

PARENTAL PORTRAYALS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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The portrayals of mothers and fathers in children's literature as companions, disciplinarians, caregivers, nurturers, and providers were documented in this research. The impact of time of publication, sex of author, award-winning status of book, best-selling status of book, race of characters, and sex of characters upon each of the five parental roles was assessed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, and multinomial logistic regression techniques.

A survey instrument developed for this study was completed for each of the 300 books randomly selected from the list of easy/picture books in the *Children's Catalog* (H.W. Wilson Company, 2001). To ensure all time periods were represented, the list was stratified by decades before sampling. It was expected that parental role portrayals would become more egalitarian and less traditional in each successive time period of publication. Male authors were expected to portray more egalitarian parental roles, and the race and sex of the young characters were not expected to influence parental portrayals. Award-winning books were expected to represent more egalitarian parental roles. Books that achieved the *Publisher's Weekly* all-time best-selling status were expected to portray parents in less egalitarian roles. Secondary analyses explored the prevalence of mothers' occupations, parental incompetence, and dangerous, solo child adventures.

While the time of publication affected role portrayals, the evidence was unclear as to whether the changing roles represented greater egalitarianism. The race and the sex of the young characters significantly affected parental role portrayals, but the sex of the author did not influence these portrayals. While award winning and bestselling texts portrayed parents differently than books that did not achieve such honors, most did not provide enough information

to adequately assess parenting roles. Half of the mothers who worked in the texts worked in conjunction with their husbands rather than independent of them. Over 10 % of mothers and fathers acted incompetently. The time of publication and the sex of the author was associated with the prevalence of solo, dangerous, child adventures.

Subsequent implications and recommendations suggest the inclusion of stronger parental characters in children's books. Many of the parents are portrayed as inactive, incompetent, or neglectful. The concern is that children are exposed to these picture book portrayals during the primary years of identity acquisition.

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CHAPTER I

WHY CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

Introduction

Picture books have the potential to play a very influential role in the early socialization of children. Children learn what it means to be a parent from observing the behaviors of their own mothers and fathers, and this acquired understanding is reinforced through other socialization agents including peers, school and media. Picture books, it can be argued, are a medium whose greatest influence occurs during the most formative years of development. Consistently seeing mothers in the nurturing and care-giving roles and fathers fulfilling the provider role in diverse and exciting professions may impress upon children what role performances are expected and what future career paths may be open to them as men and women.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, fathers have more often been portrayed in the media as providers and disciplinarians and rarely fill the caregiver or nurturer role; the opposite is true for mothers. If these traditional role expectations are evident in picture books, it necessitates acknowledgment as children employ this media during a crucial age of self-discovery and identity development.

The potential influence picture books have on adults in the reinforcement of gender-specific role behavior must be considered. Adults not only purchase but also read these texts to the children in their lives. The development of one's identity is a lifelong process, and adults may measure their parental performance based on standards set by fictitious parents in the media. Mothers in the 1950s hoped to be as competent as June Cleaver while fathers today know they cannot possibly be as incompetent as Homer Simpson. In the case of books, such influence is

compounded by repeated readings of favorites. If fictitious parents in picture books can serve as role models for *both* children and adults then assessing the portrayals of parents is essential.

Children's literature has been the medium of study for many sociological content analyses; however, investigation of the portrayal of parental roles is limited. Previous studies of children's literature have focused on books by one author, one series, or award-winning texts. For example, Clare Bradford (1998) examined masculinity in picture books by Anthony Browne; Herbert Kohl (1995) focused on the *Babar the Elephant* series to examine colonialism, elitism, and racism; and Clark, Lennon and Morris (1993) examined gendered images in Caldecott Award-winning texts. Few analyses of children's literature have utilized books written by a variety of authors and published in different decades. In this comprehensive study, children's picture books will be the units of analysis, from Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1903 through the Dr. Seuss phenomenon, which spanned many decades, to the modern children's literature of today.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Content analysis will be used to determine if authors of more modern literature have adapted parental roles to parallel the shift in emphasis in the larger society. Are the portrayals consistently traditional with the father acting as provider and the mother acting as homemaker, or are more egalitarian parental roles presented? Beyond charting the portrayal over time, the problem addressed in this dissertation involves identifying factors that influence the way parental roles are portrayed in children's picture books. To establish a foundation for the study, factors that affect whether a parent or a child even *appears* in the picture books will be explored and findings will be presented. The *focus* of this study, however, is on the performances of the

mother and father characters in the roles of companion, disciplinarian, caregiver, nurturer, and provider. The research questions are as follows:

1. Will the authors' depictions of parental roles be similar to roles promoted by society in the time period in which they wrote and published? If depictions are, in fact, similar then authors of books published before the 1970s will be more likely to depict the father as *provider*, *disciplinarian*, and *companion in physical play* and the mother as *nurturer*, *caregiver*, and *companion in non-physical play* than those who published after the 1970s. Authors of books written in subsequent time periods would depict fewer gender-based roles as women began entering the workforce in greater numbers in American society and men began taking on greater responsibilities with child rearing.

2. Will there be a difference between the parental roles that male authors exhibit and those that female authors exhibit? Male authors might be more likely to maintain traditional parental roles in their writing. However, at least one study found that male authors of children's literature, more so than their female counterparts, were making greater strides in eliminating sexism in their writing (Collins, Ingoldsby & Dellman, 1984).

3. Will there be differences among the parental role portrayals of ethnically diverse families in the literature? Though the human characters within the population of books are predominantly non-Hispanic White, several texts present cross-cultural narratives and ethnically diverse families. This representation from a variety of racial and ethnic groups will be used to test this research question.

4. Will there be a difference among the parental role portrayals in those books that feature a male main character and those that feature a female main character? It is widely believed that one of the major reasons more boys have historically been featured in children's

literature is because girls are more likely to read books featuring boys than vice versa. Parents tend not to purposefully adapt their roles as nurturer, provider, etc. to “fit” the sex of the child, so the books should not represent parents accordingly. However, if books that feature boys *are* more apt to portray very traditional parental roles, this is important because the readership of male-centered texts is comprised of both boys and girls and gender stereotypes may be fostered in the childhood socialization process.

5. *Will there be a difference among the parental portrayals in those books that have been awarded a Caldecott, Newbery, or Coretta Scott King Award and those books that have not?* Since many awards are bestowed on books that represent positive portrayals of diversity, parental roles in award-winning texts may represent greater egalitarianism.

6. *Will there be a difference in parental role portrayals of books considered all-time bestsellers and those that are not?* Arguably one reason books received *Publisher's Weekly* all-time best-selling status is simply because they have had more time on the sales rack. In fact, this sample had no books published in either the 1990s or 2000 that made this best-selling list. Many earlier works reflect the traditional parental roles of the early 20th century's “ideal” family. Not only time on the market, but sentimentality has affected sales. Books purchased for private collections are often “classics” that the consumers themselves read as children. As many of the books on the best-selling list are considered “classics” traditional parental roles may be observed.

Secondary analyses assessed the impact of several independent variables. One was the variety and frequency of occupations held by mothers and fathers. Because this reflects gender differences, occupations of every parent are noted and analyzed for frequency of employment and the variety and prestige of occupations. Men are expected not only to be more often employed in the texts, but the variety and prestige of jobs are expected to be greater than that of

women. This study may reveal stereotypes such as men being best suited for executive positions (e.g., bankers, lawyers, CEOs) and women, if they even have employment outside the home, being best suited for lower-paying service sector positions (e.g., nurses, teachers, secretaries).

Additional secondary analyses focused on the levels of potential neglect as demonstrated by either incompetence exhibited in care giving or child adventures without parental supervision. A common theme in picture books discovered during the pretests of the survey instrument involves child independence and parental incompetence. Humor may be garnered when a parent leaves her children alone to wreak havoc as in Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat* or turns her back allowing a child to wander away and come face-to-face with a mother bear as in Robert McCloskey's *Blueberries for Sal*. Children frequently undertake solo adventures with great potential danger. If similar adventures occurred in reality, parents would most probably be accused of child neglect. Determining whether many of these adventures are *dangerous* is somewhat subjective; therefore, this secondary analysis is only exploratory in nature.

The relationship of the adult to the child (e.g., biological parent, stepparent, adoptive parent) was intended to be an independent variable, but none of the parents in the 300 children's books read could be assumed to be anything but biological parents except the human parent with a dinosaur child present in Jane Yolen's *How do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight* (2000).

Design of the Research

This study used data collected from a stratified random sample of 300 fiction picture books taken from the more than 1400 "easy" children's books listed in the *Children's Catalog* (H.W. Wilson Company, 2001). A specially designed survey instrument was developed based upon pretests and was completed after reading each of the 300 books. Fifty books were randomly

selected from those books published prior to 1960, 50 books were randomly selected from those books published in each subsequent decade, and the final 50 from books published in 2000.

Ultimately, 49 books were removed from the analysis because they lacked a child character and, therefore, no parenting or lack of parenting could be observed. Thus, children's literature from 1900 to 2000 was examined to look for and assess trends in the portrayals of parents. Analysis of the parents' roles as companion, disciplinarian, caregiver, nurturer, and provider was conducted to determine what factors influenced role portrayals.

Significance of the Study

Marsiglio, Day and Lamb (2000) address the importance of determining empirically the institutional and interpersonal construction of statuses and roles. They encourage researchers to explore the media's construction of roles, among other avenues (p. 287). While children's literature may be only a chip off the iceberg of all that is media, it is a medium employed most often by parents and children during early socialization and the gender role acquisition process. While it is unclear whether children's literature reflects society, influences society, or both, children must employ active imagination when read to or when reading. The potential effects of consistently confronting future roles, particularly perceived gender-specific roles, must be acknowledged. The books under investigation were written for preschool and early elementary-aged children and are read to them at a time in their lives when they are most impressionable.

While extensive research has been conducted on identity theory as it relates to parental roles, limited research on parental portrayals depicted in children's literature is available and identity theory has not been applied to this medium. Research on *gender role* depictions and the depictions of *adults* in children's literature has offered limited findings specifically addressing

parental portrayals. Early studies of both adult and children's literature suggest the portrayal of parents has been overwhelmingly negative (Burner, 1989; Dickerson, 1977; McCormick, 1991; Nelson, 1995), but these studies lacked a delineation of specific role performance (e.g., caregiver, provider). These studies also lacked the large sample of texts that covered many decades utilized in this study. Further, evidence of the analysis of the more specific roles of disciplinarian, nurturer, caregiver, provider and companion in children's literature could not be found. In so doing, a more detailed examination of the modernization, or lack thereof, of parental portrayals is possible.

Major Divisions of the Research Report

The first chapter of this study delineates the problem and research questions to be addressed. An introduction detailing the issues surrounding parental role portrayals in children's literature is followed by the dissertation's description of scope, purpose, methodology employed, and significance.

Chapter II presents the review of literature on parental role portrayals and gender studies in children's literature that offer insight on expected parental behavior. A brief history of the division of labor and role expectations of mothers and fathers in American society establishes predicted parallels presented in children's picture books. The discussion includes an overview of the five parental roles and the possible factors influencing portrayals. Finally, the theoretical frame of reference, social identity theory, is detailed.

The third chapter offers a brief history of the children's book publishing industry. An explanation of the common themes in popular children's texts in previous decades offers insights into the propagation of gender-specific parental roles. The fourth chapter details the

methodology employed in collecting and analyzing the data. A more detailed description of the sample and survey instrument is also presented.

The fifth chapter presents the research findings. The frequencies of pertinent variables are provided, and the correlations between independent and dependent variables are discussed. Issues of validity and reliability are addressed. A concluding section addresses whether the hypotheses have been supported. The sixth chapter summarizes the research, presents limitations of the study, and provides implications for further research.

Summary

In their formative years, children become keenly aware of behavior expected of their gender. While family is the primary agent of a child's socialization, it is not the only one. Children learn the expected roles of each parent through observation of family members and others, and these roles are often reinforced through other media such as picture books. Parents who purchase and read these books to children may also confirm their own roles.

If society is to accept the new, diverse faces of American families (e.g., step-families, single-parent families), the increasing opportunities for women in the labor market, and a more egalitarian division of household labor, then media must reflect change. The necessity for analyzing the evolution or lack thereof of parental role portrayals in the media is, therefore, critical.

This dissertation contributes to these examinations by analyzing one medium, children's picture books, to determine if fathers are still portrayed as providers and disciplinarians or if they are now represented as more equal partners in a marriage, sharing in child-rearing and possibly benefiting from their wives' employment. Factors that influence the parental roles of *companion*,

disciplinarian, caregiver, nurturer, and provider were examined to assess how representative children's books are of society as a whole.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter contains an examination of the literature available on the portrayals of parents in children's books and related issues. The first section highlights the history of societal expectations of parental roles. This proves useful in drawing parallels between societal role expectations in certain eras and portrayals in literature published in these time periods. The second section presents studies of parental roles as portrayed in children's literature. Research is somewhat limited in these specific areas; thus, some gender studies are included that may offer insight into expected roles. The third section examines the inherent challenges in empirically testing the effects gender-stereotyped portrayals have on children and details the limited research conducted in this field of study. The fourth section presents findings of a pretest of parental roles in the two best-selling books from each decade since 1990. The fifth section identifies the five roles under investigation in this research. The final section discusses the theoretical framework applied to this study.

Brief History of Parental Role Expectations

In order to determine if a child's picture book reflects society during the time in which it was published, the historical evolution of parental role expectations in American society is summarized. The late 1800s is the age many social historians refer to as the "closing of the frontier" in the United States. At this time the dual sphere of men in the labor force and women in the home emerged as it became difficult for families to choose agriculture over wage labor. At the "turn of the century" leading up to World War I a slight rise in women's employment

occurred. Housework technologies eased labor, but without help from other women that was often available in pre-industrial times, women's time spent in the home was probably not lessened. During the "Depression era," the fear of job competition with men sent many employed women back to their homes. As most had to take on domestic odd jobs (e.g., laundry, sewing) their expected role within the home was confirmed. World War II created a boost in female employment, but when soldiers returned to the factories, most women returned to their homes (Bose, 1987).

Around this time, Talcott Parsons (1943) posited that modern industrialized society was best served by a sex-based division of labor. This division of labor assigned the economic provider role to the father to meet the *instrumental* needs of the family and the emotional role to the non-working, homemaker mother to meet the *expressive* needs of the family (Parsons and Bales, 1955). Thus, the 1950s ideal version of the father continued to be seen as the "good provider" who "provided a decent home, paid the mortgage, bought the shoes, and kept his children warmly clothed" while mothers were inundated with television shows and advertisements hailing their *ideal* role as homemaker (Bernard, 1981 p. 3-4). Children's literature published prior to 1960, therefore, should reflect these idealized traditional parental roles.

Research in the 1960s reported that in working-class families the provider role was reserved for the father and the caregiving role was to be adopted by the mother (Aldous, 1969), and working mothers viewed employment as a supplementary and not a primary role (Hartley, 1969). In the 1970s, research showed that mothers engaged more in feeding and caretaking activities (Kotelchuck, 1976; Park & O'Leary, 1976) but fathers spent a large percentage of time in recreational play as part of the companion role (Kotelchuck, 1976; Lamb, 1977). More recent

research maintains that a man's status as a father, involving adopting the roles of caregiver, companion, provider, nurturer and disciplinarian has increased in identity salience for men over time (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993, p. 560). Hence, it might be expected that this evolution is reflected in children's books.

We may also expect the shift in mothers' status as they have increasingly entered the labor force to be represented in children's literature. However, some researchers suggest that although women have increasingly entered the work force since World War II, they've been unable to escape their traditional roles involving homemaking and childcare (Bose, 1987; Hochschild, 1989). Pleck and Pleck (1997, p. 47) assert that since the 1970s the emergence of the "co-parent father" was a significant development, encouraging men to be more active caregivers. At the same time, however, discourse about "deadbeat dads" encouraged women to adopt more of a provider role. Regardless, parental roles have experienced an evolution in society over the past several decades. Whether children's literature will support traditional roles or reflect societal evolution is under investigation in this study.

An Overview of Parental Roles in Literature

While some research suggests that in pre-World War II children's literature parents are virtually non-existent (Taylor, 1996), other research describes parental portrayals in literature very negatively. For example, parents in teen fiction are often shown as "ineffectual," "antagonistic," and "self-absorbed caricatures" (Burner, 1989, p. 42).

In 18th century novels, fathers commonly abandoned children and mothers were often depicted as "objects of fear" and "ambitious schemers" (Nelson, 1995, p. 159). Exaggerations of the mother role in pre-20th century novels have also been noted. The two-sided stereotype of

“the-mother-as-monster-or-Madonna” predominated (McCormick, 1991, p. xv). A study on deviance in children’s literature suggests parents are often the cause of their children’s deviant acts and offer minimal assistance to their children in problem-solving (Dickerson, 1977).

Gender studies on children’s literature suggest the persistence of stereotypical roles. While women are moving beyond former stereotypes in society, this evolvement has not been reflected in children’s literature (Turner-Bowker, 1996, Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada and Ross, 1972). Males in children’s literature still have access to a broader range of occupations and are rarely seen in housework roles (Gooden and Gooden, 2001; Hillman, 1974; Weitzman et al., 1972). Proportionally more women than men are depicted employing household artifacts used in cleaning, cooking, etc. and more men than women are depicted utilizing production artifacts used in outside occupations such as construction and agriculture (Crabb and Bielawski, 1994). Both boys and girls have been socialized to accept gender stereotypes like women needing rescue and men being brave and strong (Evans, 1998).

Books are just one form of media that endorse or reflect cultural expectations. Societal “norms” of role statuses are a part of the socioeconomic structure to which every family must adapt. If parents have consistently been portrayed negatively, if mothers are seen as the weaker sex, and if a sharp division of household labor is all presented in children’s literature then the potential effect on childhood socialization must be acknowledged.

A content analysis of Little Golden Books, etiquette books, and Caldecott and Newberry award-winning books by Weitzman and colleagues (1972) found that:

The way in which the motherhood role is presented in children’s books is unrealistic. She is almost always confined to the house, although she is usually too well dressed for housework. Her duties are not portrayed as difficult or challenging—she is shown as a housebound servant who cares for her husband and children. She washes dishes, cooks, vacuums, yells at the children, cleans up, does the laundry, and takes care of babies....Nor do these picture books provide a realistic image of fathers and husbands.

Fathers never help in the mundane duties of child care. Nor do husbands share the dishwashing, cooking, cleaning, or shopping (p. 141).

Clark, Lennon and Morris (1993) examined gendered images in Caldecott and Coretta Scott King Award-winning books, and while their focus was not on parental roles, they did find that behavioral traits of men and women have slowly become more egalitarian. Collins, Ingoldsby, and Dellman (1984) found that male authors of children's literature, more so than their female counterparts, were making greater strides in eliminating sexism in their writing. Their study was not specific to parental roles and involved a smaller sample of texts. The correlation between the sex of the author and parental portrayals is under investigation in this study.

Effects of Sex Roles in Literature on Children

There exist inherent challenges with testing the effects of gender-specific roles in literature on the children who read them. Adults who read as children what may now be considered sexist material often disregard concerns about the effects of this literature with comments such as "I turned out just fine" or "children don't read that deeply for *hidden* meaning." Is it possible to determine long-term effects on a child who consistently reads about characters acting out gender-stereotypic behavior? A few studies have attempted to test the immediate effects of sex roles portrayed in children's literature.

For example, Eleanor Ashton (1983) examined the effects of roles on play behavior in the Human Development Laboratory School at the University of Massachusetts. Thirty-two children were allowed to play freely with female-stereotypic toys (i.e. dolls, china sets), male-stereotypic toys (i.e. trucks, guns), and neutral toys (i.e. balls, pegboards). Thereafter, they were each individually shown and read a picture book with a same-sex character playing with either a sex-

role stereotypic or non-stereotypic toy and allowed to return to play. Though the girls were more influenced, both boys and girls played significantly longer with the toy indicated in the picture book. Ashton concluded that

...children's literature has a pronounced effect on sex-role behaviors of the young child. Clearly, the picture books which children read should illustrate both male and female characters in a widened range of behaviors where conduct and assignment are not limited by stereotypic definitions of sex role (p. 46).

Sally Jennings (1975) studied picture book preferences of sixty-four preschool children. The children were divided into same-sex small groups and read two stories about a character of their own sex wanting to be a ballerina in one story and a mail carrier in the other. While both boys and girls stated a preference for the books that portrayed their own sex stereotypically (boys preferred the mail carrier story and girls preferred the ballerina story), both boys and girls had better recall of details in the other story that showed the character in the reversed sex role.

Lisa Barclay's (1974) study involved reading and discussing three books and an informational pamphlet all focusing on working women to sixty-four kindergarteners. It was discovered that "only three fifteen-minute lessons dealing with women's careers did affect kindergarten children's, particularly girls', perceptions of women's career roles, as reflected in increased numbers of choices of women as appropriate for career roles" (p. 13).

Picture books are clearly influential on the socialization of young children. A study by Alexander, Miller and Hengst (2001) of thirty-two families found that children's emotional attachments to books can be so strong that they may sleep with the books, act out roles, and request repetitive readings.

Through the expressions of their attachments they are also deeply engaged in the social relations found in the stories themselves. The children respond in delight and fear to the evolving relationships of the story characters. They try on the various character roles, taking as their own the relationships of those characters. Finally, by transporting familiar characters into new situations and different

worlds, the children test and forge these relationships in a multitude of social spaces. (p. 392).

Pretest of Parental Roles in Best Selling Children's Literature

A pretest conducted for this study analyzed the *fatherhood* role in the two all-time best-selling books from each decade since 1900 according to *Publishers' Weekly* ($N=20$). The portrayal of the fatherhood role remained very traditional regardless of the time period in which the books were written. The books in the analysis were not limited to picture books and included books of poetry (e.g., Shel Silverstein and Mother Goose) and adolescent novels. Fathers in these texts were not involved in childcare and mothers were not providers.

This exploratory research found that the role of fathers as portrayed in children's literature has not evolved over time. Fathers have been and still are represented as the *providers* for the family and the *disciplinarians* for the children. Unexpectedly, the *only* examples of fathers as *caregivers*, *nurturers*, and *companions*, occurred in the pages of the books published in the 1950s and earlier. Contrary to the stereotypical view of the "uninvolved" father LaRossa and Reitzes (1995) performed a content analysis of letters written to a host of a radio show on parenthood in the 1920s and 1930s and also determined that fathers may have been much more involved parents than initially thought.

Another, somewhat disturbing theme that emerged in the pretest was the sheer absence of parents. Many characters in the stories were so independent, in some cases to the point of being neglected, that it could be argued the children saw no *need* for a parent. Both *Peter Rabbit* (1902) and *Benjamin Bunny* (1904) were left to their own devices and both were almost killed. The *Hardy Boys* chased leads on their motorcycles (1927), and *Nancy Drew* rode the canyons on horseback (1931), all in search of criminals. The entire story of *The Poky Little Puppy* (1942)

involved his getting into trouble, time and again, when left alone. The young children in *The Cat in the Hat* (1957) were left alone at home with a goldfish to provide proper morals. In *The Polar Express* (1985) a young boy left his house alone at night in his pajamas to ride the express train to the North Pole. *Harry Potter* and his young friends get in life-threatening altercations during their parentless adventures at Hogwarts Academy. Perhaps authors know that children are most intrigued by reading about the adventures and misadventures of independent children. However, if literature contributes to role identity, then it is essential to highlight strong parental figures at the expense of childhood independence that often verges on parental neglect.

Whether the sex of the author affected the representation of fathers in the texts was not clear. Nine books were written by male authors and ten were by female authors and one author's sex is unknown (though some argue Watty Piper, author of *The Little Engine that Could*, was a pseudonym for female author Mabel C. Bragg). In this fairly equal representation of male and female authors, the characters of Fenton Hardy, the most "involved" father in the study, was created by a male, but female authors also created strong fathers. In terms of *portrayals*, female authors created the two most abusive fathers in this study, Mr. Benjamin Bunny (Beatrix Potter), who whipped his son with a switch, and Vernon Dursley (J.K. Rowling), who verbally abused his foster son, Harry Potter, and locked him in a closet under the stairs.

Admittedly, this pretest involved a small sample ($N=20$) of a wider variety of books (e.g., novels, poetry, picture books) and focused only on roles of the father; however, it did provide a very valuable basis for this study. Examining portrayals of both mothers and fathers in 251 picture books provides a more representative sample. As a result, any evolution of role portrayals in picture books over time and the potential influence of the author's sex will be better assessed.

Five Parental Role Categories

In this examination of the specific characteristics of parental portrayals, the role categories often used in identity theory studies are utilized. These are parent as *companion*, parent as *disciplinarian*, parent as *caregiver*, parent as *nurturer*, and parent as *provider* (Doherty, et.al. 1998; Ihinger-Tallman, et.al. 1995). Most researchers have argued that society assigns the role of nurturer to mothers (Chodorow, 1978; Simon, 1995; Thurer, 1994). Other research suggests that fathers act more as companions with their children, involving themselves more in physical play, than they do in being nurturers (Marsiglio, 1991; Minton and Palsey, 1996). According to identity theorists, if the mother were to identify herself as the child's nurturer, and the father were to identify himself as the child's companion these are the roles they would most likely play.

If "mothers' interactions with their children are dominated by care-taking whereas fathers are behaviorally defined as playmates" (Lamb, 1987 p. 10), will parental portrayals in children's literature support these perceptions? A parent in the *companion* role may take a child on a recreational outing, participate in physical play (i.e., sports, rough-and-tumble), or encourage nonphysical play (i.e., board games, tea parties, peek-a-boo). Some research suggests both parents act as companions, but the type of play in which mothers and fathers participate differs. Lamb asserts fathers participate in more physically stimulating play whereas mothers may be more likely to participate in non-physical play (1997, 1977).

The *disciplinarian* role is based on incidences of a parent correcting a child's behavior. This may include scolding, physical punishment, and non-physical punishment. Severe punishment is rare in children's picture books, but various degrees of verbal correction and scolding are fairly prevalent.

The *caregiver* role, involving feeding, dressing and cleaning the child, has historically been an expected role for mothers. In fact, depictions of fathers in care-giving roles have provided comic relief in movies and on television (e.g., *Three Men and a Baby*, *Full House*, *Mr. Mom*). LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn (2000) found evidence that fathers in comic strips were often shown as incompetent in their care-giving responsibilities.

The *nurturer* role is best defined by LaRossa and his colleagues (2000) in their analysis of fathering portrayals in these comic strips. They used Coltrane and Allan's (1994) nurturing behaviors of physical and verbal expressions of affection, verbal encouragement, emotional comforting, inquiries about thoughts and feelings, and service or care for a child and added three of their own (i.e., praise for a completed task or activity, listening to problems, and direct teaching).

The *provider* role is usually measured by whether the parent works for wages or "exchange value" outside of the home. It proves interesting to determine if the father continues to be portrayed as the breadwinner or if the themes of children's literature have adapted to account for the increasing number of mothers in the labor force. A 1972 study of Caldecott Award-winning books found that not one female adult character had a job or profession other than mother and homemaker (Weitzman, et.al, 1972). Since Barclay's (1974) and Jennings' (1975) studies both showed the powerful influence picture books could have on the career aspirations of boys and girls, examining the provider role as portrayed in picture books is essential.

Theoretical Frame of Reference

Children learn what is expected of them by primarily identifying with role performances exhibited by their parents and via media such as picture books. A young boy learns his role as a father by identifying with the performance of his own father and/or by identifying with the representations of fathers in television shows, films and books. Furthermore, parents who purchase picture books and read them to their children can not only reaffirm their own role performances, but could be seen as “authorities” on acceptable role performances by their children. The symbolic interactionism perspectives and specifically identity theory and social identity theory offer insights into why children’s literature could be a powerful tool for identity acquisition.

Identity theories are derived from symbolic interactionism and examine how attitudes and identities affect behavior and roles (Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Symbolic interactionism has been used to analyze society as well as address issues of socialization (Stryker, 1980, p. 1). Identity theory is principally a “microsociological theory” that, like symbolic interactionism, examines how internalized roles, or identities, affect an individual’s motivations and behavior (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995). The self is developed in the activity of viewing oneself reflexively. “This activity is made possible by language, a system of significant symbols; language permits use of the standpoint of others in order to view oneself as an object” (Stryker, 1980, p. 37). This process of classifying oneself reflexively is known as *identification* (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stets & Burke, 2000). A young girl who reads of a mother who balances responsibilities at home with a career in medicine, for example, may interpret the language and symbols on the page, and internalize her own future role as one filled with the opportunity to pursue both options.

While identity theory is principally “microsociological,” social identity theory more closely aligns with social psychology and is concerned with “intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self.” (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, p.259) The basic premise is that an individual’s social categories (i.e., mother, Iranian, Republican) define an individual’s self concept and prescribes “what one should think and feel, and how one should behave” (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 260). Both identity theory and social identity theory examine how self-concepts are formed, and the behaviors that evolve from these adopted identities. A reader of a picture book, therefore, may gain an understanding via language, attitudes, and performances, of her own expected behavior (as identity theory posits), or she may identify with a social category such as “mother” and define herself based on the actions of the mother characters (as Social identity theory posits). Both theories indicate the potential power picture storybooks have in identity acquisition.

