HOW MALES ARE PORTRAYED IN REALISTIC JUVENILE FICTION
AND HOW THIS PORTRAYAL HAS CHANGED
OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS

by

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B.Ed., The University of Calgary, 1987

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Curriculum and Instruction)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
February 1995
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Date March 8, 1995.
This research investigated how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction and how this portrayal has changed over the past twenty years. A deconstructionist approach was taken to analyze the primary male characters in award winning realistic juvenile fiction.

The researcher used a three-step approach to analyze the primary male characters in the books. First, templates with identified characteristics were used to categorize various features of all the primary characters. Second, characteristics occurring repeatedly were identified, grouped and labeled. These were defined as "Codes" and are the areas through which primary characters are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. The codes identified were: "Conflict Resolution," "Emotions," "Race," "Relationships," and "Success." Third, features specific to primary male characters that were found within the codes were identified and discussed.

Results showed that male characters are portrayed in a positive light, but that this portrayal is narrow in its scope. Men are portrayed more narrowly and stereotypically than are boys. The change over the past twenty years has been minimal, but males have become more multidimensional in realistic juvenile fiction during the past ten years.
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I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Claire Staab, Department of Language Education. Dr. Staab was always there to support me in my studies and offer her assistance in countless ways. I am very grateful for her guidance in the writing of this thesis and support throughout my master's program.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Wendy Sutton for helping to guide my work in a direction I never thought possible. Her assistance was appreciated more than she will ever know.

My further appreciation is given to Dr. Carl Leggo, a man I both admire and respect. From our initial discussions to the final stages of my writing, Dr. Leggo was an inspiration for me to research in a way that was unfamiliar, but more satisfying than I could have ever imagined.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people I have come into contact with who have helped me look at our world in various ways. Far too many to mention, this includes many people at the University of British Columbia, and my friends from all over the globe.
DEDICATION

For my family. Without your continuous support, I could not have reached the goals I set for myself.
CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM

During the six years spent teaching in public schools, I put a strong emphasis on language arts in my classrooms. I put a great deal of time into choosing which books to present to my students because I feel the way situations and people are portrayed in literature affects a person's view of the world. I became particularly interested in how males are portrayed in literature because this area has not been well researched. Out of this concern, I decided to describe and analyze how male characters are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction and discuss how this portrayal has changed over the past twenty years.

Two years ago I became interested in antisexism and antiracism and tried to increase my awareness of how roles in our society are defined. In examining the sexism and racism that exists in society, I noticed that most of the research is situated within the oppressed groups themselves, and not within the groups that have power. I read studies that discussed how females and minority groups are portrayed in books, movies, and television, but could not find studies that fully explored what the male images are in these mediums. I found it difficult to understand why so few studies have been done on male images since our perceptions of gender and race are formed by the comparison and contrast of genders and/or race. I began to wonder how books regarded as exceptional
literature portray males, for I often presented these books to my students since they are publications deemed to be of exceptional quality in richness of plot and writing style.

There seems to be an imbalance of power in our world, and it is ingrained in our society to such an extent that we are often unaware of when it is happening or how it keeps manifesting itself. The people with the most power, and consequently the most likely to abuse power, are males. This may, in part, be caused by how society conditions people to perceive what it means to be "a man." Part of this conditioning may be due to the way males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction, as one way boys and girls acquire their perceptions of males is through reading books.

Through books, children learn about the world outside of their immediate environment. They learn about what boys and girls do, say and feel. They learn about what is right and wrong, and they learn what is expected of children their age. In addition books provide children with role models - images of what they can and should be when they grow up. (Dougherty & Engel, 1987, p. 394)

The question to be answered in this study was, "How are males portrayed in literature for young people?"
Theoretical Framework

Over the past twenty years much research concerning the portrayal of females in children's literature has been undertaken (Anderson & Many, 1992; Simpson, 1978; Winkeljohann & Gallant, 1980). Researchers have used this research to determine how the portrayal of female characters affects people's perceptions of females. Little research has examined how males are portrayed in literature and if, like female characters, the portrayal of male characters has become more broad in scope since the early 1970s.

Studies have shown that over the past two decades, there has been a concerted effort to provide more realistic and varied female literary characters (Kinman & Henderson, 1985). After researchers took an extensive look at how females are portrayed in children's literature, a conscious effort to broaden the portrayal of female characters in children's books seemed to follow. It seemed time to look at how males are portrayed in books so in the future we will have the data needed to decide if these images also need broadening, for "Characters in children's literature can serve as symbolic models, and as such provide important sources of identification for children with the capacity to influence both sex-typed and moral behaviors" (Pearson & Tetenbaum, 1989, p. 381).

Researchers have noted that lately there is a higher percentage of female main characters in children's literature and more females are shown in
nontraditional roles than was seen in the past (Henderson & Kinman, 1985), yet few studies have shown whether male characters are portrayed in children's books in ways that reflect our diverse society. The studies that have been done in the past looked at isolated features of the characters (Hitchcock & Tompkins, 1987; Purcell & Stewart, 1990). Readers of books see more than one particular feature of a character when they read, and so it is important to examine how the character as a whole is portrayed.

A person's view of what constitutes "a man" or "a woman" is greatly affected by factors such as what that person sees on television, reads in books, and experiences in school. What a child reads affects his or her perceptions of males and females, so it is important to look at the way males are being portrayed in literature and assess how broad these portrayals are.

Male sexual identity is entirely a political and ethical construction, I argue; and masculinity has personal meaning only because certain acts, choices, and policies create it - with devastating consequences for human society. But precisely because that personal and social identity is constructed, we can refuse it, we can act against it - we can change. The core of our being can choose allegiance to justice instead. (Stoltenberg, 1989, p. 4)

As part of discovering how people are conditioned to view what it means to be "a man," the messages that are being sent to children have to be examined, for
the way males are portrayed in children's literature affects girls and boys alike.

Much of an individual's personal identity and views of society's makeup stem from the images presented to her or him as a child. Some of the most influential images are those found in schools.

In education women have 'learnt to lose' and more than that they have learnt how to lose, even though they may have had the ability to succeed academically. Through such experience they have learnt to accept that 'the masculine man is one who achieves, who is masterful: the feminine woman is one who underachieves, who defers.' (Brewster as cited in Arnot, 1982, p. 65)

Books play a critical role in schooling, and therefore the images presented to students through books influence perceptions of gender. Females are not the only ones who have been unfairly treated in schools, however. In Greenlaw, Scott, and Smith's (1987) opinion, the message from children's literature has told children that boys should be active and aggressive, not passive and reflective (p. 405).

Research to date suggests that a more comprehensive study that would indicate exactly how males are being portrayed in literature is needed because, without it, comments such as those by Greenlaw, Scott, and Smith would remain purely academic. The fact that there are more books with male main characters than female main characters does not have a direct connection with how characters
are portrayed, yet this is the type of research concerning male characters undertaken in the past (Demarest & Kortenhaus, 1993; Dougherty & Engel, 1987; Gallang & Winkeljohann, 1980).

In the past, researchers tried to isolate a character's characteristics in an attempt to make their analysis reliable. However, just like a person, a well-developed character is multidimensional and so must be looked at holistically to be understood. By isolating one feature of a character, a researcher is unable to look at the character as a whole. It is not possible to see how a discrete behavior affects other behaviors or if that specific behavior is the only one the character possesses. For example, just because a character is aggressive in parts of a story does not mean that character is not passive in other situations. It is the combination of traits that form a character's portrayal, not an isolated behavior.

