" anything or create generalizations. This study did not aim to create new truths, but to be a process of inquiry and possibly reveal more questions than finding "answers." Cruz (2001) stated, "Situating knowledges in the brown body begins the validation of the narratives of survival, transformation, and emancipation of our respective communities, reclaiming histories and identities. And in these ways, we embody our theory" (Cruz, 2001, p. 73). In accordance

with this statement from Cruz, this research project not only offers a critique of representations of women of color as "other"; it also suggests avenues for highlighting the narratives, histories, and identities of mujeres and girls of color in children's picturebooks.

Overview of the Methodology

Critical content and critical visual analysis were used as the methodology for this research project. I chose these methods to help answer the research question: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* Critical content analysis allows researchers to explore text in books in a meaningful and analytical manner while keeping issues of power at the forefront. In the case of this study, critical visual analysis supported my investigation of how illustrations convey meanings through various artistic techniques. Both methods were appropriate for this research study, as text and illustrations are equally essential to the meaning contained in picturebooks. Through a process described in Chapter 3, I generated reflective analysis charts and applied a coding process to organize the data. Chapter 4 presents the findings from both the critical content and critical visual analysis.

Conclusion

The methodology implemented for this study was critical content analysis and critical visual analysis. The aim was to analyze representations of female characters of color in children's literature from a current early childhood curriculum used in Texas. This study used a marginalized feminist lens to identify text and images that speak to the research question and used a critical analysis to create categories from which the research questions were considered.

Then looking across categories and data, conclusions and anomalies were proposed and synthesized.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Issues of gender inequality and oppression in children's literature have long been present in the representation of people of color, especially females. Critical perspectives seek to clarify hidden power relationships and the disempowerment of these individuals often referred to in the literature as other (Cannella & Lincoln, 2012). Critical analysis also offers an ontological view of historical realism that reality is shaped by context, a dialogic methodology; its aim is critique and social transformation (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). The aim of this chapter is to explain the basics of critical perspectives, describe the theory of representation, and review past scholarship analyzing gender and race in children's literature.

One way the story of females of color is told is through children's picturebooks. In these narrative stories, females of color are often underrepresented or inadequately portrayed. This research examines how gender construction and ideology are discursively written about and illustrated in children's literature. First, this chapter elucidates critical perspectives and theories of representation and silencing that will be used to frame this study. Next, I review studies of gender and race in children's literature, as well as scholarship that addresses the challenges of teaching using gender and racially biased picturebooks. Finally, I review studies of counternarrative children's literature.

Theoretical Framework: Marginalized Feminist Epistemology

Cruz (2001) wrote, "Reason, and the methodologies of research that result from an uncritical and unmediated use of it, fragment the brown body" (p. 64). This section presents

ideas for disrupting dominant epistemological perspectives in research by foregrounding Black and Chicana feminisms as a theoretical framework for early childhood research. Epistemology is based on the idea that "knowledge can be separated from context and praxis and thus can be fixed" and changed (Smith, 2009, p. 35). This study uses an epistemological lens that "disrupts history and accepts a new marginalized perspective and ideology" (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 104-105). Critical theorists have encountered many struggles trying to affirm the marginalized and subjugated knowledges of oppressed peoples (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) while denouncing the "truth" constructed through positivist notions of research. The following section will describe the theoretical tenets of marginalized feminist theory to be utilized for this study.

Representation and Silencing

In 1851 Sojourner Truth wrote, "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?" (National Park Service, 2017). Over 170 years have passed since Truth gave her famous speech at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, and still those in dominant positions continue to define what it means to be a "woman" in ways that often discount the experiences of women of color. Anzaldúa (1987) and Collins (2000) both describe how those in dominant positions in society represent women of color. Smith (2012) states, "Representation is important as a concept because it gives the impression of the 'truth'" (p. 37). When you give the impression of a truth in a book, but it is embedded with the author's subjectivities, there arises a way for discursive power techniques to enter the realm.

The issue of "truth" is seen in children's picturebooks, and the women/girls from various cultures within these stories are often represented as *other.* Edward Said conceptualized the term *other* in his book *Orientalism* (1978), which analyzed the colonial world's management of knowledge, including the process of normalizing the dominant culture and defining marginalized groups as *other*. Difference is reproduced through ways of *othering* in relation to dominant discourse, which can be a very dangerous reality in terms of power relationships (Rivas, 2010). This concept of *othering* can be reinforced through representations. When white children and teachers in early childhood assemble their identity through colonial discourses of *othering*, this process causes the dominant group to be defined as greater and more advanced (MacNaughten & Davis, 2001 as cited in Skattebol, 2003). According to Said (1978), the process of representation and *othering* is something of a vicious cycle: a representation of a people in a text can create a knowledge of those people; then it can in turn create a reality; from that reality comes discourse; and in that discourse, more texts of the *other* are created.

Silenced voices have been stifled by regimes of power and dominant discourses throughout history. A *voice* may be defined from a feminist perspective as a metaphor for freedom and power, or the ability to stand for one's beliefs and values (Viruru, 2002). *Silenced voices* are those whose lives are defined/represented by other more dominant groups. Many voices have not been heard or respected as a part of history or decision-making processes, including the voices of younger human beings, who have decisions made for them daily by others (Cannella, 1997). Silencing can also be a fear of disclosing one's opinion due to a history of being marginalized and excluded from decision-making (Soto, Hixon, & Hite, 2010). This notion of silencing is crucial with regard to representation, because not only are *mujeres* and

young girls of color represented in ways that frame them as *other* from the dominant group and stereotype who they are, but in turn, their voices and knowledges are not represented. In this research project these are key facets to the research questions being asked.

Although their voices have historically been silenced, marginalized groups are least able to participate in the political processes that shape and define their everyday lives (Soto & Inces, 2002). Nonetheless, this power to participate remains limited; marginalized authors who bring forth subjugated knowledges in children's texts are not published. This exclusion from publication creates a dichotomy and gives disproportionate power to those who are granted a public voice. The dominant views that silence the voices of the marginalized are those of you, me, publishers, authors, educators, and all of us who continue to accept the dominant ways of being and functioning in our current field. I agree with Cannella (1997), who advises us to explore and respect multiple world views. We limit ourselves by silencing ourselves and others when there is a continuous need to critique what we think we *know*. In addition, Delpit (1988) reminds us that people are the experts on their own lives (including children, women, and minorities), and we should stop denying their thoughts, views, and knowledges and calling them *false* consciousnesses.

Mestiza Consciousness and Intersectionality

In "La Conocencia de la Mestiza," a chapter in Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Anzaldúa writes that the *mestiza* belongs to two different cultures, and *mestiza* consciousness builds a "tolerance for ambiguity," which is an ability to manage living in two cultures at once (p. 101). Anzaldúa (2002) explained that the

mestiza is in a position to make connections and be a bridge between various worlds. This *mestiza* perspective is extremely similar to "intersectionality" in Black feminist thought, though both have their unique ideological standpoints. For example, Patricia Hill-Collins (2000/2009), a major theorist of Black feminist thought, explained that each of us experiences complex, intersecting forms of oppression; in one way, we may be oppressed, but in another way, we may be an oppressor. The experiences of children of color often are excluded from their school experience, and therefore their body, hair, skin, and mannerisms are deemed as irregular. This study examined whether this trend continues in children's literature placed in elementary school classrooms. Black feminist thought is also concerned with subjugated knowledge, where dialogue and lived experience create meaning. This is clearly seen in early childhood education research on how children's literature affects young females of color: it changes their very perceptions of themselves. Therefore, the concepts of intersectionality and subjugated knowledges were also used in this research to frame the research questions, analyze the children's literature, and aid in the discussion and synthesis of the inquiry.

Lived Experience

Collins (2000) calls for the importance of self-definition and self-validation through the sharing of lived experiences of women of color. Collins (2000) wrote, "Self-definition speaks to the power dynamics involved in rejecting externally defined, controlling images of Black womanhood" (p. 126). She calls for women of color to voice their own self-definition by describing their lived experience. Anzaldúa (1987) writes, "She puts history through a sieve, winnows out the lies, looks at the forces that we as a race, as women, have been a part of… She

reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths" (p. 104). Calling for women to "take inventory" through sharing lived experience, Anzaldúa suggests that women reclaim the definitions of themselves and their communities. Though lived experience is a key aspect of both Black and Chicana feminist theories, Collins (2000) reminds us that these are not monolithic groups with identical experiences.

Literature Review: Gender and Race in Children's Texts

For many years, quantitative and qualitative studies in the field of children's literature have focused on gender and race. Several common themes have emerged in this body of research. This section will discuss studies of gender and race in children's literature, with a particular focus on studies related to the research question, topics of representation, and counternarratives.

Representation: Identity and Power Structures of Gender and Race in Picturebooks

The landmark study of gender representations in children's picturebooks is by Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross (1972), "Sex Role Socialization in Picture Books for Preschool Children." This groundbreaking study examined gender and sex role bias and representations from the 1967-1971 Caldecott-winning preschool books, Newberry Award books written for preschool children, The Golden Books, and etiquette books that prescribed behavioral rules for children (p. 1127). The researchers found that most of the female characters in these books were insignificant characters—girls who were meant to be "pretty dolls" (p.1137). The plots of the books were about male adventures with friends, and girls were

seldom represented as having friendships or adventures of their own. Weitzman and colleagues also found that females were generally represented as passive characters. They played and lived indoors and were often restricted to wearing dresses. The only female roles found in all of the books were pleasing/service roles: fairies, fairy godmothers, and water maidens. The researchers concluded that these picturebooks aid children in forming their gender identities, and girls were being presented with images that discouraged them from developing a sense of agency or ambition (read: unless, of course, they want to be a fairy, a slave to their partner, or a mermaid).

In 1988, McDonald used content analysis to discover whether the treatment of gender in children's picturebooks became more equal between 1976 and 1987. Using chi-squared analysis, McDonald found a statistically significant difference that males were overly represented as characters in children's books and that males were given more roles than females, confirming that the trends identified in the Weitzman et al. (1972) study had continued throughout the 1970s.

In 1996, Turner-Bowker conducted a quantitative study that examined gender stereotypes in children's literature through what she called a feminist framework, and had similar findings to Weitzman. The researcher explained that children's books used gender as a means of power and regulation by including language that reinforced gender stereotypes. Turner-Bowker (1996) used a sample from the Caldecott Medal winners and honored books from 1984 through 1994. She and 18 raters examined the authors' genders, the major characters' genders, the ethnicity of the main human characters, and whether the central characters were male or female. Then, based on the 20 most frequently used adjectives found

in the first part of the study, 50 participants used semantic differential scales to analyze the texts. The most common descriptors for females were beautiful, sweet, scared, frightened, worthy, weak, brave, and furious. The top descriptors for males were big, horrible, furious, brave, fierce, proud, great, and terrible. These descriptors uphold the discourse of *female* as weak and passive. Chatton (2001) would agree; this researcher noted that children need to read about female characters who have agency to grow, change, and feel a range of emotions. Chatton (2001) further argued that we need to raise questions and have discussions with children when reading picturebooks that portray various images of gender.

A few years later, Tepper and Cassidy (1999) analyzed the emotional language that male and female characters used in children's books. Parents participated in a survey of books they had read with their preschool children, and from this survey, 196 books became the data sources. From this sample, eleven emotions were coded: interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, fear, shyness, shame, guilt, and love. Tepper and Cassidy found that males were associated more with emotional words, not only because of the overrepresentation of males but also because of the lack of agency and storylines given to female characters. Confirming previous studies' findings, Tepper and Cassidy found that women and girls were typically represented as passive background characters, their minds and bodies silenced.

In her book *Daddy's* Girl, Walkerdine (1990) analyzed gender representations in comic books. These books often featured females as their lead characters, yet also often portrayed females in passive roles. Walkerdine found that girl characters engaged in selfless acts, but they were passive to violence and often portrayed as victims. They were what she called "heroines who do not get angry." She also argued that the typically family structure shown in the comics

was the dominant, bourgeois family with money and material possessions. In her conclusions, Walkerdine (1990) explained that girls are presented as victims but can get out of challenging situations by providing services to others and being selfless. According to Walkerdine, these books implicitly teach girls that if they prove their worthiness through service, a prince or man will come to marry them.

In one of the most intriguing research studies I found, the body was also a central theme in passivity/agency binary. Marshall (2004) used a poststructural feminist and literary analysis to examine how different versions of the Little Red Riding Hood story reproduce and create gendered identities, highlighting changes in the story's gender representations over time. Marshall first analyzed a French story called "The Story of the Grandmother," the first known version of Little Red Riding Hood. In this original version, the girl is forced to strip naked for the wolf, and the mother does not give a warning to the girl, nor is there a woodsman to save her; she has to escape on her own.

The second analysis was of the story "Little Red Cap," written by the Brothers Grimm in 1819, in which a woodsman was added to save the girl (creating a lack of agency for the girl and reinforcing the ideal that children, especially girls, have docile minds and bodies). In this version, the mother tells the girl not to go into the woods or talk to strangers, because it is the parent's duty to regulate children's bodies, and, if children do not follow the rules, there are harsh consequences: the girl is eaten by wolf and cut out of this stomach by the woodsman. The last book analyzed was a Caldecott winner, *Little Red Riding Hood* by Hyman (1983), which is the most familiar version for U.S. readers. The discourse of femininity in Little Red Riding Hood is created in what is said and in what is not said (Marshall, 2004). In the discourse of

innocence (which denies her sexual agency), the girl is seen as a victim, and, in the discourse of femininity, the girl is sexually inciting and culpable for the wolf's advances. This is apparent even in the Caldecott-winning illustrations of the girl's seductive glances at the wolf. In conclusion, Marshall (2004) explained that Little Red Riding Hood is a site for political struggle in which shifting discourses of innocence and sexuality establish a feminine gender identity.

In 2011, because so many studies had only used Caldecott Medal winners in their samples for analysis of gender in children's literature, McCabe, Fairchild, Grauerholz, and Pescosolido (2011) examined a broader sample—5,618 Caldecott winners, Little Golden Books, and books from the Children's Catalog from 1900-2001—to determine similar results would be found. McCabe and colleagues coded the book titles as having either male/female names and pronouns, or both, or neither/non-identifiable, and applied the same coding to the books' central characters. They used many methods to find statistical significance: descriptive statistics and a chi-squared test, Fischer's exact test, and a Wilconan sign test. Based on these descriptive statistics, McCabe et al. found that males are represented more than females in both titles and central characters, and this gender disparity is even greater when the characters are animals. The researchers explained that these findings suggest to children that the characters of girls/women are less important. The Little Golden Books had the highest difference in male and female representation out of the three book categories in the sample. McCabe et al. explained that gender is socially constructed, and if females' views, experiences and identities are left out of picturebooks, what does that say about the construction of the female gender?

Also in 2011, Kirkscey (2011) completed a study on children's literature nominated for the Texas Bluebonnet Award, using a thematic analysis to investigate books with realistic

female main characters. Kirkscey only found three books that qualified; he explained that this limited sample "supports the observation that, though fifty percent of the possible readers and voters are female, they still either vote for books dominated by male characters and/or have fewer choices for books with female character.s" (pp. 96-97), which is a problem in its own right. Kirkscey concluded that the books created a cycle of omission, in which the characters' choices in the narratives perpetuate traditional female gender roles. Such choices include holding in their true thought and feelings and lacking agency and voice to make positive changes in their lives.

In a more recent study of portrayals of female characters in children's media, Steyer (2014) found that females remain significantly underrepresented and are often represented in stereotypically passive roles. Confirming previous studies' findings, Steyer noted that female characters are less visible than male characters in children's literature, and although female representation is growing, this growth is only evident in award-winning books, not books typically used in schools with young children. Steyer also found trends of passivity and lack of agency, arguing that female characters in children's media are represented as passive, needing the help of male characters, and performing stereotypical household and career roles. Steyer also explained that these dangerous representations can have grave effects on how children perceive themselves; what abilities they think they have based on their gender; interests they should or should not pursue; expectations of themselves and others; and behaviors of teachers, parents, and children.