Likewise, symbolic interactionism asserts that an individual’s assigned social status positions have attendant behavioral expectations, which are labeled *roles* (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). According to symbolic interactionism, the self is both social and active (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). The “self” is fostered via interactions and, ultimately, “taking the role of the other.” Identity theory examines “self-defining” roles and not strictly the vast range of “attributes that can be ascribed to the self” (Hogg et al., 1995). Symbolic interactionists assume the self is comprised of many identities, each emerging from the interaction between individuals performing complementary statuses by carrying out roles (e.g., the relationships of mother-child, husband-wife). Thus, reading about the relationship between a parent and a child, and identifying expected behaviors of both parties, can teach a child how to behave as a child and how he is expected to behave once he becomes an adult. A father who reads such a book to his child can

also gain affirmation of the expected behaviors of his own status as father. Identity theory uses the term *status* to represent parts of social groups or positions individuals occupy that require certain responsibilities and rights. “Father” and “mother” is each a status with many attached roles, like nurturer, provider, etc. Statuses with the greatest identity salience determine a person’s sense of self and overall identity (Callero, 1985; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Thus, identity theory posits that as some identities are more important to one’s sense of self, a hierarchy emerges (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993; Stryker, 1987). It can be argued that if books continue to promote the traditional roles of mother as homemaker and father as breadwinner, these will continue to be the statuses of greatest identity salience for the authors, publishers and ultimately the consumers.

Identities are arranged according to *salience*, or the likelihood that the action associated with the identity will be performed. Those identity-driven actions most likely to be performed in a given situation are highest on the salience hierarchy (Stryker, 1980). Thus, the “central proposition of identity theory argues that commitment affects identity salience which in turn affects role performance” (Stryker, 1989, p. 46). It therefore follows that people with similar status identities may behave differently due to differing levels or distinctions of identity salience (Hogg, et.al, 1995). For example, two children may have similar status identities, both wanting to be good mothers, but one may view the provider role as crucial to effective motherhood, having been exposed to mothers in the workplace, while another child may view the caregiver role as the most salient, having been exposed to mothers in traditional roles.

Individuals acknowledge differences in interests, duties, etc. between their statuses and the statuses of others with whom they interact. Thus, an individual role is similar, but set apart from counterroles. Role performance is achieved only through negotiation (McCall & Simmons,

1978; Stets & Burke, 2000). Parents must continuously negotiate and renegotiate their roles when it comes to child involvement. Similarly, if exposed to a variety of roles and counterroles of parents in books, both children and parents may frequently renegotiate their own roles.

Burke and Reitzes (1981) posit that while many researchers argue that connecting self-concepts to behavioral performances is a difficult task, they propose assessing both identity and performance “on the same dimensions of meaning” (p. 90). Thus, if a woman identifies with the care-giving mother role, she will act as a caregiver. Even after accounting for socio-demographic factor differences, evidence has been found that self-assessments of a man’s role as a father directly influences his performance of that role (Fox & Bruce, 2001). Burke and Reitzes’ research also supports recent studies that suggests a father’s involvement in care giving has been shown to be affected by the attitude of the mother toward that role (Pasley, Futris, & Skinner, 2002; Rane & McBride, 2000). Moreover, women who identify with the nurturing parental role and do not wish to relinquish it may become jealous of their husbands who want to adopt the same role (Ellestad & Stets, 1998).

Burke and Reitzes (1991) examine commitment, which they define as “the sum of the forces, pressures, or drives that influence people to maintain congruity between their identity setting and the input of reflected appraisals from the social setting” (p. 243). Unlike theoretical concepts that linked commitment to lines of activity, role partners and organizations, Burke and Reitzes link commitment to stable self-meanings, which, in turn, affect activity. If children’s literature acts as a socialization *force* that aides in the formulation of commitment, perhaps self-meanings are acquired through the observed depictions of parental roles, which results in the acting out of these portrayed roles.

Summary

A review of the literature on expected role performances of parents and portrayals of parents in children's literature reveals a debate concerning how representative narrative fiction is to actual fact. Andrew J. Cherlin (2002) posits that:

This great movement of married women into the labor force is one of the most important changes in American family life in the past century. It has profoundly altered women's and men's lives. It has affected the balance of power between women and men (292).

If societal change has been so profound, and parental roles have become more egalitarian, should not literature reflect change? And if it fails to reflect change, what are the implications for children who continue to read stories with traditional parental roles? Examining the roles of parents in children's picture books as companions, disciplinarians, caregivers, nurturers and providers over the past century will reveal whether traditional values and behaviors persist or whether societal evolution is acknowledged.

In this study role portrayals will be examined to determine if they have evolved over time. identity theory and social identity theory constructs are utilized to categorize characteristics of the parents in the literature in an attempt to explore depictions of parental roles over time. Before detailing the methodology used and the results obtained, the next chapter will describe the history of children's book publishing and historical themes in texts that may foretell some of the study's findings.

CHAPTER III
HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHING

Historical Overview

The influence of children's literature in the field of book publishing has been both significant and dynamic. The rise of the children's picture book began at the turn of the 20th century. English writer and illustrator Beatrix Potter first published *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1902 and followed it up with various tales of other animal characters, including Jemima Puddle-Duck, Mrs. Tittlemouse, Tom Kitten, and Squirrel Nutkin. Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats* (1928) is often considered the first American picture book for children. The first juvenile literature department in a publishing house within the United States was established by Macmillan in 1919. Within a few years, the Newbery Medal was established in 1922, and children's departments in various other publishing companies were created including Doubleday in 1923, Dutton in 1925, Little, Brown in 1927 and Harcourt Brace in 1928. While these events are often cited as the beginning of American children's literature publishing, children's books ranked among the bestselling books in prior decades. Furthermore, children's magazines, which highlighted the works of various children's literature authors, were popular in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Marcus, 1997). Children have thus been a viable audience of readers for centuries.

“In terms of freshness, enthusiasm, and genuine development in children's literature, the [1920s and 1930s] chiefly belong to the United States” (Egoff, 1985, p. 242). This was due to technical progress that allowed for mass production of books, mass marketing due to commercial series books (i.e. *Hardy Boys*), and influential women who took center stage as critics, editors and librarians

In the first half of the 20th century, female publishers dominated the children's departments in most of the major publishing houses, as women were considered to know more about the desires of children. Librarians, most of whom were women, were also very influential in the publishing industry. Since they selected books for the libraries and acted as "gatekeepers" to children accessing books, they were a valued resource for publishers in the selection of manuscripts. Children's-only bookshops began opening in major cities. While the Great Depression required publishers to "economize," it "eased somewhat earlier for publishers than for the rest of the country" (Marcus, 1997, p. 64).

While the number and quality of children's books declined during World War II, "those that were published enjoyed robust sales, as wartime rationing of rubber and metal left many toys in short supply" (Marcus, 1997, p. 64). Some credit Little Golden Books, launched in 1942, with changing the retail market for children's books. Found in local grocery and drugstores, these books, each costing a mere quarter at the time, were very popular with parents.

In the first decades of the 20th century, children's books often involved detailed plots with allegorical references. This changed when "the postwar [World War II] baby boom prompted heightened interest in books for nursery ages" (Marcus, 1997, p. 64). Simpler texts with bold illustrations resulted and Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon* (1947) became "the era's quintessential contribution to the genre." As child care center and preschool enrollments increased in subsequent decades, so too did the number of books for toddlers.

A dramatic growth in the children's literature industry occurred after World War II. David Russell (2001) credits postwar prosperity, the baby boom, and the increased sociological and psychological studies of parenting and childhood for this growth. Children's literature departments in publishing houses expanded and sales increased.

In the 1960s children's publishing departments quickly expanded due to the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965 which allotted government funds to school libraries for the purchase of non-textbook reading materials. This expansion was then dealt a blow when the funds were rescinded a few years later. This loss coupled with inflation required children's book publishing houses to again reorganize and economize. In contrast to the 1920s and 1930s, men began to rise in prominence as publishers of children's books.

As mothers entered the workplace in greater numbers in the 1970s, child care centers increased in number and early childhood education initiatives flourished. Privately-funded preschools became especially popular in major cities. The Head Start program expanded, which was established for families who could not financially afford the benefits of formal education prior to their children entering elementary school. Before 1970 kindergartens were scarce. Some cities had no kindergartens and others had only private kindergartens for the elite few families who could afford admission. The number of publicly-supported kindergartens greatly increased and by 1980 they were part of the public school system in virtually all communities nationwide (Pulliam, 1987). A new consumer group of educators emerged who were focused on the needs of the preschool-aged child and who greatly influenced the book publishing industry. Publishing companies capitalized on this expanding early education arena by releasing an increased number of picture books with bold illustrations and simpler narratives. While losing the government funding provided by the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965 hit publishing companies hard, many stayed afloat by targeting the new "consumers" of the 1970s, that is, the new group of educators and the young readership.

Publishing companies rebounded in the 1980s with the expansion of the retail market. Children's-only bookstores, while popular in major cities in the first decades of the 20th century,

virtually fell out of existence in the late 1960s but made a surprising comeback in the 1980s. The expansion of children's-only bookstores was soon followed by competition from large bookstore chains. The success of children's-only bookstores had always relied on "someone—the owner, the owner's wife, a knowledgeable salesperson—who not only knew children's books (past and present) but loved them, and had the personality or ability to share that love and knowledge with customers" (Donovan, 1991, p. 8). These shops "capitaliz[e] on the fact that specialized service is their forte" (Roback and Di Marzo, 1997); however, these shop owners continue to be challenged by competition from larger chain-stores and now the on-line sites like Amazon and Barnes and Noble that can offer greater cost reductions.

Photography and computer graphic design also grew drastically in the 1980s as mediums for illustration. Debates over the loss of artistic integrity in picture books due to mass production ensued. Capitalizing on well-known characters in literature through tie-ins with film, television and toy production also drastically altered the marketing and sales of books. "It is not surprising that the power of editors at many houses gradually but steadily declined relative to that of marketing directors. One began to hear more about focus groups, less about editorial vision" (Marcus, 1997, p. 70). The debate over whether technological advancements and the changing retail market have had a positive or negative impact on the picture book continued into the 21st century.

The competition is especially challenging to new authors of picture books today. The first major hurdle is getting a work published. As publishing houses have consolidated and the number of titles has greatly increased, an editor can no longer have the personal relationship with the authors that she once had. Authors hire agents to shop their work around to several

publishers. However, even with an agent the odds of publication are small as James Cross Giblin notes:

Publishing houses still open to unsolicited submissions receive more picture book manuscripts than any other kind. Of the 5,000 or so submissions that we screened each year at Clarion when I was editor-in-chief, at least 4,000 were picture books. And we were then publishing no more than twelve picture books a year. So, the competition in the picture book field is extremely fierce (2000, p. 7).

The second major hurdle for new authors is keeping their book in print long enough to gain appeal and sales. Backlist books, those that have been in print for many years, compete for limited shelf space with newer publications. According to a 1997 survey conducted by Cahners Publishing's research department, 72 % of the average store's stock of children's literature is taken up by backlist titles (Roback and Di Marzo, 1997). With new books consistently making their way into the stores, if a new book does not sell quickly, it may be removed from the shelves before the year is out. "Children's book publishers have adopted some of the unattractive business practices [of those] in publishing for adults...children's book publishers have accepted that they will declare some—most of their list, in many instances—titles out-of-print within a year or so if the book has not sold well immediately, this has become the standard way to do business, not the exceptional one" (Donovan, 1991, p. 10).

The popularity of backlist books is often due to purchases by both parents nostalgic for the books of their own childhoods and schools supporting the "classics." These books don't require the marketing that new, "unknown" books require and they often have greater potential for cross-media success (e.g., films, toys). If authors can introduce a new series that have potential for cross-media productions, their success in the industry is more assured.

Publishers and booksellers have learned they profit most on brand names, just as other corporations do. The best selling books have established mass appeal through recognition of

characters, authors, and series names. Authors' names, such as Dr. Seuss, J.K. Rowling, and Beatrix Potter, have become "brands." Publishers have taken advantage of well-established brands within other mediums, such as *Teletubbies*, *Sesame Street*, and Disney movies, with books featuring known characters and settings. Books that are adapted into other media forms also find financial resurgence such as *The Polar Express* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. While a challenge for authors and publishers, if a series can find success they, too, can become brand names. Curious George, Harry Potter, Junie B. Jones, and Olivia are brand names that sell. Thus, books published today often have established appeal even prior to their release. Shelf space and promotional placards in bookstores are taken up by these established brands. The challenge for authors of a single new title is, therefore, great. Not only are brand-name books taking up the available shelf space, but also the stuffed animals, board games, and toys featuring these established characters are. The competition for publication is fierce. As Peterson (2001) states, "It's not a new expression, but never has 'It's a bunny-eat-bunny world' seemed a more apt description for children's book publishing" (p. 12).

As challenging as getting a book published and on the shelves is, the even greater challenge for authors is to make a name for themselves with subsequent publications. An author of picture books must prove successful before a publisher will buy the rights or a bookstore will stock her next work. "A good track record is very valuable these days. This is especially true when it comes to the big chain stores; if a particular author's last book did not sell well for them, the chain is not likely to take their next effort, which can mean sudden death for that book" (Britton, 2001, p. 99).

Thus, the children's book industry, like most industries, has been influenced by competitive values associated with capitalism in America. On one hand, it can be argued that the

“art” of the picture book has been lost in the rush to mass-produce commercialized texts. On the other hand, it can be argued the texts today are both more accessible to children and, due to their cross-media tie-ins, more sought after. While the corporatization of the children’s book industry has made a prospective author’s success a greater challenge, selectivity and advanced technology, it can also be argued, may have improved the quality of the books.

Consolidations and Conglomerates

The last ten years have been marked with mergers and acquisitions that have significantly consolidated children’s publishing—from Simon & Schuster’s acquisition of Macmillan in 1994, to HarperCollins’s purchase of the Hearst Book imprints in 1999, to the 2001 acquisition of Golden Books by Random House (itself a company formed when Bertelsmann bought the “old” Random House in 1998 and merged it with Bantam Doubleday Dell). It’s an industry now concentrated in fewer than a half-dozen publishing companies, with many children’s imprints eliminated after their acquisition, resulting in fewer places to place manuscripts or sell rights (Peterson, 2001, p. 11).

The 300 picture storybooks in this sample represent the original publications of more than sixty different publishing houses. If each book were examined based on current publishing ownership, the effect of corporate consolidation would be evident. Many formerly independent publishing houses have been bought up by larger houses, creating publishing conglomerates. For example, Random House, the largest English-language children’s book publisher, due in large part to its acquisition of Golden Books and its partnership with the Walt Disney Company, controls Bantam Books, Doubleday Books, Beginner Books, Pantheon Books, and Alfred A. Knopf. Penguin Group, Inc. currently owns Dial Books, Dutton Children’s Books, Frederick Warne, Putnam, Philomel, and Viking Children’s Books. Simon and Schuster controls Macmillan, Scribner, Atheneum, and Margaret K. McElderry.

The smaller, independent houses that compete in the publishing market today often specialize in themed publications. For example, Lee and Low Books focus on children's stories that present multicultural themes and Abingdon Press produces Christian-based children's books. Still, smaller houses are challenged by the competition fostered by an industry in which the greatest power rests in the hands of only a few entertainment conglomerates.

Changing Themes

Beginning in the 1920s, publishers began to select and print books that addressed the nursery school movement and a changing, "progressive" education of children. Consequently, books that stimulated the senses and invited readers to interact with the story were introduced. One example is Margaret Wise Brown's *The Runaway Bunny* (1942). Also, there was a "loosening of restrictions of childhood" in the themes of children's books, according to Sheila Egoff, after World War I (1982, p. 241). Many stories involving girls at boarding schools emerged and girls "moved with the times" in the clothes, manners and conversations, mirroring the tone of the 1920s.

Also in the period between the World Wars child characters in books published during the Great Depression were depicted as "independent, resourceful and optimistic" (p. 243). Further, themes of advancing technology threatening a simpler life emerged. Watty Piper's *The Little Engine that Could* (1930) and Virginia Lee Burton's *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* (1939) were two such classics that personified machines as underdogs who, with determination, could succeed. Burton's *The Little House* (1942) depicted urban sprawl that encroached on a country home. The home is returned to the country where it can once again live in peace. This Caldecott Medal winner is considered a child's first introduction to sociology as it presents

issues associated with industrialization and urban sprawl (Huck, Hepler, Hickman, and Kiefer, 1997).

Humor in picture books became more prominent in the late 1930s and 1940s when Dr. Seuss introduced the first of many zany books in rhyme, *And to Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street* (1937). Other examples include Ludwig Bemelman's *Madeline* (1939) and H.A. Rey's *Curious George* (1941) series (Huck et al., 1997).

During World War II, patriotic themes and stories of American ideals and values abounded. "Robert McCloskey, winner of the Caldecott Medal in 1942 for *Make Way for Ducklings*, joined Frank Capra and Norman Rockwell as one of the nation's most reassuring articulators of the American dream" (Marcus, 1997, p. 64).

In postwar America, themes of fantasy and escapism emerged but more for pleasure and not due to societal dissatisfaction with life (Egoff, 1982). Furthermore, the growing interest in multiculturalism in postwar America fostered the release of several picture storybooks involving cross-cultural themes or set in foreign locales. For example, Ludwig Bemelman's *Madeline* series was set in France and Atushi Jun Iwamatsu's award-winning picture book, *Crow Boy* (1955), was set in Japan. The importation and translation of popular international texts for the retail market in the United States also began (Marcus, 1997, p. 66). Albert Lamorisse's *The Red Balloon* (1956, based on the short film he directed) was translated from French. While there has been an increasing "push toward multiculturalism in the United States [since the 1950s], more children's books are licensed for publication in translation in foreign markets than in American markets" (Biamonte, 2002, p. 26). While the lack of translated texts in the United States may be due in large part to the increased costs associated with translating and marketing non-English

texts, the number of children's picture books depicting other cultures has slowly increased over the past several decades.

Children's books published in the 1960s and 1970s were not always the optimistic and patriotic texts of years past. For example, Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) was "a turbulent book for turbulent times" (Marcus, 1997, p. 68). Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1986) acknowledge another picture book that reflected a changing society:

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (1972) reflects a new awareness of children's problems and an honesty about some negative aspects of their lives. The knowledge gained from educational and psychological research had changed society's concept of children; they were no longer seen as cheerful products of a righteous adult world. (p. 11)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Feminist Movement, the increased number of women entering the workplace, and the burgeoning early childhood education arena (i.e., child care centers, preschools and kindergartens) prompted a rise in protest against sexism in children's books. Consequently, an increase in books with female characters in non-traditional roles occurred. Around the same time, an increased focus on the representation of racial diversity in children's literature occurred. In 1962 Ezra Jack Keats' *A Snowy Day* was published, which has been hailed as the "first recognition of a minority character as the protagonist in a picture book for children" (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1993, p. 59). While racially and ethnically diverse characters slowly grew in numbers, due in large part to the works of conscientious authors including Ezra Jack Keats and Julius Lester, both the representation of race and gender continues to be hotly debated today. A study of more than 2400 children's books revealed that between the 1930s and 1950s the representation of Black characters in children's books declined, and almost no representation occurred between the late 1950s and the mid-1960s. Thereafter, a dramatic increase occurred, leveling off after 1975.

At the time of highest uncertainty in race relations, a period marked by increasing legal and social protests and conflicts, Blacks virtually disappeared from children's books, indicating indecision or unwillingness to portray racial contact in new (and at the time, radical) ways (p. 460).

Further, in both the early and later periods, stories with "intimate, interracial relationships" are very rare (Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, 1997).

According to James Cross Giblin (2000), former editor in chief of Clarion Books, the themes of successful children's picture books today include "stories with an edge" that may provide shockingly funny elements enjoyable to both parents and children. In addition, bold pictures with simple stories seem to attract the consumer's eye and, if popular, can easily be re-released as board books. Finally, farm-fuzzy stories, often with small animals and morals, are popular with grandparents.

Giblin also argues that since financial profit is of greatest interest to publishing houses, the target audience for picture books has evolved dramatically. "Children are the last concern of marketers. That's because it's adults, not small children, who select and buy the vast majority of picture books" (p. 8). In fact, it is mothers (34%), teachers (19%), and grandparents (13%) who purchase the majority of children's literature according to Cahners' 1997 survey (Roback and DiMarzo, 1997), so targeting adults in the themes of today's publications is the trend.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Various research techniques could be employed in testing parental role portrayals and their implications for identity acquisition. This primarily qualitative study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative techniques. With picture storybooks as the units of analysis, a survey instrument was designed to examine both broad themes with open-ended questions and specific, quantifiable elements.

This chapter delineates the methods used in conducting this study, describing the sample, methods, research variables and hypotheses employed. The techniques of collecting and analyzing the data are also outlined.

Research Population

The population of the study is all children's picture books published between 1900 and 2000. The sampling frame consists of the more than 1400 "easy" children's books listed in the *Children's Catalog* (H.W. Wilson Co., 2001). The books listed in the *Children's Catalog* were all selected by an advisory committee of distinguished librarians and then re-evaluated by librarians around the country. This comprehensive list of books is used to aid school and community libraries in selecting quality books for collection maintenance. As such, all of the randomly sampled texts used in this study were easily found in local public libraries. The population of "easy books" ($N=1448$) from which the sample was obtained includes fiction and nonfiction picture books and short stories all suitable for children at a preschool to third-grade reading level.

Books categorized as counting ($n=52$), vocabulary ($n=28$), and alphabet ($n=41$) were eliminated as they would lack narratives for analysis. Informational books (e.g., books on anatomy, dinosaurs, seasons of the year) were eliminated for the same reason ($n=57$). Books of collections (e.g., short stories, puzzles, songs, nursery rhymes, and prayers) were eliminated for the sheer number of characters they could potentially introduce ($n=9$). Finally, adaptations ($n=9$) such as Jerry Pinkney's retelling of *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi* (1997) and *The Ugly Duckling* (1999) and Sergey Prokofiev's updated version of *Peter and the Wolf* (1982) were removed because it was unclear whether they should be analyzed based on their most recent year of publication or on the year when the original story was first published. As a result, 196 books were removed from consideration. Therefore, the sample of books (see Appendix B) was selected from the remaining 1252 storybooks categorized as fiction, stories in rhyme, fairy tales, fables and tall tales. Thus, the weighted sample size is 1252.

Sampling

Due to the larger population of books in some time periods and the limited number of books in others, the list of the remaining 1252 books was stratified based on the time periods under investigation before a computer-generated random sample was selected. The first 50 books were randomly selected from those books first published between 1900 and 1959. The collapsing of the first five decades into one stratum was done for two reasons: the first is the prediction that *traditional* parental roles will be depicted in books prior to the 1960s, and the second is the smaller number of children's books that were published in earlier decades. An additional 50 books were then randomly selected from each of the four subsequent decades (1960-69; 1970-

79; 1980-89; 1990-1999), and a final 50 books were selected from those published in the year 2000 (see Table 1). Thus, all books in the population did not have the same probability of

Table 1

Collapsing Decades for Sampling the Units of Analysis

Decade	# of Books		Time Period	# of Books
1900-1909	9	→	1900-1959	81
1910-1919	3		1960-1969	63
1920-1929	3		1970-1979	103
1930-1939	12		1980-1989	237
1940-1949	21		1990-1999	637
1950-1959	33		2000	131
1960-1969	63			
1970-1979	103			
1980-1989	237			
1990-1999	637			
2000	131			

being selected. For example, if 50 books were chosen from the 63 books published in the 1960s and another 50 were chosen from the 637 books published in the 1990s, clearly a book published in the 1960s had a far greater chance of being selected. If characteristics and relationships within the sample are to reflect those in the population, the disproportionate probabilities of books being selected into the sample and the stratifying of the sample must be considered in the analyses.

Therefore, all analyses conducted used procedures that take into account complex sample design. As such, each procedure used weighted a book by the inverse of its probability of being selected into the sample to ensure appropriate estimates of population parameters. Furthermore, each of the procedures used adjusted the standard errors to compensate for the effect of stratifying the population by decade before sampling so that proper hypothesis testing was ensured. Forty-nine of the 300 books lacked a child character and were, therefore, removed from the analyses. This reduced the weighted sample from 1252 to 1072. Descriptive differences between the original

sample of 300 books and the reduced sample of 251 books were minimal and these differences are presented and discussed in chapter VI. The sample of 300 books was only used in multinomial logistic regression analysis to test factors that may affect the *presence* of a child character. Parenting behaviors could not be explored in books without children. Thus, in all other analyses, the 49 books without child characters were removed and 251 books were analyzed.

A limitation with this sample is the potential bias in the selection of books for this list. The advisory committee of librarians constructs this list in an effort to make recommendations for elementary schools and community libraries. As such, they may choose books that reflect only positive and/or diverse portrayals of parents and these books may not reflect the most often read and thus, the most potentially influential texts.

Initially, the *Publishers' Weekly* all-time best selling list was considered for use as the population of books. This list was rejected for several reasons. First, the variety of books is too broad, ranging from short stories, to popular movie and television adaptations like *The Lion King*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and *Star Wars*, to young adult novels like the *Harry Potter* series. Another inherent limitation with using the *Publishers' Weekly* all-time best-selling list is that it is unknown in which year or decade many of the books had the greatest popularity with or influence on children. For instance, books by Dr. Seuss, P.D. Eastman, and Beatrix Potter have sold consistently since their first publication and remain popular today. This list was generated from the total number of copies sold since each book's release, and each book had to have sold at least 750,000 (hardback)/1,000,000 (paperback) copies in order to be considered an all-time best-seller. Best-seller lists for each year would have proven more useful to garner the time period of greatest popularity, but these lists have only recently become consistent in their creation and publication. The *New York Times Book Review* published its first best-selling children's literature

list in 1935 (listing five books) and neglected to publish another until 1952. From 1952-1958 an annual list was published and from 1959-1973 a bi-annual list was published. The list was suspended for four years, published in 1977 and 1978 and then suspended again until 1990. *Publisher's Weekly* did not incorporate a monthly list of children's bestsellers into its magazine until 1990 (Justice, 1998). Thus, based on sales figures, what *Publisher's Weekly* lists as the bestselling children's book of all-time, *The Poky Little Puppy*, never appeared on a bestseller list and it is unclear whether its greatest popularity was immediately after its release in 1942 or years later. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, first released in 1902 when children's bestseller lists did not exist, first appeared on a bestseller list in 1971.

Although it is impossible to know when the books were most popular, the all-time bestsellers are clearly the most read children's literature, and as such, perhaps the most influential on role identity in the socialization process. Thus, including a variable that identifies books on the *Publishers' Weekly* all-time best-selling list in the analyses allows for comparing parental portrayals within very popular books to those in books with perhaps a more limited scope. It must be noted, however, that none of the sampled books published between 1990 and 2000 appeared on this best-selling list.

The Survey Instrument

This research is an attempt to further the understanding of the portrayals of parents in children's literature. A survey instrument (see Appendix A) was designed to use in gathering information from each of the 300 books on the five parental roles of companion, disciplinarian, caregiver, nurturer and provider. The five parental roles and each of their attendant behavioral variables are delineated on the survey instrument (see Appendix A, parts L-P and S-W). All act

as dependent variables. The survey instrument also includes information on *year of first publication, sex of the author, award-winning status of the book, all-time best-selling status of the book, race of the character, and sex of the character*. These are the independent variables. Additional features recorded to be investigated are the *types of occupations* mothers and fathers have and any parental *incompetence in care giving* in the books.

Two pretests of the attendant survey instrument were conducted to determine the logic and clarity of the questions presented. Ten books were randomly selected, read, and coded using the survey instrument. After revising the instrument, an additional ten books were tested and the instrument was finalized. In addition to minor adjustments in the format and syntax of the instrument, several additional elements were added for exploratory research. A common theme of childhood independence, which often involved dangerous adventures without adult supervision, was identified during the first pretest. Questions addressing this theme were added to the instrument (see items EE and FF in Appendix A).

During the second pretest the existence of non-parental adult characters who often act in a surrogate-parental role (e.g., grandparents, teachers, and neighbors) was noted. Several questions were added to the instrument to explore these potential relationships (see items X-DD in Appendix A). However, after collecting the data it was determined that these relationships varied too greatly, were difficult to collapse into meaningful categories, and strayed from the intended focus of the study. While ignoring these behaviors initially seemed neglectful, the non-parent adult variables were ultimately removed from consideration in this research. Perhaps future focused studies on the behaviors of a specific non-parent role status, such as the nurturing behaviors of grandparents, is warranted.

Also during the second pretest, several books set in a specific *geographical region* (e.g., Eastern Europe), focused on a certain *culture* (e.g., American Indian, Jewish), or depicting an historical *time period* (e.g., post-World War II) were noted. All three questions related to these variables were added to the instrument (GG). However, after data collection it was again discovered that all the categories could not be collapsed into meaningful categories with enough representation. The best that could be done was collapsing into binomial categories such as United States versus Outside the United States, Anglo-American versus “Other”, and Present versus Historic, respectively. Only then could enough cases be gathered for analysis, but these categories lost meaning in translation and were removed from the analysis.

Reliability of Coding

To test for reliability, the author enlisted volunteers from a junior-level university course entitled Sociology of Marriage and Family. The students were told that the research being conducted was a doctoral study of parental portrayals in children’s literature. They were given copies of the survey instrument and their training involved both reading every question out loud for clarity and answering questions. It was stressed that while some elements might involve subjectivity (character’s race, setting, potential danger), behaviors had to be *observed* and they should not read too deeply for meaning. For example, if a parental character was seen leaving the house, it could not be assumed he or she was leaving for work unless it was actually stated in the text.

Each student who agreed to participate was then asked to sign up to read and review up to five of the 300 books listed (each book could be read by only one reviewer). Thirty-eight students completed 84 survey instruments. All students were told that the results of the study

would be made available upon request and the author's contact information was provided for any follow-up questions or requests. The data generated from the student surveys were entered into a spreadsheet alongside the original data collection and responses were compared to test for reproducibility.

According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis may involve any of three tests for reliability. The three tests respectively from weakest to strongest are: the test-retest design which tests for *stability*, the test-test design which tests for *reproducibility* and the test-standard design which tests for *accuracy*. This study tested for *reproducibility*.