It was not possible to find one study that looked adequately at a character as a whole. Studies isolated features such as "Passive Behavior" or "Sexist Behavior," counted the number of times they occur in a piece or pieces of text, and put the numbers on graphs. What about all the other characteristics that the researchers did not include? Simply telling how often a character exhibits one characteristic does not fully explain how that character is portrayed. Instead, it shows that in a specific situation, a character displays a certain characteristic. Because of the lack of studies that looked at the entire character, new measurement tools and qualitative analysis were used so that all the features that make up the portrayal of a character could be better described.
It was almost impossible to keep my biases separate from the analysis of the literature for each person who reads a piece of text brings into that text personal histories and views of the world. It is impossible for researchers to claim their studies of analyzing texts are bias-free since one's personal perceptions influence the interpretation of that text. Personal histories influence the interpretation of what is read, but this does not make what a particular person has to say any less valuable. It is for this reason that I did not try to avoid presenting my personal views, but offered them as valid interpretations and gave evidence of my statements from the data compiled through the analysis of the books in this study. It is up to the reader of the study to agree or not agree with my statements.

Reading is not an innocent act. We come to a text laden with cultural, social, ideological, and literary baggage, all of which influence our responses to that text. Concomitantly, our subjectivity is structured by the texts we read, and this is an ongoing, never-completed process. (Comley, 1992, p. 69)

Considering the scarcity of research on how males are depicted in literature, I described and analyzed how male characters are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. After analyzing how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction, I examined how this portrayal has changed over the past twenty years.
Assumptions

One of the basic assumptions of this study is that what a child reads affects his or her perception of the world. This assumption is based on social learning theories that in part claim:

Children's literature has been shown to influence such sex-typed behaviors as activity, dependency, and achievement. . . (so) educators need to give thought to the stories they provide to children, most particularly to the messages contained in the nature of the personal growth and moral development of the characters in the story. (Pearson & Tenenbaum, 1989, p. 382)

A second assumption is that there are commonalities in the portrayal of male characters in the books examined. What I do not assume, however, is that these similarities are negative or stereotyped.

A third assumption is that society has generally agreed upon definitions of what constitute male and female stereotypes. For this study, male stereotypes include: courage, competitiveness, aloofness, independence, status-seeking, aggressiveness, toughness, and an avoidance of anything perceived as "feminine." Female stereotypes include: passivity, nurturing, cooperativeness, and
dependency on males. Stereotyped portrayals of males are as trivializing and restricting as those for females, but one must look beyond the stereotyped images to understand how the character as a whole is portrayed. Since I do not assume that everyone's definition of what makes up a male stereotype is exactly the same, I present what I feel are the characteristics of a stereotype in greater detail when making a claim of stereotyping.

**Definition of Terms**

**Code**
A broad category describing an area through which characters are portrayed. A code is identified by examining all the facets of a group of characters' portrayals, finding common areas in which characters are portrayed, and then labeling the broad areas in which the characters are portrayed. For example, one may claim the characters in fairy tales are shown as "maids," "servants," "princes," "slaves," and "caregivers." The "code," therefore, may be labeled as "Occupations," for the way characters in fairytales are portrayed is through their occupations.

**Deconstruction**
A type of literary criticism used to produce alternate
readings of a text. Examining texts to encourage multiple responses. Seeking to find the absences and silences within the codes in a text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Stereotypes</th>
<th>Characteristics agreed upon by society and assigned to females and males.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literary Criticism</td>
<td>An orderly linguistic modeling process with rules that can be stated, understood, and are subject to verification. It is the change of an idea into semantic and syntactic correlates. An artistic process through which the critic creates the meaning of a text. It is not a reactive reading for a literal understanding, but an interpretive, active, assertive reading that itself creates meaning (Donovan, 1975, p. 30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsexist Materials</td>
<td>Those materials that do not contain sex-stereotyped characters, storylines or illustrations. (See &quot;Sexist Materials.&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Nontraditional Story | A story in which the characters do not exhibit sex-stereotyped behavior to a large degree. (This term may
Primary Character
Any character who has an integral role in the plot of a story. He or she is not necessarily the protagonist, but is essential to the storyline and general tone of the story.

Race
A group of people of common ancestry, distinguished from others by physical characteristics, such as color of skin, hair type, and stature. Although some may argue it is no longer a valid scientific construct, race is still a term often used to identify and describe people.

Realistic Fiction
"Imaginative writing that accurately reflects life as it was lived in the past or could be lived today. Everything in such a story can conceivably happen to real people living in our natural physical world" (Hepler, Hickman, & Huck, 1993, p. 527).

Sexist Materials
Those in which (a) females appear as main characters and in illustrations far less often than males; (b) males and females are portrayed in sex-stereotypical roles.
Sexual Love

The type of feeling one has for another or others that involves wanting more than a platonic friendship. May also be described as "Romantic Love".

Stereotype

"A simplified and standard conception or image of a person, group, etc., held in common by members of a group" (Random House Webster's Electronic College Dictionary).

Traditional Family

A family that has two birth parents (as opposed to adoptive parents or stepparents) and one or more children all living together until the child(ren) reach the age of consent. This family is not considered "the norm," but rather is used as a basis to compare types of families.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to this study. A small sample of books was analyzed. The sample did impose a limitation in that it may not be representative of all the types of literature to which many students are exposed. The result was a limitation of the generalizability of this study. It was necessary to limit the number of books
to eight so that an in-depth character analysis of each primary male character found in the books could be done. It should be noted that the final selection of books was done randomly so a fair sample of award-winning books was achieved.

Since there has been little research done on the topic of how males are portrayed in literature, it was difficult to locate affirmation or denial of my findings. However, even the studies done in this field have inherent weaknesses and so their applicability was limited.

The books chosen for analysis had already been assessed and deemed as being high quality literature, and so the portrayal of males may have been more multidimensional than those found in the average children's book. Therefore, this study's findings may have painted a picture that is more positive or negative than can be generalized to all books or periods of time. This limitation, however, can be defended by claiming that educators should be trying to provide high quality literature to their students and so therefore these are the types of books that should be found in classrooms and libraries.

Significance of the Proposed Research

Most of the work done in examining female characters comes from feminist researchers. I feel comfortable in associating myself with feminist researchers, for "feminism" applies to both males and females who believe "in the full social-political equality of human beings" (Mackee, 1987, p. iii). This study may have contributed
to the work being done by feminists who have attempted to create a more balanced society in which both females and males may be strong, weak, aggressive, passive, or whatever they feel best characterizes them.

This study added to the development of knowledge in the area of gender issues in children's literature, for it offered a detailed description of how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. In the past, many studies concentrated more on how many main characters are male rather than identifying how these male characters are being portrayed. Other studies stated that male characters are often stereotyped representations, yet did not go into detail as to what these stereotypes are. In this study, I attempted to be more encompassing in that I looked at the characters holistically rather than sums of parts.

Examining how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction has many implications for further research and educational practice. For example, once it is discovered how males are being portrayed in what children read, studies of how these images affect the attitude of boys and girls can be researched in greater depth. Also, if educators feel that it is important to offer their students literature that has a broad range of characters, it is important that they know what is available. Finally, a concerted effort may be made to publish more books with nontraditional males.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There has been limited research done on how males are portrayed in children's literature. This lack of research made my study both difficult and exciting. Since there has been considerably more studies undertaken that examined how females are portrayed in children's books, the first step in my research was to look at these studies to see how previous research methods and eventual findings could inform the work to be done on male characters.