In another recent investigation of female gender roles in children's literature, Ellefsen (2015) used content analysis to study the archetypal roles of female characters in picturebooks

used by preschool teachers in 16 classrooms. The study found that of the 106 female characters, there were 50 orphans, 22 innocents, and 10 caregivers, but only four explorers, four heroes, three rulers, two sages, one rebel, one lover, and no jesters, creators, or magicians. A major finding was that only 26% of female characters communicated verbally in the books, and many of those characters were limited to words like *shhh!* or asking for assistance. Ellefsen called for more research on books used in early childhood education settings, not just award-winning books.

Research on diversity and multiculturalism in children's literature has a deep history within the United States. In *The All-White World of Children's Books*, Larrick (1965) surveyed 5,206 trade books for children published between 1962 and 1964. Only 340 of these books were found to include one or more "negro" characters, and eight publishers produced all-white books only. Larrick explained that African Americans were basically nonexistent in children's picturebooks at the time, and the few portrayals that did exist were stereotypical and crude (like *Little Black Sambo* or *The Lazy Little Zulu*). Books that involved African American characters were typically based on slavery or African folktales, or they included a token black character included to build up the white hero (or heroine) who befriends the "negro" during integration. Larrick criticized this trend in publishing and advocated for children's books to include true and relevant themes for the time that reflected the current African American experience of the time, like bombings and civil rights protests. She urged editors and publishers to consider that "what is good for the Ku Klux Klan is not necessarily what is good for America" (p. 85).

In 1998, Roethler examined the relationship between identity formation and African American illustrations in children's literature. He analyzed several artists' illustrations and

advocated for the hiring of more black illustrators who have cultural authenticity and more of a connection with the art in the books; he noted that the percentage of books illustrated by African American artists was not keeping up with the growing African American population. He also explained the adverse history of African Americans in picturebooks, in which they are nonexistent or depicted in negative ways. Readers of these books, Roethler argued, receive messages about "universal" situations that are based on white experiences and images. Roethler described the effects of these representations as follows:

> One of the ways in which black children in America create their schemata is through the illustrations they encounter in the literature to which they are exposed as children. Children, especially young children, are sensitive to illustrations. They concentrate on illustrations while another person reads to them, and they are subject to the impressions illustrations create. (p. 98)

In 2008, McNair analyzed the representation of authors and illustrators of color in school-based book clubs. McNair wrote that the Scholastic book club began in 1948 in response to the popularity of paperback children's books. Teachers receive flyers and send them home with students to order books at discounted prices, and teachers receive books for their classrooms as incentives. The researcher used a theoretical framework of selective tradition as a lens to view the content analysis and examine the existence of racism in the Firefly and Seesaw book series, which are marketed for Preschool and K-1 children. Through a year-long study, McNair found that the book fair showcased 34 authors/illustrators of color, 28 African Americans (one author shown twice) one Latino, four Asian Americans, and no Native Americans, compared to over 600 Anglo authors. Also, throughout the length of the study, McNair also noted there were several months where the flyers did not feature any authors of color (although more were featured during peak months like February, Black History Month);

she concluded there was evidence of a selective tradition that excludes the voices and viewpoints of people of color.

Similar findings emerged from a study by Hughes-Hassell and Cox (2010), who examined the percentage of board books published and reviewed from 2003-2008 that featured people of color, analyzing both who was represented and who was writing the books. The researchers emphasized that board books play a significant role in the cognitive and social/emotional development of babies and toddlers, which includes self-esteem and self-concept. The authors wrote that to develop a positive self-concept, young children of color need a multicultural and diverse environment that includes board books specifically intended for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Hughes-Hassell and Cox found that of the 218 books that met their criteria, 130 featured only white people, 12 books featured only people of color, 50 books featured people of multiple ethnic groups, 21 were English/Spanish bilingual books, and five were books with international characters. Board books depicting only people of color were scarce; of these, four were written by African American authors and four by Hispanic authors. The researchers concluded that many of the books were written from a perspective that was not from the cultures that were the focus of the books. This contributed to the perpetuation of stereotypes about Latino and African American cultures.

Most recently, Koss (2015) conducted a descriptive content analysis of 455 picturebooks published in 2012, using critical race theory to examine character depiction. Seventy-five percent of the books depicted white main characters, 15% depicted black main characters, and a combined total of 6% depicted Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, or Native American main characters. The authors and illustrators were also predominantly white (90% and 83%,

respectively). Koss established that white privilege is pervasive in contemporary children's literature; consequently, children who interact with these books are sent implicit messages that white stories are more important than their experiences, that whiteness is normal, and that people of color belong in supporting roles only.

Few studies have analyzed intersecting forms of oppression in children's literature (Resse, 2001; Roy, 2008; Clark, Lennon, & Morris, 1993). Chuhkray (2010) examined researchers who explored intersections of race and gender. She summarized Prida et al.'s (1972) findings that most picturebooks that included representations of Puerto Rican women not only reinforced stereotypes with themes of passivity and "femininity," but also added stereotypical constructions of stories of struggling to assimilate into American culture. Also, in 2001, Reese conducted a study of Native American female characters in children's literature. She explained that native peoples have historically been absent from this literature; in those books that do represent native people, Native American *women* are represented either as dead, or as squaws and princesses. This pattern of representation is significant because it suggests to children that these are the only choices for women/girls of color. Other studies have focused on books about women/girls of color and representation based on authorship.

Roy (2008) analyzed representations of intersecting oppressions by researching Indian folktales in American children's picturebooks using critical discourse analysis (CDA), which explores how discursive practices arise from relations of power. Through analysis of titles, illustrations, and text Roy found that nature was shown to be essential to life in India, and the people were perceived as a backwards "other." Because of their supposed proximity to nature, Indian people were portrayed as uncivilized and underdeveloped. In addition, Roy identified

poverty as a major theme in the books; this poverty functioned as a point of contrast to a glorified, all-American white life. My study follows Roy's example by considering multiple aspects of oppression (namely, gender and race) and by using critical analysis to explore how illustrations and text can create and maintain power relationships.

Clark, Lennon, and Morris (1993) took a similar intersectional approach by analyzing how both race and gender are portrayed and constructed in children's picturebooks. Their study compared the 1987-1991 Caldecott winners and honored books with the Coretta Scott King winners and runners-up from the same years. This study examined the illustrations in children's literature over time, including those drawn by Black and non-Black artists. The researchers examined the depiction of gender in Black-authored books to see how these books expressed the values of Black feminists compared to those of White feminists. The King books revealed more lead female relationships than the Caldecott books, and all of the King books included at least one female character.

This review of the literature demonstrates that although researchers have extensively explored both gender and race in children's literature, there is a gap in the research: studies have not focused simultaneously on gender and race in books that feature female characters of color. An additional gap in research is that studies of picturebooks have not used data collected within early childhood curriculums. This study seeks to advance our understanding of children's literature by addressing both of these gaps.

Counternarratives: Voice, Agency, Space and Subjugated Knowledges

I have also found studies that highlight counternarratives: feminist representations that

portray female characters in a wider variety of ways. Cruz (2001) stated, “The brown body, with its multiple and often oppositional intersections of sociopolitical locations, must be acknowledged in its centrality in creating new knowledges” (p. 657). Chukhray (2010) discussed a study by Ramirez and Dowd (1997), who found that over time, more books have focused on concepts of “immigration, bilingualism, migrant labor, economic issues, prejudice, discrimination, intercultural marriage, and adoption” (23, as cited in Chukhray, 2010). Many of these books closely relate to marginalized feminist concerns. In 2003, Davies conducted an analysis of feminist children’s stories in which she examined metaphors, forms of relationships, patterns of power and desire, and children’s ways of relating to the text. Davies defined a feminist children’s story as one that had subtext that turned to gender, or a story where gender remains in the subtext but metaphors for gender shift the ideals. Her selection criteria were that the books had to be well-written, accessible, and appealing for young children; address a variety of female issues; and generate discourse. Davies found that feminist children’s stories use creative narratives that help children imagine new ways of resolving conflict; she urged that we continue to foreground issues of gender when analyzing children’s literature in order to create new possibilities. Davies used poststructural feminism, and she would not have looked at power issues if it were a liberal feminist study.

Clark and Fink (2004) reviewed social science research on gender in children’s literature and analyzed differences between feminist approaches to this topic. Of the 34 studies they reviewed, 27 adopted a liberal feminist perspective, which is concerned with gender equality; five used a difference feminist perspective, which believes that there are basic differences between males and females; and only two were written from a multicultural feminist

perspective, which attends to multiple intersecting systems of oppression. I have found similar results in my own review of the literature; few studies that have been done using marginalized feminist epistemologies.

Clark and Fink (2004) focused their analysis on themes of resistance and oppression in books featuring non-traditional characters. They analyzed the voices of the authors and illustrators and looked for strategies of resistance. In their results, the researchers found various resistance strategies: some books showed actual oppression such as the L.A. riots; some, like *Nappy Hair*, celebrated racial difference; some, like Gloria Anzaldúa's children's story, *Friends from the Other Side / Amigos del Otro Lado*, emphasized cooperation with other oppressed people and advocated for traditional practices. Clark and Fink's study offers a hopeful perspective, suggesting that some children's literature is truly telling feminist stories and creating counternarratives to challenge stereotypical representations of what it means to be a *mujer* or young girl of color.

In the article "We Have Stories to Tell: Gathering and Publishing Stories in a Puerto Rican Community," Botelho, Turner, and Wright (2006) described an option for communities whose voices are left out of the school curriculum. In the article, teachers explain how they partnered with students and their parents to write and read poems and storybooks about themselves, their cultures, and their families. The children were engaged in authentic reading and writing experiences and were able to publish and read their books to others. Botelho wrote that through this activity, "Children came to see themselves as accomplished authors and illustrators, conscious of the power of their own words, images, and lives" (p. 3). In the same year, Medina (2006) examined how Latino children's literature represents immigrant

experiences. This study also highlighted examples of "critical fictions" (Mariani, 1991, as cited in Medina, 2006), which are texts that include the political and sociocultural experiences of authors from marginalized communities. These insiders use their writing to create space for stories that share a sense of community, struggle, and resistance. The books represent not only histories, but current realities that "help us understand a unique set of experiences" (p. 72). Through descriptive thematic analysis, Medina explored the following questions: how is the immigration experience represented in Latino/a young adult literature? What kind of metaphors and symbols do these authors use for "imagining immigration"? What kinds of personal stories and ideological representations do the authors share? What are the continued realities of immigration? What can a story convey? Medina analyzed *The Circuit, Esperanza Rising,* and *Before We Were Free*, and found that in all three books, the authors share unique immigration experiences based on their own lives and the lives of their families. Each text thus adds to the complex story of immigration and the vast experiences that people live through and suggest further explorations of critical fictions related to schooling experiences.

In *You Go Girl! Heroines in Newbery Medal Award Winners*, Houdyshell and Martin (2010) researched positive characteristics of resiliency among female protagonists in Newbery Medal books from 1997 to 2008. They chose books based on the following questions: Do the female protagonists possess positive characteristics related to resiliency? Are the female characters assigned traditional or nontraditional roles? and Has the number of central female characters changed from the previous twelve years? The books that matched these criteria were *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse (1998), *Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata (2001), *A Year Down Yonder* by Richard Peck (2005), and *The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron (2007). The

characters were found to display the following traits: courage, intelligence, tenacity, fortitude, conviction, optimism, and a sense of humor. Houdyshell and Martin found that these characters took up both traditional and nontraditional roles, but all of them had complex multifaceted personalities, and all shared a sense of resilience and agency. The researchers found that the number of female protagonists in Newbery award-winning books grew from 1985 to 1996 but then decreased by 33% from 1996 to 2008.

A groundbreaking study by Crisp and Hiller (2011) focused on "ungendered" characters in children's picturebooks. The researchers found that 14% of children's Caldecott Award books from 1938-2011 featured ungendered leading characters who are not explicitly identified as being male or female, leaving their gender open to readers' interpretation. Crisp and Hiller explained that some of these books included typical cultural gender markers such as clothing or accessories but did not state the protagonist's gender explicitly. This is seen as a counternarrative since "no genders are defined within the books themselves. As such, any reader is free to self-identify with any character(s) who most closely reflects images of themselves" (p. 205), which makes the concept of gender identity more fluid and open for interpretation, discussion, and understanding. These studies give insight into the possibilities that counternarratives could present for marginalized people.

The Gender Binary

One of the main issues of gender representation in children's literature that can be a concern for early childhood educators is the dichotomous relationship constructed between male and female. Male and female divisions are a consistent theme in children's literature

(Davies, 2003). Trites (1997) identified the following major concerns faced by feminists researching gender and by educators choosing which books to use with children: does the female character have agency, and does the text subdue or allow for agency in female characters? Tsao (2008) argued that females are underrepresented in children's literature, and males are represented as more active. This is of major concern for educators of young children, because these books could reinforce media and social discourses that women/girls are supposed to be passive agents and remain in the background (maybe seen, but definitely not heard). In children's literature, girls are often portrayed as victims, while males take dominant roles (Lehr, 2001). This binary represents to young girls that they have no agency in changing their fate and adds to young boys' mentality that they have the power and can (and should) overpower females, as well as "weaker" males and/or animals. This finding is consistent with Davies' (2003) claim that males are typically portrayed as active and females as passive. First and foremost, teachers need to be aware of how the books they present to children represent gender identity. Teachers must also make themselves agents of change by finding works that present various possibilities for female characters and by leading critical discussions about how class readings represent the uses and roles of gender.

The Construction/Reproduction of Gender(ed) Identities and Lost Voices

Bradford (2007, as cited in Nair & Taif, 2010) argued that careful attention should be placed on the messages about gender that children's books convey, because these books can affect young readers' developing gender identities (p. 139). Chatton (2001) described how children are trying to make sense of their identity, including their gender. Although

picturebooks are not the only source children draw upon, books are a major facet of cultural discourse that show them possibilities for gender identity. Short (2001) agreed, adding that children's perceptions of gender identities can be affected not just by the books themselves, but also by the manner in which they are presented to children. If you read a book in which a female character has no agency and that is all you read, the silence may lead to children to assume that you have agreed with the book. But if you interrupt the content, ask children questions, suggest critical responses, and create new possibilities for female agency, this could change the course of identity formations. Children's books convey many ideologies and beliefs of the dominant culture (Taylor, 2003). Tsao (2008) argued that gender bias in literature can influence gender stereotypes of young children. This can have major implications for their identity formation, and also for the perpetuation of "truths" about what it means to be male or female. Then my question becomes: what if a child steps outside of those boundaries created? Teachers have a huge job on their hands—in addition to librarians, parents, and others who read picturebooks with children—to dismantle these limiting ideas about gender.

The findings of Clark et al. (1993) offer a great deal to literacy educators. Teachers should be very cautious about the books they use in their classrooms and think carefully about how they represent women and young girls. This research also highlights the need for new children's authors to think more about the characters in the books they write and for the Caldecott Medal Committee (and other literary award committees) to consider representations of female identities in the books they select for recognition. The study from Mendoza and Reese (2001) examining race has implications for literacy educators as well; this study challenges educators to learn more about their own racial identities, bring dialogue about racial

and cultural privilege to the forefront, and seek out high-quality multicultural children's literature.