Reproducibility is the degree to which a process can be replicated by different analysts working under varying conditions, at different locations, or using different but functionally equivalent measuring instruments... Disagreements between these observers' performances are due to both intraobserver inconsistencies and *interobserver differences* in the interpretation and application of given recording instructions. Compared with stability, reproducibility, which is also variously called *intercoder reliability*, *intersubjective agreement*, and *parallel-forms reliability*, is a far stronger measure of reliability. (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 215).

Reliability data matrixes were generated to determine percentage agreement between each of the student-coder's survey data and that of the original survey data collected. All of the eighty-four student-generated survey instruments were above 90 % agreement with the original researcher-generated data. Each of the eighty-four observable variables was then examined to determine which, if any, had great disagreement. The four variables with the least agreement required more subjective responses. The *presence of the mother and father* variables had an 83.3 % and 90.5 % consistency rate, perhaps because it was harder for the student, having read only a couple of books, to determine if the parental appearance was major, minor, or cameo in nature. Whether the child had an *adventure* that was *potentially dangerous* (scoring 88.1 % and 83.3 % consistency, respectively) also is subjective as a child riding a bike alone in a neighborhood, for example, may be dangerous to some and common recreation to others. Still,

with above 80 % consistency on all variables and above 90 % consistency across all survey instruments, reproducibility was fairly strong.

Much of the discrepancy was easily resolved by collapsing data. For example, it became unimportant whether a parent had a “minor” or “cameo” role when the variable was ultimately collapsed into two categories: “parent present in text” and “parent not present.” Other discrepancies required the author to reread the text in dispute and decide upon the correct response. When the question was subjective, such as the potential danger of an adventure, choosing was more difficult. Regardless, every discrepancy was addressed and, if necessary, the response was changed.

Hypotheses

The research hypotheses based on research questions, theoretical perspective, and literature review are as follows:

H₁: Books published before the 1970s will be more likely to depict the father as provider and disciplinarian and the mother as nurturer and caregiver than those published after the 1970s.

Based on historical research, traditional parental roles were the “ideal” prior to 1970 and evolved as more women entered the labor force in subsequent decades. Therefore, if children’s literature reflects society, role evolution can be expected.

The role variables will be regressed on the independent variable, *the time period of first publication*, to determine if the depictions of parental roles in children’s literature have evolved over time. A pretest outlined in chapter II of 20 all-time best-selling children’s books showed that role evolution did not occur. Fathers remain the providers and mothers remain the

caregivers and nurturers in even the most recent texts. Still, this was a small sample that is not generalizable. This larger study is expected to reveal greater role involvement.

H₂: Male authors are more likely than female authors to depict more egalitarian parental roles.

The *sex of the author* will be examined to determine if male and female authors differ in their depictions of parental roles. Research suggests male authors have made greater strides in eliminating sexism from children's literature than their female counterparts (Collins et al., 1984). Male authors of children's literature, as evidence of their profession, may have deeper connections with children and with parenthood than the average adult male and may intentionally portray fatherhood as more involved. However, the sex of the author has not previously been examined as a variable affecting parental portrayals.

H₃: Non-Hispanic White parents in the literature will be portrayed in the same way as parents of other racial and ethnic groups.

Parental roles in books with predominantly White characters will be compared to those that feature characters from different racial and ethnic groups. While children's literature has often been criticized for not presenting ethnically diverse characters, the sample used in this study from the *Children's Catalog* (H.W. Wilson Company, 2001) includes books with characters more representative of the diversity in American society. This dissertation examines whether parental role depictions differ based on these character traits.

H₄: Regardless of the gender of the main character parental portrayals will be the same.

While it may be argued that parents play or express affection differently with boys than with girls, parents rarely *intend* to fulfill different roles depending upon the sex of their children. Furthermore, authors of children's books are arguably more in tune with children and parenthood

and may purposefully represent a loving, stable family environment. The sex of the child character should not alter the role of the parent. Still, if fathers or mothers treat sons and daughters differently in children's books, acknowledgment of these differences is essential.

H₅: Parental portrayals will be more traditional and less egalitarian in books on the Publisher's Weekly all-time bestselling list than in those books without major sales.

The purpose for comparing all-time bestsellers with the books on the list that did not gain similar status is to determine if the most popular and potentially most influential books portray parents in a different manner than books that may not have reached a larger audience. As many all-time bestsellers are classics and the parents who purchase them may embrace the "ideal" traditional family make-ups, bestsellers should be more likely to portray traditional families.

H₆: Parental portrayals will not differ depending upon whether the book was an award-winning text.

Over 10 % of the books in the sample were awarded Caldecott Medals or Honors ($n=37$), Coretta Scott King Awards ($n=1$), or Newbery Awards ($n=1$). The Caldecott is bestowed annually on the illustrator of the "most distinguished" children's picture book. Both the Newbery and Coretta Scott King Awards are bestowed for distinguished contributions in children's literature, the latter specifically for a recipient of African descent. One may predict a bias toward selecting books with positive and progressive parental roles for bestowing awards, but gender studies in the past have confirmed that gender stereotyping, particularly in pre-1960s Caldecott-winning texts, predominated (Weitzman et al., 1972; Clark et al., 1993). It necessitates an examination of parental roles in these award-winners to see if roles have evolved and whether there is a difference in role portrayals between these books and those that did not win an award.

Additional analysis will be conducted on variables including dangerous child adventures, care-giving incompetence, and parental occupations. These are exploratory in nature and not part of the core study, so hypotheses are withheld. It was discovered that many books are centered on an adventure that puts the child in grave danger, begging the question: are parents portrayed as neglectful? The commonality of harrowing situations and gross incompetence within the medium of children's literature will be examined. Finally, while the provider role is a key part of the study, the *type* of jobs mothers have compared to fathers will also be explored to determine if the variety and status of the job titles differ.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The purpose of this study is to examine effects of specific independent variables on, first, the presence of a child, a mother, a father, or either parent in children's picture storybooks and, second, on how mothers and fathers in these books are portrayed. The first set of analyses establishes a foundation for the second set of analyses. Summary statistics are presented for all variables utilized in all analyses. Bivariate tables and the design-based F statistic are presented for the preliminary examination of hypotheses. The complex survey design requires the conversion of the Pearson chi-squared statistic, using Rao and Scott's (1984) second-order correction, into a design-based F statistic. Two multivariate techniques are also employed to investigate the effect of each independent variable on each dependent variable, controlling for the effects of the other independent variables.

The first set of analyses examines four dependent variables: presence of a child, a mother, a father, or either parent, respectively. As each variable is dichotomous, coded "1" for present in the book and coded "0" for not present, logistic regression is used to estimate effects (Knoke,

Borhnstedt, and Mee, 2004). The second set of analyses, however, utilizes multinomial logistic regression to estimate effects, because each of the parental role portrayal variables has not two but three categories. These three categories are: 1. parent performed *any* of the behaviors associated with the role; 2. parent present in the text but did not perform any behaviors associated with the role; and 3. parent under investigation was not in the text.

Effects on each of the parental role portrayal variables were estimated separately for mothers and fathers. The multinomial logistic regression results for mothers estimate effects for two contrasts of a given role portrayal: 1. the log-likelihood of a mother *performing* any of the behaviors associated with the role versus no mother depicted; and 2. the log-likelihood of a mother *not performing* any of the behaviors associated with the role versus no mother depicted. In other words, “no mother depicted” serves as the reference category. Results of this procedure allow comparison of two categories of maternal presence with that of maternal absence. Results of similar analyses of role portrayals of fathers allow for the same comparisons.

Also, as previously mentioned, the study did not use a simple random sample survey methodology but a stratified sample survey methodology. Accordingly, each of the procedures used in the analyses is part of STATA Release 6.0 for Windows. STATA’s module for complex sample designs appropriately adjusts estimates and their standard errors for the effects of the study’s design (StataCorp, 1999).

Operational Definitions

The possible observations that could be made in studying parental portrayals were numerous and varied. Collapsing data and recoding variables allowed for different ways to test the hypotheses under investigation. Fortunately, the survey instrument was detailed enough to

allow for generating and investigating different variable constructs and utilizing different statistical procedures.

Dependent Variables

Immediately upon undertaking the analysis the frequent absence of both child characters and parental characters was noted. Assessing factors that predict the presence of these characters was essential. Four dichotomous variables were created to note the 1. *presence*, or 2. *absence* of a child character, a mother character, a father character, and either parental character.

One of the challenges in the survey design was determining which observed actions in the texts were evidence of parental role behaviors. Defining these five roles (the dependent variables) and delineating their attendant behaviors was essential before data collection could begin. The role of *companion* is comprised of three observational variables: taking a child on a recreational outing, physical play and nonphysical play. The *disciplinarian* role was assumed by any parent who physically punished, hit to prevent the child's harm, punished non-physically (e.g. sending to room), scolded, or corrected bad behavior. The parental role of *caregiver* is comprised of actions toward the child related to hygiene (i.e. bathing, cleaning, changing diapers), personal attire (i.e. picking out clothes, dressing), and sustenance (i.e. preparing meals, feeding).

The *nurturer* role was defined by adapting the variables used in LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, and Wynn's (2000) study. Most of the variables were incorporated, including: physical and verbal expressions of affection, verbal encouragement, emotional comforting, inquiries about thoughts and feelings, praise for a completed task or activity, listening to problems, and direct teaching. For this analysis, the behavior "serving or caring for a child" was removed as that is

included in the *caregiver* analysis. LaRossa and colleagues (2000) examined “physical and verbal expressions of affection” as one variable, but *physical expressions* and *verbal expressions of affection* were considered separately for the purpose of this study. Finally, the *provider* role is assumed by any parental character who works outside of the home. The *type* of job was noted for a secondary analysis of the possible differences in occupations between working mothers and fathers.

A failed attempt was made to generate index role variables. Since four of the five roles are made up of several observable behaviors, an index of the number of behaviors performed within each role was created. So, for example, if the following results were gathered from a text concerning the companion behaviors of a mother:

Does the mother ever:

Yes 1. Take the child on a recreational outing (museum, zoo, park, etc.)

Yes 2. Participate in non-physical play with the child (peek-a-boo, board games, etc.)

No 3. Participate in physical play with the child (sports, rough-and-tumble, etc.)

A companion index variable would be coded 1, 2, or 3 for the number of behaviors observed (in this case, coded 2). Unfortunately, observing multiple behaviors within one role was rare, perhaps due to the shorter length of picture books that make character development more challenging. In other words, parents in texts rarely performed more than one, if any, behavior associated with each role. Ultimately, therefore, each of the five role variables was collapsed into three categories: 1. parent performed *any* of the behaviors associated with the role; 2. parent present but did not perform any behaviors associated with the role; and 3. parent under investigation was not in the text. For the multinomial logistic regression analyses, the last category served as the reference category.

Two variables were created for each parent to integrate behaviors consider “traditional” and “non-traditional.” Thus providing for the family, disciplining the child, and participating in

physical play with a child was considered “traditional” for a father but “non-traditional” for a mother. Nurturing, care-giving and non-physical play were considered “traditional” for a mother but “non-traditional” for a father. Each of these variables has three categories. The categories for the “traditional” variable are: 1. parent performed any *traditional* behavior; 2. parent present but did not perform any *traditional* behavior; and 3. parent under investigation was not in the text. Categories for the “non-traditional” variable were similarly defined. Once again the last category served as the reference category for the multinomial logistic regression analyses.

Independent Variables

The independent variables used in all the multinomial logistic regression analyses are dummy-coded with assigned reference categories. To assess the effect of time the two dummy variables represented books published between 1970 and 1989 and books published between 1990 and 2000, respectively. The reference category represented books published prior to 1970.

The *sex of author* originally had three categories, but when one book in the sample had two authors of different sexes, the sex of the first author listed was used and the variable was reduced to only two categories. For the multinomial logistic regression analyses, the dummy variable represented books written by male authors; therefore, books by female authors represented the reference category.

For the multinomial logistic regression analyses, the three-category race variable was dummy-coded. Two dummies represented characters of a Non-White race and animal characters, respectively. Non-Hispanic White characters served as the reference group. The three-category sex variable was also reduced with male characters acting as the reference group to the two dummy variables that represented female characters and characters of a neutral sex (more than

one sex, or unknown sex), respectively. The “neutral” sex variable was comprised of the books that had characters of more than one sex ($n=65$) and characters whose sex was unknown ($n=18$) because neither category represented a specific sex and because the *unknown* category lacked sufficient representation. The best-selling and award-winning variables lacked representation. As such, they were only assessed using cross-tabulation techniques.

The variables that make up the secondary analyses were also dummy-coded. If parental incompetence in care-giving, adventures without parental presence, or dangerous adventures were observed, each of the respective variables were coded “1.” If the behaviors were not observed the respective variables were coded “0.”

Summary

This chapter has detailed both the quantitative and qualitative methods utilized in this study of parental roles in children’s picture storybooks. Chapter V explains the study’s findings obtained from applying this methodology.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Introduction

The results of the analyses conducted on the data collected during the course of the research are presented in this chapter. The first section provides descriptive statistics of the sample used. Sections follow that describe child and parental presence and the five main parental role behaviors, all of which act as dependent variables. Explanation of the results of cross-tabulations conducted of the independent variables on child and parental presence and the various role variables follow. The next section explains results of logistic regression analyses of factors that affect the presence of parental and child characters in the texts. The results of the multinomial logistic regressions of parental roles on time of publication, sex of author, race of main child character, and sex of main child character are then explained. The final sections detail findings of the secondary analyses focused on occupations of parents, parental incompetence, and solo child adventures.

Sample's Description

Of the 1448 picture books listed in the original sampling frame, 196 were removed from consideration because they were either not *story* books or they were adaptations. The remaining 1252 books were stratified by time period and then 50 books were randomly selected from each stratum. Fifty books were chosen from each of the six time periods: 1900-1959; 1960-69; 1970-79; 1980-89; 1990-1999; and 2000. These 300 books represented over 60 different publishing companies.

A review of all 300 texts identified 49 that lacked a child character and as such, parenting could not be observed. This changed the population (N) from 1252 books to a weighted-sample

of 1072 books. Since these 49 books were removed from the analyses, Table 2 compares the original and reduced sample on key characteristics. As Table 2 shows, original and reduced differences between the samples are minimal.

Table 2

Description of Sample Before and After the Removal of 49 Books without Child Characters

	Original Sample (N=300)	Reduced Sample (N=251)
	%	%
<i>Time of Publication</i>		
1900-1959	16.7	17.9
1960-1969	16.7	17.1
1970-1979	16.7	14.8
1980-1989	16.7	17.5
1990-1999	16.7	17.5
2000	16.7	15.2
<i>Sex of Author</i>		
Male Author	47.0	43.8
Female Author	53.0	56.2
<i>Sex of Main Character</i>		
Male Child	35.3	42.2
Female Child	20.7	24.7
Both Sexes	21.7	25.9
Unstated Sex of Child	6.0	7.2
No Child Present	16.4	0
<i>Race of Main Character</i>		
Non-Hispanic White	40.0	47.8
African American/Black	9.7	11.6
Asian	3.7	4.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.0	2.4
Hispanic	1.0	1.2
More than One Race Portrayed	6.3	7.6
Biracial	.3	.4
Animal (non-Human)	20.7	24.7
No Child Present	16.4	0
<i>Bestselling Books</i>	8.7	8.4
<i>Award-Winning Books</i>	13.0	12.0

The sex of the authors of the original sample was fairly evenly distributed with 47 % of the books written by males and 53 % written by females. When the 49 texts without children

were removed very little changed with 43.8 % of the texts written by males and 56.2% by females. The percentage distribution of male authors decreased slightly and that of female authors increased slightly. Award winners made up 13 % of the original sample, the vast majority of which were awarded the Caldecott Medal or Honor Award. Award winners made up 12 % of the reduced sample. Within the original sample, 8.7 % of the texts were listed on *Publisher's Weekly* All-Time Best-Selling List (2001); when the sample was reduced, 8.4 % of the books had best-selling status. Thus, the percentage distributions for both bestsellers and award winners changed very little after the sample was reduced.

Since the 49 books without *any* child characters were dropped, the percentage distribution increased across all sex categories. Thus, the 106 books with male children as the central characters represented 35.3 % of the original sample and 42.2 % of the reduced sample. Similarly, the sixty-two books with a female central character represented 20.7 % of the original sample and 24.7 % of the reduced sample. Main child characters of both sexes, often siblings, were featured in 21.7 % of the original sample's books and 25.9 % of the reduced sample's books. The sex of the character in 6.0 % of books of the original sample and 7.2 % of the reduced sample was unclear and unstated.

The removal of 49 books without *any* child characters, representing 16.4 % of the original sample, also affected the percentage distribution of texts across all race and ethnic categories. Forty percent of the original sample, increasing to 47.8 % of the reduced sample, had Caucasian child characters. African-American or Black main characters were featured in 9.7 % of the original sample and 11.6 % of the reduced sample. Asian main characters were featured in 3.7 % and 4.4 % of the original and reduced samples respectively. American Indians or Alaska Natives were young characters in 2.0 % and 2.4% of the original and reduced samples,

respectively. Hispanic characters were featured in 1.0 % of books in the original and 1.2% of books in the reduced sample. Multiple characters of different races were featured in 6.3 % of the original sample of books and 7.6 % of the reduced sample. Biracial children were featured in less than a percent of each sample. Non-human child characters that obviously could not be coded by race made up 20.7 % of the original sample and 24.7 % of the reduced sample; these non-human children were all animals, including two fictitious dragons and a dinosaur, with the exception of little Cindy-Lou Who, a Seussian character in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957).

Description of Child and Parental Presence

As noted in the previous section, the percentage distribution across categories of the independent variables changed little once the sample was reduced. What became apparent upon examining the descriptive statistics was the lack of adult-child interaction in many of the texts. A full 23 % of the original sample and 19.9 % of the reduced sample had no adult interaction with a child. This can partly be explained by the 102 child characters who had adventures without adult presence, and partly by the fact that 49 of the texts (removed from analysis) had no child at all. These 49 texts made up 16.4 % of the original sample.

Factors that contribute to presence of parents in picture books are examined in this study, but first establishing the popularity of these characters is necessary (see Table 3). A mother was either mentioned or present in 70.5 % of the reduced sample. In 51.0 % of the books, a father was either mentioned or present. Thus, mother characters are far more likely to appear in children's picture books than are fathers.

Table 3

Description of Parental Presence within Sample

	Parental Presence (N=251) %
Mother Character Present	70.5
Father Character Present	51.0
Both Parental Characters Present	47.4
Neither Parental Character Present	25.9
<i>Only</i> a Mother Character Present	23.1
<i>Only</i> a Father Character Present	3.6
At Least One (Either) Parent Present	74.1

The percentage of books with no parental characters was 25.9 % when the sample was reduced. Since all of the books in the reduced sample have a child character, this is a fairly large percentage of books that lack any parental presence. *Only* a mother character existed in 23.1 % of the texts, and *only* a father character appeared in 3.6 % of the books. *Both* parents were present in 47.4 % of the texts. There was at least one parent in 74.1 % of the picture books. There was no reason to believe that any of these parents were *not* the children's biological parents except for one book with human parents and a dinosaur child. Thus, the variable pertaining to the biological or non-biological relationship of the parent was not included in the analyses.

Parental Role Descriptions

Similar to parental presence variables, parental role variables act as dependent variables in the analysis. Before examining factors that attribute to mothers' and fathers' role portrayals as nurturers, disciplinarians, caregivers, companions and providers, assessing the commonality of these behaviors is imperative.

In preparing to test the hypotheses, frequencies of observed parental roles and their attendant behaviors were gathered. Behaviors exhibiting nurturance, disciplining, care-giving,

companionship, and providing as noted on the survey instrument were summarized. While four of these roles had several attendant behaviors, working outside the home was the only behavior associated with the provider role. Table 4 provides the percentage of *present* mothers and fathers who performed each of the behaviors associated with the role categories. Since a parent could perform multiple behaviors within each role, the percentage totals within roles do not equal 100 %. As the literature review indicated, the parental roles and their attendant behaviors differed considerably between the portrayals of mothers and fathers.

The *nurturing* role consisted of eight observable behaviors: physically expressing affection, verbally expressing affection, verbally encouraging, comforting emotionally, inquiring about thoughts and feelings, praising for completed tasks, listening to problems, and purposefully teaching. Mothers in the text were more likely than fathers to be portrayed performing all of these behaviors except comforting the child emotionally (11.7 % of fathers versus 11.3 % of mothers) and purposefully teaching the child (9.4 % of fathers versus 8.5 % of mothers) (see Table 4). As some parents in the books performed several of these behaviors and some parents performed none, it was important to tally the number of parents who exhibited at least one of the behaviors (see Table 5). Almost 51 % of the mothers present in the stories demonstrated at least one of the nurturing behaviors, whereas about 42 % of present fathers demonstrated some form of nurturance.

The role of *disciplinarian* consisted of five observable behaviors: physical punishment, hitting or slapping to prevent potential harm, non-physical punishment, verbal scolding, and correcting bad behavior with a non-threatening tone. None of the parents in any of the books hit their child for any reason. It proved interesting that though fathers are often portrayed in the media as the disciplinarians, they were slightly less likely than were mothers to perform any of

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Present Parents' Nurturing, Disciplining, Care-giving, and Companion Behaviors toward Children

	MOTHER (n=177)	FATHER (n=128)
	(%)	(%)
<i>Nurturing Behaviors</i>		
Physically express affection for the child	32.8	26.6
Verbally express affection for the child	6.2	2.3
Verbally encourage the child	7.9	3.9
Comfort the child emotionally	11.3	11.7
Inquire about the child's feelings or thoughts	5.1	1.6
Praise the child for a completed task/activity	6.2	4.7
Listen to the child's problems	6.2	3.9
Purposefully teach the child	8.5	9.4
<i>Disciplining Behaviors</i>		
Spank/hit/slap the child as punishment	0	0
Slap/hit the child to prevent harm	0	0
Give the child non-physical punishments	2.8	2.3
Verbally scold the child	8.5	7.8
Correct bad behavior with non-threatening tone	6.8	5.5
<i>Care-Giving Behaviors</i>		
Prepare meals for and/or feed the child	29.4	7.0
Clean the child	3.4	1.6
Pick out clothes and/or dress the child	5.1	0
Other examples of care giving	5.6	3.1
<i>Companion Behaviors</i>		
Take the child on a recreational outing	19.2	19.5
Participate in nonphysical play with the child	4.5	7.0
Participate in physical play with the child	4.5	9.4
<i>Provider Behavior</i>		
Worked outside of the home	5.6	26.6

Note: The table represents the percentage of *present* mothers and *present* fathers who performed *each* behavior. Parents could perform one, multiple, or no behaviors within each role; therefore percentage totals within roles within roles does not equal 100%.

Table 5

Percentages of Role Performance of Present Parents

	MOTHER (n=177)		FATHER (n=128)	
	Demonstrated Behavior	No Behavior	Demonstrated Behavior	No Behavior
	%	%	%	%
Nurturing Behavior	50.8	49.2	42.2	57.8
Disciplining Behavior	14.1	85.9	10.9	89.1
Care-Giving Behavior	35.6	64.4	10.9	89.1
Companion Behavior	24.9	75.1	32.0	68.0
Acted as Provider	5.6	94.4	26.6	73.4

Note: This table represents the percentage of *present* mothers and *present* fathers who performed *any* behavior associated with each role.

the other three disciplining behaviors (see Table 4). Only 2.3 % of fathers versus 2.8 % of mothers gave children non-physical punishments, 7.8 % of fathers versus 8.5 % of mothers scolded, and 5.5 % of fathers versus 6.8 % of mothers corrected bad behaviors with a non-threatening tone. However, regardless of gender of the parent, portrayals of any disciplining in children's storybooks were relatively rare. Only 14.1 % of mothers compared to 10.9 % of fathers demonstrated any form of discipline (see Table 5).

The *care-giving* role is made up of three observable behaviors and an open-ended, "other" variable. Acts of feeding, cleaning and dressing the child were tabulated and the "other" category consisted mostly of tucking children into bed. Mothers were more likely to perform all of these acts than were fathers (see Table 4). The category with the greatest difference was preparing meals and feeding children; 29.4 % of the present mothers and only 7 % of the present fathers cooked for or fed children. Additionally, 5.1 % of mothers helped children dress which none of the fathers in the texts did. Of the present parents, 35.6 % of mothers and only 10.9 % of fathers exhibited some act of care-giving (see Table 5).

Fathers outperformed mothers in each of the three following *companion* behaviors: taking the child on a recreational outing, nonphysical play, and physical play (see Table 4). The greatest difference between mothers and fathers was in the area of physical play; about 9.4 % of fathers, compared to 4.5 % of mothers, participated in physical play. About 25 % of all mothers and 32 % of all fathers acted on some level as a companion to the child (see Table 5). This lends support to Lamb's assertions that fathers are often "behaviorally defined as playmates" (1987 p. 10).

The provider role was determined solely on the basis of whether the parent was shown working outside the home. As Tables 4 and 5 show, only 5.6 % of the 177 mothers had

occupations outside the home. Almost four times as many fathers (26.6 %) were shown working outside of the home. The types of jobs these working parents had are detailed later in this chapter.

As mentioned earlier, very few parental characters performed multiple behaviors within roles; as a result, the attempt to generate an index of the number of behaviors performed within each role by each parent in each case was unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the tally of behaviors is still insightful and deserves attention (Table 6). Of those present mothers and fathers in the texts, mothers were far more likely to demonstrate at least one of the eight nurturing behaviors. While no parent demonstrated more than four nurturing behaviors, mothers were more likely to

Table 6
Percentages of Present Parents' (177 Mothers' and 128 Fathers') Demonstrated Behaviors

	MOTHER	FATHER
<i>Nurturing Behaviors</i>		
Demonstrated 0 of the 8 Behaviors	49.2	57.8
Demonstrated 1 of the 8 Behaviors	28.8	23.5
Demonstrated 2 of the 8 Behaviors	13.6	15.6
Demonstrated 3 of the 8 Behaviors	5.6	3.1
Demonstrated 4 of the 8 Behaviors	2.8	0
Total	100 %	100%
<i>Disciplining Behaviors</i>		
Demonstrated 0 of the 5 Behaviors	85.9	89.1
Demonstrated 1 of the 5 Behaviors	10.7	7.0
Demonstrated 2 of the 5 Behaviors	2.8	3.1
Demonstrated 3 of the 5 Behaviors	.6	.8
Total	100 %	100%
<i>Care-Giving Behaviors</i>		
Demonstrated 0 of the 4 Behaviors	64.4	89.1
Demonstrated 1 of the 4 Behaviors	28.2	10.1
Demonstrated 2 of the 4 Behaviors	6.8	.8
Demonstrated 3 of the 4 Behaviors	.6	0
Total	100 %	100%
<i>Companion Behaviors</i>		
Demonstrated 0 of the 3 Behaviors	75.1	68.0
Demonstrated 1 of the 3 Behaviors	21.5	28.9
Demonstrated 2 of the 3 Behaviors	3.4	2.3
Demonstrated 3 of the 3 Behaviors	0	.8
Total	100 %	100%
<i>Provider Behavior</i>		
Demonstrated 0 of 1 Behavior	94.4	73.4
Demonstrated 1 of 1 Behavior	5.6	26.6
Total	100 %	100 %

demonstrate multiple nurturing behaviors. Over 49 % of the present mothers and about 58 % of the present fathers did not demonstrate any nurturance.

As stated earlier, observed acts of discipline were rare. No parental character in the sample physically disciplined a child. Verbal chastising was most common. A few child characters received non-physical punishments like being sent to their room without dinner, a punishment Max received for wearing a wolf suit and causing mischief in Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. Slightly more mothers than fathers in this sample disciplined their children (over 14 % of present mothers compared to about 11 % of present fathers disciplined). Mothers and fathers were fairly equal in demonstrating multiple acts of discipline, though multiple acts were very rare (see Table 6).

Not only were fathers less likely to demonstrate care-giving, but they were far less likely than mothers to demonstrate multiple care-giving behaviors (see Table 6). Only one father in all the texts demonstrated more than one act of care-giving, while about 7 % of present mothers multi-tasked.

Though fathers were not often portrayed as nurturers and caregivers, they were most definitely companions (see Table 6). They were far more likely to act as companions to their children (32 % of present fathers and about 25 % of present mothers acted as companions), and only slightly less likely than mothers to involve themselves in more than one activity (3.4 % of present mothers and 3.1 % of present fathers performed more than one companion behavior).

These initial descriptive results support research that suggests mothers are more often engaged in caretaking (Kotelchuck, 1976; Park & O'Leary, 1976) and fathers act more as companions in recreational play (Kotelchuck, 1976; Lamb, 1977; Marsiglio, 1991; Minton and Palsey, 1996). Additionally, these initial findings lend support to research that suggests society

assigns the role of nurturer to mothers (Chodorow, 1978; Simon, 1995; Thurer, 1994). It is important to assess what factors, if any, influence these traditional portrayals.

Cross-Tabulations

Cross-tabulation analysis was used for three purposes. The main objective was to conduct a preliminary examination of the study's hypotheses, namely to investigate the effects of the time of publication and the other five independent variables (i.e., sex of author, race of main character, sex of main character, best-selling status, and award-winning status) on parental presence and the portrayals of parents in children's picture storybooks. The second purpose for utilizing cross-tabulation analysis was to explore how the other five independent variables might have changed over time. By considering the effects of time on other independent variables, a more thorough investigation of the dynamics of role portrayals may result. However, before such examinations are considered, cross-tabulation analysis is used to establish a foundation for the study by investigating preliminary effects of independent variables on whether a child character or a parental character is featured in the text.

Effects of Independent Variables on Child Presence and Parental Presence

Thus in the first set of cross-tabulation analyses, the effects of the independent variables on child and parental presence were examined. Before conducting in-depth analyses of parental portrayals, an attempt to answer why child and parental characters may be excluded from texts altogether establishes a necessary framework.