Importance of Examining the Portrayal of Males in Literature

In a study done by Laura J. Collins, Bron B. Ingoldsby and Mary M. Dellmann (1984), Hillman was cited as concluding that, "in the last 40 years, children's books consisted primarily of men playing central roles; that is, young boys depicted as major characters, involved in exciting adventure situations" (p. 278). If this is true, one must question why there have been so few studies on how these male characters are portrayed in children's literature. Showing that boys and men are central characters more often than girls and women does not explain how male characters are portrayed, yet researchers in the past have made this
assumption. In Collins, Dellmann, and Ingoldsby's study, for example, factors such as "female in title - male in title," and "female in central role - male in central role" were analyzed, yet only females were analyzed as whether they were being portrayed in traditional or nontraditional roles. The authors did not state what they considered to be "traditional or nontraditional roles." One can conclude that the authors assumed either (1) the male characters fit into stereotyped definitions of "male," or (2) the male characters were not stereotyped to a large degree. Either way, it did not describe how males are portrayed in children's literature. Collins, Dellmann, and Ingoldsby's study performed three types of analysis: ratio comparison, content comparison, and analysis of the percentage of male and female authors to determine which sex was writing the most nonsexist or sexist books. Their results showed that there are advances being made towards sexual equality and, although their definition for "sexist" was unclear, that women authors appear to be more sexist than men in their writing. Although this study has important findings, it is time that researchers move away from "counting" characteristics in the attempt to find out if male and females are being portrayed the same number of times in the same areas, to finding out exactly how the characters are being portrayed. This has already begun for female characters, so now male characters must be analyzed, too. The function of my study was to fully examine how males are portrayed in literature, for in the past only the portrayal of female characters had been extensively examined.

Too often gender issues are viewed as something that only concern girls
and women. Although females are the most oppressed in society, males have a stake in this issue, too. It is time to begin the process of being able to look at how males affect gender issues. Barrie Thorne (1986) of Michigan State University conducted a study using participant research. She observed the interactions in classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, and cafeterias in two schools for a total of 11 months. Thorne noted that the physical space and curricula were not formally divided by sex, but gender is a visible marker in the school day. For example, announcements from the principals began with, "Boys and girls. . .," and often gender terms are used to divide the students by the teachers. Students were frequently pitted against each other based on gender for things such as spelling bees and math games. Students also explicitly invoked gender in situations such as sitting together in the lunchroom. Gender segregation was least at the first grade and almost total among sixth graders. Thorne's observation of children's play was as follows:

I observed only one boy in the upper grades (a fourth grader) who regularly played with all-female groups, as opposed to "playing at" girls's games and seeking to disrupt them. . . . Although I never saw him play in other than an earnest spirit, the girls often chased him away from their games, and both girls and boys teased him. The fact that girls see, and have more access to boys' worlds than vice versa, and the fact that girls who travel with the other sex are less stigmatized for it, are obvious asymmetries. (p. 179)
Thorne concluded by stating that there is a need for more complexity in our conceptualization of gender and of the social relationships of children. One way adults demonstrate to children how a person of a given sex is "supposed" to be is through the actions of the characters in children's literature. Past studies show that female characters traditionally have been portrayed in a narrow light. Consequently, a conscious effort to broaden the portrayal of females in literature is being made. It is equally important to see how children's literature is presenting what it means to be "a boy" or "a man" and to see if a broad portrayal is evident.

**How Reading Affects Self Perception**

Piper Purcell and Lara Stewart (1990) put forth and verified four assumptions based on the theory that what children read affects their self-perception. These assumptions are:

1. Sex roles are learned behavior and are not solely biologically defined.
2. Sex role definitions can be learned from role models including people presented in media such as picture books, storybooks, and films.
3. Role definitions that are too narrow or rigid can be harmful to a child's development.
4. Such narrowly defined sex-role definitions have been found by prior research in children's literature. (p. 178)
In the literature review presented by Purcell and Stewart to support their assumptions, the studies offered to support assumption number four were not thorough. They presented studies that state (1) magazines show differences by sex in areas such as economic dependency, attitude towards others, and social role, (2) reader books in the 1960s and 1970s had not changed their role models to keep pace with the changing political and social climate, (3) sentences used in dictionaries to illustrate definitions give males more active roles than females, and (4) the ratio of boy-centered stories to girl-centered stories was 5:2 and the ratio of main adult male characters to main female characters was 3:1 in 1972 (p. 179). These studies may show an unequal representation of male to female roles, but they do not show how sex-roles are defined. There are two questions to be answered before Purcell and Stewart's claims are applicable to male role definitions. These questions are "How are male characters defined?" and "How broad are these definitions?".

How Reading Material Effects Comprehension and Interest

The types of reading material presented to children affects not only self image, but also reading comprehension. Some have argued that it is important for children to be exposed to literature with traditional characters, for most students can relate to these characters, and therefore comprehension can be increased. However, it has been shown that reading books with nontraditional male characters
does not have a negative impact on comprehension. In a survey of research studies, Kathleen Bordelon (1985) examined these questions: (1) Is comprehension affected by interest?, (2) Do traditional or nontraditional sex roles of the characters influence comprehension?, (3) Do boys and girls prefer traditional or nontraditional sex-typed story content?, and (4) What, if any, influence does traditional or nontraditional sex-typed story content have on comprehension? The results of her examination of a study done by Frasher and Frasher (1978) reveal that there are higher comprehension scores for both sexes with the nontraditional story. Most girls prefer the nontraditional story and identify with its main character. The boys indicate no significant difference in preference for either story or character. However, even though the students' interests have not significantly increased, their comprehension scores for the nontraditional story are better than for the traditional story (Bordelon, 1985, p. 795). Also, both boys and girls remember the story with the nontraditional character longer and in more detail. Bordelon concluded that the studies she examined indicate that "boys can read, enjoy, and comprehend stories with females as main characters, as long as they are not portrayed in typical sex-role stereotypes. Content is the key" (p. 796). This study did not indicate what the author considered "nontraditional characters," so the applicability of her work may be limited in the opinion of some people. I feel that the work done by Bordelon adequately illustrates that there is a place for a variety of roles played by males in children's literature. Bordelon's observations led me to feel that children can read, enjoy, and comprehend stories with nontraditional males as main characters. The
way characters are portrayed does not affect comprehension, so showing boys in a variety of roles would not negatively affect comprehension.

Some may argue that nontraditional boys can identify with female characters, for "as far as cognitive outcomes are concerned, there is no significant indication that they are influenced by the sex of the main character" (Bleakley, Hopkins, Westerberg, 1988, p. 152). However, boys enjoy reading stories about boys, and so a boy who does not see his lifestyle being given validation in books may become reluctant to read. A study that examined the effect of the gender of the character on story comprehension and interest was undertaken by Bleakley et al. (1988). In this study, the authors looked at the effect of the sex of the main character on the reading comprehension of 540 boys and girls in grade five. This study revealed that the interest ratings are almost equal for girls and boys when the sex of the main character is the same as their own. The interest ratings of females drop moderately when the main character is male, but the interest ratings of males drop dramatically when the main character is female.