Trites (1997) wrote that female voices are often silenced in children's literature, and she calls for books that provide counternarratives to challenge the stereotype of female passivity. She discussed two children's books, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* and *Rice Without Rain*, in which the voices of female characters are silenced. Female characters in children's books are often portrayed as helpless, kept far from action, and seen but not heard; it is very important for researchers and feminist critics to be aware of this form of silencing (Trites, 1997). There are many ways that females are silenced in children's literature, just as there are many ways in which popular discourse teaches young girls to be silent and teaches boys that it is okay to silence female voices. Again, the implication for educators is significant, and awareness is key to helping young girls make their own voices heard in the classroom. As Short (2001) wrote, book choice is political; it is crucial for educators and for all those who read and select picturebooks for young children to provide a variety of texts, and if those texts affirm gender stereotypes, those issues must be addressed. (Short even argued that silence from educators about gender in picturebooks is a political statement in itself). In addition, it is very important to continue the study of gender in children's literature and the language that is used to create male/female discourse and truths (Nair & Talif, 2010).

Conclusion

Memmi (1965) explained that our heritage is passed down through teaching children and through our language. This process is stifled in many marginalized communities where

children are placed in early childhood settings (because of the thought that school will save these poor, uneducated children from the fate of their communities), and the history and memories taught to the children are not those of their own culture, but those of a Eurocentric Western middle class. This is a saddening aspect of school systems in the U.S., and my hope for this project is to contribute to transformations in education by illuminating how young girls and women of color are represented in children's picturebooks.

In this chapter, I have explained the basics of critical theory and theories of representation and silencing. I have also examined past researchers' analyses of children's literature in regard to gender, intersectionality, counternarrative stories, and strategies for teaching with gender-biased picturebooks. In addition, I have discussed the marginalized feminist lens through which I conduct this study.

> We are the colored in the white feminist movement.
> We are the feminists among the people of our culture.
> We are often the lesbians among the straight.
> We do this bridging by naming ourselves and by telling our stories in our own words.
>
> (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981, p. 23)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study analyzed children's literature from a current Texas-adopted early childhood curriculum. The research question was: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* I employed a marginalized feminist lens, as well as critical content and visual analyses, to interpret text and images in response to this research question. This chapter describes the methodology for this inquiry, including time frame, book selection, rationale, research question, and methods of data collection and analysis.

Time Frame and Location

This analysis was conducted in Wichita Falls, TX. I gathered the data over the spring and summer of 2018 and completed my analysis in the summer of 2018. The data collection process included creating a list of all the books in the chosen curriculum and selecting books based on specific criteria related to the research question; next, the data were analyzed using critical content and visual analyses with a critical feminist lens.

Book Choice and Rationale

When selecting children's literature for research, there are many methods in choosing what to study. In previous analyses, there has been an emphasis on reviewing Caldecott books only. Such research has not given an accurate assessment of the multitudinous aspects of gender in children's literature in public schools, because the picturebooks used in classrooms

are not limited to just Caldecott Award books (McCabe et al., 2011). The database of children's books used for investigation in this study came from a current adopted Texas early childhood curriculum. These books were analyzed because young children in Texas public preschool programs are being exposed to the books from state-adopted curriculums, and I wanted to survey what some young children are being exposed to in the classroom.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) listed the approved selected early childhood curricula from which school districts adopt and that prekindergarten teachers can use in their classrooms. Currently, the Texas State Board of Education has adopted the following curricula: Texas DLM Early Childhood Express, Opening the World of Learning: Texas Comprehensive PreK, The Big Day for PreK Texas Program, High Scope Preschool Curriculum and Assessment, Frog Street PreK Texas System, Teaching Strategies Systems for PreK, Texas Edition, and We Can! Texas Classroom System. I chose to use the High Scope Preschool Curriculum for this study for reasons of access, implementation, and effectiveness. I had direct access to the curriculum materials and books for High Scope through its website, where each picturebook, big book, board book, paperback book, and bilingual book that can be purchased within the curriculum is listed. This particular curriculum is currently implemented in school districts and Head Start programs in Texas and throughout the United States; thus, this selection offers insight into what many children are being exposed to on a daily basis in public prekindergarten and Head Start programs. The High Scope curriculum is also used in the United States as an "intervention program for low-income, at-risk children" (Jackman, 2015, p. 55). Thirdly, I knew that the books in this curriculum contain at least some representation of people and not just animals; thus, they offer opportunities to examine representations of gender and race.

Next, once researchers choose their databases, they have to be mindful of the criteria for specific books to be used in the study and how they will analyze and evaluate the text and illustrations. Taylor (2003) stated that researchers need to be careful of what elements are contained in a book they choose to study. For example, in their study of Malaysians represented in children's books, Nair and Talif (2010) used the following criteria: the books had to written by a Malaysian author and reflect a Malaysian setting, and there had to be illustrations on every other page of the text.

Table 1

Categories of Books Included in the Study

Book Category	Total Number of Books	Books with Multicultural Representations or Characterizations	Books with a main female character of color
Bilingual Books	16	5	[none]
Big Books	20	2	1. *Flower Garden*
Paperback books	90	19	1. *Feast for 10* 2. *Flower garden* 3. *Bee-Bim Bop* 4. *Lola at the Library* 5. *Ten, Nine, Eight* 6. *My Friends and I* 7. *Looking for a Moose*
Board Books	123	17	1. *Ten, Nine, Eight* 2. *Dim sum for Everyone* 3. *I Love my Hair!*
Hardcover Books	92	30	1. *Flower Garden* 2. *Lola Plants a Garden Kitchen Dance*

For this study, I made selections from a total of 339 books in the High Scope program. When evaluating the books, I searched for multicultural content in the text and illustrations, such as depictions of characters of color, specific cultural references (like those in the book *Bee-*

Bim Bop), and any books that contained diverse languages. After looking through the books, I determined that 59 of the books contained multicultural representations of characters. Then I considered the research question: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* Based on this question, I developed more specific criteria: namely, that the books had to include text and illustrations that depict women and/or young girls of color as main characters in the story. Table 1 lists and describes the books included in this study.

Books Chosen for the Study

The books chosen for this study, as seen in Table 1, are from various book categories, including paperbacks, board books, and hardcover books. Though many books contained multicultural representations, 11 books clearly aligned with the research question. In this section, I briefly describe the books I chose to use in this study.

1. *Bee-Bim-Bop* (Park, 2008)

This is the story of young girl and her mother shopping and cooking their family a meal called bee-bim-bop, a traditional Korean dish made of rice and vegetables. The text is very appropriate for early childhood, with rhyming on each page and kid-friendly illustrations.

2. *I Love My Hair* (Tarpley, 2003)

This is a book about an African American girl named Keyanna and the experiences she has with her hair. There are many cultural references to the African American community in this book.

3. *Dim Sum for Everyone* (Lin, 2014)

This story is about a girl and her experience going to a dim sum restaurant and sharing a meal with her parents and two sisters, Jei-Jei and Mei-Mei.

4. *Flower Garden* (Bunting, 1994)

This book is a rhyming story of a little girl and her father putting together a garden for their apartment window in the city to give to her mother as a birthday surprise when she arrives home from work. The young African American girl is the narrator, and she is describing her experience.

5. *Looking for a Moose* (Root, 2008)

This is a story about an African American girl and her three friends of color searching through the woods for a moose.

6. *Ten, Nine, Eight* (Bang, 2003)

This is a Caldecott Medal-winning counting book that shows the life of an African American small child (possibly toddler as she is sleeping in a crib) at her bedtime. It is all about her room, her things, and her bedtime routine.

7. *Lola at the Library* (McQuinn, 2006)

This story is about Lola's trip to the public library with her mother. The illustrations are focused on Lola, and this is her story about her day and what she wants to do, which is go to the library.

8. *Kitchen Dance* (Manning, 2008)

Kitchen Dance is a book about a little girl who wakes up in the middle of the night to find her parents dancing in the kitchen. She is the narrator and uses some Spanish language that is

mixed into the text. Her brother Tito is also a main character.

9. *My Friend and I* (Jahn-Clough, 2003)

This is a story about an interracial relationship between an African American girl and an Anglo-American boy. The girl is the narrator, telling the story about making a new friend.

10. *Lola Plants a Garden* (McQuinn, 2014)

Lola is back! This story is about Lola the African American girl from *Lola and the Library*. The book is a view into Lola's world. She and her mother have read the poem "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary," and this inspires Lola to want to plant a garden.

11. *Feast for 10* (Falwell, 1995)

This is a counting book that shares the story of a large African American family shopping and preparing for a meal. I used this book when teaching prekindergarten. The mother is featured on almost all pages, and so are her children.

Critical Content and Critical Visual Analysis

"At the broadest level, critical content analysis involves bringing a critical lens to an analysis of a text or group of texts in an effort to explore the possible underlying messages within those texts, particularly as related to issues of power" (Johnson, Mathis, & Short, 2016, p. 6).

Critical content analysis was the methodology for this study. This analysis allowed for an in-depth examination of how racial and gender identities were written about and illustrated in children's picturebooks in the High Scope Preschool Curriculum. According to Sipe (2012, p. 4), "picturebooks are highly sophisticated aesthetic objects, worthy of study and research by

readers and viewers of all ages. As aesthetic wholes, picturebooks combine words and visual images (and occasionally other modalities) in complicated ways to produce this unity." Sipe (1998/2012) explains that there is a "synergistic" relationship between text and illustrations and that they are connected to one another for meaning-making. Through critical content analysis and critical visual analysis, this research project analyzed this synergistic relationship in selected books from the early childhood curriculum to gain insight into how girls and women of color are being represented to young children. The following sections describe these analysis processes in detail.

Critical Content Analysis

"Content analysis... is a conceptual approach to understanding what a text is about, considering content from a particular theoretical perspective, such as sociohistorical, gender, cultural, or thematic studies" (Beach et al., 2009, p. 131). Analytical constructs like theories, experience, and previous research are used along with the text to answer the research questions. Content analysis answers many questions, including the following: what themes are seen in the text, what is the quality of the information in the text, and what impact does the text have on readers?

This study specifically took a critical stance on content analysis, adapting the protocol suggested by Johnson et al. (2016). Critical approaches to content analysis seek to clarify hidden power relationships and call attention to the disempowerment of those created as other (Cannella & Lincoln, 2012; Botelho, 2004). As framed within critical qualitative inquiry, this methodology was critical for my study, because I used a critical feminist lens as a frame for

the study, not just as an aid to the discussion (Johnson et al., 2016, p. 5). Below, I describe the steps of the analysis process drawn from Johnson et al.'s (2016) protocol:

First, one must decide on a research purpose, question and text. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, my research question is: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* The purpose of this research was to analyze some of the books to which children in early childhood preschool programs are exposed; this purpose provided the rationale for using books from an early childhood curriculum. After the books were collected (through the sample process described above), the content and visuals were examined critically using a marginalized feminist lens, again including my own biases based on personal experience. This process will be described below.

Next, Johnson et al. (2016) explain that a researcher must read deeply within a critical theme, and they call for "thinking with theory" while reading the data and reflecting about theory simultaneously. Again, the theory I selected was a marginalized feminist thought, a combination of Black and Chicana feminist thought as described in Chapter 2. From this theory, I selected several theoretical tenets to frame the analysis: representation, voice, mestiza consciousness, intersectionality, and lived experience. I choose these particular tenets of theory because I believe they support my analysis of the data collected to best answer the research question.

Next, I began the process of close reading within the theoretical frame. I used the aforementioned tenets to begin what Johnson et al. (2016) called an initial close reading, exploring the content of the text. During this reading, aspects of "focalization, power and

agency, and closure" regarding gender and race were examined (p. 11). Specifically, I considered the questions proposed by Johnson et al. (2016): "whose story is told and by whose point of view, who has power and agency, and how is the story resolved" (p. 11). During this process, I created a reflective chart in which I kept a journal of my thoughts as I read each book. The chart I created (see Table A.2) comprised four categories for each book: focalization, power and agency, closure, and a "memos" category for any other information I thought could help to answer the research question. My notes, as well as quotations to support my interpretations of the text, are indicated in black. Next, I re-examined the texts through the use of the reflective charts and the theoretical tenets. During this time, I revisited theory and wrote theoretical memos aligned with each picturebook, utilizing the aforementioned theoretical tenets. The purple font in Appendix 3 indicates additional notes I took after carefully reading the books, again keeping and adding aspects of representation, voice, mestiza consciousness, intersectionality, and lived experience that were evident in the picturebooks. The charts can be found in the appendix, but below is an example of the chart created:

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos

Johnson et al. (2016) state that the next step of content analysis is "a close examination of the identified units within those texts, moving between the theoretical frame and the texts, initially making many notes and gradually moving toward identifying significant issues, themes or categories" (p. 11). Through the process of the initial close reading, a unit of analysis was determined as phrases and sentences in the narrative. I created the codes of mother, action, activity, voice, name, relationship, and specific cultural reference. I used these codes to help

categorize all the units of data (the phrases in the text). I arrived at these codes because they were all categories clearly seen throughout the books. First, I used the code of "mother" because mothers were in all of the books except two, and I wanted to investigate these mother-daughter relationships and what they mean in terms of identity and representations of female characters of color. In each of the books, the characters were completing multiple activities and actions, and having these as codes would allow further exploration into how female characters of color were represented. All of the characters were speaking or giving opinions; therefore, "voice" was a code that would help to analyze and answer the research question. There were also relationships outside of just the mother-daughter relationship, and I used the code "relationship" to explore this area. Not all the characters were named, but I wanted to explore names to see if these were significant in any way to help answer the research question. Lastly, I used the code "specific cultural reference" because I was not only analyzing the books for gender but also for race and culture, and this code helped to explore whether there are specific cultural characteristics given to female characters of color. I then used these codes to review phrases and sentences as units of analysis.

Critical Visual Analysis

Roethler (1998) wrote, "In these post-modern times, meaning lies with readers, or, in the case of illustrations, with viewers, who bring their experiential past, including literary experience, to bear upon their understanding of present circumstance" (p. 95). Critical visual analysis can assist in the comprehension of the meaning of illustrations and photographs in

children's literature. Mendoza and Reese (2001) described the combined effects of text and illustrations as follows:

> When teachers share books with young children, they offer, among other things, exposure to ways of thinking about other human beings. For the child, illustrations and text combine to create particular views of individuals as well as groups of people complete with messages about what those people are like. (p. 157)

This statement elucidates why critical visual analysis was essential to this study of picturebooks from an early childhood curriculum.

Painter, Martin, and Unsworth (2013) drew upon concepts from the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) on the meaning of visual representations for the viewer and connections between the visual and the viewer. I examined the illustrations and made notes using their methods of analysis. Through a method developed by Painter et al. (2013), I utilized the semiotic elements of focalization, pathos and affect, ambience, and graduation to look at the interpersonal meta-function of literature. To do this, I created a chart for critical visual analysis (Table A.3) where I annotated my reflections and the page numbers where each of these areas can be seen.

Focalization

Painter (2006) explained the concept of focalization as the "construction of point of view" (p. 44). The point of view or focalization through illustration is derived by what characters are "seeing" and what is happening in the story. I viewed the illustrations in each book to see "who sees" as it is explained in Painter et al. (2013, p. 18) and noted this in Table A.3. The researchers also explained that the images can set up the viewer to see from the characters' point of view, or viewers can act as observers through contact, and that contact can be made

through a front-facing/direct gaze or a side-facing/invited gaze. There can also be mediated views where the viewer sees through the eyes of a character; this can be inferred, inscribed, or unmediated (where the viewer observes without being situated as the character). I analyzed each book for these aspects; the notes from this analysis are in purple in Table A.3.