As stated earlier, a full 16.3 % of the original sample lacked a child character which seems to be a fairly large percentage for books that target a young audience. Table 7 summarizes

the results of four cross-tabulation analyses that explore child presence. The design-based F statistic is used to assess statistical significance of effects in all cross-tabulation analyses in this study. Two variables significantly affect whether a child is present (see Table 7). The sex of the author is very influential ($p \leq .01$). Over 91 % of female authors and only 78 % of male authors featured a child character in their text. The other statistically significant predictor is the award-winning status ($p \leq .05$). Award-winning books are much less likely to feature a child character; 69 % of award winners versus 87 % of books that did not win awards featured children. Neither the time of publication nor the all-time best-selling status of the text significantly affected whether or not a child appeared in the text.

Table 7

Findings of Cross-Tabulations of Each Independent Variable on Child Presence in Children's Books (Weighted N=1252)

	Child Character Present in Text	No Child Character in Text	Total
Time of Publication			
Pre-1970	88.3	11.7	100.0 % (144)
1970-1989	83.8	16.2	100.0 % (340)
1990-2000	85.9	14.1	100.0 % (768)
Design-based F (degrees of freedom)		.24 (1.6, 460.1)	
Male Author	77.7	22.3	100.0 % (522)
Female Author	91.3	8.7	100.0 % (730)
Design-based F (degrees of freedom)		6.31 (1.0, 294.0)***	
Bestseller	77.4	22.6	100.0 % (1204)
Not a Bestseller	85.9	14.1	100.0 % (48)
Design-based F (degrees of freedom)		.92 (1.0, 294.0)	
Award Winner	68.7	31.3	100.0 % (86)
No Award Won	86.9	13.1	100.0 % (1166)
Design-based F (degrees of freedom)		3.72 (1.0, 294.0)**	

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

Once the 49 books without child characters were removed from the sample, the presence of parents was assessed. Among the books with child characters, 70.5 % had a mother character and 51.0 % had a father character. A cross-tabulation was performed to determine which, if any, of the independent variables affected whether a parent was present in the text (see Table 8). In

Table 8

Findings of Cross-Tabulations of Each Independent Variable on Parental Presence in Children’s Books with Child Characters (Weighted N=1072)

	Parental Presence in Each Text				TOTAL
	Mother Only in Text	Father Only in Text	Both Parents in Text	Neither Parent in Text	
Time of Publication					
Pre-1970	29.7	3.0	35.7	31.6	100.0 % (127)
1970-1989	17.9	.7	56.4	25.0	100.0 % (285)
1990-2000	24.4	3.5	50.7	21.4	100.0 % (660)
Design-based <i>F</i> (<i>df</i>)			1.09 (4.5, 1111.1)		
Character’s Race					
Non-Hispanic White	21.6	4.7	46.9	26.8	100.0 % (482)
Non-White	21.6	.7	58.7	19.0	100.0 % (387)
Non-Human (Animal)	30.6	1.9	43.3	24.2	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (<i>df</i>)			.86 (5.3, 1287.1)		
Character’s Sex					
Male	30.8	3.5	45.5	20.2	100.0 % (356)
Female	20.8	1.3	66.0	11.9	100.0 % (301)
Neutral (Unknown or More Than One)	18.7	3.0	43.5	34.8	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (<i>df</i>)			2.00 (5.3, 1298.2)*		
Male Author	26.1	2.4	48.6	22.9	100.0 % (405)
Female Author	21.6	2.9	51.6	23.9	100.0 % (667)
Design-based <i>F</i> (<i>df</i>)			.14 (2.8, 696.4)		
Bestseller	44.8	0	19.7	35.5	100.0 % (37)
Not a Bestseller	22.5	2.8	51.6	23.1	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (<i>df</i>)			1.94 (2.6, 638.4)		
Award Winner	11.8	6.5	37.4	44.3	100.0 % (59)
No Award Won	24.0	2.5	51.2	22.3	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (<i>df</i>)			2.54 (2.9, 697.3)**		

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

this case, the sex of the child affected the presence of the parent ($p \leq .10$). If the child were a boy, he was more likely to have either just a mother or just a father in the text. If the child were a girl, she was more likely to have *both* parents in the text. The “neutral” sex category (more than one child of different sexes or of an unknown sex) was most likely to not have either parent

portrayed, but this may be explained by the books that take place in classrooms or the books that focus on several children on adventures without parents. The award-winning status also affects parental presence ($p \leq .05$). According to the cross-tabulations, award-winning texts are almost two times more likely than non-award winners to exclude parents all together.

While the variance among the other variables lacks statistical significance a few elements are noteworthy. Non-White children are most likely to have both parents in the text, while animal children are most likely to only have a mother. White children are slightly more likely to have only a father, and they are more likely to have neither parent present. Bestsellers are almost twice as likely to only have a mother present, they are more likely to have neither parent present, and the sheer absence of fathers in bestsellers appears evident.

Effects of Decade of Publication on Other Independent Variables

The second set of cross-tabulation analyses were conducted on each of five independent variables by the sixth independent variable, time of publication, in order to explore potential historical evolution. Table 9 summarizes these five analyses. Four of the five models show statistically significant variance over time; the *sex of the main character* ($p \leq .01$), the *race of the main character* ($p \leq .05$), the *best-selling status* ($p \leq .001$) and the *award-winning status* ($p \leq .001$) varied significantly over time.

While the sex of the author did not vary significantly over time, the sample does reflect the commonality of women in the children's book-writing arena over time. While male authors did outnumber female authors in earlier decades of the 20th century, women were still well-represented in the field at a time when their working in the public sphere was not typically encouraged. By comparing books published prior to 1960 to those published in 2000, the

increased representation of women in the field is also noted (i.e., 48.9 % and 68.4% of books, respectively).

Table 9

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Independent Variables by Time Period of Publication of Books with Child Characters (Weighted N=1072)

	<i>Time Period of First Publication</i>					
	Pre-1960	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000
<i>Sex of Author</i>						
Female Author	48.9	39.5	51.4	63.6	65.9	68.4
Male Author	51.1	60.5	48.6	36.4	34.1	31.6
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.51 (3.3, 814.7)					
<i>Sex of Main Child Character</i>						
Male Character	40.0	51.2	59.5	29.5	25	52.6
Female Character	26.7	20.9	2.7	36.4	29.5	26.3
More than One or Unknown Sex	33.3	27.9	37.8	34.1	45.5	21.1
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	2.55 (6.6, 1623.9)***					
<i>Race of Main Child Character</i>						
Non-Hispanic White	51.1	58.1	48.7	45.5	43.2	39.5
Non-White	8.9	23.3	21.6	38.6	43.2	28.9
Non-Human/Animal	40.0	18.6	29.7	15.9	13.6	31.6
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	2.14 (6.5, 1601.1)**					
<i>All-Time Bestseller</i>						
Not an All-Time Bestseller	68.9	93.0	91.9	97.7	100	100
All-Time Bestseller	31.1	7.0	8.1	2.3	0	0
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	20.04 (3.0, 740.8)****					
<i>Award-Winning Status</i>						
Not an Award Winner	66.7	79.1	97.3	90.9	100	97.4
Award Winner	33.3	20.9	2.7	9.1	0	2.6
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	13.98 (4.0, 986.9)****					

Note: Books were considered bestsellers if they were on *Publisher's Weekly All-Time Best-selling Children's Books* list. Books were considered award winners if they were awarded the Caldecott Medal or Honor Award, the Newbery Award, or the Coretta Scott King Award.

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

As Table 9 shows, male main characters were more prevalent than female main characters in every time period except the 1980s and 1990s, with the greatest disparity occurring

in the 1970s (59.5 % male and 2.7 % female). The increased number of female characters in books in the 1980s and 1990s may be a consequence of the rise of the Feminist Movement in the 1970s that prompted a focus on the representation of females across many mediums (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1993). However, with twice as many male characters as female characters (i.e., 52.6 % and 26.3 %, respectively) in the books published in 2000, perhaps children's literature is reverting back to a male character-dominated medium.

While gender diversity increased in the 1990s, so too did racial diversity in this sample. Non-Hispanic White main characters were more prevalent than non-White main characters in every decade except the 1990s when representation was equal (43 % each). Perhaps the increased focus on human diversity prompted a drop-off in animal main characters in the 1980s and 1990s (15.9% and 13.6 %, respectively, from 40.0 % pre-1960), but they make a comeback in books published in 2000, comprising nearly one-third (31.6 %) of main characters in that year.

Virtually no representation of award-winning and best-selling books exists in more recent decades (see Table 9). It is unclear why the award-winning status lacks recent representation, but one can assume the parental nostalgia for and the increased shelf life of "classics" (i.e., books published in earlier decades) explains the reason for the lack of all-time bestsellers in recent decades. Due to the extremely skewed distribution of the award-winning and bestseller variables toward the earlier decades, these variables were removed from the regression analyses.

Acknowledgement of the variance of the sex of the main character, the race of the main character, the award-winning status and the best-selling status across time assists with determining potential reasons for specific parental portrayals. The final set of cross-tabulation analyses examines these independent variables across each of the parental role portrayals.

Effects of Time of Publication on Parental Role Portrayals and Parental Presence

The final set of cross-tabulation analyses provides a preliminary investigation of the hypothesis by assessing the variance of each of the independent variables across each of the role variables (i.e., companion, disciplinarian, caregiver, nurturer and provider). Two additional variables that account for traditional and non-traditional behaviors are also assessed. Any acts of providing, disciplining a child, and participating in physical play with a child were considered *traditional* behaviors for fathers and *non-traditional* for mothers. Any acts of nurturing, caregiving, and participating in non-physical play were considered *traditional* behaviors for mothers and *non-traditional* for fathers. These variables were created to establish greater evidence for the evolution of roles.

The results of the cross-tabulation analyses of *time of publication* across each of the five mother roles and the two traditional variables are summarized in Table 10. The design-based *F* reveals that none of these cross-tabulation analyses are statistically significant. This suggests that the role portrayals of mothers have not varied significantly across time.

Role portrayals of fathers also lack significant variance across time (see Table 11). The only somewhat significant finding is the father's role of companion across time ($p \leq .10$). Fathers are least likely to be portrayed as companions in books published prior to 1960 (2.2 %) and most likely in books published in the 1970s (35.1%) when there was a greater psychological and sociological focus on parenting.

Since little variance was found between any of the mother and father role variables across *time*, support for the first hypothesis was not achieved. The effects of other independent variables on role portrayals need to be included in the preliminary investigation of the hypotheses.

Table 10

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Mothers' Behaviors and Presence by Time Period of Publication of Books (Weighted N=1072)

	<i>Time Period of First Publication</i>					
	Pre-1960	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000
Acted as Companion	13.3	9.3	27.0	18.2	25.0	13.2
Did Not Act as Companion	48.9	60.5	51.4	54.5	52.3	50.0
No Mother in Text	37.8	30.2	21.6	27.3	22.7	36.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.80 (6.7, 1637.4)					
Acted as Disciplinarian	8.9	14.0	10.8	11.4	11.4	2.6
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	53.3	55.8	67.6	61.4	65.9	60.6
No Mother in Text	37.8	30.2	21.6	27.2	22.7	36.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.62 (6.7, 1632.0)					
Acted as Caregiver	20.0	20.9	32.4	34.1	22.7	21.1
Did Not Act as Caregiver	42.2	48.8	46.0	38.6	54.6	42.1
No Mother in Text	37.8	30.3	21.6	27.3	22.7	36.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.94 (6.6, 1607.1)					
Acted as Nurturer	26.6	25.6	46.0	40.9	34.1	44.7
Did Not Act as Nurturer	35.6	44.2	32.4	31.8	43.2	18.5
No Mother in Text	37.8	30.2	21.6	27.3	22.7	36.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.11 (6.6, 1626.1)					
Acted as Provider	4.4	0	5.4	4.5	2.3	7.9
Did Not Act as Provider	57.8	69.8	73.0	68.2	75.0	55.3
No Mother in Text	37.8	30.2	21.6	27.3	22.7	36.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.76 (6.0, 1479.3)					
Acted Traditionally	35.6	37.2	55.8	52.3	43.2	52.6
Did Not Act Traditionally	26.6	32.6	21.6	20.4	34.1	10.6
No Mother in Text	37.8	30.2	21.6	27.3	22.7	36.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.29 (6.7, 1645.4)					
Acted Non-Traditionally	13.3	14.0	24.3	22.7	15.9	10.5
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	48.9	55.8	54.1	50.0	61.4	56.7
No Mother in Text	37.8	30.2	21.6	27.3	22.7	36.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %
	(73)	(54)	(76)	(209)	(561)	(99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.76 (6.5, 1601.8)					

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Table 11

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Fathers' Behaviors and Presence by Time Period of Publication of Books with Child Characters (Weighted N=1072)

	<i>Time Period of First Publication</i>					
	Pre-1960	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000
Acted as Companion	2.2	13.9	35.1	11.4	13.6	26.3
Did Not Act as Companion	28.9	34.9	35.1	40.9	40.9	26.3
No Father in Text	68.9	51.2	29.8	47.7	45.5	47.4
Total	100.0 % (73)	100.0 % (54)	100.0 % (76)	100.0 % (209)	100.0 % (561)	100.0 % (99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.71 (6.7, 1632.3)*					
Acted as Disciplinarian	0	4.6	10.8	6.8	6.8	5.2
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	31.1	44.2	59.5	45.5	47.7	47.4
No Father in Text	68.9	51.2	29.7	47.7	45.5	47.4
Total	100.0 % (73)	100.0 % (54)	100.0 % (76)	100.0 % (209)	100.0 % (561)	100.0 % (99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.73 (6.3, 1545.1)					
Acted as Caregiver	0	4.6	10.8	6.8	4.5	7.9
Did Not Act as Caregiver	31.1	44.2	59.5	45.5	50.0	44.7
No Father in Text	68.9	51.2	29.7	47.7	45.5	47.4
Total	100.0 % (73)	100.0 % (54)	100.0 % (76)	100.0 % (209)	100.0 % (561)	100.0 % (99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.82 (6.1, 1497.7)					
Acted as Nurturer	6.7	16.3	32.5	20.5	20.4	36.8
Did Not Act as Nurturer	24.4	32.6	37.8	31.8	34.1	15.8
No Father in Text	68.9	51.1	29.7	47.7	45.5	47.4
Total	100.0 % (73)	100.0 % (54)	100.0 % (76)	100.0 % (209)	100.0 % (561)	100.0 % (99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.38 (6.7, 1634.4)					
Acted as Provider	8.9	7.0	13.5	11.4	18.2	23.7
Did Not Act as Provider	22.2	41.9	56.8	40.9	36.4	28.9
No Father in Text	68.9	51.1	29.7	47.7	45.4	47.4
Total	100.0 % (73)	100.0 % (54)	100.0 % (76)	100.0 % (209)	100.0 % (561)	100.0 % (99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.23 (6.8, 1655.5)					
Acted Traditionally	8.9	11.6	29.7	18.2	22.7	31.6
Did Not Act Traditionally	22.2	37.2	40.6	34.1	31.8	21.0
No Father in Text	68.9	51.2	29.7	47.7	45.5	47.4
Total	100.0 % (73)	100.0 % (54)	100.0 % (76)	100.0 % (209)	100.0 % (561)	100.0 % (99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.10 (6.7, 1641.7)					
Acted Non-Traditionally	6.7	18.6	43.3	25.0	22.7	36.8
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	24.4	30.2	27.0	27.3	31.8	15.8
No Father in Text	68.9	51.2	29.7	47.7	45.5	47.4
Total	100.0 % (73)	100.0 % (54)	100.0 % (76)	100.0 % (209)	100.0 % (561)	100.0 % (99)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.43 (6.7, 1635.4)					

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Effects of Sex of Author on Parental Role Portrayals and Parental Presence

Based on cross-tabulations of the sex of the author on each of the parental roles, there is no statistically significant difference between male and female authors in their portrayals of mothers or fathers (see Table 12 and 13, respectively). Of interest, however, male authors were slightly more likely to portray mothers as companions (25.9 % versus 18.2 % of female authors), disciplinarians (11.1 % versus 10.1 %) and providers (5.4 % versus 2.4 %) and to portray fathers as disciplinarians (6.6 % versus 6.3 %), caregivers (7.4 % versus 4.2 %) and providers (16.8 % versus 15.3 %) than were their female counterparts. Female authors were slightly more likely to show mothers as caregivers (27.7 % versus 21.1 % of male authors) and nurturers (40.3 versus 29.7) and fathers as companions (15.4 % versus 14.8 %) and nurturers (25.2 % versus 15.9 %). Even more intriguing, male authors were more likely than female authors to portray fathers behaving traditionally (23.6 % and 20.5%, respectively) and less likely to portray fathers behaving non-traditionally (18.1 % and 28.6 %, respectively). On the other hand, female authors were more likely than male authors to portray mothers behaving traditionally (49.0 % and 41.1 %, respectively) and less likely to portray mothers behaving non-traditionally (15.4 % and 19.8 %, respectively). This suggests that authors are more likely to portray their opposite-sexed parental character in more egalitarian ways. Still, there was not enough variance within any of these cross-tabulation analyses to be statistically significant or to lend support to the second hypothesis that male authors will present more egalitarian roles.

Table 12

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Sex of Author on Observed Mothers' Behaviors and Mothers' Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Female Author	Male Author
Acted as Companion	18.2	25.9
Did Not Act as Companion	55.0	48.8
No Mother in Text	26.8	25.3
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.56 (2.0, 485.7)	
Acted as Disciplinarian	10.1	11.1
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	63.1	63.6
No Mother in Text	26.8	25.3
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.02 (2.0, 487.2)	
Acted as Caregiver	27.7	21.1
Did Not Act as Caregiver	45.5	53.6
No Mother in Text	26.8	25.3
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.51 (2.0, 489.0)	
Acted as Nurturer	40.3	29.7
Did Not Act as Nurturer	32.9	45.0
No Mother in Text	26.8	25.3
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.17 (2.0, 487.6)	
Acted as Provider	2.4	5.4
Did Not Act as Provider	70.8	69.3
No Mother in Text	26.8	25.3
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.52 (2.0, 479.6)	
Acted Traditionally	49.0	41.1
Did Not Act Traditionally	24.2	33.2
No Mother in Text	26.8	25.3
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.72 (2.0, 485.8)	
Acted Non-Traditionally	15.4	19.8
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	57.8	54.9
No Mother in Text	26.8	25.3
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.22 (2.0, 489.0)	

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Table 13

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Sex of Author on Observed Fathers' Behaviors and Fathers' Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Female Author	Male Author
Acted as Companion	15.4	14.8
Did Not Act as Companion	39.1	36.2
No Father in Text	45.5	49.0
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.08 (2.0, 489.6)	
Acted as Disciplinarian	6.3	6.6
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	48.2	44.4
No Father in Text	45.5	49.0
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.09 (2.0, 489.4)	
Acted as Caregiver	4.2	7.4
Did Not Act as Caregiver	50.3	43.6
No Father in Text	45.5	49.0
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.50 (2.0, 489.7)	
Acted as Nurturer	25.2	15.9
Did Not Act as Nurturer	29.3	35.1
No Father in Text	45.5	49.0
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.84 (2.0, 489.0)	
Acted as Provider	15.3	16.8
Did Not Act as Provider	39.2	34.2
No Father in Text	45.5	49.0
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.16 (2.0, 487.7)	
Acted Traditionally	20.5	23.6
Did Not Act Traditionally	34.0	27.4
No Father in Text	45.5	49.0
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.32 (2.0, 488.5)	
Acted Non-Traditionally	28.6	18.1
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	25.9	32.9
No Father in Text	45.5	49.0
Total	100.0 % (667)	100.0 % (405)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.04 (2.0, 487.6)	

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Effects of Race of Child Character on Parental Role Portrayals and Parental Presence

The three-category, nominal race variable (i.e., non-Hispanic White, non-White, and non-Human) was cross-tabulated with each of the mother and father role variables (see Table 14 and 15, respectively). There were not enough differences in the mother's role variables by the race categories to be statistically significant (see Table 14) though a few interesting observations are noteworthy. Based on percentages, the mothers of White children are slightly more likely to act as companions (22.9 % versus 21.5 %) and disciplinarians (10.7 % versus 5.7 %) than the mothers of non-White children. However, the mothers of non-White children seem much more likely to act as caregivers (29.8 % versus 20.0 %), nurturers (41.4 % versus 27.4 %) and providers (6.4 % versus 1.9 %) than the mothers of White children. Animal children are more likely than either racial group to be both nurtured and disciplined. Mothers are more likely to be portrayed traditionally and non-traditionally with non-White (56.3 % and 18.9 %, respectively) and animal (51.7 % and 20.8 %, respectively) children than with White (35.2 % and 13.9 %, respectively) children. This suggests mothers are often inactive in books that feature White children.

Statistical significance was achieved in three of the examinations of the effect of race on fathers' roles (see Table 15). Fathers in children's books are far more likely to act

as a companion to a White child (23.5 %) than a non-White child (6.1 %) or an animal child (12.5 %). Fathers are more likely to discipline animal children (14.6 %) and least likely to discipline White children (1.8 %). Fathers are more likely to provide direct care if they have animal children (13.8 %) and least likely to provide it to White children (1.2 %).

While the nurturing and providing father roles were not statistically significant across the race categories, based on percentages fathers were slightly more likely to nurture and provide for

Table 14

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Race of Main Character(s) on Observed Mothers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Non-Hispanic White Main Character	Non-White Main Character	Animal (non- Human) Main Character
Acted as Companion	22.9	21.5	16.3
Did Not Act as Companion	45.6	58.7	57.6
No Mother in Text	31.5	19.8	26.1
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		.75 (3.7, 911.4)	
Acted as Disciplinarian	10.7	5.7	19.0
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	57.8	74.5	54.9
No Mother in Text	31.5	19.8	26.1
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.42 (3.9, 967.5)	
Acted as Caregiver	20.0	29.8	28.8
Did Not Act as Caregiver	48.5	50.4	45.1
No Mother in Text	31.5	19.8	26.1
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		.70 (3.9, 965.2)	
Acted as Nurturer	27.4	41.4	47.6
Did Not Act as Nurturer	41.1	38.8	26.3
No Mother in Text	31.5	19.8	26.1
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.27 (3.9, 968.4)	
Acted as Provider	1.9	6.4	1.8
Did Not Act as Provider	66.6	73.8	72.1
No Mother in Text	31.5	19.8	26.1
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.20 (3.5, 846.3)	
Acted Traditionally	35.2	56.3	51.7
Did Not Act Traditionally	33.3	23.9	22.2
No Mother in Text	31.5	19.8	26.1
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.33 (3.9, 967.1)	
Acted Non-Traditionally	13.9	18.9	20.8
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	54.6	61.3	53.1
No Mother in Text	31.5	19.8	26.1
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		.61 (3.9, 969.9)	

Note: The non-White category includes any books with multiple main characters of mixed ethnicity.
 $*p \leq .10$, $**p \leq .05$, $***p \leq .01$, $****p \leq .001$

Table 15

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Race of Main Character(s) on Observed Fathers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Non-Hispanic White Main Character	Non-White Main Character	Animal (non- Human) Main Character
Acted as Companion	23.5	6.0	12.5
Did Not Act as Companion	28.0	53.3	32.7
No Father in Text	48.5	40.7	54.8
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		3.68 (3.6, 880.7)***	
Acted as Disciplinarian	1.8	7.8	14.6
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	49.8	51.5	30.6
No Father in Text	48.4	40.7	54.8
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.15 (3.5, 865.3)*	
Acted as Caregiver	1.2	6.3	13.8
Did Not Act as Caregiver	50.3	53.0	31.4
No Father in Text	48.5	40.7	54.8
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.42 (3.5, 866.1)**	
Acted as Nurturer	18.2	24.7	24.1
Did Not Act as Nurturer	33.3	34.6	21.1
No Father in Text	48.5	40.7	54.8
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		.64 (3.9, 956.8)	
Acted as Provider	13.6	24.7	4.2
Did Not Act as Provider	37.9	34.7	41.0
No Father in Text	48.5	40.6	54.8
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.64 (3.5, 866.4)	
Acted Traditionally	18.6	26.7	19.2
Did Not Act Traditionally	32.9	32.6	26.0
No Father in Text	48.5	40.7	54.8
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		.51 (3.9, 955.7)	
Acted Non-Traditionally	21.6	25.9	29.5
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	29.9	33.5	15.7
No Father in Text	48.5	40.6	54.8
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (387)	100.0 % (203)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		.82 (3.9, 960.5)	

Note: The non-White category includes any books with multiple main characters of mixed ethnicity.
 * $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

non-White children. Fathers with non-White children were most likely to be portrayed behaving traditionally (26.7 %) and fathers with animal children were most likely to be portrayed non-traditionally (29.5 %).

The statistical significance achieved in the three examinations of the effect of race on fathers' roles contradict the third hypothesis which states there will be no difference in parental portrayals based on the race of the child.

Effects of Sex of Child Character on Parental Role Portrayals and Presence

Cross-tabulations of the main character's sex across each of the mother and father role variables were very telling (see Tables 16 and 17, respectively). All of the cross-tabulations involving the mothers' roles were statistically significant (see Table 16), suggesting role portrayals of mothers in children's books vary depending upon the sex of the child. Mothers with sons are more likely to be portrayed in the disciplinarian (15.4 %), care-giving (26.9 %), nurturing (46.5 %) and providing (6.2 %) roles than if they have daughters. They are more likely to be companions to daughters (26.3 %). Mothers are often portrayed as caregivers and nurturers to children in the "neutral" category (more than one child of different sexes, or unknown), but this is due in part to the babies in the texts who require more direct attention but whose sex is often unstated. Mothers are most likely to be portrayed traditionally with sons (56.1 %) and are slightly more likely to be portrayed non-traditionally with daughters (23.1 % versus 22.7 %, respectively).

Statistical significance was achieved in three of the examinations of the effect of the main character's sex on the portrayals of fathers. Fathers are more often in the companion (14.5 % versus 9.9 %) roles with daughters than with sons. However, they are most likely to be

Table 16

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Sex of Main Character(s) on Observed Mothers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Male Main Character	Female Main Character	More than One or Unknown Sex
Acted as Companion	20.5	26.3	17.9
Did Not Act as Companion	55.8	60.5	44.2
No Mother in Text	23.8	13.2	37.9
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.92 (3.7, 914.0)*	
Acted as Disciplinarian	15.4	12.7	4.7
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	60.9	74.1	57.5
No Mother in Text	23.8	13.2	37.9
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.45 (3.7, 915.6)**	
Acted as Caregiver	26.9	22.8	25.4
Did Not Act as Caregiver	49.3	64.0	36.7
No Mother in Text	23.8	13.2	37.9
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.50 (3.8, 929.3)**	
Acted as Nurturer	46.5	36.6	27.4
Did Not Act as Nurturer	29.7	50.3	34.7
No Mother in Text	23.8	13.2	37.9
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.85 (3.8, 923.7)**	
Acted as Provider	6.2	3.0	1.5
Did Not Act as Provider	70.0	83.9	60.6
No Mother in Text	23.8	13.2	37.9
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		3.36 (3.6, 875.1)***	
Acted Traditionally	56.1	43.9	38.8
Did Not Act Traditionally	20.1	42.9	23.3
No Mother in Text	23.8	13.2	37.9
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		3.15 (3.8, 918.8)**	
Acted Non-Traditionally	22.7	23.1	7.8
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	53.5	63.7	54.3
No Mother in Text	23.8	13.2	37.9
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.89 (3.8, 928.2)**	

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Table 17

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Sex of Main Character(s) on Observed Fathers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Male Main Character	Female Main Character	More than One or Unknown Sex
Acted as Companion	9.9	14.4	20.1
Did Not Act as Companion	39.0	52.9	26.4
No Father in Text	51.1	32.7	53.5
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.21 (3.8, 919.9)*	
Acted as Disciplinarian	5.6	10.5	4.1
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	43.3	56.8	42.4
No Father in Text	51.1	32.7	53.5
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.24 (3.8, 926.1)	
Acted as Caregiver	8.0	2.0	5.7
Did Not Act as Caregiver	40.9	65.3	40.8
No Father in Text	51.1	32.7	53.5
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.06 (3.8, 933.3)*	
Acted as Nurturer	18.5	33.2	16.1
Did Not Act as Nurturer	30.4	34.1	30.4
No Father in Text	51.1	32.7	53.5
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.45 (3.9, 954.0)	
Acted as Provider	13.9	31.4	6.3
Did Not Act as Provider	35.0	35.9	40.2
No Father in Text	51.1	32.7	53.5
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		2.95 (3.9, 964.3)**	
Acted Traditionally	19.5	34.2	14.4
Did Not Act Traditionally	29.4	33.1	32.1
No Father in Text	51.1	32.7	53.5
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.65 (3.9, 953.9)	
Acted Non-Traditionally	21.3	37.4	18.2
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	27.6	29.9	28.3
No Father in Text	51.1	32.7	53.5
Total	100.0 % (356)	100.0 % (301)	100.0 % (415)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)		1.51 (3.9, 952.6)	

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

companions to children who make up the “neutral” category; this may be due in part to the organized sports father characters participate in with groups of children in picture books. Fathers are more likely to provide direct care, involving feeding, dressing, and bathing when they have sons. Fathers are more likely to act as providers for daughters in children’s books. While the nurturing and disciplining examinations are not statistically significant across the sex categories, based on percentages fathers are more likely to discipline (10.5 % versus 5.6 %) and nurture (33.2 % versus 18.5 %) daughters than sons in children’s books. Fathers are more likely to behave both traditionally and non-traditionally with daughters than with sons, but these examinations also lack significance. This may suggest that fathers are portrayed as more actively involved in raising daughters. The significant findings do contradict this study’s fourth hypothesis predicting no difference in parental portrayals across sex categories.