Research On Specific Forms of Children's Literature

In the past, studies have looked at the portrayal of males and females in various types of children's literature. It was important to examine what has been done in these studies. This offered the opportunity to see how these studies had been executed and what weaknesses needed to be avoided in my analysis of
Examination of Nonsexist Books

Darwin L. Henderson and Judith R. Kinman (1985) analyzed Newbery Medal Award books published between 1977-1984. They noted that nonsexist reading materials are needed for young children who are establishing a sense of identity and social order. The authors considered setting, genre, and point-of-view when reviewing Newbery Medal winners and Honor books. They did not specify what criteria they used, but Henderson and Kinman did state that they based their reviews on the following sources: "Guidelines for Publication" by the National Council of Teachers of English, Committee on the Role and Image of Women in the Council and Profession (1971), "Selecting Bias-Free textbooks and Storybooks" by the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1981), and five guides from Books for Liberating Young Readers by Pamela Giller (1976). In comparison to a 1971 study, females are more often main characters, but there are still exceptions to the idea that authors are considering the society children live in when writing books. For example, "A String in the Harp" (Bond, 1976) contained the age-old scenario of the oldest daughter taking over for the absent mother. In A Ring of Endless Light (L'Engle, 1980), the 'handsome prince' had to rescue the 'princess'" (pp. 887-888). It was reported that "eighteen books presented positive images of females, while only six presented negative images" (p. 887), yet there was no discussion of the...
ways males are portrayed. Also, details of exactly what the authors considered positive and negative images were not fully revealed. This study concluded by stating that "from this survey it would appear that authors are observing society as it is and evolving stories and characters that fit into it" (Henderson & Kinman, 1985, p. 888). Female characters may be becoming more realistically represented in children's literature, but whether or not the male characters in these books show boys and men in a realistic manner was not fully addressed in this study.

**Examination of Basal Readers**

There has been some research which explored the characters in basal readers. For example, in "Whatever happened to Jane and Dick? Sexism in text reexamined," Kathryn P. Scott (1981) noted:

> When portrayed, girls and women are seen in a limited number of familial and societal roles often reflecting a stereotypic definition of appropriate female behaviour based on such characteristics as weakness, passivity, and emotionality. In contrast, boys and men are seen in a far greater range of roles although most of these also reflect stereotypic notions of appropriate male behaviour, such as the display of strength, activity, and lack of emotion. (p. 135)
Scott stated that newer texts have not improved significantly in eliminating one-sided or sexist portrayals of females and males. This study examined sexism in stories in two basal series published as new readers in 1978. Scott surveyed the series Pathfinder (Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978) and Basics in Reading (Scott, Foresman and Company, 1978). Three hundred and eighty-five stories chosen from grades one through six were picked randomly and analyzed according to the sex of the main character and roles played by each main character. Several readers judged the material and stories were assigned to one of four categories: (1) female main characters, (2) male main characters, (3) both female and male main characters, and (4) sex-neutral characters. Each main character's role was assessed as being traditional, nontraditional, mixed, or other. Traditional role behavior was defined as that which depicts stereotyped expectations for females or males. Nontraditional roles were defined as those not expected according to traditional stereotypes. Male main characters who had a nurturing role or female main characters that had an active role were classified as nontraditional. Results show that there are greater representations of females in nontraditional roles and neutral main characters than in earlier basal series. Only 12 percent of the stories feature males in nontraditional roles while 59 percent of the female characters are shown in nontraditional roles. The author stated that there are two possible reasons for females to be shown in nontraditional roles more frequently than males:

First, because of the attention focused on the changing roles of girls and
women, many more stories about nontraditional females than about nontraditional males may be available for adaptation in the series. Second, the necessity to change the portrayal of males in textbooks because of the harmful effects of sexism for boys has not yet been addressed adequately.

(p.139)

This particular study did not go into detail as to how the males are portrayed, but rather made unsupported judgements as to whether or not the characters are traditional or nontraditional. Also, Scott did not take into consideration where a character may be traditional in some areas and nontraditional in others.

A more recent study that examined sexism in basal readers was done by Mary E. Hitchcock and Gail E. Tompkins (1987). They examined recent editions of six popular basal reading textbooks to determine if sexism in stories had been reduced or eliminated. The study looked at Economy Reading Series (1986), Ginn Reading Series (1985), Heath American Readers (1986), Holt Basic Reading (1986), Houghton Mifflin Reading (1986), and Riverside Reading Program (1986). The authors read each story and classified the main characters as either male, female, or other. They then tallied and listed in rank order the occupations of the female main characters. Although the researchers gave no indication of how their results were obtained, their results indicated that sexism has been reduced in basal reader stories. Due to the counting and listing of occupations, it was found that the number and types of occupations held by female characters has greatly increased.
No analysis was done for males.

**Examination of Picture Books**

Just as it was important to look at studies that examined basal series, it was imperative that studies concerning gender roles in picture books were examined, for there has been substantial research done in this area. Methods and results needed to be looked at to give guidance of where to go and what to avoid in my study.

A study that addressed the topic of sexism in literature in a different fashion than those presented so far was Albert J. Davis' (1984) "Sex-differentiated behaviours in nonsexist picture books." Books described as non-sexist were compared to more conventional picture books to examine if sexism exists in children's picture books. The female and male characters in 50 nonsexist books and 46 conventional books were examined for sex stereotypes. The author stated that earlier analyses show conventional books had female characters that had neither the desire nor ability to actively compete and achieve in the world outside the home in an unemotional, independent, and effective manner. However, "the charge of sexism in the behavioral portrayals in preschool picture books, as distinguished from social role portrayals, has not yet been convincingly demonstrated in the research" (p. 3), for no documentation of the reliability of any assessment procedures was offered and the units of analysis were unclear. Davis
presented an investigation of the behaviors exhibited by female and male
characters in conventional and nonsexist preschool picture books. Text and
illustrations in books previously classified as "nonsexist," "best-sellers," and
"award-winners" were analyzed separately. Each book had to include at least one
male and/or female human character and have a plot line presented both in text
and illustrations. The following discrete behavioral categories were analyzed:
dependent, independent, nurturant, aggressive, competitive, cooperative,
persistent, explorative, directive, submissive, creative, imitative, emotional, active,
and passively-active behaviors. Illustrations and text were analyzed separately in
twenty picture books. The analysis consisted of coding the main characters
behavior according to the preset behavioral characteristics. "Reliability figures for
each discrete behavioral category ranged form 83.56% (submissive) to 97.43%
(explorative) for illustrations, and from 78.16% (explorative) to 97.87% (imitative)
for text messages" (p. 7). A checklist was used to identify when a main character
exhibited a certain type of behavior. This study found that no statistically
significant male-female differences are evident in either the award-winning or best-
selling books and that standardized coefficients indicated that the nonsexist female
characters exhibit more independent and emotional behavior, and less active
behavior than the nonsexist, award-winning, or best-selling male characters. The
primary differentiating factor between the characters is their independence, with
female characters in nonsexist books being more independent by a large degree.