Affect

The affect is the description of characters' feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions or pathos (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013). They explain that there are three major depiction styles: minimalist, generic, and naturalistic (p. 30). When analyzing the illustrations for these styles, there are several key characteristics to observe. A minimalist style has minimal depth in the pictures, circles or ovals for head, dots for eyes, restricted views, and the figures are not proportionate or realistic. A generic style is more detailed, allowing the characters to be more expressive with a function of being injunctive and having more empathetic roles. In the naturalistic style, the illustrations of people are the most realistic, having a personalizing and ethical inference; this style is often used to deal with serious themes. I used these styles to analyze each picturebooks, making notes in the critical visual analysis chart. In addition, I used the critical feminist lens to make notes about the representation of characters' feelings through the pictures.

Ambience

Ambience creates emotional moods through the use of color in the illustrations. The core systems of an active ambience are vibrancy (or the saturation of colors), warmth (or

warmer and cooler color contrasts), and familiarity (or the amount of color differentiation). When assessing ambience, I applied these categories from Painter et al. (2013, p. 36). I took notes on the warmth, familiarity and color saturation of each book, as well as notes on what the ambience helped to create in terms of meaning for the viewer.

Graduation

Lastly, there is the use of graduation or recognizing attitudinal meanings through the illustrations. This creates a more dramatic effect by various quantifications of number, amount/mass, and extent that can be upscaled or downscaled (Painter et al., 2013). In my research, I took note of these areas while viewing the picturebooks as seen in Table A.3 in purple. I also conducted a deeper analysis of the attitudinal meanings, and how they related to the identities of female characters of color.

Credibility

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) presented the idea of the qualitative researcher as an interpretive bricoleur who "understands that research in an interactive process shaped by one's own personal history" (p. 5). In this study, the researcher was used as an instrument. Using my own position with my background experience as a woman of color and a marginalized feminist lens, I analyzed the data through emerging themes in the texts, and insights from this analysis are revealed in the concluding chapter. According to Lather (1991), the goal of feminist research is to correct the invisibility and the distortion of the female experience. Feminist research methodologies include empowerment, emancipation, and self-reflection. Lather

(1993/2007) calls for critical researchers to begin counter-practices like transgressive validity to show possibilities of the unknown in a space understanding of the visibility of the practices of methodology. The visibility in this study is seen through the charts in the appendix which demonstrate the processes of the critical content and critical visual analyses using marginalized feminist thought. I believe this research has accomplished trustworthiness through the openness of the subjectivity of the researcher, the sound quality of the methodology, the detailed description of the procedure, and a critical explanatory narrative of the conclusions and the process that led to them.

Conclusion

This chapter's purpose was to provide a detailed account of how this research project was conducted, including research question, text selection, and methods of data analysis. Detailed information was provided about critical content analysis and critical visual analysis. Reflecting on my positionality as a researcher and using a marginalized feminist lens were both critical for analyzing the data. In the following chapter, I describe the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the critical content analysis of picturebooks from an early childhood curriculum, analyzing the representations of multicultural female characters. The research question addressed in this study was: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* In this section, I describe the findings from each stage of the study, including the initial close reading with reflective journals and theoretical tenets, the coding process, and critical visual analysis.

Initial Close Reading

Several facets emerged at the beginning of the process during the book selection (see Table A.1). The books are available to purchase in separate groups, and unless the educators/buyers are cautious when purchasing a curriculum content "group" for their classroom or library, they might not possess books that feature characters of varied cultures, races, ethnicities, or backgrounds. Purchasers must become even more cautious with the group they select because they may not include any books with female characters of color. This concern is discussed further in the Implications section in Chapter 5.

After the text selection process as described above and in Chapter 3, I began with what Johnson et al. call an initial close reading (2016). I read each book, took notes based on aspects of "focalization, power and agency, and closure," and examined representations of gender and race (p. 11); see black text in Table A.2. Specifically, I considered Johnson et al.'s (2016)

questions of “whose story is told and by whose point of view, who has power and agency, and how is the story resolved” throughout this process as I took notes in a reflective journal (p. 11). I found that in the books used for this study, the female characters were given voice and agency, but of the 339 books only 11 had the representation of women and girls of color as main characters that were used in this investigation.

Focalization

Each picturebook in this collection is told from the point of view of a young girl of color. I reflected on the cultures, races, and ethnicities represented in the books. The books selected for the study featured main characters who are girls of color: two are Asian, one is Latina, and the other eight are African American. The authors are from various cultural heritages, but they are all women. This is a significant finding because it speaks to several critical issues dealing with focalization. One is that the silencing of voices is often an issue because of lack of representation. In this sample set of books, African-American ethnicity had more representation compared to Asian and Latina ethnicities. Also, the cultural backgrounds of the authors also speak to cultural authenticity. All of the authors are female, therefore the authors’ lived experience as women may have contributed to the ways in which the characters are given voice and agency in the books. Some of the authors were cultural insiders to the characters they were writing about, and others were not. For example, the book *Bee-Bim Bop* is culturally authentic as the authors are both Korean and their lives and experience with family, culture, and food are described in an author’s note in the back of the book. In *I Love My Hair*, the author and illustrator are both African American, and the author also has written adult literature on

black identity and black women. And *Dim Sum for Everyone* is written by Lin, a Taiwanese-American author and illustrator, and an explanation of dim sum restaurants is given in the back of the book. The rest of the books in the sample are written from the perspectives of cultural outsiders, which does not necessarily mean that the books are not culturally authentic. It adds another layer to consider.

Agency and Power

Agency and power was observed through the social processes of the main characters; this differed significantly from the findings presented in my literature review. For example, in the book *Bee-Bim Bop*, the girl has agency in the story as she chooses the meal: "Hurry, mama, hurry, gotta shop shop shop, hungry hungry hungry for some BEE-BIM BOP" (Park, 2008, p. 5). She also helps prepare the meal—"Let me pour the water in-yes, I know I can!" (p. 17)—and she sets the table and cleans up a spill. In the *Lola* books, Lola is depicted choosing books at a library, reading a poem, reading garden books for research, planning which flowers to buy, shopping for seeds, planting a garden, making a book, making a doll, making cupcakes, and telling her friends a story. Lola shows significant agency in these stories as she is given a choice of activities and books to check out, a choice of the flowers she wants to plant. In *My Friend and I*, the girl exercises power and agency as she makes the decision to introduce herself, chooses which games to play, and resolves the conflict in the story. In *Looking for a Moose*, the characters also make their own decisions; moreover, they are extremely intelligent, sharing ideas and going on an adventure, thus giving voice and agency to the representation of female characters of color.

The books' main characters are young girls and the children are, for the most part, accompanied by their mothers, who seem to have little agency, power, or voice. For example, in *Bee-Bim Bop,* the mother does not say anything in the story and is told "hurry mama hurry" multiple times. The mother is given many other commands that she is to follow; this could be understood as the typical impatience of a young child, but it also shows how much work is put on the mother and how much goes into preparing the meal. This representation could also reaffirm views of traditional gender roles. In the *Lola* books, Lola's mother is seen doing whatever Lola asks and has no voice or say as a character; her only role is to meet Lola's needs. This idea of a mother as a caretaker of her family also is repeated in *I Love My Hair* and *Feast for 10*. In contrast, *Kitchen Dance* shows the mother in another light, not only as caretaker but as a person with her own pleasures and interests—dancing and laughing and having fun with her husband. The mother in *Flower Garden* is the only one in my sample of books who works outside the home. The mothers of color represented in these books could be seen as a positive reflection of motherhood, but the representations could also be seen as problematic. The little girls are taught to be fearless, have an opinion, be leaders, and make decisions, but the more traditional depiction of mothers in these books implies that when they grow up, women of color are just there to serve and please everyone else.

Closure

Closure was a curious aspect to analyze in these picturebooks. As these are written for very young children, preschool age, all of them have very happy endings where characters are proud of their accomplishments. For example, in the end of *I Love My Hair*, the little girl shows

pride as the story is resolved. Keyanna loves her hair and wears her favorite style: two ponytails that "stick out on either side of my head and flap in the air like a pair of wings." At the end of *Bee-Bim Bop*, pride is also apparent on the faces of the mother, daughter, and extended family members as they close their eyes, smile, and enjoy the meal, saying, "Time for Bee-Bim Bop" (p. 29). Similarly, *My Friend and I* ends with the kids resolving the conflict and feeling proud of their accomplishment: "Friends again? I asked. Friends, my friend said" (28-29). Other endings include a feeling of happiness from completing the activities in the story. In *Dim Sum for Everyone*, the narrator says, "We eat a little bit of everything"—everyone shares from the plates at the table, and the story ends with the family finishing the meal. Similarly, in *Feast for 10*, at the end of the book, the older generation joins at the table for dinner and "10 hungry folks to share the meal" (p. 28).

Critical Visual Analysis

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I chose critical visual analysis to examine the illustrations from the picturebooks. This analysis focused on the aspects of visual images described by Painter et al. (2013): *Focalization,* or whose story is told and by whose point of view; *Affect*, or expression of characters' feelings through facial expressions and body movements; *Ambience*, or the creation of emotional modes through the use of color; and *Graduation,* or attitudinal meanings through the use of illustration. While I was reading, I kept a journal of my responses to the illustrations (see Table A.3).

Focalization of Illustrations

Overall, most of the books from this sample have a focalization where the viewpoint is

that of an unmediated observer. One exception is *I Love My Hair*, which is unmediated but the viewer has an invited contact visual realization, as Keyanna uses an invited gaze toward the viewer. *Ten, Nine, Eight* and *Flower Garden* also fluctuate between different visual realizations of the focalization of the characters. For example, on some pages, the characters have direct contact with the viewer, on others the viewer is an observer, and on some pages there is inscribed and/or inferred mediated focalization. See Figures 1 to 5 as examples.

The illustrators showed whose story is told and by whose point of view in unexpected or critical ways. For example, in *I Love My Hair*, Keyanna is the main character whose picture appears on every set of pages. The illustrations show not only this little girl's perception of the world around her, but also what she sees in her head. For example, on page 12, she imagines her hair braided into actual rows of corn, and on page 18 she envisions her Afro as a globe of earth, seen above. In *Bee-Bim Bop*, the mother's face is seldom shown on pages 6-21; as they are preparing the meal, the mother's head is intentionally left off of each page, and her body is shown doing the work of preparing the meal. In *Looking for a Moose,* the four friends usually are featured together on all pages, but when one of them has an idea, that individual gets their own full page (p. 4, 8, 14, 20).

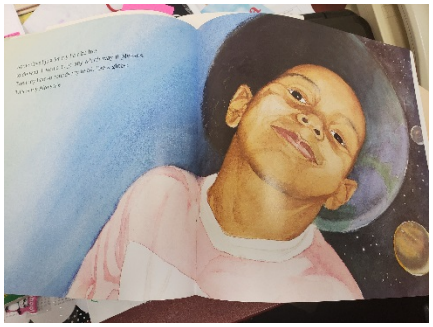

Figure 1. Contact, unmediated.

Figure 2. Contact, unmediated.

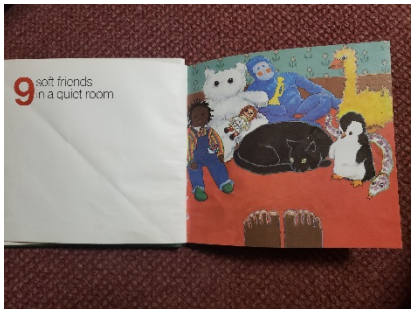

Figure 3. Contact, mediated, inscribed.

Figure 4. Observer, unmediated.

Figure 5. Contact, mediated, inscribed.

Affect

As described in Chapter 3, while analyzing the visuals for affect, I looked for three major depiction styles: minimalist, generic, and naturalistic. Two books in this sample used the least realistic or minimalist style: *My Friend and I* and *Looking for a Moose*. For example, all four characters in *Looking for a Moose* have similar builds and facial features, with dots for eyes and the exact same lines for noses and mouths. Although the illustrations of the characters were of the minimalist style, both stories were more complex than simple illustrations might suggest. Also, I would have expected more of the illustrations to be in the minimalist category since they are part of an early childhood curriculum. The majority of the books used the generic depiction style, in which illustrations include more detail and readers are encouraged to identify and empathize with characters. I found *Lola and the Library*, *Lola Plants and Garden*, *Bee-Bim Bop*, *Feast for 10*, *Kitchen Dance*, and *Dim Sum for Everyone* to be in this style. Lastly, *I Love My Hair* and *Ten, Nine, Eight* were illustrated in the naturalistic style, which is usually more common in books for older children. In these two books, the illustrations felt very real and personal, and the "whole typography of the face and skin is depicted and contributes to our inferences about the characters' feelings" (Painter et al., 2013, p. 32). For example, on page 3 of *I Love My Hair*, readers can visually see how frustrated Keyanna is with combing her hair as she squints her eyes and squeezes her hands together.

Ambience

Ambience creates the emotional mood or the atmosphere of a book through vibrancy, warmth, and familiarity. For the most part, the books were very similar in this category; for

example, all of the books were very familiar with extensive color differentiation, and all of the books showed warmth, creating a positive mood throughout. The majority of the books were very vibrant with full saturation, but a few books were a bit muted with darker shades like *My Friend and I*, *Ten, Nine, Eight*, *Flower Garden*, and *Kitchen Dance*. I believe this muting and darkening of color was used in *Kitchen Dance* and *Ten, Nine, Eight* to establish the feeling of being in house at nighttime, and in *Flower Garden* to evoke the feeling of being in a downtown urban area, where tall buildings block much of the sunlight. When considering the textual distribution of ambience in the sample set, every book except for one (*Ten Nine Eight*), the illustrators used both pages to complete each scene instead of beginning a new scene on each page; this design choice gives readers a full-scale view into what is happening in that moment. For example, in *Bee-Bim Bop*, you can see the whole family at the table together on pp. 28-29, or you can see multiple things happening at the same time, like on pp. 18-19 when the mother is at the stove and at the same time the little girl is mopping up a mess, the dog is playing, and there is some prepared food at the table.

Graduation

In this category, I examined the illustrations for quantifications of number, amount/mass, and extent that can be upscaled or downscaled. There were not many findings to report in this category; not much meaning was placed behind the scaling or quantification of the illustrations. Five of the eleven books used graduation as an illustrative technique. In *Looking for a Moose*, quantifications of number were used at the end of the book upscale and to show an outrageous number of moose in a valley. *Flower Garden* and *Ten, Nine, Eight* used

quantifications of extent to upscale on certain pages to zoom into what the character is seeing and place emphasis on those pages. *Dim Sum for Everyone* used quantifications of extent to both upscale and downscale on certain pages, sometimes zooming in to show more detail and sometimes zooming out to reveal the surroundings of the restaurant and the food. *I Love My Hair* uses the quantification of extent to upscale the main character's visions, so it is as if the reader is seeing what goes on inside of her mind.

Multicultural Depictions

Although I do not mention this as a category of analysis in Chapter 3, after viewing the books several times, I found a need for a category to consider multicultural aspects of the illustrations that I wanted to address--features unique to multicultural characters. These are important details in these illustrations because the research question is: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens*? Most of the books in my sample do not explicitly identify characters' ethnicity in the text (by saying, "this character is Asian or Black or Latina"), but the illustrations do add to the text and represent female characters of color in many ways. As mentioned earlier, there are only two books depicting characters with an Asian heritage. The characters in both books have straight black hair, light skin, and almond-shaped eyes depicting Asian heritage. The family in *Dim Sum for Everyone* is wearing traditional Chinese clothing, and characters in both books use chopsticks while eating traditional Chinese and Korean food. The only book depicting a Latina character reveals characters have a dark complexion to their skin and the children have coiled curly hair

traditionally seen as black natural hairstyles, but the family is speaking in Spanish. It is an Afro-Latino family, and although there are many Afro-Latino families, they seldom are represented in Latino children's picturebooks.