Effects of Award-Winning and Best-Selling Status on Parental Roles and Presence

It has proven a challenge to determine whether the award-winning or best-selling status of books affects parental portrayals. Once the 49 books without child characters were removed from analysis, only 21 all-time bestselling books and only thirty award-winning books remained. Of the 21 bestsellers, 6 books had no mothers and 17 had no fathers. Of the 30 award-winners, fifteen had no mothers and eighteen had no fathers. Thus, there were very few parents to analyze so both variables were removed from regression analyses. Cross-tabulations were conducted, though statistical significance with such limited cell frequencies is questionable (see Tables 18 and 19).

All of the examinations of award-winning status on mothers’ role portrayals (see Table 18) were statistically significant ($p \leq .05$). When examining the percentages of mother behaviors,

Table 18

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Award-Winning Status on Observed Mothers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Award Winner	No Award
Acted as Companion	10.3	21.8
Did Not Act as Companion	38.9	53.4
No Mother in Text	50.8	24.8
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	3.93 (1.9, 460.4)**	
Acted as Disciplinarian	4.9	10.8
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	44.4	64.4
No Mother in Text	50.8	24.8
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.06 (1.9, 453.5)**	
Acted as Caregiver	25.9	25.2
Did Not Act as Caregiver	23.3	50.0
No Mother in Text	50.8	24.8
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	3.80 (2.0, 489.3)**	
Acted as Nurturer	15.6	37.5
Did Not Act as Nurturer	33.6	37.7
No Mother in Text	50.8	24.8
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	3.53 (2.0, 487.7)**	
Acted as Provider	2.7	3.5
Did Not Act as Provider	46.5	71.7
No Mother in Text	50.8	24.8
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	3.91 (1.9, 462.9)**	
Acted Traditionally	38.1	46.4
Did Not Act Traditionally	11.1	28.8
No Mother in Text	50.8	24.8
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.11 (1.9, 466.1)**	
Acted Non-Traditionally	7.6	17.6
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	41.6	57.6
No Mother in Text	50.8	24.8
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.06 (1.9, 455.6)**	

Note: Books were considered award winners if they were awarded the Caldecott Medal or Honor Award, the Newbery Award, or the Coretta Scott King Award.

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Table 19

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Award-Winning Status on Observed Fathers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Award Winner	No Award
Acted as Companion	7.0	15.6
Did Not Act as Companion	36.9	38.1
No Father in Text	56.1	46.3
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.80 (1.8, 445.4)	
Acted as Disciplinarian	0	6.8
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	43.9	46.9
No Father in Text	56.1	46.3
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.62 (1.9, 454.2)	
Acted as Caregiver	0	5.8
Did Not Act as Caregiver	43.9	47.9
No Father in Text	56.1	46.3
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.59 (1.9, 461.8)	
Acted as Nurturer	4.8	22.7
Did Not Act as Nurturer	39.1	31.0
No Father in Text	56.1	46.3
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	2.16 (1.8, 443.2)	
Acted as Provider	5.5	16.4
Did Not Act as Provider	38.4	37.3
No Father in Text	56.1	46.3
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.09 (1.9, 457.9)	
Acted Traditionally	5.5	22.6
Did Not Act Traditionally	38.4	31.1
No Father in Text	56.1	46.3
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.94 (1.9, 453.8)	
Acted Non-Traditionally	4.8	25.8
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	39.1	27.9
No Father in Text	56.1	46.3
Total	100.0 % (59)	100.0 % (1013)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	2.77 (1.8, 441.2)*	

Note: Books were considered award winners if they were awarded the Caldecott Medal or Honor Award, the Newbery Award, or the Coretta Scott King Award.

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

care-giving is the only role which is slightly more likely to occur in award-winning texts (25.9% versus 25.2%). The award winning status variable did not vary enough across all but one of the fathering roles to be statistically significant (see Table 19). The cell frequencies for fathers are so limited that results are virtually meaningless. The examination of fathers' non-traditional behaviors is the only analysis of the fathers' roles with significance ($p \leq .10$). Fathers are more likely to behave non-traditionally in books that have not won awards. However, as Frankfort-Nachmias and Leon-Guerrero (2002) assert, most researchers are wary of bivariate tables with cell frequencies below five, or with more than 20 % of the cell frequencies below five (p. 516). While less than five fathers performed *any* role in award-winners and bestsellers, perhaps a graver concern is the simple lack of fathers in these texts.

When the best-selling status variable is cross-tabulated with the parental role variables, the only statistically significant model for mothering roles is that of caregiver (see Table 20). Mothers in all-time best-selling books are more likely to give direct care to a child than are mothers in non-bestselling books. Though results are not significant, based on percentages mothers are about equally as likely to nurture (36.3 % versus 36.3 %) and less likely to provide for the family in bestsellers. Since most bestsellers were published in the earlier decades of the 20th century, this may lend proof to the idea that traditional mothering roles were portrayed more often in earlier works.

There was more statistical significance among the fathering role cross tabulations with best-selling status (see Table 21), but frequencies were again so low that significance is suspect. Still, fathers are shown to be less likely to fulfill any of the roles in bestsellers than they are in non-bestellers with the exception of the equally distributed care-giving role (5.5 % and 5.4 %).

Table 20

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Best-Selling Status on Observed Mothers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Bestseller	Not a Bestseller
Acted as Companion	12.0	21.5
Did Not Act as Companion	52.4	52.6
No Mother in Text	35.5	25.9
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.64 (1.9, 470.2)	
Acted as Disciplinarian	13.2	10.4
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	51.3	63.7
No Mother in Text	35.5	25.9
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.52 (2.0, 480.8)	
Acted as Caregiver	43.8	24.5
Did Not Act as Caregiver	20.7	49.6
No Mother in Text	35.5	25.9
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	2.85 (1.9, 472.6)*	
Acted as Nurturer	36.1	36.3
Did Not Act as Nurturer	28.4	37.8
No Mother in Text	35.5	25.9
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.47 (1.9, 474.9)	
Acted as Provider	0	3.6
Did Not Act as Provider	64.5	70.5
No Mother in Text	35.5	25.9
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.41 (1.9, 458.8)	
Acted Traditionally	48.1	45.9
Did Not Act Traditionally	16.4	28.2
No Mother in Text	35.5	25.9
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.71 (1.9, 472.4)	
Acted Non-Traditionally	13.2	17.2
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	51.3	56.9
No Mother in Text	35.5	25.9
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.40 (1.9, 477.2)	

Note: Books were considered bestsellers if they were on the *Publisher's Weekly All-Time Best-selling Children's Books* list.

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Table 21

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Best-Selling Status on Observed Fathers' Behaviors and Presence (Weighted N=1072)

	Bestseller	Not a Bestseller
Acted as Companion	0	15.7
Did Not Act as Companion	19.7	38.7
No Father in Text	80.3	45.6
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	3.58 (1.9, 470.1)**	
Acted as Disciplinarian	0	6.6
Did Not Act as Disciplinarian	19.7	47.8
No Father in Text	80.3	45.6
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	2.75 (1.8, 43.3)*	
Acted as Caregiver	5.5	5.4
Did Not Act as Caregiver	14.2	48.9
No Father in Text	80.3	45.6
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.32 (2.0, 487.8)***	
Acted as Nurturer	5.5	22.3
Did Not Act as Nurturer	14.2	32.1
No Father in Text	80.3	45.6
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.24 (2.0, 489.6)***	
Acted as Provider	5.5	16.2
Did Not Act as Provider	14.2	38.2
No Father in Text	80.3	45.6
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.19 (2.0, 489.2)***	
Acted Traditionally	5.5	22.3
Did Not Act Traditionally	14.2	32.1
No Father in Text	80.3	45.6
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.24 (2.0, 489.5)***	
Acted Non-Traditionally	5.5	25.3
Did Not Act Non-Traditionally	14.2	29.1
No Father in Text	80.3	45.6
Total	100.0 % (37)	100.0 % (1035)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.28 (2.0, 489.7)***	

Note: Books were considered bestsellers if they were on the *Publisher's Weekly All-Time Best-selling Children's Books* list.

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

These findings are more likely a result of the sheer absence of fathers in earlier texts than the “poorer” fathering skills portrayed.

While a few interesting findings were garnered from examining parental roles in award winners and bestsellers, the findings are not significant enough to definitively reject or fail to reject the hypotheses. Future research assessing more cases of award winners and bestsellers is warranted.

Regression Analyses

The effects of each of the independent variables on both the parental presence and parental role portrayal variables were further examined using logistic and multinomial logistic regression techniques, respectively. Each of these techniques estimates one independent variable’s effect on a dependent variable, controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. Of particular interest in both sets of analyses was the effect of time period, controlling for the effects of the other variables.

Logistic Regression: Factors Affecting Parental Presence in Picture Books

Logistic regression was used to estimate effects on the three two-category parental presence variables. These three variables are mother present, father present, and parent present. The two categories for each of these variables are “present,” coded 1, and “absent,” coded 0. Table 22 presents the results of the logistic regression analyses representing the relationships between each of the three parental presence variables and the independent variables. Two models for each of the three parental presence variables were estimated and presented. The first model includes time period only. The second model includes time period as well as the other independent variables. Comparison of estimated effects across the two models for a dependent

variable explores how the effect of publication period on the variable may be either supported or explained, or even unaffected, by the effects of the other independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 22

Summary of Six Logistic Regression Models for Variables Predicting Parental Presence in Picture Books with Child Characters (Weighted N=1072)

Predictor	Mother Present		Father Present		Parent Present	
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>	<i>Model 6</i>
	Odds Ratio (Std Err)					
Time of Publication						
1970-1989	1.52 (.55)	1.54 (.62)	2.11** (.69)	2.01** (.72)	1.38 (.50)	1.41 (.57)
1990-2000	1.60 (.60)	1.65 (.70)	1.88* (.65)	1.75 (.65)	1.70 (.67)	1.82 (.83)
Character's Race						
Non-White		2.11 (.98)		1.34 (.55)		1.70 (.81)
Non-Human (Animal)		1.58 (.80)		.87 (.42)		1.36 (.73)
Character's Sex						
Female		2.05 (.93)		2.03 (.89)		1.85 (.88)
Neutral (Unknown or More than 1)		.46* (.19)		.85 (.35)		.43** (.19)
Male Author		1.33 (.53)		1.07 (.41)		1.26 (.52)
Design-based <i>F</i>	1.05	2.86***	3.06**	1.62	.99	2.65***
Degrees of Freedom	2; 244	7; 239	2; 244	7; 239	2; 244	7; 239

Note: All predictor variables coded as 1 for *yes* and 0 for *no*. The parental presence variables were coded: 1 for *present* and 0 for *absent*. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

Estimates presented in the table are odds ratios. A logistic regression coefficient estimate, or *b*, for a given predictor in the table is interpreted as the change expected in the *log-odds* of

having a mother/father present with a one-unit increase in the predictor, holding all other predictors constant. However, Long (1997) calls attention to the fact that “Unfortunately, most of us do not have an intuitive understanding of what a change in the [log-odds] means” (p. 80). A direction function of the logistic regression coefficient estimate’s (b ’s) odds ratio (odds ratio= \exp^b) provides a more intuitive interpretation than the b ’s from which they are derived. The odds ratio “provides the same information as the logistic regression coefficient in a different [more intuitive] way” (Menard, 1995, p. 50). The interpretation of an odds ratio varies somewhat depending upon whether or not a predictor is continuous and on whether or not the odds ratio is over 1. All of the predictors in this study’s models are indicator or dummy variables, and are thus non-continuous; therefore, the odds ratio associated with each is interpreted in the same way. An odds ratio over 1 for a given indicator or dummy variable (e.g., the “1970-1979” dummy) is interpreted as the differences in the odds of a book portraying a mother/father in books having the indicated characteristic (e.g., being published during the seventies and eighties) compared to books in the omitted or reference group (e.g., being published prior to 1970). An odds ratio less than 1 is transformed into “percentage change in odds” (i.e., percentage change in odds= $100 \times [\text{odds ratio}-1]$) (Long, 1997). Specific examples of these interpretations are given as the effects in Table 22 are discussed in the next several paragraphs.

For example in Model 1, the odds ratio associated with the “1970-1989” dummy indicates that children’s picture books published during the seventies and eighties are 1.52 times as likely as those published before 1970 to contain a mother. Similarly, the odds ratio associated with the “1990-2000” dummy indicates that books published during the nineties and 2000 are 1.60 times as likely as those published before 1970 to contain a mother. However, while mothers are more likely to be represented in books published in the last quarter of the 20th century than in

books published in the previous three quarters, this time effect is not statistically significant ($p < .01$). Moreover, the effect of time remains insignificant in Model 2, controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. Indeed, only one of the independent variables, *main child character's sex*, has a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of a book including a mother character. Specifically, books containing multiple “main character” children of different genders or children of an unknown sex are less likely than books containing a male main character to portray a mother. In fact, all else equal, the odds of a mother character being present in a book containing multiple main characters of different genders or children of an unknown sex are 54 % lower (i.e., $-54.0 = 100 \times [.46 - 1]$) than the odds of a mother being present in a book containing a male main character. This finding is probably a function of setting and plot. Many of the books containing mixed-gender groups of child characters are set in classrooms or present adventures with multiple children. For example, Jan Ormerod’s *Ms. MacDonald Has a Class* takes place in an elementary classroom and no mother is present in the book. In Jean Marzollo’s book *Pretend You’re a Cat* a variety of children pretend to be different animals; no parents are present.

Interestingly, the estimated effects of the predictors on having either parent present, given in Models 5 and 6 of Table 22, are similar to those described for having a mother present. On the other hand, estimated effects of the predictors on having a father present differ. In particular, time of publication has a statistically significant effect ($p < .05$). As the estimates of Model 3 in Table 22 show, a father is about two times (i.e., 2.11 and 1.88, respectively) as likely to appear in books published between 1970 and 2000 than in books published before 1970, although this effect diminishes in statistical significance when the other independent variables are introduced into the model (Model 4). The lack of a father character in books published prior to the 1970s

may be due in part to the fact that many books with parental characters during that publication period are set in a domestic environment; the private sphere of care-giving and nurturing was considered a mother's domain at the time. Additionally, children's picture books published in the years after World War I and the Great Depression tended to depict childhood independence, often without parental characters (Egoff, 1982). For example, *Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain* (1936) by Edward Ardizzone told the story of a boy who ran away to sea and stowed-away on a boat. Virginia Lee Burton's *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* (1939) featured a boy who roamed town alone and single-handedly saved the day by coming up with a brilliant idea to save the steam shovel.

Multinomial Logistic Regression: Factors Affecting Parental Role Portrayals

Multinomial logistic regression analysis was used to estimate the effects of the independent variables on the seven, three-category parental role portrayal variables. These seven role variables are companion, disciplinarian, caregiver, nurturer, provider, any traditional role, and any non-traditional role. The three categories for each of these variables are "role behavior observed," "role behavior not observed," and "no mother/father in the text." For all of the multinomial logistic regression analyses, the "no mother/father in the text" served as the reference category, allowing comparison of effects on each of two types of maternal/paternal presence with maternal/paternal absence. Effects on each of the parental role portrayal variables were estimated separately for mothers and fathers. In addition, as in the logistic regressions of the parental presence variables, two models were estimated, one including only time period and the other including time period and the other independent variables. Just as in the presentation of results of the logistic regressions, odds ratios are presented in the tables. Their interpretation is

similar in multinomial logistic regression, only complicated slightly by the additional category of the dependent variable. Specific examples of interpretation are given in the discussion of the effects.

Companion Role

Table 23 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regressions representing the relationship between mother or father characters performing behavior associated with a companion role and the independent variables. The first four columns of the table contain the results of two models for mothers. Model 1 presented in columns 1 and 3 includes publication period only. Column 1 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a mother acting as a companion versus not portraying a mother at all. Column 3 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a mother, but not acting as a companion, versus not portraying a mother at all. The odds ratio associated for the “1970-1989” dummy presented in column 1 indicates that books published during the seventies and eighties are about two and one-third (i.e., 2.37) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray mothers participating in play with their child or taking their child on a recreational outing than to exclude them from the text altogether. As the odds ratio associated with the “1990-2000” dummy in column 1 indicates authors of books published even more recently, in the nineties and 2000, are nearly three times (i.e., 2.78) as likely as those whose books were published before 1970 to portray mothers as companions to their children than to leave them out of the story. The odds ratios associated with the two publication period dummies presented in column 3 indicate that books published in 1970 through 2000 are only about one and one third times (i.e., 1.34 and 1.34, respectively) as likely as those published prior to 1970 to portray mothers, but not acting as

a companion, than to exclude them altogether. However, as the design-based F statistic given for Model 1 ($F=1.09$, $df=4$ and 242) indicates, the model is not statistically significant.

Table 23

Summary of Four Multinomial Logistic Regression Models for Variables Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Companion Behaviors in Picture Books with Child Characters (Weighted N = 1072)

Predictor	Mother Acted as a Companion vs. No Mother Present		Mother did not Act as a Companion vs. No Mother Present		Father Acted as a Companion vs. No Father Present		Father did not Act as a Companion vs. No Father Present	
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)
Time of Publication								
1970-1989	2.37* (1.21)	2.60* (1.42)	1.34 (.50)	1.32 (.55)	3.51*** (1.77)	3.84*** (2.06)	1.79* (.64)	1.56 (.66)
1990-2000	2.78** (1.48)	3.12** (1.78)	1.34 (.53)	1.35 (.60)	2.89** (1.57)	3.29** (1.89)	1.65 (.62)	1.43 (.61)
Character's Race								
Non-White		1.74 (1.13)		2.29* (1.10)		.24** (.15)		2.55** (1.06)
Non-Human (Animal)		1.05 (.66)		1.81 (.96)		.49 (.27)		1.20 (.67)
Character's Sex								
Female		2.56 (1.63)		1.89 (.92)		2.40 (1.63)		1.92 (.88)
Neutral (Unknown or More than 1)		.53 (.33)		.44* (.19)		2.34 (1.27)		.53 (.25)
Male Author		2.01 (1.10)		1.13 (.48)		.96 (.54)		1.18 (.50)
Design-based F df	1.09 4; 242	1.76** 14; 232			1.97* 4; 242	2.96**** 14; 232		

Note: No mother/father present is the reference category. All predictor variables coded as 1 for *yes* and 0 for *no*. The parental presence variables were coded: 1 for *present* and 0 for *absent*. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively.
* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

On the other hand, Model 2 for mothers (presented in columns 2 and 4) is statistically significant. This model includes publication period and the other independent variables, main child character's race, main child character's sex, and sex of the author. All else equal, publication period, child character's race, and child character's sex appear to influence the portrayal of mothers as companion in children's picture books. The effects of publication period on this portrayal are similar to those described in Model 1, the only difference being that Model 2 is statistically significant. That is, books published most recently are more likely than those published before 1970 to portray mothers as companion than to exclude them from the text (column 2). Race and sex of child characters affected the other contrast, the likelihood of portraying a mother, but not as companion, versus not portraying her at all (see column 4). Specifically, children's picture books with non-White children are about two and one-fourth (i.e., 2.29) times as likely as those with White children to depict a mother who did not act as a companion versus not depict a mother. Lastly, the only statistically significant effect associated with the child character's sex suggests that mothers are more likely to be excluded from texts that focus on multiple children of different sexes. As the odds ratio associated with the "neutral" dummy in column 4 shows, the odds of books with this focus including a mother (not acting as a companion) are 56 % ($-56 = 100 \times [.44-1]$) lower than the odds of books that focus on a male main character. Since groups of children are often in settings such as classrooms that do not require parental presence, this finding is easily explained.

The latter four columns of the table contain the results of two models for fathers. Similar to the presentation of the mother's companion role, Model 3 presented in columns 5 and 7 includes publication period only while columns 6 and 8 include the additional independent variables. Column 5 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book

portraying a father acting as a companion versus not portraying a father at all. Column 7 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a father, but inactive in the companion role, versus not portraying a father at all. The odds ratio associated for the “1970-1989” dummy presented in column 5 indicates that books published during the seventies and eighties are about three and one-half (i.e., 3.51) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray fathers as a child’s companion than to exclude them from the text altogether. As the odds ratio associated with the “1990-2000” dummy in column 5 indicates, authors of books published even more recently, in the nineties and 2000, are nearly three times (i.e., 2.89) as likely as those whose books were published before 1970 to portray fathers as companions than to exclude the father character from the story. The odds ratios associated with the two publication period dummies presented in column 7 indicate that books published in the seventies and eighties are 1.79 times as likely as those published prior to 1970 to portray fathers, though inactive in the companion role, than to exclude them from the texts. The design-based *F* statistic given for Models 3 and 4 ($F=1.97$ and 2.96 , respectively) indicates an increase in statistical significance when the additional independent variables are added.

Model 4 (presented in columns 6 and 8) includes both the publication period and the other independent variables: main child character’s race, main child character’s sex, and sex of the author. All else equal, publication period and child character’s race, appear to influence the portrayal of fathers as companions. The effects of publication period on this portrayal are similar to those described in Model 3; that is, books published most recently are more likely than those published before 1970 to portray fathers as companions than to fail to include them in the text (column 6). Race of child characters affected both contrasts. The odds of children’s picture books with non-White children are about 76 % ($-76 = 100 \times [.24-1]$) lower than the odds of

books that focus on White child characters to portray fathers as companion than to exclude fathers from the text. However, books with non-White children are about two and one-half (i.e., 2.55) times as likely as those with White children to depict a father who did not act as a companion versus not depict a father. This indicates that non-White child characters may be more likely than White characters to have a present father, but this father is more likely to be inactive in the companion role.

Disciplinarian Role

Table 24 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regressions representing the relationship between the independent variables and the disciplinarian role of both parental characters. The first four columns of the table present two models representing the mother's disciplining portrayals. The first model that focused on publication period only (columns 1 and 3) lacks statistical significance ($F=.58$, $df=4$ and 242) suggesting the portrayals of mothers as disciplinarians do not change over time.

Model 2 (presented in columns 2 and 4), however, is statistically significant ($F=2.81$, $df=14$ and 232, $p < .001$). The time of publication remains an insignificant influence; however, other independent variables, specifically the race and sex of the main child character, do appear to influence the portrayal of mothers as disciplinarians in children's picture books. Race and sex of child characters affected the latter contrast, the likelihood of portraying a mother, but not as disciplinarian, versus not portraying her at all (see column 4). Specifically, children's picture books with non-White children are about two and one-fourth (i.e., 2.27) times as likely as those with White children to depict a mother who did not act as a disciplinarian than to not depict a mother at all.

Table 24

Summary of Four Multinomial Logistic Regression Models for Variables Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Disciplining in Picture Books with Child Characters (Weighted N = 1072)

Predictor	Mother Disciplined vs. No Mother Present		Mother did not Discipline vs. No Mother Present		Father Disciplined vs. No Father Present		Father did not Discipline vs. No Father Present	
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)
Time of Publication								
1970-1989	1.36 (.78)	1.59 (.95)	1.55 (.57)	1.52 (.63)	5.68** (4.81)	5.83** (5.33)	1.92** (.64)	1.78 (.65)
1990-2000	1.26 (.79)	1.74 (1.20)	1.66 (.64)	1.63 (.70)	4.45* (4.03)	4.95* (4.63)	1.74 (.61)	1.57 (.59)
Character's Race								
Non-White		1.02 (.87)		2.27* (1.07)		5.34** (4.27)		1.21 (.51)
Non-Human (Animal)		2.81 (2.09)		1.39 (.72)		9.26*** (8.10)		.61 (.30)
Character's Sex								
Female		1.70 (1.27)		2.16* (1.01)		3.21 (2.42)		1.89 (.86)
Neutral (Unknown or More than 1)		.19** (.16)		.53 (.23)		.60 (.55)		.88 (.38)
Male Author		1.10 (.76)		1.37 (.55)		1.40 (.96)		1.03 (.40)
Design-based <i>F</i> <i>df</i>	.58 4; 242	2.81**** 14; 232			1.89 4; 242	2.10**** 14; 232		

Note: No mother/father present is the reference category. All predictor variables coded as 1 for *yes* and 0 for *no*. The parental presence variables were coded: 1 for *present* and 0 for *absent*. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

Additionally, books with female main characters are over two times as likely (i.e., 2.16) as books with male main characters to portray mothers who did not act as disciplinarians than to exclude mother characters from the story. The finding that mothers are more likely to be excluded from texts that focus on multiple children of different sexes reemerges in this analysis.

As the odds ratio associated with the “neutral” dummy in column 2 shows, the odds of books with multiple characters including a disciplinarian mother are 81 % ($-81 = 100 \times [.19-1]$) lower than the odds of books that focus on a male main character.

The four remaining columns contain the results of two models for fathers (see Table 24). Again, Model 3 presented in columns 5 and 7 includes publication period only while columns 6 and 8 include the additional independent variables. Unlike the models focusing on mothers as disciplinarians, the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a father acting as a disciplinarian versus not portraying a father at all are significant. The odds ratio associated with the “1970-1989” dummy presented in column 5 indicates that books published during the seventies and eighties are about five and one-half (i.e., 5.68) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray fathers as disciplinarians than to exclude them from the text altogether. As the odds ratio associated with the “1990-2000” dummy in column 5 indicates, authors of books published even more recently, in the nineties and 2000, are about four and one-half (i.e., 4.45) times as likely as those whose books were published before 1970 to portray fathers as disciplinarians than to exclude the father character from the story. Though time of publication does appear influential in Model 3, the model itself is not statistically significant. The design-based F statistic given for Model 4 ($F=2.10$) is statistically significant ($p < .01$) when the additional independent variables are added. Time of publication, for the most part, remains influential on the portrayal of the father’s disciplinarian role. However, Model 3 shows books published in the seventies and eighties are almost two times (i.e. 1.92) as likely as those published prior to 1970 to portray fathers, though inactive in the disciplinarian role, than to exclude them from the texts; this association loses significance in Model 4.

All else equal, publication period and child character's race, appear to influence the portrayal of fathers as disciplinarians. The effects of publication period on this portrayal are similar to those described in Model 3; that is, books published most recently are more likely than those published before 1970 to portray fathers as disciplinarians than to fail to include them in the text (column 6). Race of child characters also affected this contrast. The odds of children's picture books with non-White children are about five and one third (i.e., 5.34) times as likely than the odds of books that focus on White child characters to portray fathers as disciplinarians than to exclude fathers from the text. Additionally, the odds of books with animal children are about nine and one-fourth (i.e., 9.26) times as likely as books with White, human child characters to portray a disciplining father than to exclude a father character from the text. These odds are quite high and the rarity of *any* disciplining behaviors, particularly those of fathers, must be acknowledged as these odds may be skewed.

Caregiver Role

Table 25 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regressions representing the relationship between the independent variables and the caregiver role of both mothers and fathers. The results of the two models investigating mother's care-giving portrayals are presented in the first four columns of the table. The first model that focused on publication period only (columns 1 and 3) lacks statistical significance ($F=1.32$, $df=4$ and 242), though books published in the seventies and eighties are about two and one-fourth (i.e., 2.21) times as likely as books published prior to 1970 to depict mothers in the care-giving role than to exclude mothers from the texts. This association remains significant in Model 2.

Table 25

Summary of Four Multinomial Logistic Regression Models for Variables Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Care-Giving in Picture Books with Child Characters (Weighted N=1072)

Predictor	Mother Demonstrated Care vs. No Mother Present		Mother did not Give Care vs. No Mother Present		Father Demonstrated Care vs. No Father Present		Father did not Give Care vs. No Father Present	
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)
Time of Publication								
1970-1989	2.21* (.97)	2.11* (.96)	1.21 (.47)	1.26 (.56)	5.68** (4.81)	6.96** (6.36)	1.92** (.64)	1.75 (.66)
1990-2000	1.53 (.74)	1.45 (.75)	1.63 (.65)	1.77 (.82)	3.41 (3.18)	4.55 (4.76)	1.80* (.63)	1.59 (.60)
Character's Race								
Non-White		2.52 (1.47)		1.92 (.96)		7.41** (6.75)		1.19 (.50)
Non-Human (Animal)		1.95 (1.16)		1.40 (.79)		11.29*** (10.06)		.61 (.30)
Character's Sex								
Female		1.40 (.88)		2.44* (1.15)		.40 (.48)		2.30** (.99)
Neutral (Unknown or More than 1)		.52 (.28)		.43* (.20)		.60 (.63)		.89 (.38)
Male Author		.94 (.49)		1.60 (.68)		1.90 (1.42)		1.00 (.39)
Design-based <i>F</i> <i>df</i>	1.32 4; 242	1.91** 14; 232			1.92* 4; 242	2.35*** 14; 232		

Note: No mother/father present is the reference category. All predictor variables coded as 1 for *yes* and 0 for *no*. The parental presence variables were coded: 1 for *present* and 0 for *absent*. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

Model 2 (presented in columns 2 and 4) is statistically significant ($F=1.91$, $df=14$ and 232 , $p < .05$). The sex of the main child character, in addition to the time of publication, does appear to influence the portrayal of mothers as caregivers in children's picture books. Books

with female main characters are about two and one-half times as likely (i.e., 2.44) as books with male main characters to portray mothers who did not act as caregivers than to exclude mother characters from the story. The finding that mothers are more likely to be excluded from texts that focus on multiple children of different sexes again emerges in this analysis. The odds ratio associated with the “neutral” dummy in column 4 shows that books with multiple characters are 57 % ($-57 = 100 \times [.43-1]$) lower than the odds of books that focus on a male main character to portray a mother, but not in the care-giving role, than to exclude the mother character from the text.