Davis stated that there has been an overcompensation in the
characterization of self-reliant, spirited, and competent heroines. Instead of presenting a picture of equality, the scales have been tipped in favour of the female and the traditional stereotype has been reversed. The outcome of Davis' research in regards to how males are portrayed in non-sexist children's literature is as follows:

The nonsexist books in this study included a substantial number of male main characters, and the behaviour they exhibited in the two areas of nurturance and aggression represented a clear departure from traditional male stereotypes. More males exhibited nurturant behaviors, while fewer males behaved aggressively in nonsexist books than males in Caldecott award-winners. Nonsexist males were often shown praising their peers, displaying affection, and providing help, comfort, and support to those in need; and rarely did they express hostility toward others, attempt to physically or emotionally hurt another person or animal, or destroy objects. A nontraditional characterization of males was achieved in nonsexist books without creating male-female differences in these domains, indicating a more balanced representation than the portrayal of females in these books. (p. 13)

A weakness in this study was that only preset, and therefore limiting, behavioral characteristics were examined. Eleven of the fifteen behaviors that the
author identified to be examined were "not exhibited at all by 72% of all the characters in either the text or illustrations of the books" (p. 10). Perhaps the characters in books are too complex to break down into discrete behavioral categories. Part of a literary character is his or her appearance, friendships, hobbies, and sexual orientation. All of these areas were addressed in this study so that the characters were looked at in a more holistic manner.

In a 1993 study done by Carole M. Kortenhaus and Jack Demarest, picture books were studied to determine whether the sex bias in the books is still as prevalent as in the past. They compared 125 nonaward picture books and 25 Caldecott winners or runners-up published between the 1940s and 1980s. Twenty-five nonaward picture books and five award-winning picture books were chosen from each decade. The researchers looked at females in titles, males in titles, females in central roles, males in central roles, females in pictures, males in pictures, female animals, and male animals. A content analysis of the major activities of the central characters in each book was also undertaken. Eighteen of the most clearly delineated activities were categorized as either instrumental independent or passive dependent. Instrumental independent actions are those which involve a lot of self-initiated movement, creativity, and/or decision making. Passive dependent actions are those that require more help from others and/or little movement. A frequency count was then done to determine the number of males and females in central roles who portrayed these activities. The results of this study indicated that there are increased female representations in titles, central
roles, and pictures, but the portrayal of females is still sexist and biased, for girl characters display placidity and boy characters display energy in an overwhelming number of books. Boys are far more often characterized as instrumental and independent than are girls. This study has yielded some very relevant and important information, but, again, categorizing the characteristics to be looked at before the study was done put limitations on the information that could be analyzed. The authors assessed the types of activities that the male and female story characters were involved in because they felt content analysis of set categories was insufficient, yet only the characters' activities were assessed, not appearance, emotions, hobbies, or other features that combine to create a literary character. This study could only state if actions, titles, pictures, and animals are sexist, not if the characters themselves are portrayed in a stereotyped or sexist way. My study examined characters in a more holistic fashion so that the entire character, and not isolated features, could be studied.

The studies by Davis (1984) and Korenhaus and Demarest (1993) did address to some degree how males are portrayed in children's literature, but their work is limited to picture books. Others have limited their work to basal readers. As students and teachers are exposed to other types of literature in the classroom, it is important to look at different forms of literary text. I chose to look at realistic juvenile fiction books because it is my personal experience that very often teachers present this form of literature to their students and that many students choose realistic fiction when selecting books to read on their own.
Avoiding Perceived Weaknesses Identified in Other Studies

It was important to find where others have identified weaknesses in previous studies and thus these studies were examined to pinpoint and subsequently avoid the weaknesses. Albert J. Kingston and Terry Lovelace (1977) analyzed various procedures used to investigate sexism in basal readers, texts, and children's literature. They noted that some studies look for stereotypes, but that most of these studies rarely examine the total personality of the boys and girls or men and women portrayed. Instead, they focus on issues such as the frequency of female/male appearance in occupations, titles, and indexes (p. 136). These authors also noted that several studies seek to determine differences depicted in male and female social roles. Kingston and Lovelace found that, "in none of the . . . studies were operational definitions of the characteristics given by the investigators. Nor were criteria employed for determining docility, dependence, altruism, etc., explained" (p. 146).

In order to avoid some of the features perceived as weaknesses of studies done in the past, characters were examined holistically rather than as sums of parts. In the past, studies looked only at specific parts of a character's makeup. For example, Davis (1984) only looked at behavioral characteristics and Demarest and Kortenhaus (1993) examined only isolated features of the characters. I feel that if one looks for a certain character trait, it will probably be found. Just like people, well developed literary characters show a range of characteristics.
Therefore, if one looks to see if a character is "aggressive," that characteristic will probably be found in some fashion. However, that same character might also be "nurturing" or "passive" in other situations. By not looking at all the features that combine to create a character, much was missed in past studies. Therefore, in this study, open-ended qualitative research methods were used for analyzing characters, resulting in a more thorough, albeit subjective, analysis.

Although much of my work was subjective, I did not make assumptions about a character's personality without providing evidence for my statements from the specific text. Studies such as those done by Bordelon (1985), Henderson and Kinman (1985), and Scott (1981) seemed to assume that there is one definition for what constitutes male and female stereotypes and that they did not need to provide evidence when they stated a character is stereotyped. Although I agree that most people have a common perception of what makes up the stereotypes, without specific proof from the books, researchers have simply assumed the reader would agree with their findings. More evidence is needed to back up subjective claims. Therefore, I provided evidence in the form of examples from the books for what I considered to be stereotyped representations of male characters when they appeared.

My study is a continuation of looking at gender issues in children's literature. Candace Garett Schau and Kathryn P. Scott (1983) listed aspects that limit many of the studies that have dealt with gender issues in literature in the past. Two of the weaknesses addressed in this study were: (1) properties of the instruments used
to evaluate the treatments, and (2) analysis techniques (p. 190). I looked at a broad range of characteristics and kept my analysis open-ended so that the study did not become too narrow in scope. In order to prevent being restricted by my template for assessment, which is presented in Chapter Three of this thesis, I left my study open-ended. This allowed for codes that arose from my textual analysis that were not part of the preset categories in the template to be discussed.

The Development of Methodology

Content analysis is a method of research that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. There are many purposes for using content analysis, but I used it specifically to identify how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. The reason for choosing content analysis as opposed to other data-generating and analysis techniques is that communication is a central aspect of social interaction and content analytic procedures operate directly upon text or transcripts of human communications (Weber, 1985, p. 10). When searching for a technique I felt was appropriate for the analysis of the characters, I attempted to find one technique that looked at the characters as wholes rather than sums of parts.

Although my study took a different route than hers, much of it was greatly influenced by the work of Linda Christian-Smith presented in her book Becoming a Woman Through Romance (1990). In this book, Christian-Smith analyzed the
structure of romance novels in terms of the codes of "Romance," "Sexuality," and "Beautification." I employed techniques similar to those used by Christian-Smith, but I used them for analyzing primary male characters instead of text structures. The part of Christian-Smith's study I found the most useful for my work was how to analyze literature by using codes. Monaco (1977) was cited giving a description of what a code is:

The code is the medium through which cultural products transmit their messages. . . . Codes are critical constructions derived from the analysis of signs which permit the interpretation of literature. Interpretation then involves identifying the codes, analyzing their meaning and making connections between the codes in individual texts or among texts. (cited in Christian Smith, 1990, p. 147)

My study reflected Christian-Smith's in its beginning stages. I followed Christian-Smith's idea of identifying larger codes found in a specific form of literature and then listing features that are found in that code in a chosen group of books. I did this by describing how all the primary characters are portrayed in various classifications, then examined these classifications to locate broader areas in which characters are portrayed. These broad areas were identified and labelled as "Codes." I then went back into the books, isolated the major male characters, and identified the features found in these codes to find out how males are
portrayed in examples of realistic juvenile fiction.