The other books feature black female characters. Although the stories and text are not all about their race and ethnicity, the illustrations are thought provoking. Skin tone is a charged issue in many communities of color. For example, in many Latino communities, lighter skin is a praised attribute, but if a baby is born with a darker complexion, people will say, *pobrecito salió muy indio* (poor baby came out looking very Indian). The two oldest books have the characters with the darkest skin complexions, and the books from the 2000s have varying complexions of skin—from medium to very light—but no dark-skinned characters. Does this mean that in the 1990s dark black skin was viewed more positively? Or did illustrators and publishers imagine that African-American characters should all have very dark-toned skin, rather than representing a more diverse variety of skin colors for African-American characters? Hair is a cultural topic and concern among African-American women and the books examined in this study portray a variety of hairstyles. The hair of black characters in the books are various types of natural African American hairstyles. For example, the illustrations show characters with cornrows, Afros, braids, bantu knots, pressed hair, buns, ponytails, natural curls, low Caesars, fades, high tops, and do-rags.

Revisiting Theory, Theoretical Memos, and Passages Reflecting on Theoretical Tenets

Next, I used the theoretical tenets of Black and Chicana feminism described in Chapter 2—representation and voice, mestiza consciousness, intersectionality, and lived experience—to

reread the texts and added notes in my journals (seen in purple in Table A.2). This stage of analysis gave me a second opportunity to ask deeper questions about the books' content, using these tenets as a lens for critical analysis.

Representation and Voice

Collins (2000) wrote that "controlling images applied to Black women that originated during the slave era attest to the ideological dimension of U.S. Black women's oppression" (p. 7). She argued that Black women are stereotyped and represented as mammies, jezebels, welfare mothers, and matriarchs. Anzaldúa (1987) also reminded us that it is not only the dominant culture that aims to shape the identity of women of color; this shaping force also comes from our own cultural background. For example, she mentions the traditional Mexican saying *En boca cerrada no entran moscas* (flies don't enter a closed mouth), typically used for training young girls to grow up to be quiet women, subordinate to their husbands.

Fortunately, the representations and aspects of voice in these books did not often follow these patterns of female silencing and subordination. In the book *Looking for a Moose*, female characters of color are given a clear voice, in that on each page a new person gets to decide where to search and give advice to the group. Past research found that girls and people of color are rarely given much adventurous action in books; departing from this historical pattern, *Looking for a Moose* gives young boys and girls of color adventurous characters with whom they can identify. This empowering representation raises the question: Are these stories true representations of the experiences children from Latino or African- American households might be having? Is going on an adventure in the woods a better type of play than play that

would be particular to a Black community? Similarly, in the books *Lola and the Library* and *Lola Plants a Garden*, Lola is active and participating in great activities but aspects that might tie them to the African-American community are non-existent, except for the illustrations. However, African Americans are not a monolithic group and should be shown in different lights. Other books like *Feast for 10* and *Bee-Bim Bop* incorporate some representations of traditional African-American and Asian culture, such as traditional foods. *Kitchen Dance* had cultural connections/representations in the text, not only in the images; for example, "*Besitos mija*, mama says, and she kisses me twice" (p. 29).

In *Bee-Bim Bop*, based on the text, one could argue that the theoretical tenet of voice is observed when the main character is given agency to make the choice for dinner—but then there is the mother, who is an extreme example of silencing as she says nothing in the story and does all the work in service to her family. This pattern also is explained above in the section discussing agency and power. In contrast, the book *I Love My Hair* fully gives voice to a female character of color while also shedding light on women's hair issues in the African-American community. Many of the other books showcase natural hair through illustrations, but this text brings to the center a realistic representation of the life of a young African-American girl and her hair glories and problems.

Intersectionality and Mestiza Consciousness

When describing black feminist thought and moving towards empowerment, Collins (2000) wrote, "By embracing a paradigm of intersecting oppression of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation, as well as Black women's individual and collective agency within them,

Black feminist thought reconceptualizes the social relations of domination and resistance" (pp. 291-292). Anzaldúa (1987) calls for women of color to come to terms with this intersectionality through a process called mestiza consciousness, in which one builds tolerance for ambiguity (p. 101) and juggles the multiple intersecting cultures which comprise one's identity. *I Love My Hair* is a book that truly embodies these two theoretical tenets. This particular story is all about intersectionality between race and gender, as Keyanna deals with matters that are both uniquely black and uniquely female. For example, when her hair is hurting from the combing/grooming process, she is crying, and you can visually see how frustrated she is with the combing of her hair as she squints her eyes and squeezes her hands together; the mother comforts the daughter by rubbing the sore spots and saying, "Do you know why you're so lucky to have this head of hair, Keyanna?… because it's beautiful and you can wear it in any style you choose" (p. 4). In another interaction, after Keyanna is teased for wearing her hair in an Afro style, her teacher explains that hair is a blessing and "wearing an Afro was a way for them to stand up for what they believed, to let the world know that were proud of who they were and where they came from" (p. 20). Here we can see where mestiza consciousness comes into play, as Keyanna is learning to navigate through the culture of a school whose kids do not have the knowledge and understanding she must learn and later possesses about black women's hair. *Bee-Bim Bop* also showed the intersectionality of Asian culture, gender, and motherhood, because the mother in this story was solely responsible for caring for her daughter, the pet, and all other family members, even though there were three other adults in the home. We also see this duality in the mother in *Kitchen Dance*, a story that depicts an Afro-Latino family showing

the mother cleaning the kitchen after having made dinner and caring for children, but also as a wife and a human being who loved to dance.

Lived Experience

Amoah (1997) wrote, "In asserting the unique experience of Black women, one must be careful not to assume that all Black women share the same experience" (p. 99). Lived experience as a theoretical tenet was critical to my analysis because it is a central facet of marginalized feminist thought. This quotation is consistent with my analysis, because the books considered in this study represent a wide array of African-American lived experiences. In *I Love My Hair*, African-American culture as a part of women's identity is addressed through a young girl's experiences with her hair. This book even details how people in the Civil Rights Movement wore Afros to stand up for their rights, and she imagines her parents wearing Afros and being dressed in dashikis. We also see aspects of traditional African-American lived experience in *Feast for Ten*, where there is a large group of children, and everyone in the house is helping one another. It is not solely the mother doing the work; they are all cooking soul food together and living in a multigenerational household. The book *Flower Garden* includes many references to the lived experiences of urban African American families, such as riding the bus, walking city blocks, and living in an apartment. In the books *Lola and the Library* and *Lola Plants a Garden*, Lola is shown living a typical suburban life with a stay-at-home parent who takes her to various learning activities; she also reads poetry and invites friends over. Similarly, in *Ten, Nine, Eight* and *My Friend and I*, the girls are living a somewhat suburban experience having a bedtime routine, a new neighbor moving in. Then in *Looking for a Moose*, the African-American girl and

her three friends of color are searching through the woods for a moose—this is not a traditional experience for African-American children, but it is nonetheless curious in this group assessment because it creates a wider perspective on the lived experience and identity of African-American characters in this sample of picturebooks.

There are two books that give readers a sample of the lived experience of girls in the Asian culture, and both are centered on food. *Bee-Bim Bop* does have the multicultural component of Asian food and includes an explanation and recipe for how to make it, and the intergenerational family showing subjugated knowledge as lived experience. In *Dim Sum for Everyone*, the Chinese names for mother and father, *Ma-Ma* and *Ba-Ba*, were used in the story, along with traditional Chinese clothing. In the illustrations on pages 6-14, the characters seem happy to choose their own meals and share with one another. When these are the only two books depicting Asian female characters' lived experiences, they only provide access to a small portion of the plethora of experiences that is shared by this group. These representations are also arguably limiting in the sense that they define a culture by its food. Likewise, the only book with Latina lived experience is *Kitchen Dance*, and although it shows the mother using terms like *besitos mijita* and *te quiero*, it reduces the lived experiences offered through this set of picturebooks of Latinas to a single story of loud people, who have fun cooking, cleaning, and dancing around their houses.

Initial Codes to Themes

To analyze the books, I considered how the text and illustrations intertwine to represent female characters of color. After taking into consideration the initial codes, along with the

findings from the close reading with theoretical tenets and critical visual analysis, a second level of analysis resulted in three broader categories/themes: Motherhood, action and agency, and subjugated knowledge and culture.

Regarding the Motherhood theme, many of the picturebooks through text and illustrations focus on the following: mothers are caring, mothers spend time with their children doing activities, mothers buy and make things for their children, mothers help children accomplish tasks and goals, mothers are comforting, mothers are helpful, and mothers are patient. Regarding the theme of Action and Agency, these books showed young girls of color engaging in a plethora of actions and activities, such as cooking, hiking, dancing, reading, creating, playing, laughing, counting, helping, planting, etc., that showed them as helpful, leaders, initiators, doers, originators, confident, fun, and joyful. And lastly, regarding the theme Subjugated Knowledge and Culture, I found that these picturebooks incorporate young girls of color and their relationships, names that are essential to identity, specific cultural references to language, food, and traditions, and the words of multiple main female characters of color who are given a voice to share their likes, loves, ideas, and experiences. Each of these themes, as well as their relationship to this study's theoretical framework, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Inequity through Omission

An important aspect about a critical study is not only what is seen, but also what is unseen. Critical theory and research are the center of power and oppression, and then strive to evaluate how power is used to oppress (Server, 2012). Not only do critical methodologies

analyze this power relationship, but they also look at the position power has in producing hegemonic knowledge and expose those dominant power relationships (Hesse-Biber, 2012). Therefore, critical findings addressed in this section are what is omitted. Of the 339 books included in as supplemented books to the curriculum, only 11 books, or 3.2% fit the criteria for this study, and the lack of representation of main female characters of color reflects an ongoing issue in children's literature.. Hegemonic power is the ideology of culture and consciousness, and it is valuing and empowering one group's customs and ideas over another (Collins, 2000/2009). With little to no representation of women and girls of color especially, for Latina, indigenous, mixed race, and Middle Eastern ethnic groups in this sample set, these groups again are pushed to the margins of the classroom. Arce (2004) described Gramsci's classified hegemonic power as that which exists in systems viewed as democratic in which the dominant class exercises its will through non-coercive models by exercising control over the mores, ethics, and values of society as a whole. In early childhood, the school and the curriculum are systems that have power and control over students who are taught that there is a set knowledge that all must know in order to be considered human and that their identity, knowledge and experience may not be validated in the classroom. In addition, Arce mentioned Giroux's four areas where schools support hegemonic interests. *Selection of culture deemed as socially legitimate* is one area were schools support hegemony. It is very disheartening to find book sets in which the culture and language of the students and their families are not valued. Secondly, *categories used to classify certain cultural content and form a superior or inferior* represents what is chosen for the curriculum content and what is left out. In this set of books culture is minimized to a few words in a couple of books and to food, and themes of activism

and reform are non-existent. Another area where schools support hegemonic interests is *selection and legitimatization of school and classroom relationships*. In early childhood through the use of teacher preparation, professional development, and scripted curriculums, adult/child relationships are classified where the adult is the empowered one and those who are younger are left at the bottom. The teacher truly has the final power of what is read in the classroom. Finally, *distribution of access to different types of culture and knowledge by different social classes* is the last area of hegemonic power that Giroux mentioned. This facet of hegemonic power is seen even in the books that were selected to supplement the curriculum. The dominant class will continue its pursuit of articulating norms in education, and therefore we must continue to deconstruct and reconceptualize these dominant perspectives to create social justice for all (Arce, 2004).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings from the critical content analysis and critical visual analysis of picturebooks from an early childhood curriculum, with a focus on representations of multicultural female characters. The research question addressed in this study was: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* In Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of my findings in response to this question.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

As stated in Chapter 1, "Picturebooks are written artifacts that convey cultural messages and values about society and help children learn about their world" (Koss, 2015, p. 32). Meaning comes from the reader, in part, but also from the text. If we say that the meaning only comes from the reader, then the author bears no responsibility for what is written, because it was merely interpreted by the reader in a certain way. There can be multiple meanings in the text, which means a complex and in-depth analysis must be conducted. This research project surveyed the various books in a Texas state-adopted curriculum, one that is also used across the United States as an "intervention program for low-income, at-risk children" (Jackman, 2015, p. 55). The general purpose of this study was to critically analyze children's picturebooks from a current early childhood curriculum, looking specifically at representations of gender and race. The study was guided by the question: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* The purpose of this chapter is to detail the emerging themes of motherhood, action and agency, and subjugated knowledge and culture as viewed through a marginalized feminist lens. I conclude by discussing implications for the field and identifying possible directions for future research.

Motherhood

I identified the theme of motherhood through several steps in the research process. Initially I noticed the many mothers in the picturebooks during my close readings of the books,

and then “mother,” “mama,” and “mommy” were all in the regularly used words that assisted in the choice of initial codes. Both coding the text and the visual analysis revealed a theme of motherhood throughout the data sources. Data related to this theme included: mothers are caring, mothers spend time with their children doing activities, mothers buy and make things for their children, mothers help children accomplish tasks and goals, mothers are comforting, mothers are helpful, and mothers are patient. In this section, I discuss these findings in relation to marginalized feminist thought.

Motherhood is also a common topic in Black and Chicana feminist thought. Anzaldúa (1987) wrote, “Educated or not, the onus is still on a woman to be a wife/mother—only the nun can escape motherhood” (p. 39). Many of the mothers in these stories were not portrayed as complex people; rather, their identities were largely limited to the responsibility of being a mother. Collins (2000) argued that society places numerous controlling images on black women, such as that of the mammy or the welfare mother; similarly, Anzaldúa (1987) wrote that women often are made to accept the roles created for them by a male-dominated culture, and the top role for a woman in this paradigm is motherhood. The books in this study actually do fit within this stereotype, presenting all adult women as mothers only (with the exception of *Flower Garden*, in which the mother works in an unspecified profession). Even if they may have had important jobs contributing to society, the only role shown, or given importance, is that of being a mother.

This one-dimensional representation is consistent with Collins’ (2000) claim that “in many African-American communities, so much sanctification surrounds black motherhood that ‘the idea of black motherhood has come to be seen as the norm’” (p. 188). She continues to

explain that these images of the super-strong black mother are used to control women and pressure them to continue to place everyone else's needs above their own. This cultural pressure is also apparent in books like *Bee-Bim Bop*, where the mother happily complies when other family members yell orders at her, and books like *Lola and the Library*, in which all the child's needs and wishes are fulfilled throughout the day without regard to the difficulty the mother must be facing to be a supermom.

Collins (2000) further explains that there are tensions between the controlling images of black women as mothers (stereotypes like the mammy, the matriarch and the welfare mother that are designed to justify and continue oppression) and alternative images of black motherhood as a place where women can "learn the power of self-definition, the importance of valuing and respecting ourselves, the necessity of self-reliance and independence, and a belief in black women's empowerment" (p. 191). This struggle between conflicting versions of motherhood is somewhat evident in the picturebooks reviewed; the images of the mothers are positive and problematic at the same time, as they are depicted caring for their families or giving wonderful advice, they are also depicted as mindless house cleaners, chefs, and activities coordinators. For example, in *I Love my Hair*, the mother teaches her daughter to love herself and recognize her hair as part of her culture. Then in the *Lola* books, *Bee-Bim Bop,* and other books, mothers do not say anything, attend to the demands of their children and families, and their heads are literally cut-out illustrations and their bodies left to do the work.

Collins (2000) also describes the complexity of mother-daughter relationships and child-rearing practices among women of color. Collins explained that on one hand, to ensure survival, black mothers must teach their daughters to "fit into the sexual politics of black womanhood,"

for instance by staying in their place. On the other hand, these very efforts to protect their daughters' physical survival may lead to "emotional destruction" (p. 198), because women of color with "strong self-definitions and self-validations who offer serious challenges to oppressive situations may not physically survive" (p. 198). This set of books embodies these questions. The young girls in the stories are given a clear voice and have agency and self-reliance and self-love, which are excellent characteristics and great for identity formation in young children. The portrait of mothers in the books, however, is the opposite, and insinuates that when you grow up, this is the option you have: to become a mother. These books offer no other visions for the future; they do not depict grown women of color as doctors, teachers, scientists, or any other professionals, but only as mothers.