The last four columns in Table 25 contain the results of two models for fathers. Model 3, presented in columns 5 and 7, includes publication period only while Model 4, presented in columns 6 and 8, includes the additional independent variables. The odds ratios associated with the “1970-1989” dummy presented in column 5 and 7 indicate that books published in this time period are about five and one-half (i.e., 5.68) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray fathers as caregivers and almost two times (i.e., 1.92) as likely to portray fathers, but not as caregivers, than to exclude them from the text. This is perhaps more indicative of the increased presence of fathers in children’s books in the seventies and eighties, and not necessarily indicative of increased care-giving.

The additional independent variables presented in Model 4, specifically the child character’s race and sex, are also influential on the portrayal of the father’s caregiver role. The odds of children’s picture books with non-White children are about seven and one half (i.e., 7.41) times as likely than the odds of books that focus on White child characters to portray fathers as caregivers than to exclude fathers from the text. Additionally, the odds of books with animal children are about eleven and one-third (i.e., 11.29) times as likely as books with White,

human child characters to portray a care-giving father than to exclude a father character from the text. These odds are quite high and the rarity of fathers performing *any* care-giving behavior in children's books must be acknowledged as these odds may be misleading. The sex of the main character was also influential as books with female main characters are about two and one-third (i.e., 2.30) times as likely as books with male main characters to portray a father who does not fulfill the caregiver role, than to not portray a father at all.

Nurturer Role

Table 26 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression analyses representing both parental characters' nurturer role and the independent variables. Results of analyses of the mothers' role are presented in Model 1 (columns 1 and 3), which includes publication period only and Model 2 (columns 2 and 4) which includes other independent variables. The odds ratio associated with the "1970-1989" dummy in both Model 1 and 2 indicates that books published during the seventies and eighties are about two and one-fourth (i.e., 2.16 and 2.21, respectively) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray mothers nurturing their children than to exclude them from the text altogether. This is the only significant association of time of publication on the mother's role as nurturer. The design-based F statistic given for Model 1 ($F=1.25$, $df=4$ and 242) indicates the model is not statistically significant.

Model 2 (presented in columns 2 and 4) is statistically significant. In addition to the one significant effect of time, the additional independent variables, namely the child character's race and sex appear to influence the portrayal of mothers as nurturers in children's picture books. Books with non-White children and books with animal characters are about two and one-half (i.e., 2.66 and 2.55, respectively) times as likely as those with White children to depict a mother as a nurturer versus not depict a mother. Once again it is evident that mothers are more likely to

Table 26

Summary of Four Multinomial Logistic Regression Models for Variables Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Nurturing in Picture Books with Child Characters (Weighted N=1072)

Predictor	Mother Nurtured vs. No Mother Present		Mother did not Nurture vs. No Mother Present		Father Nurtured vs. No Father Present		Father did not Nurture vs. No Father Present	
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)
Time of Publication								
1970-1989	2.16* (.89)	2.21* (1.00)	1.09 (.45)	1.11 (.51)	3.14*** (1.44)	2.92** (1.42)	1.71 (.63)	1.64 (.67)
1990-2000	1.89 (.83)	2.04 (.99)	1.39 (.59)	1.43 (.67)	2.86** (1.36)	2.62* (1.33)	1.51 (.60)	1.42 (.59)
Character's Race								
Non-White		2.66* (1.42)		1.72 (.89)		1.43 (.79)		1.28 (.60)
Non-Human (Animal)		2.55* (1.40)		.90 (.56)		1.41 (.87)		.61 (.34)
Character's Sex								
Female		1.23 (.65)		3.45** (1.81)		2.49* (1.39)		1.75 (.89)
Neutral (Unknown or More than 1)		.29*** (.15)		.75 (.37)		.72 (.42)		.94 (.44)
Male Author		.86 (.39)		1.99 (.90)		.74 (.38)		1.33 (.57)
Design-based <i>F</i> <i>df</i>	1.25 4; 242	2.21*** 14; 232			1.96* 4; 242	1.28 14; 232		

Note: No mother/father present is the reference category. All predictor variables coded as 1 for *yes* and 0 for *no*. The parental presence variables were coded: 1 for *present* and 0 for *absent*. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

be excluded from texts that focus on multiple children of different sexes. As the odds ratio associated with the “neutral” dummy in column 2 shows, the odds of books with this focus including a nurturing mother are 71 % ($-71 = 100 \times [.29-1]$) lower than the odds of books that focus on a male main character. Furthermore, books with female main characters are about three

and one-half (i.e., 3.45) times as likely as books with male main characters to portray mothers in an inactive nurturing role as opposed to excluding mother characters altogether.

Columns 5 through 8 of the table contain the results of two models for fathers. Model 1 (column 5 and 7) examines just the period of publication on the nurturing role of fathers. The design-based F indicates that this model is significant ($F=1.96$, $df=2$; 242). Model 1 estimates that books published between 1970 and 1989 and books published between 1990 and 2000 are about three times (3.14 and 2.86, respectively) as likely as books published before 1970 to portray fathers acting as nurturers versus not portraying a father at all. These effects appear to hold up in Model 4, though the statistical significance of Model 4 is lost after the inclusion of additional independent variables ($F=1.28$, $df=14$; 232). Though Model 4 lacks significance, there does appear to be an association between the sex of the child and the father's nurturing role. Books with female child characters are about two and one-half (i.e., 2.49) times as likely as books with male main characters to depict fathers as nurturers than to not portray fathers at all.

Provider Role

Table 27 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regressions representing the relationship between parental characters performing behavior associated with a provider role and the independent variables. The results of the two models for mothers are presented in the first four columns of the table. Model 1, which includes publication period only, lacks statistical significance ($F=.62$, $df=4$; 242) and no relationship between the book's time of publication and the mother's role of provider appears significant. The inclusion of independent variables in Model 2 produces model significance ($F=2.09$, $df=14$; 232) and shows the effects of other independent variables, namely the main child character's race and sex, on portrayals of mothers

Table 27

Summary of Four Multinomial Logistic Regression Models for Variables Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Providing in Picture Books with Child Characters (Weighted N = 1072)

Predictor	Mother Acted as Provider vs. No Mother Present		Mother did not Act as Provider vs. No Mother Present		Father Acted as Provider vs. No Father Present		Father did not Act as Provider vs. No Father Present	
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)	Odds Ratio (St Err)
Time of Publication								
1970-1989	2.51 (2.37)	2.99 (3.42)	1.48 (.54)	1.51 (.61)	2.11 (1.20)	2.08 (1.32)	2.11** (.73)	2.06** (.75)
1990-2000	1.70 (1.74)	2.19 (2.77)	1.59 (.60)	1.65 (.70)	3.16** (1.71)	3.13* (1.87)	1.54 (.58)	1.48 (.59)
Character's Race								
Non-White		11.04** (12.94)		1.98 (.93)		2.76* (1.68)		1.03 (.48)
Non-Human (Animal)		1.46 (1.60)		1.58 (.80)		.32 (.26)		1.01 (.49)
Character's Sex								
Female		.92 (1.07)		2.13* (.98)		3.56** (1.98)		1.54 (.78)
Neutral (Unknown or More than 1)		.10** (.12)		.48* (.21)		.34 (.24)		1.07 (.48)
Male Author		4.04 (4.39)		1.28 (.51)		2.12 (1.32)		.89 (.35)
Design-based <i>F</i> <i>df</i>	.62 4; 242	2.09*** 14; 232			2.10* 4; 242	2.39*** 14; 232		

Note: No mother/father present is the reference category. All predictor variables coded as 1 for *yes* and 0 for *no*. The parental presence variables were coded: 1 for *present* and 0 for *absent*. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

as providers. For example, children's picture books with non-White children are about eleven (i.e., 11.04) times as likely as those with White children to depict a mother as a provider versus not depict a mother at all. Very few mothers were portrayed in the providing role, so this rather large odds ratio may be misleading. Furthermore, books with female child characters are about

two times (i.e., 2.13) as likely as books with male main characters to portray a mother, though not as a provider, than to not portray a mother. Once again, the odds ratio associated with the “neutral” dummy in column 2 and 4 shows the lack of mothers in books with multiple child characters.

The latter four columns of the table contain the results of similar assessments on the father’s provider portrayal. Time of publication does have an effect within both statistically significant models. As the odds ratios associated with the “1990-2000” dummy in columns 5 and 6 indicate, authors of books published in the nineties and 2000, are about three times (i.e., 3.16 and 3.13, respectively) as likely as those whose books were published before 1970 to portray fathers as providers than to exclude the father character from the story. The odds ratios associated with the “1970-1989” dummy presented in columns 7 and 8 indicate that books published during the seventies and eighties are about two (i.e., 2.11 and 2.06, respectively) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray fathers, though not in the provider role, than to exclude them from the text altogether. The design-based F statistic given for Models 3 and 4 ($F=2.10$ and 2.39 , respectively) indicates an increase in statistical significance when the additional independent variables are added.

Model 4 (presented in columns 6 and 8) includes both the publication period and the other independent variables. In addition to the significant effect of the publication period, the child character’s race and sex appear to influence the portrayal of fathers as providers. Children’s picture books with non-White children are about two and three-fourths (i.e., 2.76) times as likely as the books that focus on White child characters to portray fathers as providers than to exclude fathers from the text. Furthermore, picture books with female children are about three and one-

half (i.e., 3.56) times as likely as the books that focus on male child characters to portray fathers as providers than to exclude fathers from the text.

Traditional Roles

As some of the role behaviors lacked representation (e.g., few mothers provided, few fathers disciplined), it was important to construct variables that represented a broader range of behaviors classified as either “traditional” or “non-traditional.” Thus, *any* act of discipline to, providing for, or physically playing with a child was coded “traditional” for a father and “non-traditional” for a mother. *Any* act of nurturing, care-giving, or non-physical play was coded “traditional” for a mother and “non-traditional” for a father. Two three-category variables were created for both the mother and father and multinomial logistic regression was employed to examine factors that may influence traditional and non-traditional portrayals. Findings of these regressions are presented in Tables 28 and 29.

Table 28 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regressions representing the relationship between mother or father characters’ traditional behaviors and the independent variables. The first four columns of the table contain the results of two models for mothers. Model 1 presented in columns 1 and 2 includes publication period only. Column 1 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a mother acting traditionally versus not portraying a mother at all. Column 2 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a mother, but not acting traditionally, versus not portraying a mother at all. While Model 1 lacks statistical significance ($F=1.34$, $df=4$; 242), there appears to be a slight association between books published from 1970-1989 and traditional portrayals of mothers. The odds ratio indicates that books published during the

Table 28

Findings of Four Models Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Traditional Behaviors (Weighted N=1072)

Predictors	Traditional Mothering Behaviors Observed (N=251)				Traditional Fathering Behaviors Observed (N=251)			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Odds Ratio (St Err)		Odds Ratio (St Err)		Odds Ratio (St Err)		Odds Ratio (St Err)	
	No		No		No		No	
	Behaved Traditionally vs. No Mother	Traditional Behaviors vs. No Mother	Behaved Traditionally vs. No Mother	Traditional Behaviors vs. No Mother	Behaved Traditionally vs. No Father	Traditional Behaviors vs. No Father	Behaved Traditionally vs. No Father	Traditional Behaviors vs. No Father
Time of Publication								
1970-1989	1.97* (.77)	.95 (.43)	1.96 (.84)	1.02 (.52)	3.02** (1.45)	1.79 (.65)	3.06** (1.56)	1.66 (.65)
1990-2000	1.71 (.71)	1.46 (.65)	1.73 (.79)	1.62 (.83)	3.21** (1.58)	1.41 (.56)	3.24** (1.71)	1.27 (.53)
Character's Race								
Non-White			2.87** (1.45)	1.25 (.70)			1.82 (1.04)	1.12 (.52)
Non-Human (Animal)			2.07 (1.08)	.96 (.65)			1.10 (.73)	.74 (.38)
Character's Sex								
Female			1.22 (.63)	4.60*** (2.48)			2.77** (1.45)	1.59 (.85)
Neutral (Unknown or More Than One)			.35** (.16)	.78 (.43)			.63 (.36)	.98 (.47)
Male Author			1.03 (.45)	2.06 (1.00)			1.58 (.84)	.84 (.35)
Design-based <i>F</i> <i>df</i>	1.34 4; 242		2.39*** 14; 232		2.01* 4; 242		1.22 14; 232	

Note: Father was coded "1" (traditional) if he was the provider, disciplined the child, and/or participated in physical play with the child. Mother was coded "1" (traditional) if she participated in non-physical play, nurtured, and/or gave direct care to the child. They were each coded "2" if they were present but did not behave traditionally and "3" if there was not a mother/father in the text. No mother/father present is the reference category. Omitted categories for the time of publication, main character's race, main character's sex, and sex of author are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively. * $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

seventies and eighties are about two (i.e., 1.97) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray mothers traditionally than to exclude them from the text altogether.

On the other hand, Model 2 for mothers (presented in columns 3 and 4) is statistically significant ($F=2.39$, $df = 14$; 232). This model includes publication period and the other independent variables, main child character's race, main child character's sex, and sex of the author. All else equal, child character's race and child character's sex appear to influence the traditional portrayal of mothers in children's picture books. Children's picture books with non-White children are almost three (i.e., 2.87) times as likely as those with White children to depict a mother traditionally versus not depict a mother. Books with female child characters are about four and one-half (i.e., 4.60) times as likely as books with male child characters to portray a mother, but not acting traditionally, versus not portraying her at all (see column 4).

The latter four columns of the table contain the results of two models for fathers. Similar to the presentation of the mother's traditional role, Model 3 presented in columns 5 and 6 includes publication period only while columns 7 and 8 include the additional independent variables. Column 5 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a father acting traditionally versus not portraying a father at all. Column 6 gives the estimated effects of publication period on the likelihood of a book portraying a father, but not behaving traditionally, versus not portraying a father at all. The odds ratio associated with the "1970-1989" dummy and the "1990-2000" dummy presented in column 5 indicate that books published during those time periods are about three (i.e., 3.02 and 3.21, respectively) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray fathers traditionally than to exclude them from the text altogether. While the design-based F statistic given for Model 3 ($F=2.01$) is statistically significant, when the additional independent variables are added in Model 4, significance is lost ($F=1.22$). This suggests time of publication is the only independent variable with a significant effect on the traditional portrayals of fathers. Still, Model 4 does show that books with female

child characters are almost three (i.e., 2.77) times as likely as books with male child characters to portray fathers traditionally than to not portray them at all.

Non-Traditional Role

Non-traditional parental roles may indicate greater evolvement toward egalitarianism. Thus, portrayals of mothers participating in physical play, providing for the family and disciplining children and portrayals of fathers participating in non-physical play, nurturing and care-giving, are contradicting stereotypical, and often expected, roles of parents. Table 29 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regressions representing the non-traditional role of mother or father characters and the independent variables. Table 29 is formatted and interpreted in the same way as Table 28.

The first model for mothers presented in columns 1 and 2 includes publication period only. This model is not statistically significant ($F=1.05$; $df=4, 242$) but the one influence of time of publication, namely among books published between 1970 and 1989, holds up in the second model that includes the additional independent variables. The odds ratio associated with the “1970-1989” dummy indicates that books published during the 1970s and 80s are about two and one-half (i.e., 2.55) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray mothers non-traditionally than to exclude them from the text altogether. Lastly, the only other statistically significant effect suggests that mothers are more likely to be excluded from texts that focus on multiple children of different sexes. As the odds ratio associated with the “neutral” dummy in column 3 shows, the odds of books with this focus including a mother behaving non-traditionally are 81 % ($-81 = 100 \times [.19-1]$) lower than the odds of books that focus on a male main character. Again, since multiple children are often in group settings that do not require parental presence, this finding is easily explained.

Table 29

Findings of Four Models Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Nontraditional Behaviors (Weighted N=1072)

Predictor	Nontraditional Mothering Behaviors Observed (N=251)				Nontraditional Fathering Behaviors Observed (N=251)			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Odds Ratio (St Err)		Odds Ratio (St Err)		Odds Ratio (St Err)		Odds Ratio (St Err)	
	Behaved Non-traditionally vs. No Mother Present	No Non-Traditional Behaviors vs. No Mother Present	Behaved Non-traditionally vs. No Mother Present	No Non-Traditional Behaviors vs. No Mother Present	Behaved Non-traditionally vs. No Father Present	No Non-Traditional Behaviors vs. No Father Present	Behaved Non-traditionally vs. No Father Present	No Non-Traditional Behaviors vs. No Father Present
Time of Publication								
1970-1989	2.28* (1.12)	1.32 (.50)	2.55* (1.39)	1.33 (.55)	3.63*** (1.57)	1.44 (.56)	3.51*** (1.64)	1.35 (.57)
1990-2000	1.54 (.85)	1.61 (.63)	1.84 (1.16)	1.60 (.69)	2.83** (1.31)	1.46 (.59)	2.70** (1.32)	1.34 (.58)
Character's Race								
Non-White			2.95 (1.98)	1.95 (.94)			1.25 (.66)	1.39 (.67)
Non-Human (Animal)			2.33 (1.68)	1.41 (.74)			1.47 (.84)	.50 (.31)
Character's Sex								
Female			2.00 (1.27)	2.09 (1.00)			2.51* (1.36)	1.68 (.88)
Neutral (Unknown or More Than One)			.19** (.13)	.56 (.25)			.73 (.39)	.96 (.47)
Male Author			1.78 (1.03)	1.25 (.51)			.71 (.34)	1.45 (.65)
Design-based <i>F</i> <i>df</i>	1.05 4; 242		2.38*** 14; 232		2.39** 4; 242		1.49 14; 232	

Note: Father was coded "1" (nontraditional) if he participated in non-physical play, nurtured, and/or gave direct care to the child. Mother was coded "1" (nontraditional) if she was the provider, disciplined the child, and/or participated in physical play with the child. They were each coded "2" if they were present but did not behave traditionally and "3" if there was not a mother/father in the text. No mother/father present is the reference category. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

The time of publication is much more influential in the non-traditional portrayals of fathers. Model 3 presented in columns 5 and 6 includes publication period only and is statistically significant ($F=2.39$, $df=4$; 242); this significance is lost when Model 4 introduces additional variables (see columns 7 and 8), suggesting that time has the greatest influence of the independent variables on the non-traditional portrayal of fathers. The odds ratio associated with the “1970-1989” dummy presented in column 5 indicates that books published during the seventies and eighties are about three and one-half (i.e., 3.63) times as likely as those published before 1970 to portray fathers non-traditionally than to exclude them from the text altogether. As the odds ratio associated with the “1990-2000” dummy in column 5 indicates, authors of books published even more recently, in the nineties and 2000, are nearly three times (i.e., 2.83) as likely as those whose books were published before 1970 to portray fathers non-traditionally than to exclude the father character from the story. While Model 4 is not statistically significant, it does seem to suggest that picture books with female children are about two and one-half (i.e., 2.51) times as likely as picture books with male children to depict fathers non-traditionally.

Since parental characters could potentially behave both traditionally and non-traditionally in the same text, and since evolvment was best explained by focusing on non-traditional behaviors, an attempt was made to create an all-inclusive four-category variable. The four categories were as follows: 1. parent behaved *only* traditionally; 2. parent exhibited *any* non-traditional behavior; 3. parent behaved neither traditionally nor non-traditionally; 4. the parent was not present in the text. No new information was garnered, however, and significance was limited. The tables of results are, thus, presented in Appendix C (see Tables C1-C3). Cross-tabulations of this new variable with each independent variable were conducted for both parental characters and all results are presented in Table C1. Multinomial logistic regressions of variables

predicting traditional behavior patterns of mothers and fathers were conducted and results are presented in Tables C2 and C3.

Secondary Analyses

Occupations of Mothers and Fathers

The provider role was determined by the employment of each parental character in the 300 texts. The data is not weighted as it is descriptive and exploratory in nature.

Ten mothers and thirty-two fathers were employed outside the home. The types of jobs they held were noted to determine if the occupations of fathers were either more various or more prestigious. The list and frequency of jobs is listed in Table 30. While there was not enough representation to determine empirically if mothers or fathers had greater or more prestigious opportunities, observations were telling and deserving of future study.

Table 30

Frequency and Types of Parental Occupations (N=251)

OCCUPATIONS OF MOTHERS (n=177)		OCCUPATIONS OF FATHER (n=128)	
Artist/Painter	1	Artist/Painter	1
Circus Performer/Employee	1	Businessman	1
Dressmaker	1	Church Deacon	1
Easter Bunny	1	Circus Performer	1
Farmer	2	Clam Digger	1
Hunter	1	Drummer (Jazz)	1
Racehorse Walker	1	Engineer	1
Unspecified (i.e. "work")	1	Farmer	9
**Judge, Nurse, Author, etc.	1	Horse Jockey	1
		Hunter	1
		Mechanic	1
		Store Owner	1
		Tailor	1
		Teacher (Secondary English)	1
		Woodcutter	1
		Unspecified (i.e. "work")	8
		**Carpenter, Manager, etc.	1
TOTAL	10	TOTAL	32

Note: The data presented is descriptive and not weighted. **List based on one book: *Career Day* by Anne Rockwell.

Two discrepancies concerning the sample need mentioning. In Jeanette Winter's *Follow the Drinking Gourd* (1988) both the mother and father characters were slaves; this was not noted as an occupation. Anne Rockwell's *Career Day* (2000) showed parents attending their children's school to describe their occupations. The occupations of the four mothers were a judge, an author, a nurse, and a veterinarian. The six occupations of the fathers were a construction worker, a musician, a paleontologist, a sanitation worker, a carpenter, and a store manager. As this was one book, the provider role was clearly fulfilled by both the mother and father, but the occupation for each was counted only once.

Some characters were depicted as leaving for "work" or going to "the office," so the occupation was listed as unspecified and the working parent was considered a provider. If it was not clearly established that the parent was employed outside the home, the provider role was not noted. For example, the mother in Margaret Wild's *Our Granny* (1993) is shown putting a book in a briefcase and leaving the child with the grandmother. However, her destination was not made clear so she was not considered a provider.

Farming was the most common specified occupation. Otherwise, there was little commonality. Fathers in this sample clearly worked in more varied occupations, but it is unclear whether this is because they are depicted in more varied roles than mothers or simply because they are employed more often.

Perhaps a more interesting finding is that while only ten women were shown working, five worked in conjunction with their husbands, not independently of them. In Peter Spiers' *Circus!* (1992) the mothers sold programs and juggled, and the fathers were acrobats and electricians. In George Ella Lyon's *One Lucky Girl* (2000) the mother was a horse walker at a track where her husband was a jockey. In Adrienne Adams' *The Easter Egg Artists* (1976) both

rabbit parents painted Easter eggs. In Janet and Allan Ahlberg's *Each Peach Pear Plum* (1978) both bear parents were hunters. In *Radio Man* (1993) by Arthur Dorros, both parents were migrant farmers. Thus, not only was there a lack of working mothers in children's literature, but mothers with occupations were often portrayed as dependent on their husband's career.

Care-Giving Incompetence

A common theme in media that target young children is parental incompetence; when a child handles adult situations *because* of parental influence, not just in *spite* of it, comic relief is often garnered. Readers may all get a laugh from a mother, unmindful of an impending visit from The Cat in the Hat, leaving her two small children in the care of a goldfish (1957). The parents of Gregory the Terrible Eater fed him spaghetti with shoelace and string beans with rubber heels (1980). It may be amusing but if this theme of parental incompetence is common and recurring, is this detrimental to a child's socialization?

Examining parental incompetence involves subjectivity. It could be argued that the sheer absence of parents in texts involving childhood adventures reveals incompetence. To some, allowing a child to play alone or giving a child unhealthy foods reflects parental incompetence, while others might have different measures, judging incompetence based solely on the potential physical danger to the child. For this exploratory study, only present parents were assessed for incompetence and the incompetence had to be fairly obvious. The data is not weighted as it is descriptive and exploratory in nature.

A full 14 % of present mothers and 10 % of present fathers were coded as incompetent (see Table 31). A recurring storyline involved parents sleeping during adventures as in Lore Segal's *Tell me a Mitzi* (1970), Marcia Vaughn's *Snap!* (1994), and Morag Loh's *Tucking*

Table 31

Percentage of Care-Giving Incompetence Among Present Mothers (n=177) and Fathers (n=128)

	MOTHER	FATHER
Demonstrated Incompetence	14.1	10.2
Did Not Demonstrate Incompetence	85.9	89.8
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %

Note: The data presented in the table is descriptive and not weighted.

Mommy In (1987). In *Tell Me a Mitzi* the young child dresses an infant sibling and they take a taxi around the city. In *Snap!* a child wanders outside, confronting a snake and winding up trapped in a crocodile’s mouth. Confrontation with dangerous animals is another common theme. In Robert McCloskey’s *Blueberries for Sal* (1948) a mother wanders off while picking blueberries and her young daughter comes face-to-face with a mother bear. In Laura Numeroff’s *The Chicken Sisters* (1997) squirrel parents dress their children in salt and pepper costumes and allow them to play alone in the presence of a wolf.

Perhaps the height of incompetence is abandonment. In Robert McCloskey’s *Make Way for Ducklings* (1941) the father duck leaves, forcing the mother to lead ducklings Jack, Kack, Lack, Mack, Nack, Ouack, Pack and Quack through Boston city traffic in search of a new home. In Dr. Seuss’ *Horton Hatches the Egg* (1940) Mayzie the lazy bird abandons her egg to lounge on Palm Beach, returning only when Horton the elephant has done all the dedicated work.

The roles of mother and father are to be respected. If children consistently see incompetent, often neglectful parental characterizations they may be socialized to believe parenting is not a respectable position. While incompetence can sometimes be amusing, further study on the commonality of this theme and the potential effect it may have on children is warranted.

Dangerous Adventures: Parental Neglect?

Similar to judging parental incompetence, assessing the dangerousness of a childhood adventure calls for subjectivity. For example, in Aliko's *We are Best Friends* (1982) children ride bikes and search for frogs without parental presence. This text was coded as an adventure, but it was not coded as dangerous. It may be argued that playing around a pond is inherently dangerous, but there was an innocent tone to the text. On the other hand, the adventure in Lorna Balian's *Humbug Witch* (1962) was coded as dangerous because a young girl dressed as a witch was making "potions" in her kitchen without apparent adult supervision using glass bottles and cough syrup. While clearly judging some circumstances as dangerous involved subjectivity, most situations were obviously dangerous and thus easier to code.

Slightly more than 40 % of the sample showed children having an adventure without an adult present (see Table 32). Of those adventures, more than 60 % were coded as dangerous. Indeed these are common themes in children's literature. Many of these adventures involved a child's confrontation with wild animals as in Robert McCloskey's *One Morning in Maine* (1952), Lynd Ward's *The Biggest Bear* (1952), Maurice Sendak's *Pierre* (1962), Crosby Newell's *Who's a Pest* (1962), David McPhail's *The Bear's Toothache* (1972), Thatcher Hurd's *Mama Don't Allow* (1984) and Jan Brett's *Annie and the Wild Animals* (1985). Of course, the tables were sometimes turned as young animal characters ran from humans as in Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1903) and Bill Peet's *Huge Harold* (1961).

Some adventures involved elements of fantasy that, while lacking realism, were coded as dangerous. A child fought off a closet monster in Mercer Mayer's *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* (1968) and a board game spawns monsoons, lions and rhinoceroses in Chris Van Allsburg's *Jumanji* (1981).

Table 32

Summary of Cross-Tabulations of Independent Variables by Solo Child Adventures and Their Potential Danger in Books with Child Characters (Weighted N=1072)

	<i>Adventure</i>		<i>Danger</i>		
	Solo Adventure	No Solo Adventure	Danger	No Danger	No Adventure
<i>Time Period of Publication</i>					
Pre-1960	6.0	7.4	6.1	6.0	7.4
1960-1969	6.3	4.0	7.7	4.0	4.0
1970-1979	5.6	8.4	7.0	3.3	8.4
1980-1989	13.8	24.1	14.6	12.5	24.1
1990-1999	63.4	43.2	61.0	67.3	43.2
2000	4.9	12.9	3.6	6.9	12.9
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (590)	100.0 % (293)	100.0 % (189)	100.0 % (590)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	3.52 (3.4, 835.3)***		2.05 (7.0, 1715.2)**		
<i>Sex of Author</i>					
Female Author	53.1	69.6	37.0	77.9	69.6
Male Author	46.9	30.4	63.0	22.1	30.4
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (590)	100.0 % (293)	100.0 % (189)	100.0 % (590)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	3.80 (1.0, 245.0)**		7.18 (2.0, 483.6)****		
<i>Sex of Main Child Character</i>					
Male Character	34.0	32.6	39.8	25.0	32.6
Female Character	33.7	23.5	28.9	41.0	23.5
More than One or Unknown Sex	32.3	43.9	31.3	34.0	43.9
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (590)	100.0 % (293)	100.0 % (189)	100.0 % (590)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.19 (2.0, 483.9)		.96 (3.9, 952.3)		
<i>Race of Main Child Character</i>					
Non-Hispanic White	50.9	40.1	58.6	39.1	40.1
Non-White	29.0	41.9	18.5	45.2	41.9
Non-Human/Animal	20.1	18.0	22.9	15.7	18.0
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (590)	100.0 % (293)	100.0 % (189)	100.0 % (590)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	1.23 (2.0, 481.5)		1.54 (3.9, 957.9)		
<i>All-Time Bestseller</i>					
Not an All-Time Bestseller	96.7	96.3	95.7	98.5	96.3
All-Time Bestseller	3.3	3.7	4.3	1.5	3.7
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (590)	100.0 % (293)	100.0 % (189)	100.0 % (590)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	.08 (1.0, 245.0)		.74 (2.0, 480.1)		
<i>Award-Winning Status</i>					
Not an Award Winner	91.8	96.6	89.7	95.1	96.6
Award Winner	8.2	3.4	10.3	4.9	3.4
Total	100.0 % (482)	100.0 % (590)	100.0 % (293)	100.0 % (189)	100.0 % (590)
Design-based <i>F</i> (degrees of freedom)	4.24 (1.0, 245.0)**		2.88 (2.0, 483.5)**		

Note: The *adventure* variable had two categories: 1. Child character had a solo adventure without adult presence, and 2. Child character did not have a solo adventure. The *danger* variable had three categories: 1. the solo adventure was potentially dangerous, 2. the solo adventure was not dangerous, and 3. there was no solo adventure in the text.