My study differed from Christian-Smith's in the work that followed the identification of the codes and their identifying features. Christian-Smith's work was taken beyond the descriptions of the codes to examine how the readers are affected by these codes. My work went beyond the identification of the codes to find out when and why some characters contradict the features that make up the codes. A more detailed description of the methodology is given in Chapter Three.

Following the Aims of Feminist Writers

I followed the aims of many feminist writers. In *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Feminist Literary Criticism*, Maggie Humm (1994) stated four aims of feminist criticism in the area of literary criticism. Although I could not realise all of the aims she lays out, I attempted to reach at least some parts of them. The first aim stated is that "the issue of a masculine literary history is addressed by reexamining male texts, noting the patriarchal assumptions and showing the way women in these texts are often represented according to prevailing social, cultural and ideological norms" (p. 7). In this study, I examined the texts to see if *males* in texts are represented according to prevailing social, cultural and ideological norms. The second aim Humm noted is that "the invisibility of women writers has been addressed" (p. 7). A possible outcome of my study could be to see if there are any groups of writers of realistic juvenile fiction that have had their material kept from
wide spread distribution because of the way they portray characters, but I did not address this directly in my research. Humm stated that the third aim feminist criticism addresses in literary criticism is that it "confronts the problem of the 'feminist reader' by offering readers new methods and a fresh critical practice" (p. 8). In this study, I focused on elements of male characters not usually dealt with in literary criticism of children's literature by having my analysis open-ended. Until now, most studies that have looked at how characters are portrayed have relied on quantitative methods of study. I attempted to analyze characters using qualitative methods and relied on my interpretations of what the authors have said instead of counting how many times a character exhibited a predetermined characteristic. The fourth aim, according to Humm, is "to make us act as feminist readers by creating new writing and reading collectives" (p. 8).

Research Summary

Past studies claimed that female characters are portrayed in narrow and stereotypical roles. Many researchers have the perception that what it means to be "a woman" and what it means to be "a man" is influenced by what we read. It is time, then, that an analysis of how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction is undertaken, for there have been no studies that look at all the features that create male characters in order to say how they are portrayed.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the research questions were:

1) How are males portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction?

2) How has this portrayal changed over the past 20 years?

This study included an initial description of characters based on, but not exclusive to, set criteria as set forth in a template. The resulting data were examined and codes were identified, then discussed and analyzed. A discussion of the template and codes is presented later in this chapter.

Sample Choice

The books to be examined in this study were initially chosen based on the following:

1. The book was a Newbery Award or Honor Mention or Canadian Library Association Book of the Year winner from 1975-1994.

2. The book contained at least one primary male character.
3. The book was realistic fiction.

Eight books were used in this study. The books covered a 20-year time period. They were given awards from 1975-1994. Two Newbery Award, Honorable Mention and/or Canadian Library Association Book of the Year books which were either published or given the award from each of four five-year intervals (1975-1979 or Period One, 1980-1984 or Period Two, 1985-1989 or Period Three, 1990-1994 or Period Four) were chosen.

All of the Newbery Award and Honorable Mention or Canadian Library Association Book of the Year books from the stated time periods were screened initially according to the preset criteria. All books meeting the preset criteria were placed in a pool and two from each time period were selected randomly.

The reason for choosing realistic fiction was that it helps children come to understand themselves as they acquire "human-ness" (Hepler, Hickman, & Huck, 1993, p. 528), and a suggested possible extension of this study is to find out how the portrayal of males in realistic juvenile fiction affect children's conception of gender. Also, based on my personal experiences, realistic fiction is one of the most popular literature genres children choose to read and teachers use in their classrooms when they do novel studies.

I chose to look at Newbery Award and Honorable Mention and Canadian Library Book of the Year books for many reasons. First, these books have been deemed exceptional literature for children and so they may have a range of male
characters both in the types of characters included and the dimension of the characters themselves. Second, many teachers choose to read these books aloud to their students or use the books in novel studies, so many children are exposed to these books. Third, studies have been done in the past which examined the female characters in these books. Fourth, Newbery Award and Honorable Mention and Canadian Library Association Book of the Year books are contemporary American and Canadian fiction often read by students.

The eight books chosen for this study range in topic, sex of the protagonist, time period, reading level, and sex of author. Some of these factors were relevent when analyzing the codes, but they were not addressed as topics on their own, for this study was not concerned with what influences the way an author portrays a character as much as it was with how the characters are being portrayed.

Books Selected

The books chosen for this study were Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), River Runners (Houston, 1979), Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981), The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987), Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), and Missing May (Rylant, 1992). For ease of reference, I have listed which book belongs to which time period in chart form:
Figure 3.1

Separation of Books Into Four Time Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period One</th>
<th>Period Two</th>
<th>Period Three</th>
<th>Period Four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dragonwings</td>
<td>Ramona Quimbv.</td>
<td>Like Jake and Me</td>
<td>Maniac Magee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Runners</td>
<td>The Sign of the Beaver</td>
<td>Hatchet</td>
<td>Missing May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What follows is a brief description of each book used in this study. Books will be presented in chronological order, beginning from the first book published.

**Dragonwings**

*Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep (1975) is the story of a young boy who in 1903 travels from his home in China at the age of eight to join his father in America. The boy, Moon Shadow, and his father, Windrider, live and work in a land that is not overly inviting to the Chinese people or their customs. The story is told through the eyes of Moon Shadow and covers a seven year period, in which time he and his father try to start a new life on their own away from the others in the Chinese
community and endure racism, a devastating earthquake, and poverty. Throughout the book, Windrider works to live out his dreams of building an airplane and making enough money to bring his wife over to America from China. Moon Shadow and Windrider are the main characters in the book, with the minor characters being the catalysts for much of their growth and views of the world. Dragonwings is a 1976 Newbery Honor Book.

River Runners

River Runners by James Houston (1979) is the winner of the 1980 Canadian Library Association's Children's Book of the Year Award. It is the story of a fifteen year old White boy, Andrew Stewart, and his adventures as a clerk apprentice in Naskapi First Nations territory. He becomes friends with a First Nations boy named Pashak and the two of them travel with Pashak's nation to set up a fur-trading outpost on Ghost Lake. The winter is a severe one, and they almost freeze and starve to death, but they ultimately achieve their goals. Along the way the boys survive different hardships and adventures, and Andrew learns some of the ways of the Naskapi through his friends Pashak, Agawan, and Mium-scum.

Ramona Quimby, Age 8

Ramona Quimby, Age 8 is a 1982 Newbery Honor Book winner written by
Beverly Cleary (1981). It is about a young girl, Ramona, and her ups and downs as she attends grade three. In this story, Ramona has an ongoing conflict with a boy in her class named Danny, comes to grips with having to play with her babysitter's granddaughter, overhears her teacher say Ramona is a show-off and a nuisance, and lives her life one day at a time with her mother, sister, and father. Ramona's father works in a frozen food plant while attending university to get his teaching degree. Her mother works full time to support the family. The main character in this story is a female, but Ramona's father, Mr. Quimby, and her nemesis Danny, play major roles in the story.