Action and Agency

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Trites (1997) wrote that female voices often are silenced in children's literature, and she calls for books that provide counternarratives against stereotypes of female passivity. Taken together, the books analyzed in this study help to answer this call. For the theme of Action and Agency, these books represented girls of color engaging in a plethora of actions and activities that included cooking, hiking, dancing, reading, creating, playing, laughing, counting, helping, planting, etc. These activities presented them as helpful, leaders, initiators, doers, originators, confident, fun, and joyful. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 4, in the book *Looking for a Moose*, female characters of color are given a clear voice in making decisions. This book also gives readers who are young girls and boys of color adventurous characters with whom they can identify. Anzaldúa (1987) wrote, "Through our

mothers, the culture gave us mixed messages: *No voy a dejar que ningún pelado desgraciado maltrate a mis hijos* (I will not let any miserable jerk mistreat my children). And in the next breath it would say, *La mujer tiene que hacer todo lo que diga el hombre* (A woman has to do everything the man says). Which was I to be—strong or submissive, rebellious or conforming?" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 40). Anzaldúa's question is one that I was asking at the beginning of this research: How would these characters be represented--as strong or submissive, rebellious or conforming? The findings of action and agency uncover strong and resilient female characters in this selection of texts for young children, but much more than 3.4% of the total books in a curriculum is needed for true change. Dirlik (1997) described culturalism as a hegemonic ideology that bewilders the hegemonic role that culture plays in relationships between and within societies. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Bradford (2007, as cited in Nair & Taif, 2010) discussed how attention should be placed on the messages about gender that children's books convey, because these messages can affect the development of young children's gender identities. Within these books, young girls are making decisions and completing activities and have agency to do what interests them. For example, in books like *Flower Garden*, *Lola and the Library*, *Lola Plants a Garden*, and *My Friend and I,* the characters are doing various activities that they chose for themselves, and if a problem or conflict arises, they resolve it themselves without a dominant character coming to save them. This finding differs greatly from those presented in my review of literature, and this difference is significant for the developing identities of preschool children.

Although these positive representations of female characters highlighted in this research indicate a small step in the right direction, much more needs to be done to reach true

equality of adequate portrayals of females of color in early childhood literature. One critical issue is that the books are offered in separate packages for purchase; some of the packages have no books with multicultural representation at all, and some packages may only have one or two books with main female characters of color (see Table A.1). This could further empower those in the dominant culture and maintain the stereotypes that marginalize communities of color. As mentioned in chapter 2, silencing can be a fear of stating one's opinion *or* voices that have been marginalized and excluded from decision-making (Soto, Hixon, & Hite, 2010). Therefore, another critical issue is young children and families in schools have no choice or voice to what is read or brought into the classroom. The way in which this power play will resolve depends on who the teacher is, on whether they will address this situation will or not at all, or on whether the curriculum is supplemented by input from the children and community.

Subjugated Knowledge and Culture

Lastly, as explained in Chapter 4, the initial codes of voice, name, relationship, and specific cultural reference defined the theme Subjugated Knowledge and Culture. Collins (2000) writes that, "Living life as Black women requires wisdom because knowledge about the dynamics of intersecting oppressions has been essential to U.S. Black women's survival" (p. 275). I analyzed the characters by looking at their personal relationships, including mother-daughter, father-daughter, siblings, extended family, and friendships, see Table A.4. Also, character names, which were essential to identity, were explored, as well as specific cultural references to language, food, and traditions. In addition, the words of multiple main female

characters of color were analyzed; specifically, who was given the voice to share their likes, loves, ideas, and things that happened to them. Collins (2009) explains that black women have a unique perspective, a shared body of "subjugated knowledge" that is produced and validated in non-mainstream ways. Collins argues for the subjugated knowledge of lived experience as a criterion for credibility. All the books were written from a female perspective, so in some ways lived experiences of womanhood may be a part of each book. Also, some of the books are written by women of color, so does this make the characters in these books and their stories more credible as examples of subjugated knowledge and/or lived experiences of females of color? Or as a collective, do the books bring different ideas together to create various points of view and representations of the lived experiences of the characters as females of color to show their varied experiences as a non-uniform heterogeneous group?

The significance of language to culture is not a new insight. Anzaldúa (1987) wrote, "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language" (81). This ethnic-linguistic tie is portrayed in some of the books. For example, *Feast for 10* and *I Love My Hair* have words and phrases from the African-American community like "folks" and "greens," along with cultural practices like wearing one's hair in cornrows and rubbing coconut oil on the scalp. *Bee-Bim Bop* and *Dim Sum for Everyone* include names of food and people like *Ba-Ba* for father, and *Kitchen Dance* includes Spanish words like *besitos* and *te quiero*. Our positionality and identity are formed from our cultural roots and from dominant constructs that are seen as universal truths (Anzaldúa, 1987). I mentioned in Chapter 4 that some of the books, such as *Looking for a Moose* and *Ten, Nine, Eight*, represent female characters of color with agency and at the center of a story. However, for the most part, the stories themselves (other than the illustrations) do

not carry messages of subjugated knowledge of black culture. Rather, these stories depict what some would consider to be universal experiences of children, and they truly come from the dominant paradigm.

Anzaldúa wrote a poem that ties in not only with the Chicana idea of mestiza consciousness but also with the concept of intersectionality in black feminist thought:

> Because I, a mestiza, continually walk out of one culture and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time, *alma entre does mundos, tres, cuatro* (a soul in two worlds, three four), *me Zumba la cabeza con lo contradictoriom* (my head spins with the contradiction). *Estoy norteada por todas las voces que me hablan simultáneamente* (I am lost with all the voices that speak to me simultaneously). (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 99)

Some of the books also did address some of the experiences that women of color, in particular, confront daily due to living in multiple cultural spaces. For example, in the book *I Love My Hair*, Keyanna wears an Afro to school and is teased, but is later reassured when her teacher (a black woman) shares the history behind wearing Afros and the pride she should feel wearing one.

Within the 11 books subjugated knowledges are given a voice and some aspects of cultures traditionally considered as *other* are given a space, but only within these 11 books from the total of 339. Also, this analysis and these themes come from the 11 books as a whole set, and if a school or district or Head Start purchases only a single set of books with the curriculum, then they might not have any of these themes being brought before students in a classroom (see Table A.2). Moreover, even if educators have all of these books at their disposal, it is still up to the discretion of the teacher whether they choose to read the books to students or if the emerging themes are discussed with students after the books are read. Even gendered areas of study, such as early childhood education and care, centralize white-European male perspectives, which has created inequitable circumstances portrayed for young children and

marginalized communities. This is very troubling and disappointing in a minority majority state like Texas, which has a 52% Latino population (Nagy, 2018).

Implications

The findings from this inquiry raise several implications for practice and research that merit the attention of numerous stakeholders in early childhood education. As mentioned in Chapter 2, few studies of children's literature have analyzed representations of race and gender from an intersectional perspective. Therefore, this study is significant in that it will add to this body of research. This section describes these implications in detail, including practical implications for school administrations and educators as well as implications for multicultural literature and children's identity development.

I would encourage Prekindergarten and Head Start curriculum personnel at the Texas Education Agency (TEA) who work on the book adoption list as they are choosing curricula to not only be cautious and aware of overall instructional content, but to also be aware of the books in the curriculum and to strive for inclusive representations of female characters of color. There are further implications for committees in school districts or Head Start programs that are purchasing the books from the curriculum to consider as well, because representations of female characters are not present in each type of book that constitutes a program set. If not carefully selected, like for example with this curriculum, the hegemonic practices of school that marginalize young girls of color could continue. Educators have the responsibility to ensure that the books they use in the classrooms represent a diverse range of characters. Even if the books from the curriculum do not meet this need, teachers have the task of supplementing with

books from the school or public library or with other funding so that children from diverse backgrounds can see reflections of themselves in books featuring characters with voice and agency and power. Not only do educators have the responsibility to never use a book alone, as this could further create issues *othering* and normalizing the dominant culture, but how educators use these books also is critical. Simply reading books that have multiple representations of female character of color with voice and agency is a step but it is not the only one. I would charge educators of young children with the task of also following up with discussion about issues in the books and in society to begin a dialogue about identity and culture that could be meaningful and educative.

This is not a critique or blame placed on educators, but a call for those who are not yet aware of this problem to become more conscious of it. They need to know that, while making changes in classrooms, they can also fight for change in social justice activist causes, urging publishers, authors, award committees, and curriculum companies to become more critical of how gender is represented in children's picturebooks. As Short (2001) argued, book choice is political; thus, it is crucial for educators (and for all those who read and select picturebooks for young children) to provide a variety of texts that reflect the experiences of an increasingly diverse population. If the texts contain gender bias, silencing, and stereotypes, those issues must be addressed. Once more, it is not just about which books are read in the classroom; the pedagogy used to address controversial themes during class is equally important. Although it is crucial to include a variety of books in an early childhood curriculum, it is equally important that teachers address gender and race in critical ways.

Another finding of this study is that my analysis revealed there are some books in curriculum that are providing space for multicultural characters. Taylor (2003) wrote that many children's books carry the ideologies and beliefs of the dominant culture. The content and illustrations in 11 books analyzed in this study do provide counternarratives to dominant discourse, but being that only 11 were sufficient for the study and the limited number of characters form multiple marginalized communities, it could only keep traditional hegemonic practices in place. Michelle Pérez (in Saavedra & Pérez, 2012) explained that Black feminism aims to "reclaim" and "re-center" the subjugated knowledges of women of color. Some of the books in this study aim to reclaim this knowledge, and lived experience is visible through cultural authenticity in the authorship and stories presented. But this is a small sample from an originally large set of a total collection of 339 books. This is significant because as demographic trends continue to show a rise in the populations of minority students in Texas, we need a continuing influx of books that reflect the identities of these students. Teachers need access to the books in which subjugated knowledges, agency and voice for varied genders, and diverse representations of minority groups are represented in the classroom.

Subsequently, as mentioned in Chapter 1, children are trying to make sense of their identity (Chatton, 2001), and although picturebooks are not the only cultural source that affects this identity formation, they can have a significant influence. Therefore, findings from this study show that diverse character representations of females of color tell young girls of color that it is okay to voice their opinions, have adventures, and learn new ideas, that being helpful to others and family is very important; and that keeping close ties with their culture through language, hair, or food is encouraged. However, there needs to be much more of this represented

throughout the entire set of books that supplemented the curriculum. Also, a main criticism is that it would have been more agreeable to see this agency attributed to the older women in the stories as well—to show young children in this critical stage of identity development that motherhood represents only one potential facet of their futures. And again, though the African-American experience is given more space, Latina and Asian viewpoints are extremely limited in this sample, especially considering the current enrollment data from TEA (the Texas Education Agency) that reveals that Latino students make up 52% of the total Texas public school population and the Asian population has had a 48% population increase in Texas public schools over the last 10 years (Nagy, 2018, Enrollment Trends, TEA).

Lastly, as a teacher educator, this study has and will continue to have a great impact on my life and work. As a woman of color I was enthusiastic about the content of the 11 books that were used for this study, and at the same time disheartened that only 11 were identified. As a former bilingual educator who knows the plethora of books that cover the Latina experience, to only have one book giving a voice to this community is problematic to say the least. I teach several courses addressing the unique and diverse needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. This research will be used to impact the lives of teacher candidates that I encounter by sharing with them the results, and having them identify multicultural books that they can use in content area instruction to create meaningful connections with students' lives and provide as counter-narratives to hegemonic perspectives in the mainstream classroom.

Possibilities for Future Research

There are many possibilities for future research to continue the work in this area.

Specifically, three chief considerations could be beneficial in impacting practice in education. One possibility is for different researchers to analyze this same sample using a different critical lens, such as critical race theory or postcolonial theory, to see what other themes might emerge. Second, it would be beneficial to complete this research using the same theory and methodology but with different samples from the different adopted prekindergarten curricula in Texas. A third possibility for future research would be to analyze books from bestseller lists or award lists using a similar intersectional approach that considers more than one cultural aspect of the characters within the books.

Conclusion

The research question addressed in this study was: *How do picturebook texts and illustrations in an early childhood curriculum represent the identities of female characters of color as viewed through a critical feminist theoretical lens?* I found major themes of motherhood, action and agency, and subjugated knowledge and culture. These themes showed a wide range of possibilities for representations of female characters of color. Past research on children's picturebooks has shown that through underrepresentation and discursive messages, culturally and linguistically diverse students are either excluded from literature altogether or represented in ways that do not value their modes of being, thinking, and knowing. While the books form this sample contained authentic cultural themes and gave voices to female characters of color, this limited sample reflects only a few of the many experiences and knowledges of diverse cultures. For example, African-American culture is given an array of perspectives and lived experiences, but for Asian and Latino cultures, the lack of multiple

perspectives aids in creating generalizations and perpetuating stereotypes about these communities. This is problematic in a classroom where children's cultural identities and self-esteems are developing, and if the teacher does not supplement the material given to them from the curriculum, the students only receive one part, if any, of the story these cultures claim. Overall, the 11 books included in this study do provide agency and voice for female characters of color, but that is only 3.2% of the total books within the curriculum. These 11 books reflect the significant potential that culturally relevant literature offers for an early childhood reading program. However, 3.2% is not adequate. There must be more books that represent female characters of color highlighting the variety, complexity, strength and fierceness of the multiple cultures and possibilities of these non-monolithic groups.

APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES FROM PICTUREBOOK ANALYSIS

Table A.1

Categories and Numbers of Books

Book Category	Total Number of Books	Books with Multicultural Representations or Characterizations	Books with a main female character of color	Broken Down by Order Sets
Bilingual Books	16	5	[none]	All in same order
Big Books	20	2	1) *Flower Garden*	Big Books Set 1 • 10 books • 0 multicultural representations Big Books Set 2 • 10 books • 2 multicultural representations • Both were main female characters of color
Paperback books	90	193	1) *Feast for 10* 2) *Flower garden* 3) *Bee-Bim Bop* 4) *Lola at the Library* 5) *Ten, Nine, Eight* 6) *My Friends and I* 7) *Looking for a Moose*	Paperback Set 1 • 40 total • 10 multicultural representations • 3 had main female characters of color Paperback Set 2 • 50 total • 7 multicultural representations • 4 had main female characters of color
Board Books	123	17	1) *Ten, Nine, Eight* 2) *Dim sum for Everyone* 3) *I Love my Hair!*	Board Books Set 1 • 40 total • 4 multicultural representations • 0 had main female characters of color Board Book Set 2 • 50 total

Book Category	Total Number of Books	Books with Multicultural Representations or Characterizations	Books with a main female character of color	Broken Down by Order Sets
				• 4 multicultural representations • 1 had main female characters of color Rhythm, Rhyme, Song • 15 total • 1 multicultural representations • 0 had main female characters of color Multicultural • 10 total • 10 multicultural representations • 2 had main female characters of color Bilingual Concept Books • 8 total • 0 multicultural representations • 0 had main female characters of color
Hardcover Books	92	30	1) *Flower Garden* 2) *Lola Plants a Garden* 3) *Kitchen Dance*	My Feelings Set • 8 total • 1 multicultural representations • 0 had main female characters of color Hard Topics Set • 8 total • 4 multicultural representations • 0 had main female characters of color Hardcover Set 1 • 50 total • 10 multicultural representations • 2 had main female characters of color

Book Category	Total Number of Books	Books with Multicultural Representations or Characterizations	Books with a main female character of color	Broken Down by Order Sets
				Early Math • 8 total • 1 multicultural representations • 0 had main female characters of color Our Families • 8 total • 5 multicultural representations • 1 had main female characters of color Multicultural • 8 total • 8 multicultural representations • 1 had main female characters of color

Table A.2

Themes Identified in Initial Close Reading

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
Bee Bim Bop	Little girl's point of view as she is the narrator Story of her and her mother shopping and making a meal for the family Therefore based on the text, one could make an argument that the theoretical tenet of voice is observed when the main character is given agency to make the choice for dinner, but then the mother who is an extreme example of silencing as she says nothing in the story and does all the work So what does this say to young girls? Be strong and independent and make choices until you are grown? -also this could show intersectionality of duties of Asian culture and gender motherhood	The girl has some agency in the story as she chooses the meal "hurry, mama, hurry, gotta shop ship shop, hungry hungry hungry for some BEE-BIM BOP" (p. 5) She helps prepare the meal "Let me pour the water in-yes, I know I can!" (p.17) She also sets the table and cleans up a spill (as state in text) The mother though does not have a voice in the story is told "hurry mama hurry" multiple times in the story The mother is given many other commands that she is to follow -this could come off as the typical impatience of a young child, it shows how much work is put on the mother and how much goes into preparing the meal	They finish preparing the meal The father says a prayer "Papa says the grace" (p. 24) gender roles "Time for BEE-BIM BOP" (p. 29) the family finally eats	Text is very appropriate for early childhood with rhyming on each page At the end of the book there is a recipe for bee-bim bop The book is culturally authentic as the authors, both Korean and their lives and experiences with family, culture, and food are described in an author's note in the back of the book The book does have the multicultural component of Asian food and how to make it, and the intergenerational family showing subjugated knowledge as lived experience

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
		This could also reaffirm view of traditional gender roles		
I Love my Hair	A little girl is the narrator and she is describing her experiences with her hair and the different styles she can wear it in Although she interacts with a couple of other characters, this is completely her story This story completely gives a voice to and sheds light on women's hair in the African American community	The little girl takes control of the narrative in this story describing her favorite styles and what she likes to do with her hair Twice in the story the little girl is disillusioned about her hair, but she has strong female role models of color who lift her spirits "Mama, stop! I cry when I can't stand the comb tugging at my hair any longer" (p. 5) Then the mother comforts the daughter by rubbing the sore spots and saying, "Do you know why you're so lucky to have this head of hair, Keyanna…because it's beautiful and you can wear it in any style you choose" (p.4) "This is my Afro style….Once when I wore it, the kids at school teased me" (p.17/19)	The story is resolved as the little girl loves her hair and wear her favorite style two ponytails that "stick out on either side of my head and flap in the air like a pair of wings"	Page 1 rubbing coconut oil on the scalp Many similes and metaphors help the reader to feel the deep connections she has with her hair and make the story come alive and make it very meaningful But the books in this curriculum are for very young children and might go over the head of 3 or 4 year olds The author and illustrator are both African American and the author has also written adult literature on black identity and black women This particular story is all about intersectionality between race and gender

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
		Here we can see where mestiza consciousness comes into play, as Keyanna is learning to navigate through the culture of a school whose kids do not have the knowledge she possesses about black hair Then on page 20 the teacher explains that hair is a blessing and "wearing an Afro was a way for them to stand up for what they believed, to let the world know that were proud of who they were and where they came from"		
Dim Sum for Everyone	The story is about a little girl and her experience going to a dim sum restaurant and sharing a meal with her parents and two sisters., Ma-Ma Ba-Ba, Jei-Jei and Mei-Mei are Chinese names for mother and father and then the names of the siblings (p. 6-12)	I believe each family member (p.6-14) as they each choose their own food (the wife and children are not ordered for) creates agency Voice to choose and to share about a community tradition (sub know) And then p. 15-18 "We eat a little bit of everything" everyone shares from the plates at the table	The family finishes the meal	Explanation of dim sum restaurants in the back of the book Lin is a Taiwanese American author and illustrator
Flower Garden	A rhyming story of a little girl and her father putting together a garden for their apartment window in the city	There is not much in this story giving anyone power or agency	The girl and father put the garden box together and in the end, it was a birthday surprise for the mother	Author and illustrator are both outsiders to the culture

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
	The narrator is the girl describing her experience Pages 5 and 7 “Garden in a cardboard box, walking to the bus, garden sitting in our laps, people smile at us”	The representation in this book is complicated and perplexing It shows a father and daughter working together to put together a garden, later revealed to be a birthday present to the mother The mother is working while the girl is cared for by her father Good positive images		
Looking for a Moose	A story about an African- American girl and her 3 friends of color searching through the woods for a moose The story is from the point of view of the girl, and and she headlines the adventure, but each character chooses a different place to search for a moose with smart suggestions for each place to look “Let’s go! We put on our hats. We put on our boots” (p. 4) “We’ll look on the hillside for a bulgy-nose moose! We take off our hats. We tighten up our packs”. (p.20)	The power is shared by all group members Although in the text there are not really multicultural themes, the fact that the characters are of color is significant because they are making decisions, they are extremely intelligent, sharing ideas and going on an adventure *Giving voice and adventure to the representation of female characters of color	The story is resolved when the children find 100s of moose in a valley	Author and illustrator are both Anglo, but not a multicultural story, a story with multicultural characters--great thing this story is out there that gives incredible agency to characters of color vs. do cultural outsiders have to right to tell the stories of multicultural peoples for capital gain?

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
Ten, Nine, Eight	This is a counting book that shows the life of an African- American small child (possibly toddler as she is sleeping in a crib at her bedtime) The point of view is unclear, there is a narrator but it could be the little girl or just a silent figure looking into her world	I guess technically the parents have the power as they are determining the bedtime But the text is not super complicated, it is a book meant for very young children as a bedtime story and to introduce the concept of numbers and rationale counting "10 small toes washed and warm…9 soft friends in a quiet room….8 square windowpanes with falling snow…." etc. (p. 1,3,5)	The little girl is put to bed by her father which I think is an unexpected ending (p. 19/20)	Caldecott Medal winner Father putting daughter to bed instead of a mother figure If text read without pictures, would never know this was about an African-American family
Lola at the Library	This story is about Lola and her trip to the public library with her mother The narrator is telling the story and it is unknown Lola and her mother are the only characters mentioned	Lola has the agency to choose her own books in the story "After storytime Lola chooses her books" (p.13)	Her mother reads her a book in her own bed at home Incredibly positive images of young African- American girl and her mother, again if the pictures were not there, this books could have been about any race/ethnicity of people	"Lola" is the most popular word in entire set of books, said many times in two sets This is a traditionally Spanish and African nickname shorted from longer versions

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
	Page 1 “Lola loves Tuesdays. On Tuesdays, Lola and her mommy go to the library”		Therefore you cannot have the text without pictures and vice versa, they are intertwined to tell the complete story	
Kitchen Dance	Kitchen Dance is a book about a little girl who wakes up in the middle of the night to find her parents dancing in the kitchen She is the narrator and uses some Spanish language mixed in the text Tamales “I slip out of my blankets and climb up to where Tito sleeps. Oye! Do you hear?” p. 4	The characters in the story are given equal amount of agency in the story The kids wake up to find the parents dancing in the kitchen and then they are then able to join in the dancing and then they fall back asleep	“Besitos mija, mama says, and she kisses me twice” p. 29 The kids are placed back in bed and go to sleep Culturally authentic--multicultural theme	This is one of the main books that truly had cultural connections/ representations in the text, not only in the images Also, shows the mother in another light, not only as caretaker but as a human--dancing and laughing and having fun with her husband
My Friend and I	A story about an interracial relationship between an African American girl and a white boy The girl is the narrator telling the story about making a new friend “I played with my toys. Until one day a little boy moved next door” (pp. 4-6)	The girl is given the power and agency in the story as she makes the decision to introduce herself, she resolves the conflict in the story p. 8-9, p. 24-25	p. 28-29 they fix the toy and are friends again “Friends again I asked. Friends, my friend said.”	If text read without pictures, would never know this was about an African American girl But with the pictures, this shows that little black girls have choices, can make decisions, can have a story, etc.

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
Lola Plants a Garden	The story is about Lola the African American girl from *Lola and the Library* The book is a view into Lola's world and she and her mother have read the poem "Mary Mary quite contrary" and this inspires Lola to want to plant a garden	Lola contains quite a bit of agency in this story as again, she is given a choice of the flowers she wants to plant; her mother and father help her to plant a garden, make a flower book and doll, and hang bells in her garden like in the poem "Lola makes her own flower book while she waits. Mommy types the Mary Mary poem, and Lola glues it in" (pp. 9-10) "Daddy helps Lola hang her bells" (p. 18)	Lola invites her friends to see the garden "Lola's friends love everything about her garden" (p. 21)	Lola conducts research on pages 3/4 to find various flowers she could plant before heading to the store -see the father in a small role in this book, Lola's mother again is such an incredible role model, but then is this the view that all mothers should be and all traits that might tie them to the African American community are non-existent, but African Americans are not a monolithic group and should be shown in different lights
Feast for 10	This is a counting book that shares the story of a large African- American family shopping and preparing for a meal Though the children are helping, the mother is clearly running the show	The power and agency go to the mother, counting children and groceries and steps to cook, but the children are helping "1 cart into the grocery store… 2 pumpkin pies… 10 hands help to load the car" (pp. 2, 3, 13) This book has culture, it has more representations of motherhood, and it somewhat gives characters agency as the family comes together to share the workload, but the pictures are tied	"10 hungry folks to share the meal" (p. 280 The family eats the meal together	Traditional African-American soul foods mentioned in the text (pp. 3, 4, 5, 6) Greens, fried chicken, pumpkin pie, beans

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Power and Agency	Closure: How the story is resolved	Memos
		with text and one is incomplete without the other		

Table A.3

Findings from Critical Visual Analysis

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
Bee Bim Bop	Little girl's point of view as she is the main character whose picture is on every page, Story of her and her mother shopping and making a meal for the family The other is on most pages, but very interestingly her face is seldom shown in pages 6-21 as they are	The girl is feeling very excited She is moving, jumping (p. 9), smelling (p. 11), tasting (p. 15) helping and cleaning up (pp. 16, 18, 21), jumping into her grandmother's arms and smiling (p. 23) Generic	The illustrator used both pages to complete each scene instead of a new scene on each page, which gives a full-scale view into what is happening in that moment For example, you can see the whole family at the table together on 28/29 Or you can see multiple things happening at the same time like in 18/19 when the mother is at the stove and at the same time the little girl is mopping up a mess, the dog is playing, and there is some prepared food at the table Vibrant Warm Familiar	On pages 24 and 25 as the family says the prayer, the illustrator has very calm reverent faces on the older family members, and the baby is playing with food and staring at his hand and the dog has one eye open, maybe to bring in some humor On pages 28/29 you can see the family's faces smiling and eyes closing as they enjoy the meal On 21/23/29 you can see the pride on the faces of the characters of the mother and daughter

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	preparing the meal the mother's head is intentionally left off of each page and her body is left doing the work of preparing the meal Viewer is observer/ unmediated			
I Love My Hair	Little girl's point of view as she is the main character whose picture is on every set of pages, and the illustrations not only give you the	On page 3 you can visually see how frustrated she is with the combing of her hair as she squints her eyes and squeezes her hands together	Initial pages before the book have realistic illustrations of hair combs and ties traditionally used in the African-American community A celebration of natural hair The women in the book are a lighter brown color and the presumed father is very dark (p. 19)	The one emotion that was elicited through the book was pride in the face of the little girl Upscale Extent

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	little girl's viewpoint of reality but also what she sees in her head For example, on page 12 she imagined her hair braided into actual rows of corn or on page 18 she envisions her Afro as a globe of earth Contact invited Unmediated	On pages 19/20 when it is describing how people in the Civil Rights Movement wore Afros to stand up for their rights, she imagines her parents wearing Afros and being dressed in dashikis Naturalistic	Vibrant Warm Familiar	
Dim Sum for Everyone	Point of view of a girl who is the narrator	The characters seem happy to choose their own meals 6-14 and	Almond-shaped eyes depicting Asian heritage of characters as well as the traditional Chinese clothing Vibrant Warm	Very short book with not much meaning placed behind the characters except they are happy to eat and possibly be together as a family Upscale Extent

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	On pages 3/4 and 17/18 there is a view of the entire restaurant, but the rest of the book is the girl and her family Viewer is observer/ unmediated	to share with one another Generic	Familiar	Downscale Extent
Flower Garden	The story of a young African-American girl is told Nothing specifically on culture but darker skin and curly black hair on the family members	There are many background characters in the story from people around the neighborhood smiling and going about their day (pp. 4, 7, 8, 21, 22)	In this book it was more the attention to detail in the illustrations The tagging on the stoop on p.21 The ladybug crawling on her hand on p. 20 Mother and daughter have natural hair Muted Dark Warm Familiar	Pages 23/24 show the little girl looking out at the people who will enjoy the flowers from below and on 27/28 you can see the joy in the mother's face for her gift and little girl happy and proud Upscale Extent

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	Contact direct mediated inscribed, inferred and as observer	You can see the illustrator wanted to make this point as on pages 7 and 8 you can see through the eyes of the girl looking out to the people Generic		
Looking for a Moose	The four friends share the story and the power Each are featured on all pages When they have an idea, they get their own page (p. 4, 8, 14,20)	Facial expressions are in mouths only as the noses and eyes do not change from page to page Serious faces while searching (p. 5, 6)	Fall, woodsy colors All four characters have similar builds and facial features but varying skin tones of brown and different hair textures and styles Also the girls are wearing pink, purple, and red Vibrant Warm Familiar The boys are in blue, green and yellow	Upscale Number

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	Viewer is observer/ unmediated	Joyous and excited smiles and open mouths when the moose is found (pp. 27, 28) Minimalist		
Ten, Nine, Eight	The reader is given a view into the room of the little girl It is all about her room, her things and her bedtime routine with her father Contact direct mediated inscribed,	On p. 14 you can see how tired the young girl is by her yawning and she seems happy on 20 when she is bathed, dressed, has her bear and is tucked in Naturalistic	The ambiance is that of a typical toddler's room with a crib and mobile and to make it more realistic one of the shoes is missing on page 8 and then on page 12 the cat is seen chewing the shoe Muted Dark Warm Familiar	On page 12 I love how the illustrator showed the father holding and looking down at the little girl with such emotion in his face like when someone is looking at someone they love more than anything Upscale Extent

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	inferred and as observer			
Lola at the Library	The illustrations are focused on Lola--this is her story about her day and what she wants to do Viewer is observer/ unmediated	Lola has a smile on her face on every page of the book Generic	Traditional African- American hair styles seen on Lola and her mother (pp. 17, 18) Natural hair Vibrant Warm Familiar	Images of a young African- American girl and her mother In these representations, they are each checking out their own books, going to a coffee shop, and reading at home together (pp. 15,16,17,18,21,22)
Feast for 10	The mother is featured on almost all pages and so are her children Viewer is observer/ unmediated	On pages 27/28 the family is sitting down for the meal and all making eye contact, smiling, laughing, talking, eating The feeling of togetherness of	Realistic when the baby falls asleep on the way home p. 16 Various types of African- American hairstyles and skin tones and facial features Older generation joins at the table for dinner (otherwise not seen) p.27/28 Natural hair	The children are happy to help, on each page seen smiling

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
		family love is felt deeply through the artwork Generic	Vibrant Warm Familiar	
Lola Plants a Garden	Lola is the focal point of the entire story; she is on every page and completing a plethora of activities 1 reading 3/4 reading garden books for research and planning which flowers to buy 5/6 shopping for seeds 7/8 planting a garden	Lola and her family and friends smile through most of the book, but you can see her exhaustion in her face in her eyebrows and hand on her head on p 14 after she pulls up roots Generic	Made for small children with friendly and warm pictures, nothing specifically multicultural about the book except the family is African American and on page 12, the doll Lola made is also African American Lola has natural hair Vibrant Warm Familiar	Similar to the other Lola book Positive images of a young African- American girl and her family In these representations, they are reading poetry, conducting research, connecting with the earth and their creativity and art