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

Based on both cross-tabulations and regression analyses (see Tables 32 and 33), the time of publication and the sex of the author have an effect on the presence of solo adventures and their potential danger. According to cross-tabulations, the percentage of both solo adventures and

Table 33

Summary of Regression Models for Variables Predicting Solo Children's Adventures and Potential Danger Involved in Picture Books with Child Characters (Weighted N = 1072)

Predictor	Solo Child Adventure Without Parental Presence (Logistic Regression)		Potential Danger of Solo Adventures (Multinomial Logistic Regression)			
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>		<i>Model 4</i>	
			No Danger Involved versus Dangerous Adventure	No Solo Adventure versus Dangerous Adventure	No Danger Involved versus Dangerous Adventure	No Solo Adventure versus Dangerous Adventure
Time of Publication						
1970-1989	.55* (.18)	.66 (.23)	1.01 (.57)	1.81 (.68)	.69 (.43)	1.34 (.53)
1990-2000	1.13 (.38)	1.55 (.60)	1.59 (.82)	1.05 (.41)	.91 (.53)	.63 (.29)
Character's Race						
Non-White		.58 (.25)			2.74 (1.87)	2.80* (1.57)
Non-Human (Animal)		.98 (.46)			1.11 (.97)	1.06 (.59)
Character's Sex						
Female		1.86 (.84)			1.26 (.88)	.60 (.33)
Neutral (Unknown or More than 1)		.81 (.36)			1.12 (.84)	1.26 (.68)
Male Author		2.22** (.86)			.20*** (.13)	.25*** (.12)
Design-based <i>F</i> <i>df</i>	2.28* 2	1.99** 7	1.38 4		1.79** 14	

Note: . Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively. All predictor variables coded as 1 for *yes* and 0 for *no*. The adventure variable was coded: 1 for *adventure without parental presence* and 0 for *no adventure without parental presence*. The danger variable had three categories: *dangerous solo adventure*, *not a dangerous solo adventure*, and *no solo adventure in text*.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

dangerous adventures skyrocketed in the 1990s, but appear to have had a dramatic decrease in books published in 2000. Furthermore, 63.0 % of male authors versus 37.0 % of female authors depict dangerous adventures.

Table 33 presents the results of a logistic regression analysis and a multinomial logistic regression analysis representing the relationship between both childhood adventures and dangerous adventures (respectively) and the independent variables *time of publication*, *main child character's race*, *main child character's sex*, and *sex of the author*. The sex of the author had the greatest influence on portrayals of adventures. Male authors are about two times (i.e., 2.22) as likely as female authors to include a child adventure without adult presence in their texts. The odds of presenting a danger-free adventure are 80 % ($-80 = 100 \times [.20-1]$) lower for male authors than for female authors than the odds of presenting a dangerous adventure. Additionally, the odds of not including any solo adventure in texts are 75 % lower for male authors than the odds of presenting a dangerous adventure. Another interesting finding is that non-White characters are almost three times (i.e., 2.80) as likely as White characters to not have a solo adventure as opposed to having a dangerous one. Thus, White child characters appear to be placed in greater danger in picture storybooks, most often by male authors.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the analyses conducted on the data collected during the course of the research. Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, logistic regression analyses, and multinomial logistic regression analyses were utilized to analyze the portrayal of parental characters in children's picture books. The next and final chapter reviews and assesses the

findings, offers implications for further research and makes recommendations for improving parental portrayals in children's books.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This final chapter presents the discussion, summary and conclusions generated from this study. The first section presents an overall review of the study. The second section provides a brief overview of the findings that either lend support to or refute the hypotheses. The next section offers limitations of the study, followed by a section that presents the implications of this study for future research. The final section of this chapter highlights the major findings and includes closing remarks.

Review of the Study

A survey instrument to examine parental role behaviors was designed to be completed by the principal investigator while reading each of the 300 picture storybooks that were randomly selected from the *Children's Catalog* (H.W. Wilson Co., 2001). Junior-level undergraduate students were tasked with reading a random sample of these same books to assess interrater reliability. The survey instrument captured data on five parental roles: *companion*, *disciplinarian*, *caregiver*, *nurturer*, and *provider*. Data from each book was collected including the *year of first publication*, the *sex of the author*, the *sex of the main character*, the *race of the main character*, the *award-winning status* of the book and the *best-selling status* of the book. These acted as independent variables.

Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, logistic regression, and multinomial logistic regression were employed to first assess the presence of child and parental characters and then to address each of six hypotheses. Secondary analyses explored the prevalence of parental

incompetence, the potential danger associated with childhood adventures without adult supervision, and the types of occupations mother and father characters held.

Assessment of the Findings

Identity theory posits that an individual develops a sense of self, including the roles and identities he or she will assume, by identifying with the language and symbols associated with the roles of others (Stryker, 1980). A self-concept emerges when one adopts the attitudes and behaviors of others. This research adds to the theoretical framework through its application to the medium of children's picture books. Role portrayals in children's picture storybooks can be especially influential in identity development as these books are read to children during the primary years of socialization when children are just beginning to identify with the roles of others. *Parental* role portrayals can be potentially more influential as children are identifying with roles they may believe are expected of them in their future. If, as identity theory suggests, children can develop their identities by adopting observed behaviors of others, then examining those portrayals that children are often exposed to is essential. Therefore, acknowledging parental role performances in children's media, particularly if they are consistently absent, negative, stereotypical, or limited in scope and opportunity, is warranted.

It was important to first establish the prevalence of parental characters in children's picture storybooks over time in order to determine whether role behaviors actually reflect change, or if behavior observations are merely a result of parental characters being present more often in certain time periods. The sample showed that the father character appears more frequently in the last several decades, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, than he did in books published prior to 1970. The presence of mother characters over time did not change significantly. By then

examining their roles, it could be determined whether mothers and fathers were portrayed in active parenting or as mere props in illustrations.

H₁: *Books published before the 1970s will be more likely to depict parents in traditional roles.*

The first hypothesis was tested which predicted parental roles would become less traditional and more egalitarian over time. If society's parental role expectations have evolved from a somewhat strict dual sphere prior to the 1960s, to a limited entry into the public sphere for women with continued traditional private sphere roles in the 1960s and 1970s, to a progressive melding of spheres for mothers and fathers after the 1970s (see Chapter 2) then similar progress was expected to be represented in the texts. However, cross-tabulations suggested there was little variance between the time of publication and each of the parental behaviors. When the time of publication was collapsed into three categories and used in multinomial logistic regression analyses, time did predict some parental behaviors. More curvilinear effects of time as opposed to linear effects were often observed. For example, compared to books published prior to 1970, mothers were about two times as likely (i.e., 2.11) to be shown as caregivers and nurturers (i.e. 2.16) in books published in the 1970s and 1980s than to be missing from the texts. No statistically significant difference in mothers' care-giving and nurturing behaviors existed between books published prior to 1970 and those published between 1990 and 2000. Similarly, fathers were almost seven times (i.e., 6.96) as likely to be portrayed as caregivers in books published in the 1970s and 1980s and about three times as likely (i.e., 3.13) to be portrayed as providers in books published between 1990 and 2000 than they were in books published prior to 1970. Mothers were more than two times as likely to be portrayed as

companions and fathers were about three times as likely to be portrayed as companions and nurturers in books published between 1970 and 2000 than in books published before 1970.

As discussed in chapter V, the 1960s and 1970s was a time of increased focus on parenting due in large part to a growing number of mothers entering the workplace. Child care centers, preschools and kindergartens flourished in the 1970s and early childhood educators became many children's caregivers during the workday. This fueled the sociological and psychological debate of the effects working mothers have on the socialization of children. This may have led to the increased presence of parental characters in children's books in the 1970s and 1980s.

These shifts in role portrayals over time, however, do not represent shifts toward more egalitarian behavior, and as such the hypothesis was rejected. While father characters increased their likelihood of care-giving and nurturing in picture books, this may be due merely to the increased presence of fathers. For this reason variables were constructed to examine traditional and non-traditional behaviors. Examining potential change in multiple behaviors considered either "traditional" or "nontraditional," for example, might show increased egalitarianism that a single role variable could not. While multinomial logistic regression analyses assessed both traditional and non-traditional behavior sets, a focus on non-traditional values which represent greater egalitarianism show that portrayals of fathers are progressing more than those of mothers over time. Fathers are far more likely to behave as nurturers, caregivers, or companions in non-physical play in books published post-1970 than they were in books published pre-1970. But, again, this may be a result of the increased presence of fathers and not necessarily on shifting behaviors.

Parents, particularly father, may appear more frequently in texts published after 1970, but there is no clear evidence that their role portrayals have become less traditional. Publishers target the consumer and are rarely at the forefront of social change. As discussed in Chapter 3, a book must sell to remain on the market. Thus, it is unclear whether publishers want to promote conservative family values or whether consumers desire depictions of the golden “ideal” of family.

H₂: *Male authors are more likely than female authors to depict more egalitarian parental roles.*

The second hypothesis predicting more egalitarian parental roles from male authors lacked support and was ultimately rejected. Collins, Ingoldsby and Dellman (1984) found that the work of male authors showed greater efforts toward eliminating sexism; therefore, it was hypothesized that the parental portrayals created by male authors would represent greater egalitarianism. None of the cross-tabulations or regression analyses showed a statistically significant effect on parental role portrayals based on the sex of the author. Female authors were found to be more likely to include child characters in their texts, but there was no significant difference between male and female authors concerning either the presence of parents or parental role behaviors.

It may be argued that this lack of difference in parental portrayals is due to *both* male and female authors of children’s books recognizing the need to present strong, supportive and loving mother and father characters. However, what seems more likely is that parental portrayals are rarely of primary concern to authors of children’s picture books, as mother and fathers often take second stage to the plot, if even permitted to make an appearance in the text.

H₃: *Non-Hispanic White parents in the literature will be portrayed in the same way as parents of other racial and ethnic groups.*

The third hypothesis predicts no difference between the parenting behaviors of White, Non-White and animal parents. However, many differences were revealed and the third hypothesis was rejected. It was hypothesized that authors would not intentionally portray parental characters differently based on the children's physical attributes; therefore, portrayals were not expected to differ. The cross-tabulations revealed statistically significant differences in fathering behavior. Fathers were more likely to act as companions if they had White children. They were most likely to discipline and care for animal children and least likely to discipline and care for White children. Each of these findings was confirmed in the multinomial logistic regressions of each of the parental roles. Thus, fathers fulfilled traditional roles for White children, acting as companions but not participating in direct care. This may be due in part to the publishing companies' or authors' promotion of traditional, conservative values, or it may be more consumer-driven as White, middle-class parents are frequent purchasers of picture books. If young, White children identify with father characters in children's books, then identity theory suggests boys might accept their future role as companion but may fail to adopt a care-giving role.

Of interest is the fact that animal characters are more likely to receive "extreme" attention from fathers for direct care and discipline. Since animal characters were most prevalent in books published prior to 1960 (see Table 9), authors at the time may have thought an animal father in a nontraditional, care-giving role would be easier to accept than a human father fulfilling what was then considered a woman's role. Similarly for the sensitive issue of discipline, some authors might have thought it best to incorporate harsh discipline in a story with animal characters so as

to be less threatening to a human child reader. While identity theory is applied to human behavior, anyone who has seen a child play with a stuffed animal, watch an animated film, or read a book with a central animal character recognizes that children are not as constricted by the human-versus-non-human dichotomy. As non-human, personified characters in books, television and film speak, dress, and often walk upright, it is fairly easy for children to suspend disbelief. Sherry Turkle (1997) in her studies on children's reactions to robotic toys and computer programs, concludes that children define these objects as "alive" based on the objects' movement, speech, "body" shape, and expressed feelings. If children can readily accept personified behavior of non-human characters, authors need to be aware of the potential influence even animal character portrayals have on socialization. A child who identifies the role of a mother can recognize expected behaviors attendant with that role whether the mother is a human or an apron-clad donkey.

The regressions also revealed that mothers are about two and one-half times as likely to nurture non-White and animal children (i.e., 2.66 and 2.55, respectively) than White children and they are eleven times as likely to act as providers when they have non-White children compared to White children. It is, therefore, rather surprising that mothers are more likely to behave traditionally (i.e., nurture) and non-traditionally (i.e., provider) if they have non-White children. The 1960s and 70s prompted a greater focus on the inclusion of non-White characters across various mediums (see Chapter 3). The portrayals may be an effect of the greater presence of mother characters in books with non-White children, but clearly attentive mother characters in books with White children were especially a rarity.

Both mothers and fathers are over two times as likely to be present but inactive companions for non-White children, and mothers, while likely to be present, are least likely to

discipline non-White children. Fathers were almost three times as likely (i.e., 2.76) to act as providers for non-White children. Very involved parent-child relationships are rare in children's books, and the fact that these parental portrayals are often affected by the physical attributes of children is surprising.

H₄: *Regardless of the gender of the main character parental portrayals will be the same.*

Gender of the character was hypothesized to have no effect on parental portrayals. This fourth hypothesis of no difference was also rejected. Based on cross-tabulations, mothers were more likely to discipline, care for, nurture and provide for sons and more likely to act as companions to daughters. Fathers were more likely to care for sons but discipline and act as companions for daughters. Multinomial logistic regressions revealed that mothers with daughters are more than two times as likely to be present but inactive in the disciplining, nurturing and providing roles (i.e., 2.16, 3.45, and 2.13, respectively) than to be absent from the text. Fathers were likely to be present but inactive in their care-giving role when they had daughters. Thus, the parents of daughters are more often present, but they are often inactive in parenting.

Fathers were about two and one-half (i.e., 2.49) times as likely to nurture and about three and one-half (i.e., 3.56) times as likely to provide for daughters than to be absent from the text. The regression analyses that assessed traditional and non-traditional role behaviors showed that mothers are more likely to behave only traditionally when they had sons. Since books that portray *both* parents are more likely to have a female child character (see Table 8), and since fathers rarely appear in books without a mother character, strong father-son relationships seem especially rare in children's books. These findings may be representative of sexist ideology that "weaker" girls are in greater need of a father's protection and that boys are much more able to

deal with independence. Still, the levels of inactivity of present parents seem to indicate that both male and female child characters are in need of more *involved* parenting.

H₅: *Parental portrayals will be more traditional and less egalitarian in books on the Publisher's Weekly All-time Bestselling List*

Many of the books that have garnered all-time bestselling status are classics that were first published in the early 1900s. As such it was hypothesized that those books that appeared on the *Publisher's Weekly All-Time Bestselling List* would portray parents more traditionally. Unfortunately, there were not enough books in this sample that appeared on the bestselling list so the variable was not included in regression analysis. Nonetheless, cross-tabulations revealed mothers in bestsellers were more likely to act as caregivers than they were in books not on this bestselling list. As many of these bestsellers are classics and were published in the early decades of the 20th century when the care-giving role was expected of mothers, this result is not surprising.

Fathers in bestsellers were more likely to act as caregivers, but less likely to act as disciplinarians, nurturers, providers and companions. Father role portrayals in bestsellers need further study as these initial results are difficult to explain. If traditional roles are expected in these mostly early publications, the fact that fathers are more likely to be caregivers in bestsellers is an anomaly. Cell frequencies were limited and these findings may more closely reflect the absence of fathers in earlier works rather than their activity or inactivity. Therefore, the father role in bestsellers needs further examination, but based on the role portrayals of mothers, there is initial support for the hypothesis and, therefore, it cannot be rejected.

H₆: *Parental portrayals will not differ depending upon whether the book was an award-winning text.*

The final hypothesis predicted that parental portrayals in award-winning books would not differ from portrayals in non-award winning texts. Unfortunately, there were not enough award-winning texts to use the variable in regression analysis. Cell frequencies were low, but cross-tabulations suggest mothers are more likely to act as caregivers in award-winning texts. It was also revealed that award-winners are less likely to have a child character or a parental character than books that have not won awards. Previous gender studies of award-winning children's books reveal gender-specific behaviors (Clark et al., 1993; Weitzman et al., 1972) but the research gathered from this study does not empirically support those previous studies. Of perhaps greater concern is the lack of parental characters in award-winning texts. Additional studies with larger samples of award winners to examine the presence and roles of parents are warranted. If the absence of parental characters is further supported, perhaps examination of the standards used to justify awarding texts needs to be conducted. Though further comparative studies are needed, based on these limited findings the hypothesis of no difference is rejected.

Secondary analyses included examining the types of jobs mothers and fathers had in children's books. Only ten books in the sample had mothers who worked outside the home. Thirty-two books had employed fathers. While this represents a greater likelihood of fathers being employed, there was not enough variance in the *types* of occupations to determine if the scope of opportunity was smaller for women. It is noteworthy, however that half the mothers had jobs in conjunction with their husbands rather than independent of them. Thus, strong portrayals of working mothers are extremely rare in children's picture books.

Parental incompetence was determined to be a common theme, but a more focused study is needed to assess factors that may affect portrayals of incompetence. The question required subjectivity and as such was challenging to analyze. The absence of parents during certain child events could be considered incompetence. Some may consider parents incompetent for accidentally turning their backs when something happened while others might believe incompetence is more purposeful, like sending a child out in a storm. To effectively assess incompetence a detailed and focused study needs to be undertaken. This study did reveal that the theme of incompetence is prevalent with more than 10 % of both mothers and fathers behaving incompetently in children's books. Portraying parents as incompetent is potentially more damaging to a child's socialization than is the absence of parental characters.

Finally, a common theme of childhood adventures without adult supervision emerged. Based on cross-tabulations and regression analyses, both the time of publication and the sex of the author had significant effects on the presence of solo adventures and their potential danger. Cross-tabulation analysis revealed the percentage of solo adventures and dangerous adventures increased significantly in the 1990s, but appear to have had a dramatic decrease in books published in 2000. Multinomial logistic regression analysis revealed that male authors are over two times as likely (i.e., 2.22) as female authors to include a child adventure without adult presence in their texts, and they are 80 % less likely to depict danger-free adventures than are female authors. Cross-tabulation also reveals that the race of a child affects the portrayals of adventure. White child characters appear to be placed in greater danger in picture storybooks as they are more likely to partake in solo and dangerous adventures than are non-White children. The potential effects these recurring themes of danger have on children are unclear. Perhaps they encourage independence or perhaps they warn against it. The outcomes of such plots may show

children the need for parental presence and control, or they may show children success can be achieved without parents. They may foster the imagination or foster nightmares. Further study is needed to determine if such a common theme is detrimental to a child's socialization and emotional growth.

Study Limitations

The validity and reliability of a survey instrument is of great concern to researchers; therefore every attempt was made to achieve reliability. Several pretests of the survey instrument and a test-retest design to verify reproducibility in data collection were employed to insure reliability. Still, a few elements of this investigation were particularly subjective, namely parental incompetence and the danger associated with adventures without parental presence.

The data set of books obtained from the *Children's Catalog* (H.W. Wilson Co., 2001) includes texts recommended by librarians and may not represent the most widely read, and therefore the most influential, children's literature. Furthermore, acclaimed books may exclude many books with negative portrayals. Perhaps best-selling texts would prove more revealing, but since the sample used in this analysis was stratified by *time of publication*, and since best-selling children's literature lists have been historically inconsistent in their creation, using solely bestsellers was not a possibility. Attempts were made to examine those bestsellers and award-winners included in this sample, but there were not enough of either to prove significant effects.

Upon explaining the purpose of this study to friends and colleagues, recommendation of picture books representing positive and diverse parental portrayals were frequently offered. These recommended books were invariably part of a relatively new crop of books targeting schools and early childhood educators. Books presenting various issues, including divorce, same-sex parents, adoption and occupational opportunities have become increasingly popular in

preschool and elementary school classrooms. Perhaps sampling and evaluating parental roles in such books would garner different results.

Almost one-sixth of the sample was immediately lost when 49 of the original 300 books were removed from the analysis because they lacked a child character. Furthermore, of the 251 texts that remained only 177 had mother characters and 128 had father characters. Though analyzing child and parental presence proved revealing, a large cross-section of books were discarded. Perhaps a way of sampling only from books that included a parental character would have garnered greater evidence of role evolution.

Finally, this is perhaps the first study to examine parental roles in children's literature. As such, it may be limited conceptually and operationally in ways that may not be revealed until similar investigations are conducted.

Recommendations

The application of identity theory to interpreting the findings raises a number of concerns. These concerns suggest a number of recommendations directed toward the authors and publishers of these books and the consumers, especially parents, who purchase them.

If, as identity theory posits, people develop their identities through the observation and adopting of behaviors associated with the role performances of others, then authors and publishers of children's literature need to be more sensitive to the portrayal of parents in their works, as these books act as a major agent of early socialization and can reinforce gender-specific behaviors even for the adults who read these books to children. If parents are consistently portrayed in stereotyped roles, then readers who identify with the mother or father role will be limited by what they consider their "expected" behaviors.

First, the sheer absence of parents in picture books needs to be addressed. Children's picture books have the potential to be powerful and positive influences on identity acquisition, but with the limited representation of parents, that potential is neglected. While children's book publishing today is a business, and while publishers and authors may realize a giant, talking dog sells more than a strong father-son relationship, strong parental portrayals need to be woven into more plots.

Secondly, these parental portrayals need to reflect *active* and *quality* parenting. When present in the texts, too many parental characters are mere props in illustrations and are not actively involved in the child characters' lives. If an individual develops his identity through the observation of language and behavior, based on many of these parental portrayals he may conclude a parent's role is inactive and unimportant. Attentive parents, portrayed as caregivers, nurturers, and companions, need greater representation.

Child characters of different races and ethnicities lack both representation and involved parents. Non-White characters may be more likely to have a parent represented in the text, but the parent is often an inactive prop. White characters may get attention when there is a parent in the text, but they are less likely to have a parent represented. Furthermore, when parents are portrayed, they are often shown as incompetent or contributing to the "messes" their children get into. These negative portrayals should be minimized due to their potential to negatively impact identity acquisition.

Working mothers in children's literature with occupations that depict greater independence and diversity may be stronger role models for young readers. This is particularly important for the identity acquisition of young girls. Books rarely depict the vast options available to women in *both* the public and private spheres.

Finally, fantastic childhood adventures without parental presence may sell books, but these children need to experience consequences and not positive reinforcement for their actions. Young readers should not consistently see stories of profit through deviance.

If the publisher purposefully targets the consumer, than those who purchase children's books (e.g., parents, relatives, and library personnel) must also take responsibility. Consumers often purchase classic children's books, remembering reading them in their own childhood. These classics often lack strong parental portrayals. Books with media tie-ins (e.g., Elmo, Clifford, Eloise, Curious George, etc) also frequently lack parental characters. Both backlisted classics and these mass-marketed texts overshadow recent publications with strong parent-child relationships. Consumers, recognizing the social impact these books can have on children, should be proactive in choosing books that represent positive character portrayals.

Future Research

Further research is needed to explore the influence of a book's *year of publication, sex of the author, sex of the child character, race of the child character, award-winning status, and best-selling status* on parental roles of *companion, disciplinarian, caregiver, nurturer, and provider*. Although studies have addressed these parental roles most often as they pertain to human subjects, there has not been enough focus on media portrayals, and particularly on those media that target young children during socialization. Examining parental role portrayals in other media (e.g., film, television shows, novels) or targeting different audiences (e.g., teenagers) may provide additional support for the findings of this investigation.

Exploring other sampling frames of children's picture storybooks is warranted. Books recommended by early childhood educators and used in schools often deal with family issues.

Analyzing a data set of these texts may reveal very different findings as many of these books appear to respond to some of the recommendations made earlier. Additionally, collecting a sample of best-selling texts is complicated by the fact that best-selling children's book lists have been historically inconsistent in their creation and distribution. Still, as these books are arguably of greater influence due to their popularity, if a comprehensive sample can be gathered, its analysis may prove illuminating. Finally, applying similar analysis to a sample of award-winning texts would most likely garner greater validity than did the examination of a small group of award winners in this study.

Due to the unusually high correlation between the increased presence of parents, particularly fathers, over time and the increased role behaviors observed, future research should examine whether roles are truly evolving or whether parental characters have just appeared more often. The level of parental activity should also be examined as many parents were present but inactive in texts. Attempts were initially made to create index variables of parental behaviors, essentially assigning scores to parents based on the number of performed behaviors that comprise each role. Unfortunately, *multiple* parental behaviors were far too rare to index. Perhaps assessing other media that allow for greater character development will allow for assigning and analyzing levels of parental activity.

The secondary analyses that examined the employment of mother characters, the prevalence of parental incompetence, and the solo and dangerous child adventures in children's books were exploratory in nature. Each analysis proved revealing. Still, additional research is warranted to develop ways of better assessing the commonality of such qualitative themes.

Finally, examining parental roles as portrayed in children's media would prove inconsequential without evidence of the *effect* consistent exposure to these roles has on children

and the parents who read to them. While there are countless challenges inherent with assessing long-term effects literary portrayals have on children, ground-breaking studies in the 1970s and 1980s showed powerful and immediate effects gender-specific literature had on children, particularly girls (Ashton, 1983; Barclay, 1975; Jennings, 1975). Furthermore, examining effects gender-specific roles have on reinforcing the roles of the adults who read these books to children also needs analysis. Contemporary studies of the effects of gender-specific portrayals in children's media are warranted.

Conclusion

The findings of this investigation indicate that while the presence of certain parental role behaviors in children's picture storybooks have increased over time, only the roles of fathers have been portrayed more "progressively" (though much of this progress may be explained away by the increased presence of father characters). Parental portrayals do, in fact, differ based on both the sex of the child and the child's race or species (i.e., animal character). Award-winning texts and best-selling texts portrayed parents differently than books that did not achieve such honors, though most did not provide enough information to adequately assess parenting roles. The sex of the author had no significant influence on parental characters' role behaviors.

The secondary analyses revealed mothers are rarely employed, particularly independently of their husbands, in children's picture books. Parental incompetence in care-giving seems to be a common theme, which is compounded by the even more popular theme of dangerous childhood adventures without parental presence.

Too often in the media parents are portrayed as incompetent and often with less common sense than their own children. While parental role portrayals in children's books have evolved in

some respect over time, a more concerted effort on the part of authors to present strong parent role models is necessary. Children who are exposed to these books during the most prime years of socialization learn of their expected future roles as adults. Exposure to mothers and fathers who are stellar examples of good parents, balancing both public and private lives, is essential for children to establish their own paths for the future.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Questionnaire: Parental Roles in Children's Literature

Complete a questionnaire for each book. Read the text and answer the following questions. Refer to both the narrative and the illustrations in your analysis. Feel free to use the margins or the space provided to detail any thoughts, quote key elements of text, or express any concerns about responses.

A. **TITLE:** _____

B. **AUTHOR:** _____

C. **YEAR OF FIRST PUBLICATION:** _____

D. **SEX OF AUTHOR(S):** ___ 1. Male ___ 2. Female ___ 3. More than one author of both sexes

E. **WHICH AWARD, IF ANY, DID THIS BOOK WIN:** ___ 1. Caldecott Medal; ___ 2. Caldecott Honor; ___ 3. Coretta Scott King; ___ 4. Newberry; ___ 5. Other: _____

F. **THERE IS AN ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION IN THE TEXT** ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No

G. **DOES THE BOOK APPEAR ON THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY ALL-TIME BEST-SELLING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE LIST:** ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No

H. **RACE OF CHILD(REN):**

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. White/Caucasian | ___ 5. Other: _____ |
| ___ 2. Black/African-American | ___ 6. More than one: _____ |
| ___ 3. Asian | ___ 7. character is not human |
| ___ 4. American Indian | ___ 8. There is no child (human or animal) in the text
(explain at end of questionnaire) |

I. **SEX OF CHILD(REN):** ___ 1. Male ___ 2. Female ___ 3. Characters are of both sexes
___ 4. Unknown

J. **IS THE CHARACTER'S MOTHER PRESENT?**

- ___ 1. Yes, and the mother has a major role
___ 2. Yes, and the mother has a minor role ("cameo performance"; non-pivotal role with limited dialogue)
___ 3. Yes, but her presence is only mentioned/shown
___ 4. No, it is stated that she is living separately (i.e. divorce)
___ 5. No, it is stated that she is deceased
___ 6. No, she is neither mentioned nor does she play a role (Skip to question "Q")
___ 7. Other: _____

K. **IS THERE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THIS IS NOT THE BIOLOGICAL MOTHER?**

- ___ No ___ Yes (Explain relationship _____)

L. **DOES THE MOTHER EVER (check all that apply):**

- ___ 1. Spank/hit/slap the child as punishment
___ 2. Slap/hit the child to prevent harm
___ 3. Give the child non-physical punishments (i.e. grounding, going to room, etc.)
___ 4. Verbally scold the child
___ 5. Correct bad behavior with non-threatening tone

Describe disciplining behaviors _____

M DOES THE MOTHER EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Physically express affection for the child (i.e. hug, kiss, pat, etc.)
- 2. Verbally express affection for the child (i.e. say "I love you")
- 3. Verbally encourage the child
- 4. Comfort the child emotionally
- 5. Inquire about the child's feelings or thoughts
- 6. Praise the child for a completed task/activity ("job well done")
- 7. Listen to the child's problems
- 8. Purposefully teach the child

Describe nurturing behaviors _____

N. IS THE MOTHER IN THE STORY SHOWN WORKING TO PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN A JOB OTHER THAN HOMEMAKER

1. Yes 2. No Occupation (if stated): _____

O. DOES THE MOTHER EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Prepare meals for and/or feed the child
- 2. Clean the child (bathe, change diapers, etc.)
- 3. Pick out clothes and/or dress the child
- 4. Other example(s) of care giving: _____
- 5. Demonstrate incompetence in providing care: _____

Describe care-giving behaviors _____

P. DOES THE MOTHER EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Take the child on a recreational outing (museum, zoo, park, etc.)
- 2. Participate in non-physical play with the child (peek-a-boo, board game, etc)
- 3. Participate in physical play with the child (sports, rough-and-tumble, etc.)