The Sign of the Beaver

The Sign of the Beaver, a 1984 Newbery Honor Book winner by Elizabeth George Speare (1983), is the story of thirteen year old Matt who must live and survive by himself in a cabin in the wilderness. Finding himself without a gun, Matt learns to survive in the forest. It is after he meets a First Nations boy and learns of the Bear clan's way of life that he adapts to his new environment while waiting for his parents to return. In this book, the main characters are two males, Matt and his First Nations friend, teacher, and student, Attean. Other primary male characters are Matt's father and Attean's grandfather.
Like Jake and Me

Like Jake and Me by Mavis Jukes (1984) is a 1985 Newbery Honor Book. This story revolves around the relationship between Alex and his stepfather Jake. Jake will not let Alex help with chores such as cutting lumber or carry in wood. Alex feels that he can never be as much of a man as Jake and that Jake is not interested in dancing as is Alex. Alex soon learns that even Jake is afraid of things such as spiders and he too likes to dance. Both Jake and Alex are primary male characters.

Hatchet

The book Hatchet by Gary Paulsen (1987) is about a boy named Brian who is the sole survivor of a plane crash in the wilderness. His only possessions are what he is wearing and a hatchet. Brian survives in the wilderness by building a shelter, finding food, and dealing with nature's elements. In this 1988 Newbery Honor Book Brian is rescued by the end of the story. Although the pilot of the plane and Brian's father do play roles in the story, neither of them fits the definition of "primary male character."
**Maniac Magee**

*Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli (1990) is the winner of the 1991 Newbery Medal. This book tells the story of a young White boy, Maniac, and how he touches the lives of those he comes in contact with. Maniac is a star athlete, a scholar, free of prejudice, and lonely. He continually looks for a place to call home after his parents die in an automobile accident. The Beale family, the McNab boys, Mars Bar, Mr. Grayson, and a host of minor characters are affected by Maniac's actions and in turn, affect Maniac's life.

**Missing May**

*Missing May* by Cynthia Rylant (1992) is the story of three people who are trying to deal with the death of a loved one. The story is told through the eyes of the main female character, Summer, who is the niece of May, the character who has died. Summer, along with her Uncle Ob and friend/nemesis Cletus Underwood set off in search of a woman whom they feel can help them get in touch with May's spirit. Their search leads them to find that the woman they are looking for has also died and there is nobody in the church who can help them. Both Uncle Ob and Cletus play major roles in this story, and are therefore classified as primary male characters.
Analysis Methods

One weakness in many past studies that have analyzed characters in children's literature is that the criteria used by the researchers do not look at a character holistically. A character's portrayal is made up of many factors, not just behaviors, occupation or appearance. I could not find one study which adequately analyzed characters as wholes instead of sums of parts, and for this reason, I created my own analysis methods.

I wanted to create a method to analyze characters that would take into account all of the areas that affected the ways in which they are portrayed. Some type of organizing tool was needed so that the analysis remained consistent and findings could be presented coherently. The best way to do this was to identify broad areas in which all primary characters are portrayed and then find out how the primary male characters in the books chosen for this study are portrayed in these broad areas.

To begin, a template was used to describe the various characteristics of all the primary characters. All of the primary characters, both male and female, were described because the information gathered was to aid in the development of all-encompassing codes with which to analyze any character or specific group of characters in realistic juvenile fiction. The data were collected by describing how the characters reflected characteristics listed in the template and describing
additional characteristics I felt were important. Characteristics included in this template are as follows:

- Physical Appearance:
  Any outward appearance described by the author. Included is height, weight, hair colour, visual ethnic characteristics, and physical attributes.

- Ethnic background:
  The character's place of birth, race, and family history.

- Social class:
  The character's economic status, societal standing, etc.

- Methods used to resolve conflict:
  The character's actions, thoughts, intentions, and interactions when conflict occurs.

- Interactions with others:
  How the character identify and interact with friends, family, males, females, and superiors.

- Types of emotions exhibited and ways expressed

- Occupation

- Intelligence

- Self concepts

- Sexual orientation
This template was created through a compilation of various characteristics identified in studies which have looked at the ways characters are portrayed in books. Kathryn P. Scott in "Whatever happened to Jane and Dick? Sexism in texts reexamined" (1981) and Albert J. Davis in "Sex-differentiated behaviors in nonsexist picture books" (1984) looked at behavioral categories, including dependence, aggressiveness, and competence. Since characters can exhibit a range of behaviors, in my study descriptors developed from observations of such things as how the characters resolve conflict, relate to females, and express their feelings rather than fitting characters' behaviors into preset discrete behavioral categories. Much of how we define a person has to do with appearance (Fitton, Tremblay, & Whitehouse, 1990), which is why appearance and ethnic heritage were put in as classifications in my template. In studies done by O'Donnell (1973) and Frasher and Walker (1972), the occupations of the characters were used to compare male and female characters (Vukelich, McCarty, & Nanis, 1976). I, too, used the classification of "occupation" in this study because it is one way we often define a person. Bernard A. Rihn (1980) conducted a study that showed a difference in the level of moral reasoning between male and female characters. This made me feel there is a need to address the intelligence shown by the characters in books. Studies usually do not consider a character's intelligence, self concept, or sexual orientation when examining the portrayal of male and female characters. They are very important parts of a person's identity, and therefore were categories in the template. The template used in this study took into account
physical, sociological, and cultural aspects of the characters. This had been done intentionally for the purpose of examining the characters as complete entities rather than separate parts.

The initial data were collected by completing templates to describe every primary character in each book. When discovering a feature of a character's portrayal that fit into one of the categories in the template, it was recorded under the most appropriate descriptor. If a feature appeared that did not fit into one of the categories previously set out, it was recorded in a section entitled "Additional Findings." During this stage of analysis, I attempted not to make assumptions about the characters, but rather summarized the events and descriptions the authors use to present the characters (see Appendix A). Evidence for my findings was taken directly from the texts themselves, and was based on the set categories in my template and additional findings.

Once the data were collected, I compared and contrasted the information from this initial analysis in order to identify where there were similarities amongst the books. I did not only look for similarities among each preset category, but also across the various categories. The similarities seen in this data were noted and used for the next step of my analysis.

The second step involved examining the characteristics the characters had in common in order to locate broad categories that could be used in the analysis of the portrayal of any primary character in realistic juvenile fiction. I did not simply use the categories in the template to analyze how males are portrayed in realistic
juvenile fiction, for I was uncertain which areas would provide for the most thorough character analysis when my study began. This was also the reason for including the category of "Additional Findings" in my template.

After the preliminary data had been collected using the template, I felt that the categories in the template were too specific and restricted my ability to locate how one part of a character's portrayal affected another. Relying only on the present categories would have made the task of analyzing the commonalities amongst the characters inefficient, especially since the category of "Additional Findings" included various types of data. Therefore, all the data was collapsed and I identified more encompassing descriptors that included all the various characteristics identified yet allowed me to discover how specific characteristics affected each other to create a character's portrayal. This was achieved by examining the data until broad descriptors that included all the information from the templates were found. The descriptors used to identify these units were the labels given to the codes (see Appendix B). The codes identified are areas in which I feel the characters in the eight books are most commonly portrayed. Five codes were identified and they are "Conflict Resolution," "Emotions," "Race," "Relationships," and "Success."