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	9/10 making a book 11/12 making a doll 19 making cupcakes 23/24 telling her friends a story Viewer is observer/ unmediated			
My Friend and I	A little girl, the story is her view of getting a new neighbor and friend, causing a fight and realizing her mistake (p.23 in tears) and fixing it (25-27 going to	Different from most of the books in this curriculum, the facial expression of these characters tell so much of the story	The illustrations look as though they are painted by a child, this might be appealing to young children Muted Dark Warm Familiar	Anyone can be friends, and friends of different races go through things just like friends of the same race 32

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
	the house with a solution) Viewer is observer/ unmediated	On p. 6 the little girl squints her eyes and hides behind a bush as to look suspiciously at new neighbors On 17 the kids are very angry and eyebrows are raised their faces turn red and their mouths open are they fight and argue On 21/23 very sad faces as they are not friends in that moment Minimalist		

Book Title	Focalization: Whose story is told and from whose point of view	Affect: Description of character feelings in which facial expressions and body movements engage emotions	Ambience: Creates emotional modes through the use of color	Graduation: Attitudinal meanings through the illustrations
Kitchen Dance	The kids are seen in most pictures (they hide behind a door for a bit and the parents stare while dancing) (pp. 10-19) The family is the focal point Viewer is observer/ unmediated	p. 20 you can see the "oops" looks on the kids' faces when they are caught behind the door, but the parents are laughing and in a good mood Generic	Seeing an Afro-Latino family who you assume are African American but then begin to sing and dance in Spanish p. 4 The mother's curvy Latina body is seen throughout with hips moving and belly showing but in a beautiful and body positive way—facial expressions smiling and eyes glowing Muted Dark Warm Familiar	pp. 10-11, 12-13 The parents stare lovingly at one another while dancing and putting away dishes

Table A.4

*Themes in Relation to Theoretical Tenets**

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
Unit phrases from text	Happy, happy birthday, Mom! A garden box-for you. Lola and her mommy give back the books from last week. The librarian buzzes them through the machine. Mommy has some books, too. The librarian buzzes them through the machine, then stamps the date inside. Lola and her mommy always get a snack after visiting the library. Mommy has a cappuccino, and Lola has juice.	10 small toes all washed and warm 2 strong arms around a fuzzy bear's head 4 four children off to look for more 7 seven more carrots to wash and peel Garden in a shopping cart Doesn't it look great? Garden on the checkout stand	1 big girl all ready for bed "Let's go!" We put on our hats. We pull on our boots. We look in the woods-TROMP STOMP! TROMP STOMP!- the treesy-breezy, tilty-stilty, wobbly-knobbly woods. We look and we look, but it's just no use. We don't see any long-leggy	"Have you ever seen a moose- a long-leggy moose- a branchy-antler, dinner-diving, bulgy-nose moose?" Put purple pansies at each end Daisies, white as snow Daffodils, geraniums And tulips in a row. Garden in a window box High above the street	Lola Mary Keyanna Tito Mei-Mei Jei-Jei	3 loving kisses on checks and nose-father to daughter I slip out of my blankets and climb up to where Tito sleeps. -siblings Papa hands us wooden spoons. "!Como te quiero!" we all sing. " Oh, how I love you!" We twirl around and around in a circle of family. Papa sways too, and I see Tito blink. The whole house is quiet but for Papa's softest voice. "Como te quiero…"	3 three chickens to fry 6 six bunches of greens 10 ten hands help to load the car 3 three will cook-family/siblings 10 ten hungry folks to share the meal!-family intergenerational Garden in a cardboard box Walking to the bus Garden sitting on our laps People smile at us! Walkers walking down below

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
	Whenever Lola has been good, her mommy lets her taste the foam-mmmmm! Every night, after Lola is tucked in bed her mommy reads her a story. It is the best way to end the day. Mama holds out her hand, and I run to her. Now eight feet fly! Finally, the kitchen dance slows. Our song grows sleepy. Mama sways, feet whispering. Her hand rubs my back. Every night before I go to bed, Mama combs my hair. I sit between her knees,	I can hardly wait. Garden going up the stairs Stopping at each door This garden's getting heavier! At last- our own front door. Hurry! Hurry! Get the trowel Spread the papers thick. Get the bag of potting soil Get the planting mix. We tiptoe down the	moose. "Now what?" On Tuesdays Lola and her mommy go to the library. After storytime Lola chooses her books. In the library she can have any book she wants. Lola likes stories with bears and anything with shoes. There are so many, it takes ages to choose! Papa and Tito spin by. Mama	Where butterflies can stop and rest And ladybugs can meet. Candles on a birthday cake Chocolate ice cream, too. 9 soft friends in a quiet room 8 square windowpanes with falling snow 7 empty shoes in a short straight row 6 pale seashells hanging down 5 round buttons on a yellow gown		Folks on the street look at me and smile as I dance along to the *Tap! Tap! Clicky-clacky!* music my hair makes just for me. Daddy helps Lola hang her shiny bells Orla, Ben, and Ty are coming to see Lola's garden. They share the crunchy peas and sweet strawberries that Mommy grew. Hurry, family, hurry Gotta hop hop hop Dinner's on the table and it's BEE-BIM BOP! Quiet for a moment Papa says the grace Everybody says "Amen" A smile on every face	Will lift their heads and see Purple, yellow, red, and white A color jamboree. -neighborhood "!Oye! Do you hear?" A bright skirt flashes by! Four feet fly! My father sings a Spanish song into a wooden spoon. !Como te quiero! Oh, how I love you. Umm, hmm." Side by side with stacked plates they glide. My father twirls my mother by one hand. Laughing, she spins into his arms, then out again, like a yo-yo on a string.

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
	resting my elbows on her thighs, like pillows. Mama is always gentle. "Mama, stop!" I cry when I can't stand the comb tugging at my hair any longer. Mama puts the comb down and rubs my hurting places. Then she leans in close to me, like she has a big secret to tell. "Do you know why you're so lucky to have this head of hair, Keyana?" she asks. I shake my head no. "Because it's beautiful and you can wear it in any style you choose." Mommy says there is room near the vegetables. Mommy makes a list.	stairs, following the sounds. Lola gets books about gardens from the library. She chooses her favorite flowers from the books. They go to the garden store to buy seeds. Lola makes her own flower book while she waits.	lifts me up and swings me high. In the morning before we walk to the store, Mama adds colorful beads to the ends of my braids. The beads click to the rhythm of my walk, helping me remember what we're going to buy: *Tap! Tap!* *Clicky-clacky!* *Milk, bread, peanut butter.* Lola wants to plant a garden. Rice is on the boil Bubbling in the pot	4 sleepy eyes which open and close "LOOK THERE! It's a long leggy, dinner-diving, branchy-antler, bulgy-nose moose… and a moose… and a moose… and a moose." There is a special section in the library just for children. It is really cool. Nobody ever says, "Shhh!"		Ba-Ba chooses little dishes of fried shrimp. Jie-Jie wants turnip cakes. Mei-Mei wants sweet tofu. We eat a little bit of everything. The little boy asked, "What are you doing?" "Watching," I said. "Do you have any toys?" he asked. "Yes," I said. "Me, too. Let's play!" I tried to grab the bunny. My friend grabbed it back. I shouted, "I want it!" My friend yelled back, "No!" I pulled the bunny. My friend pulled it back. We grabbed and shouted And yelled and pulled. Until suddenly .. .	A bump of her soft hips, and cabinet doors shut- bang! One, two- pots clang into their spots in the cupboard. A third gets dried with the swipe of a cotton cloth. My mother twists, and my father catches her by the waist and bends her low. My mother's voice joins my father's hers high and his low. Together they tango across the room with the leftover tamales. Suddenly, Mama spies our peeking faces. Tito and I squeal and turn

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
	Lola and Mommy make the garden. Mommy types the Mary Mary poem, and Lola glues it in. Mommy helps Lola with her hair. Mama buys the groceries— more, Mama, more! Hurry, Mama, hurry Gotta shop shop shop! Home and in the kitchen Eggs to stir and fry Mama, catch the spatula— flip the eggs high! Hurry, Mama, hurry Gotta flip flip flop! Hungry hungry hungry for some BEE-BIM BOP! Mama's knife is shiny Slicing fast and neat Hurry, mama, hurry Ma-Ma picks little dishes on sweet pork buns.	Lola makes a string of bells. She finds shells and some old beads. She even makes a little Mary Mary. She pulls up weeds so the shoots can grow. The Lola makes up a story about Mary Mary. Almost time for supper Rushing to the store Let *me* pour the water in—	White and sticky-lickety Steaming good and hot! Bowls go on the table Big ones striped in blue I help set the glasses out Spoons and chopsticks too. We wore silly hats and blew up balloons. We played the drums and danced. We sang songs and jumped in the air. Together we fixed the bunny almost as good as new.	I wake up and listen. Through the walls and floor, I hear kitchen sounds. Glasses clinking. Water swishing. Forks clattering. Then something else- a deep voice humming a tune and someone laughing. "Hush!" I love my hair because it is thick as a forest,		the bunny broke! "Uh-oh," I said. "You're not my friend anymore," my friend said. "Go away." . "I missed you," I said. "I missed you too," he said. "Friends again?" I asked. "Friends," my friend said. "Now let's fix all our toys!"	to run, but Papa swings the door wide and catches us. "!Hola!" "Good night-again," Papa tells us. "Besitos, mi'ja", Mama says, and she kisses me twice. "Sweet dreams." She rubs coconut oil along my scalp and slowly pulls the comb through my hair, but sometimes it still hurts. When mama gets to especially tangled places I try my hardest not to cry, sucking in my breath and pressing my hands together until they're red.

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
		yes, I know I can! Sorry, Mama, sorry Gotta mop mop mop We lined up all of our toys. We had three dolls, two cars, four trucks, two bears, one lion, six balls, two soldiers, and some string. "I'm sorry I broke your bunny," I said. "It doesn't look so bad now," he said. And so we did,	Lola and Mommy make cupcakes.	soft as cotton candy, and curling as a vine winding upward, reaching the sky and climbing toward outer space. Today I'm wearing it in my favorite style of all: two ponytails that stick out on either side of my head and flap in the air like a pair of wings. One of these days I just might take off and fly!			"I can spin your hair into fine, soft yarn, just like our grandmothers did at their spinning wheels, and weave it into a puffy little bun. "Or I can part your hair into straight lines and plant rows of braids along your scalp, the way we plant seeds in our garden, then wait and watch for them to grow." Some days I just let my hair be free to do what it wants, to go any which-way it pleases.

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
		my friend and I.		Lola loves her book of garden poems. Her favorite poem is the one about Mary, Mary. Lola wears her flower shirt. I like little egg tarts. Once upon a time there was me. I played with my toys. Until one day a little boy moved in next door. I played by myself again			Then my hair surrounds my head, like a glove. This is my Afro style. Once when I wore it the kids at school teased me. My head felt heavy and I let it hang down low. But my teacher made me feel better. She said that when she was growing up, folks counted their hair as a blessing. Wearing an Afro was a way for them to stand up for what they believed, to let the world know that they were proud of who they were and where they came from. Hungry hungry hungry

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
				I lined up my toys. I wore my silly hat. I danced. I sang. But it wasn't the same. I peeked in the window. He was trying to fix the bunny. "What are you doing?" he asked. "Watching," I said. "Oh," he said. "I think I can help," I said. "How?" he asked.			For some BEE-BIM BOP! Dim sum has many little dishes. Little dishes on carts. Little dishes on tables. Everyone eats a little bit of everything Tito listens Mary, Mary, quite contrary how does your garden grow? With silver bells and cockleshells and pretty maids all in a row.

Themes	Motherhood	Action and Agency		Subjugated Knowledge and Culture			
Initial Codes	Mother	Action	Activity	Voice	Name	Relationship	Specific Cultural Reference
				I showed him what we could do.			

*Color Codes for Books: *Bee Bim Bop*, *I Love my Hair*, *Dim Sum for Everyone*, *Flower Garden*, *Looking for a Moose*, *Ten, Nine, Eight*, *Lola at the Library*, *Kitchen Dance*, *My Friend and I*, *Lola Plants a Garden*, *Feast for 10*

Miscellaneous	1 one cart into the grocery store 2 two pumpkins for pie 5 five kinds of beans 7 seven dill pickles stuffed in a jar 8 eight ripe tomatoes 9 nine plump potatoes Then… 1 one car home from the grocery store 2 two will look 4 four will taste and ask for more 5 five empty cans 6 six pots and pans 8 eight platters down 9 nine chairs around “No! We’ve never, never ever, ever. Ever, ever, ever seen a moose. And we really, really, really, really want to see a moose.” “We’ll look in the swamp for a dinner-diving moose!” We roll up our pants. We take off our boots. We wade in the swamp- squeech squooch squeech squooch!- the sloppy-gloppy, lily-loppy, slurpy-glurpy swamp.

	We look and we look, but it's just no use. We don't see any long-leggy, dinner-diving moose. "Now what?" "We'll look in the bushes for a branchy-antler moose!" We roll up our pants. We button up our sleeves. We scrape through the bushes!-scritch scratch! scritch sratch!- the brambly-ambly, bunchy-scrunchy, scrubby-shrubby bushes. We look and we look, but it's just no use. We don't see any long-leggy, dinner-diving, branchy-antler moose. "Now what?" "We'll look on the hillside for a bulgy-nose moose!" We take off our hats. We tighten up our packs. We scramble up the hillside-TRIP TROP! TRIP TROP!- the rocky-blocky, lumpy-bumpy, fuzzy-muzzy hillside. We look and we look, but it's just no use. "We'll never, ever, ever, ever, ever see a moose!" Oo-roog! "What's that?" The library opens at nine o' clock, but Lola is ready to go long before that! Sometimes there is singing. Lola knows all the words and the hands for " Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Sometimes there is a storytime. Lola loves that. Lola must bring them back in two weeks. But she will probably be back for more long before then! Then it is time to go home again.

	Scrape! Splash! Clunk! Clang! Scrape Hmm Clang He rubs the sleep from his eyes, and we climb down the ladder. Hmm Clunk Shh! We creep closer and crack open the door. There is silence for a moment. Then… …around the kitchen they sweep, feet tapping, water dripping, sponge wiping, towel snapping. Umm, hmm. But a few tears always manage to squeeze out. The seed packets mark where the flowers are planted. Lola will have to wait a long time for them to grow. One day Lola sees tiny green shoots! Lola's flowers grow bigger. They open up to the sun. Lola finds Mary Mary a special spot. It's just perfect. Lola's friends love everything about her garden.

	What kind of garden will Lola plant next? Lola, Lola, extraordinary, how does your garden grow? With flower seeds and shells and beads and happy friends all in a row. Hurry, flurry rice Gotta pop pop pop! Hungry hungry hungry for some BEE-BIM BOP! Garlic and green onions Skinny strips of meat. Gotta chop chop chop! Hungry—very hungry for some BEE-BIM BOP! Spinach, sprouts, and carrots Each goes in a pan Hungry—in a hurry for some BEE-BIM BOP! Rice goes in the middle Egg goes right on top MIX IT! MIX LIKE CRAZY! Time for BEE-BIM BOP! Now there are empty little dishes.

	“You’re my friend,” he said. “You’re my friend too.” I said We were very happy. One day my friend had a new toy. “It’s soft and new and mine,” he said. “I want to play with it,” I said. He held the bunny tight. “No,” he said.

APPENDIX B

PICTURE BOOK REFERENCES

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