Describe companion behaviors _____

Q. IS THE CHARACTER'S FATHER PRESENT?

- 1. Yes, and the father has a major role
- 2. Yes, and the father has a minor role ("cameo performance"; non-pivotal role with limited dialogue)
- 3. Yes, but his presence is only mentioned/shown
- 4. No, it is stated that he is living separately (i.e. divorce)
- 5. No, it is stated that he is deceased
- 6. No, he is neither mentioned nor does he play a role (Skip to question "X")
- 7. Other: _____

R. IS THERE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THIS IS NOT THE BIOLOGICAL FATHER?

- No Yes (Explain relationship _____)

S. DOES THE FATHER EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Spank/hit/slap the child as punishment
- 2. Slap/hit the child to prevent harm
- 3. Give the child non-physical punishments (i.e. grounding, going to room, etc.)
- 4. Verbally scold the child
- 5. Correct bad behavior with non-threatening tone

Describe disciplining behaviors _____

T. DOES THE FATHER EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Physically express affection for the child (i.e. hug, kiss, pat, etc.)
- 2. Verbally express affection for the child (i.e. say "I love you")
- 3. Verbally encourage the child
- 4. Comfort the child emotionally
- 5. Inquire about the child's feelings or thoughts
- 6. Praise the child for a completed task/activity ("job well done")
- 7. Listen to the child's problems
- 8. Purposefully teach the child

Describe nurturing behaviors _____

U. IS THE FATHER IN THE STORY SHOWN WORKING TO PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES?

1. Yes 2. No Occupation (if stated): _____

V. DOES THE FATHER IN THE STORY EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Prepare meals for and/or feed the child
- 2. Clean the child (bathe, change diapers, etc.)
- 3. Pick out clothes and/or dress the child
- 4. Other example(s) of care giving: _____
- 5. Demonstrate incompetence in providing care: _____

Describe care-giving behaviors _____

W. DOES THE FATHER IN THE STORY (check all that apply):

- 1. Take the child on a recreational outing (museum, zoo, park, etc.)
- 2. Participate in non-physical play with the child (peek-a-boo, board game, etc.)
- 3. Participate in physical play with the child (sports, rough-and-tumble, etc.)

Describe companion behaviors _____

X. IS A SIGNIFICANT ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION FEATURED OTHER THAN THAT OF PARENT AND CHILD Yes No (If no, skip to "EE") If so, what is the adult's relationship to the child (i.e. grandparent, teacher): _____

Y. SEX OF THE NON-PARENT ADULT: 1. Male 2. Female

Z. DOES THIS NON-PARENT ADULT EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Spank/hit/slap the child as punishment
- 2. Slap/hit the child to prevent harm
- 3. Give the child non-physical punishments (i.e. grounding, going to room, etc.)
- 4. Verbally scold the child
- 5. Correct bad behavior with non-threatening tone

Describe disciplining behaviors _____

AA DOES THIS NON-PARENT ADULT EVER (check all that apply):

- 1. Physically express affection for the child (i.e. hug, kiss, pat, etc.)
- 2. Verbally express affection for the child (i.e. say "I love you")
- 3. Verbally encourage the child
- 4. Comfort the child emotionally
- 5. Inquire about the child's feelings or thoughts
- 6. Praise the child for a completed task/activity ("job well done")
- 7. Listen to the child's problems
- 8. Purposefully teach the child

Describe nurturing behaviors _____

BB IS THE OCCUPATION OF THIS NON-PARENT ADULT IDENTIFIED?

1. Yes 2. No Occupation (if stated): _____

CC DOES THIS NON-PARENT ADULT EVER:

- 1. Prepare meals for and/or feed the child
- 2. Clean the child (bathe, change diapers, etc.)
- 3. Pick out clothes and/or dress the child
- 4. Other example(s) of care giving: _____
- 5. Demonstrate incompetence in providing care: _____

Describe care-giving behaviors _____

DD DOES THIS NON-PARENT ADULT EVER:

- 1. Take the child on a recreational outing (museum, zoo, park, etc.)
- 2. Participate in non-physical play with the child (peek-a-boo, board game, etc)
- 3. Participate in physical play with the child (sports, rough-and-tumble, etc.)

Describe companion behaviors _____

EE DOES THE CHILD HAVE AN ADVENTURE WITHOUT AN ADULT PRESENT?

1. Yes 2. No (Skip to GG) If yes, explain: _____

FF IS THE ADVENTURE DANGEROUS OR POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS?

1. Yes 2. No If yes, explain: _____

GG IF INDICATED, IN WHAT GEOGRAPHICAL REGION (i.e. country, state, continent) IS THE STORY SET? _____

IS A PARTICULAR CULTURE FEATURED (i.e. American Indian, Jewish, etc.) _____

IS THE BOOK SET IN A PARTICULAR TIME PERIOD? _____

(Many books have generic settings and could potentially take place anywhere, so please provide the setting/culture/time period only if it is clearly made known)

HH. Additional comments: _____

APPENDIX B

LIST OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS USED IN ANALYSIS

AUTHOR	TITLE	YEAR
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Peter Rabbit	1903
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin	1903
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Two Bad Mice	1904
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle	1905
Potter, Beatrix	The Story of Miss Moppet	1906
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher	1906
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Jemima Puddle-duck	1908
Ivimey, John W.	The Complete Story of the Three Blind Mice	1909
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse	1910
Sandburg, Carl	The Huckabuck Family and How they Raised Popcorn...	1923
Gag, Wanda	Millions of Cats	1928
Piper, Watty	The Little Engine that Could	1930
Brunhoff, Jean de	The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant	1931
Ardizzone, Edward	Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain	1936
Burton, Virginia Lee	Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel	1939
Heyward, DuBose	The Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes	1939
Seuss, Dr	Horton Hatches the Egg	1940
McCloskey, Robert	Make Way For Ducklings	1941
Brown, Margaret Wise	The Runaway Bunny	1942
Burton, Virginia Lee	The Little House	1942
Brown, Margaret Wise	A Child's Good Night Book	1943
Krauss, Ruth	The Carrot Seed	1945
Brown, Margaret Wise	Goodnight Moon	1947
Tresselt, Alvin R.	White Snow, Bright Snow	1947
McCloskey, Robert	Blueberries for Sal	1948
Politi, Leo	Song of the Swallows	1949
Seuss, Dr	Bartholomew and the Oobleck	1949
Seuss, Dr	If I Ran the Zoo	1950
McCloskey, Robert	One Morning in May	1952
Ward, Lynd Kendall	The Biggest Bear	1952
Bemelmans, Ludwig	Madeline's Rescue	1953
Thayer, Jane	The Popcorn Dragon	1953
Seuss, Dr	Horton Hears a Who!	1954
Ets, Marie Hall	Play With Me	1955
Iwamatsu, Atushi Jun	Crow Boy	1955
Johnson, Crockett	Harold and the Purple Crayon	1955
Thompson, Kay	Kay Thompson's Eloise	1955
Brown, Margaret Wise	Big Red Barn	1956
Lamorrisse, Albert	The Red Balloon	1956
Seuss, Dr	If I Ran the Circus	1956
Udry, Janice May	A Tree is Nice	1956
Zion, Gene	Harry the Dirty Dog	1956
Minarik, Else Holmelund	Little Bear	1957
Seuss, Dr	The Cat in the Hat	1957
Seuss, Dr	How the Grinch Stole Christmas	1957
Tresselt, Alvin R.	Wake up, city!	1957
Cooney, Barbara	Chanticleer and the Fox	1958
Minarik, Else Holmelund	No Fighting, No Biting!	1958

Buckley, Helen E.	Grandfather and I	1959
Zolotow, Charlotte	The Bunny Who Found Easter	1959
Eastman, P.D. (Philip D.)	Are You My Mother?	1960
Hoban, Russell	Bedtime for Frances	1960
Hoff, Syd	Oliver	1960
Keats, Ezra Jack	My Dog is Lost	1960
Lionni, Leo	Inch by Inch	1960
Sendak, Maurice	The Sign on Rosie's Door	1960
Seuss, Dr	Green Eggs and Ham	1960
Brown, Margaret Wise	Four Fur Feet	1961
Brown, Margaret Wise	On Christmas Eve	1961
Buckley, Helen E.	Granmother and I	1961
Lindgren, Astrid	The Tomten	1961
Peet, Bill	Huge Harold	1961
Showers, Paul	The Listening Walk	1961
Bonsall, Crosby Newell	Who's a Pest	1962
Keats, Ezra Jack	The Snowy Day	1962
Sendak, Maurice	Pierre	1962
Ungerer, Tomi	The Three Robbers	1962
Zolotow, Charlotte	Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present	1962
Zolotow, Charlotte	When the Wind Stops	1962
Bonsall, Crosby Newell	The Case of the Hungry Stranger	1963
Lexau, Joan M.	Go Away, Dog!	1963
Lexau, Joan M.	Who Took the Farmer's Hat	1963
Lionni, Leo	Swimmy	1963
Parish, Peggy	Amelia Bedelia	1963
Sendak, Maurice	Where the Wild Things Are	1963
Zolotow, Charlotte	The Quarreling Book	1963
De Regniers, Beatrice Schenk	May I Bring a Friend?	1964
Freeman, Don	Dandelion	1964
Scheer, Julian	Rain Makes Applesauce	1964
Balian, Lorna	Humbug Witch	1965
Ets, Marie Hall	Just Me	1965
Tresselt, Alvin R.	Hide and Seek Fog	1965
Waber, Bernard	Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile	1965
Kessler, Leonard P.	Kick, Pass and Run	1966
Martin, Bill	Knots on a Counting Rope	1966
Udry, Janice May	What Mary Jo Shared	1966
Lionni, Leo	Frederick	1967
Martin, Bill	Brown Bear, Brown Bear What do you See?	1967
Benchley, Nathaniel	A Ghost Named Fred	1968
Freeman, Don	Corduroy	1968
Lionni, Leo	The Biggest House in the World	1968
Mayer, Mercer	There's a Nightmare in My Closet	1968
Alexander, Martha G.	Blackboard Bear	1969
Blume, Judy	The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo	1969
Kessler, Leonard P.	Last One in is a Rotten Egg	1969
Lionni, Leo	Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse	1969
Lobel, Arnold	Small Pig	1969
Skorpen, Liesel Moak	We Were Tired of Living in a House	1969
Steig, William	Sylvester and the Magic Pebble	1969
Zolotow, Charlotte	The Hating Book	1969

Burningham, John	Mr. Gumpy's Outing	1970
Carle, Eric	The Very Hungry Caterpillar	1970
Keats, Ezra Jack	Hi, Cat!	1970
Kraus, Robert	Whose Mouse are You?	1970
Lobel, Arnold	Frog and Toad are Friends	1970
Monjo, F.N.	The Drinking Gourd: A Story of the Underground Railroad	1970
Peet, Bill	The Whingdingdilly	1970
Segal, Lore Groszmann	Tell me a Mitzi	1970
Sendak, Maurice	In the Night Kitchen	1970
Waber, Bernard	A Firefly Named Torchy	1970
Duran, Cheli	Hildilid's Night	1971
Viorst, Judith	The Tenth Good Thing About Barney	1971
Bonsall, Crosby Newell	The Day I Had to Play With My Sister	1972
Ginsburg, Mirra	The Chick and the Duckling	1972
Hutchins, Pat	Good-Night Owl!	1972
Lobel, Arnold	Mouse Tales	1972
Marshall, James	George and Martha	1972
McPhail, David M.	The Bear's Toothache	1972
Scott, Ann Herbert	On Mother's Lap	1972
Viorst, Judith	Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day	1972
Waber, Bernard	Ira Sleeps Over	1972
Zolotow, Charlotte	The Beautiful Christmas Tree	1972
Zolotow, Charlotte	The Old Dog	1972
Briggs, Raymond	Father Christmas	1973
Marshall, James	Yummers!	1973
Wells, Rosemary	Noisy Nora	1973
Pomerantz, Charlotte	The Piggy in the Puddle	1974
Charlip, Remy	Hooray for Me!	1975
Lionni, Leo	A Color of His Own	1975
Wells, Rosemary	Morris's Disappearing Bag	1975
Adams, Adrienne	The Easter Egg Artists	1976
Blood, Charles L.	The Goat in the Rug	1976
Brown, Marc Tolon	Arthur's Nose	1976
Carrick, Carol	The Accident	1976
Isadora, Rachel	Max	1976
Kellogg, Steven	Much Bigger Than Martin	1976
Allard, Harry	Miss Nelson is Missing!	1977
Clifton, Lucille	Everett Anderson's 1-2-3	1977
Hughes, Shirley	Dogger	1977
Kellogg, Steven	The Mysterious Tadpole	1977
Lobel, Arnold	Mouse Soup	1977
Ahlberg, Janet and Allan	Each Peach Pear Plum	1978
Crews, Donald	Freight Train	1978
Lobel, Arnold	Grasshopper on the Road	1978
Peet, Bill	Eli	1978
Alexander, Martha G.	When the New Baby Comes, I'm Moving Out	1979
Allard, Harry	Bumps in the Night	1979
Calhoun, Mary	Cross-Country Cat	1979
Kellogg, Steven	Pinkerton, Behave!	1979
Van Leeuwen, Jean	Tales of Oliver Pig	1979
Bonsall, Crosby Newell	Who's Afraid of the Dark?	1980
Kesselman, Wendy Ann	Emma	1980

McPhail, David M.	Pig Pig Grows Up	1980
Murphy, Jill	Peace at Last	1980
Noble, Trinkia Hakes	The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash	1980
Ross, Pat	Meet M and M	1980
Sharmat, Mitchell	Gregory, the Terrible Eater	1980
Kalan, Robert	Jump, Frog, Jump!	1981
Koide, Tan	May We Sleep Here Tonight	1981
Van Allsburg, Chris	Jumanji	1981
Aliki	We Are Best Friends	1982
Caines, Jeannette Franklin	Just us Women	1982
Cooney, Barbara	Miss Rumphius	1982
Rylant, Cynthia	When I was Young in the Mountains	1982
Van Allsburg, Chris	Ben's Dream	1982
Holabird, Katharine	Angelina Ballerina	1983
Carle, Eric	The Very Busy Spider	1984
Gibbons, Gail	The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree	1984
Hurd, Thacher	Mama Don't Allow; Starring Miles and the Swamp Band	1984
Jonas, Ann	The Quilt	1984
Most, Bernard	Whatever Happened to the Dinosaurs?	1984
Wood, Audrey	The Napping House	1984
Brett, Jan	Annie and the Wild Animals	1985
Daly, Niki	Not so Fast	1985
Joyce, William	George Shrinks	1985
Dragonwagon, Crescent	Half a Moon and One Whole Star	1986
Fox, Mem	Hattie and the Fox	1986
Martin, Bill	Barn Dance!	1986
Steig, William	Brave Irene	1986
Ziefert, Harriet	A New Coat for Anna	1986
Carle, Eric	A House for Hermit Crab	1987
De Paola, Tomie	An Early American Christmas	1987
Gerstein, Mordicai	The Mountains of Tibet	1987
Loh, Morag Jeanette	Tucking Mommy In	1987
Noble, Trinkia Hakes	Meanwhile Back at the Ranch	1987
Rockwell, Anne F.	At the Beach	1987
Bunting, Eve	How Many Days to America: A Thanksgiving Story	1988
Carlson, Nancy L.	I Like Me!	1988
Coerr, Eleanor	Chang's Paper Pony	1988
Cohen, Miriam	It's George!	1988
Fleishman, Sid	The Scarebird	1988
Fox, Mem	Koala Lou	1988
Greenfield, Eloise	Grandpa's Face	1988
Hayes, Sarah	Eat Up, Gemma	1988
McKissack, Patricia C.	Mirandy and Brother Wind	1988
Winter, Jeanette	Follow the Drinking Gourd	1988
Florian, Douglas	Turtle Day	1989
Kimmel, Eric A.	Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins	1989
Schotter, Roni	Captain Snap and the Children of Vinegar Lane	1989
Schroeder, Alan	Ragtime Tumpie	1989
Goble, Paul	Dream Wolf	1990
Henkes, Kevin	Julius, The Baby of the World	1990
Khalsa, Dayal Kaur	Cowboy Dreams	1990
Marzollo, Jean	Pretend You're a Cat	1990

Polacco, Patricia	Just Plain Fancy	1990
Aylesworth, Jim	Country Crossing	1991
McDonald, Megan	The Potato Man	1991
Van Allsburg, Chris	The Wretched Stone	1991
Emberley, Ed	Go Away, Big green Monster!	1992
Osofsky, Audrey	Dreamcatcher	1992
Spier, Peter	Peter Spier's Circus!	1992
Auch, Mary Jane	Peeping Beauty	1993
De Paola, Tomie	Tom	1993
Dorros, Arthur	Radio Man	1993
Johnson, Angela	Julius	1993
McMillan, Bruce	Mouse Views: What the Class Pet Saw	1993
Rosenburg, Liz	Monster Mama	1993
Seymour, Tres	Hunting the White Cow	1993
Siebert, Diane	Plane Song	1993
Sis, Peter	Komodo!	1993
Uchida, Yoshiko	The Bracelet	1993
Wild, Margaret	Our Granny	1993
Wolff, Ashley	Stella and Roy	1993
Martin, Bill	The Maestro Plays	1994
Vaughan, Marcia	Snap!	1994
Chinn, Karen	Sam and the Lucky Money	1995
Glass, Andrew	Folks Call Me Appleseed John	1995
Hindley, Judy	The Big Red Bus	1995
Schertle, Alice	Down the Road	1995
Vaughan, Marcia	Whistling Dixie	1995
Martin, Jacqueline Briggs	Grandmother Bryant's Pocket	1996
Newcome, Zita	Toddlerobics	1996
Ormerod, Jan	Ms MacDonald Has a Class	1996
Rylant, Cynthia	The Old Woman Who Named Things	1996
Blake, Quentin	Mrs. Armitage and the Big Wave	1997
Greenberg, David	Bugs!	1997
Miranda, Anne	To Market, To Market	1997
Numeroff, Laura Joffe	The Chicken Sisters	1997
Williams, Vera B.	Lucky Song	1997
Brissom, Pat	The Summer My Father Was Ten	1998
Chanbers, Veronica	Amistad Rising	1998
McCully, Emily Arnold	Beautiful Warrior	1998
Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie	Elizabeth's Doll	1998
Asch, Frank	Baby Bird's First Nest	1999
James Betsy	Tadpoles	1999
Rockwell, Anne F.	Thanksgiving Day	1999
Sis, Peter	Trucks, Trucks, Trucks	1999
Taback, Simms	Joseph Had a Little Overcoat	1999
Teague, Mark	One Halloween Night	1999
Tsubakiyama, Margaret	Mei-Mei Loves the Morning	1999
Alborough, Jez	Duck in the Truck	2000
Banks, Kate	The Night Worker	2000
Barner, Bob	Fish Wish	2000
Bogacki, Tomek	My First Garden	2000
Bradby, Marie	Momma, Where are you From?	2000
Bynum Janie	Otis	2000

Carrick, Carol	Mothers are Like that	2000
Chorao, Kay	Pig and Crow	2000
Collier, Bryan	Uptown	2000
Cronin, Doreen	Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type	2000
Demi	The Emperor's New Clothes: A Tale Set in China	2000
Dunrea, Olivier	Bear Noel	2000
Ernst, Lisa Campbell	Goldilocks Returns	2000
Faulkner, Matt	Black Belt	2000
Godard, Alex	Mama, Across the Sea	2000
Haas, Jessie	Hurry!	2000
Henkes, Kevin	Wemberly Worried	2000
Hest, Amy	Mabel Dancing	2000
Hooper, Meredith	River Story	2000
Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald	Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys	2000
Huneck, Stephen	Sally Goes to the Beach	2000
Jocelyn, Marthe	Hannah's Collections	2000
Jonell, Lynne	Let's Play Rough	2000
Kaplan, Howard	Waiting to Sing	2000
Krudop, Walter	The Man Who Caught Fish	2000
Kuskin, Karla	I am Me	2000
Lewis, Kim	Little Calf	2000
London, Jonathan	Shawn and Keeper: Show and Tell	2000
London, Jonathan	Snuggle Wuggle	2000
Lyon, George Ella	One Lucky Girl	2000
Marshall, Janet Perry	A Honey of a Day	2000
McPhail, David M.	Drawing Lessons From a Bear	2000
Miller, Sara Swan	Three More Stories You Can Read to Your Dog	2000
Narahashi, Keiko	Two Girls Can!	2000
Nolen, Jerdine	Big Jabe	2000
Novak, Matt	Little Wolf, Big Wolf	2000
Paraskevas, Betty	On the Day the Tall Ships Sailed	2000
Rey, Margret	Whiteblack the Penguin Sees the World	2000
Rockwell, Anne F.	Career Day	2000
Stevenson, James	The Most Amazing Dinosaur	2000
Swope, Sam	Gotta Go! Gotta Go!	2000
Thomas, Shelley Moore	Good Night, Good Knight	2000
Uff, Caroline	Lulu's Busy Day	2000
Weston, Martha	Space Guys!	2000
Wild, Margaret	Tom Goes to Kindergarten	2000
Wong, Janet S.	Buzz	2000
Wood, Douglas	What Dads Can't Do	2000
Wormell, Mary	Why Not?	2000
Yolen, Jane	How do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight	2000
Ziefert, Harriet	Hats Off for the Fourth of July	2000

APPENDIX C
ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table C1

Cross-Tabulations of Independent Variables on Each Parent's Traditional Behaviors (Weighted N=1072)

	Traditional Mothering Behaviors Observed				Traditional Fathering Behaviors Observed			
	Mother Behaved <i>only</i> Traditionally	Mother Exhibited <i>any</i> Non-Traditional Behavior	Mother behaved <i>neither</i> Traditionally nor Non-Traditionally	Mother was not Present in the Text	Father Behaved <i>only</i> Traditionally	Father Exhibited <i>any</i> Non-Traditional Behavior	Father behaved <i>neither</i> Traditionally nor Non-Traditionally	Father was not Present in the Text
TOTAL	31.3 (79)	17.1 (42)	25.4 (56)	26.2 (74)	7.3 (15)	24.6 (62)	21.2 (51)	46.8 (123)
Time of Publication	<i>Row Percentage (frequency)</i>				<i>Row Percentage (frequency)</i>			
Pre-1970	23.6 (21)	13.6 (12)	28.2 (25)	34.6 (30)	4.5 (4)	11.8 (11)	22.4 (20)	61.3 (53)
1970-1989	33.4 (28)	23.1 (19)	17.7 (14)	25.8 (20)	4.8 (4)	29.9 (27)	22.4 (18)	42.9 (32)
1990-2000	31.8 (30)	15.1 (11)	28.2 (17)	24.9 (24)	8.9 (7)	24.9 (24)	20.5 (13)	45.7 (38)
χ^2 / Design-based F	5.73/.93				5.89/1.01			
Character's Race	<i>Row Percentage (frequency)</i>				<i>Row Percentage (frequency)</i>			
Non-Hispanic White	21.3 (29)	13.9 (17)	33.3 (33)	31.5 (41)	6.3 (9)	21.6 (23)	23.6 (30)	48.5 (58)
Non-White	43.1 (26)	18.9 (13)	18.2 (13)	19.8 (17)	11.1 (5)	25.9 (19)	22.3 (12)	40.7 (33)
Non-Human (Animal)	32.5 (24)	20.9 (12)	20.5 (10)	26.1 (16)	2.3 (1)	29.5 (20)	13.4 (9)	54.8 (32)
χ^2 / Design-based F	16.55/1.48				7.64/.72			
Character's Sex	<i>Row Percentage (frequency)</i>				<i>Row Percentage (frequency)</i>			
Male	35.1 (37)	22.7 (20)	18.4 (19)	23.8 (30)	9.8 (9)	21.3 (26)	17.8 (20)	51.1 (51)
Female	25.9 (16)	23.1 (12)	37.8 (17)	13.2 (16)	9.0 (3)	37.4 (19)	20.9 (10)	32.7 (29)
Neutral (Unknown or More Than One)	31.9 (26)	7.8 (10)	22.4 (20)	37.9 (28)	3.9 (3)	18.2 (17)	24.4 (21)	53.5 (43)
χ^2 / Design-based F	25.00/2.41**				14.47/1.22			
Male Author	22.3 (30)	19.8 (19)	32.7 (28)	25.3 (33)	10.4 (8)	18.1 (21)	22.5 (27)	49 (54)
Female Author	36.8 (49)	15.4 (23)	21 (28)	26.8 (41)	5.4 (7)	28.6 (41)	20.4 (24)	45.5 (69)
χ^2 / Design-based F	7.86/1.43				4.92/.84			
Bestseller	34.9 (8)	13.2 (3)	16.4 (4)	35.5 (6)	5.5 (1)	5.5 (1)	8.7 (2)	80.3 (17)
Not a Bestseller	31.2 (71)	17.2 (39)	25.7 (52)	25.9 (68)	7.4 (14)	25.3 (61)	21.7 (49)	45.6 (106)
χ^2 / Design-based F	.70/.47				4.23/2.91**			
Award Winner	30.6 (8)	7.6 (3)	11.1 (4)	50.8 (15)	2.7 (1)	4.9 (2)	36.3 (9)	56.1 (18)
No Award Won	31.3 (71)	17.6 (39)	26.2 (52)	24.8 (59)	7.6 (14)	25.8 (60)	20.3 (42)	46.3 (105)
χ^2 / Design-based F	5.33/3.13**				4.60/2.86**			

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

Table C2

Findings of Two Models Predicting Mothers' Traditional, Nontraditional, Inactive, or Absent Roles in Texts (Weighted N=1072)

Predictor	Mothering Behaviors Observed					
	Model 1			Model 2		
	Odds Ratio (SE)			Odds Ratio (SE)		
	Only Traditional Behaviors vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	Mother Present but Inactive vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	No Mother in Text vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	Only Traditional Behaviors vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	Mother Present but Inactive vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	No Mother in Text vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior
Time of Publication						
1970-1989	.83 (.41)	.38* (.19)	.44* (.21)	.70 (.36)	.37* (.22)	.39* (.21)
1990-2000	1.21 (.67)	.90 (.51)	.65 (.36)	.89 (.52)	.89 (.55)	.54 (.34)
Character's Race						
Non-White				1.19 (.77)	.32 (.23)	.35 (.23)
Non-Human (Animal)				.90 (.61)	.38 (.29)	.43 (.31)
Character's Sex						
Female				.52 (.33)	2.50 (1.66)	.52 (.33)
Neutral (Unknown or More Than One)				2.19 (1.48)	4.63** (3.41)	5.21** (3.53)
Male Author				.42 (.24)	1.30 (.78)	.57 (.33)
<i>F-test</i>		1.17			2.52****	
<i>df</i>		6; 240			21; 225	

Note: Books were coded “1” (only traditional) if the mother participated in non-physical play, nurtured, and/or gave direct care to the child and did not behave nontraditionally (as provider, disciplinarian, or companion in physical play). Books were coded “2” if nontraditional behaviors were observed, “3” if the mother was present but inactive and “4” if there was no mother. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively. The reference category is “nontraditional behavior.”
 * $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

Table C3

Findings of Two Models Predicting Fathers' Traditional, Nontraditional, Inactive, or Absent Roles in Texts. (Weighted N=1072)

Predictor	Fathering Behaviors Observed (N=251)					
	Model 1			Model 2		
	Odds Ratio (SE)			Odds Ratio (SE)		
	Only Traditional Behaviors vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	Father Present but Inactive vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	No Father in Text vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	Only Traditional Behaviors vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	Father Present but Inactive vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior	No Father in Text vs. Any Non-traditional Behavior
Time of Publication						
1970-1989	.41 (.34)	.39* (.20)	.28*** (.12)	.45 (.41)	.38* (.20)	.28*** (.13)
1990-2000	.93 (.73)	.43 (.24)	.35** (.16)	1.05 (.84)	.41 (.23)	.37** (.18)
Character's Race						
Non-White				2.42 (2.45)	.88 (.55)	.79 (.42)
Non-Human (Animal)				.27 (.33)	.36 (.26)	.68 (.39)
Character's Sex						
Female				.59 (.50)	.72 (.49)	.40* (.22)
Neutral (Unknown or More Than One)				.42 (.42)	1.80 (1.18)	1.37 (.73)
Male Author				3.95 (3.41)	1.67 (.92)	1.40 (.67)
<i>F-test</i>		1.78*			1.42*	
<i>df</i>		6; 240			21; 225	

Note: Books were coded “1” (only traditional) if the father participated in physical play, acted as provider, and/or disciplined the child and did not behave nontraditionally (as nurturer, caregiver, or companion in non-physical play). Books were coded “2” if nontraditional behaviors were observed, “3” if the father was present but inactive and “4” if there was no father. Omitted categories for the *time of publication*, *main character's race*, *main character's sex*, and *sex of author* are early years of publication (1900-1969), non-Hispanic White main character, male main character, and female author, respectively. The reference category is “nontraditional behavior.”

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. **** $p \leq .001$

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