The third step in my study was identifying the specific features of primary male characters found in each code. For this information, I once again turned to the eight books used in this study to see how the primary male characters reflected these codes. These data created the features specific to primary male characters
that make up the codes. I then listed these features and offered evidence of my statements. Using a deconstructionist approach, I provided evidence of how and when the characters in the books created the features in the identified codes and how they may have contradicted these same features on other occasions. This gave me the opportunity to look at the primary male characters in various lights instead of just one.

The reason I chose to use a deconstructionist approach is that "deconstruction encourages a multiplicity of responses. . . . It celebrates the wildness of language, full of wonder" (Leggo, 1994, p. 26). There is no one right answer when analyzing characters and it is important the text be opened up rather than fit into preset categories. When reading articles such as "Some Day My Prince Will Come' Female Accultration through the Fairy Tale" (Lieberman, 1992), it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that characters are oppressors or oppressed, good or bad, masculine or feminine. In the past, some studies "have been based upon assumptions which are questionable at best and which at worst exhibit their own form of sex bias. Whether explicit or implicit, many of these studies reduce human history to a tale of male oppressors and female victims or rebels" (August, 1992, p. 131). I attempted to peel away the various layers of the characters until I got to the core of how they are being portrayed. This meant going beyond the features that were found in the codes, and examining when and why the characters move beyond these features.

Some may question the methods I used to analyze characters, for "three
types of reliability are pertinent to content analysis; *stability, reproducibility, and accuracy*" (cited in Weber, 1985, p. 16). I do not claim that my study is as statistically reliable as a study that counts variables and charts them. However, as I have stated previously, the way in which a person interprets a piece of text varies from person to person, and so I question whether there can be "one correct answer" when analyzing characters. In keeping with the deconstructionist approach, the results of this study are my personal interpretation of the eight books. It is up to the reader of this study to decide whether they agree with all or portions of my findings. It is up to me as a researcher to provide evidence for what I say and to look critically at the methods.

In response to the second research question, it was necessary to examine how the portrayal of male characters changed over the past twenty years. The evidence for my statements on how the portrayal of characters changed over the past twenty years is reflective of the codes and their identified features. To examine how the portrayal of males has changed, the information gathered from the analysis of the books using the codes of "Conflict Resolution," "Emotions," "Race," "Relationships," and "Success" was isolated into four five-year time periods so that the separate time periods could be compared.

**Summary**

This study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) How are
males portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction? and (2) How has this portrayal changed over the past twenty years? It examined and described the primary male characters in eight pieces of realistic juvenile fiction. The methods used in this study had not been used before. They were developed in order to avoid what I considered to be weaknesses in previous studies. My research methods sought to overcome: (1) looking at discrete behaviors of characters instead of looking at characters as complete entities and (2) the devaluing of opinions and personal views of researchers in academic studies.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. The research questions were: (1) How are males portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction? and (2) How has this portrayal changed over the past twenty years? To answer these questions, primary male characters in realistic juvenile fiction were analyzed. The first step in this process was to describe male and female characters using a template that was designed for this study but was based on research found in previous studies. Since this stage of the analysis was essentially to provide me with the information needed to find the codes through which characters are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction, the data from the templates are not presented in this chapter although examples are presented in Appendix A.

The codes that I identified appear in alphabetical order. An in-depth look at the individual codes and the features found in these codes specific to primary male characters in eight works of realistic juvenile fiction make up the first part of Chapter Four. The second part of Chapter Four is a discussion of how the portrayal of males in eight works of realistic juvenile fiction has changed over the past twenty years.

A chart indicating the eight works and four time periods is repeated. Each
work was summarized and explained in Chapter Three:

Figure 4.1
Separation of Books Into Four Time Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period One</th>
<th>Period Two</th>
<th>Period Three</th>
<th>Period Four</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dragonwings</td>
<td>Ramona Quimby</td>
<td>Like Jake and Me</td>
<td>Maniac Magee</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Age 8</em></td>
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<td>River Runners</td>
<td>The Sign of the</td>
<td>Hatchet</td>
<td>Missing May</td>
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<td>Beaver</td>
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Codes Present in the Books

After all of the primary characters were described using the template discussed in Chapter Three, the information gathered was examined, shuffled around, and reshuffled until areas in which the characters are repeatedly portrayed were identified. The examination of these areas led me to the identification of five codes. The codes identified were "Conflict Resolution", "Emotions", "Race", "Relationships", and "Success." Features that make up the essence of these codes that are specific to the primary male characters in the books used in this study were then identified. The codes and specific features that relate to the
primary male characters in each of the eight books are discussed separately in this chapter.

The Code of Conflict Resolution

There are three types of conflict that characters face. These are: (1) person-against-person, (2) person-against-nature, and (3) person-against-self. The ways in which a character resolves these conflicts are important features in the way that literary character is portrayed. The fact that the ways a character resolves conflicts is extremely important in the way he or she is portrayed led me to the identification of the code "Conflict Resolution." In the books examined, males are portrayed as people who:

1. Try to resolve person-against-person conflicts through peaceful means but view using physical means as a viable option.
2. Resolve person-against-nature and person-against-self conflicts through thought, reflection, and the help of others.

1. **Male Characters Try to Resolve People-Against-People Conflicts Through Peaceful Means but View Using Physical Means as a Viable Option.**

There is a common perception among many people that males in movies,
television, and books solve all their conflicts, and especially person-against-person conflicts, through immediate physical action. In the books used in this study where person-against-person conflicts play a major role in the plots, a pattern emerged that shows male characters portrayed as people who progress from thought to physical competition.

At first, Moon Shadow uses words and wit to resolve conflicts that develop against other people in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975, p. 16). Later, as the conflicts become more physical, Moon Shadow tries to walk away and ignore the situation (pp. 30, 55). Moon Shadow soon comes to the realization that to stop those who may harm him, physical competition is a viable option (p. 143). He feels successful after he beats up a White boy and realizes that the White boys are just like the boys back in China, "You only had to punch out the biggest and toughest of the bunch and the others would accept you" (p. 145).

In Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), Windrider tries to teach his son to be nonviolent by repeatedly telling him to solve his problems by using his mind. Windrider often attempts to show his son how to solve the problems his cousin is creating by offering love and understanding. However, when the conflict with his cousin is not resolved through discussion and Moon Shadow is repeatedly harmed by his cousin, Windrider takes a weapon and tries to find the assaulting person (p. 85). This is another example of how males are portrayed as trying to resolve person-against-person conflicts through peaceful means, but if this does not work, physical competition is a viable option.
In *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983), the person-against-person conflicts that arise between Matt and Attean are first resolved by one of the boys walking away from the situation that is causing the conflict. As the two boys get to know each other better, the person-against-person conflicts are resolved through the physical competitions of hunting, fishing, and sports contests. Apparently, the boys can find no other option than to compete against each other. They are unable to talk with each other easily because of a language barrier, so physical competition is the only option they see for showing the other that he is as good as his friend.

In *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) a pattern similar to that seen in *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975) emerges within the story. Initially, Maniac runs away from a confrontation with McNab (Spinelli, 1990, p. 30) and then talks his way out of a difficult situation with Mars (p. 34). As the story progresses, Maniac walks away from the racial conflict in which he is involved (p. 76). Near the end of the story, Maniac's solution for solving the problem of how to deal with another's defiance turns out to be much more physical, for he yells and destroys the McNab boys' toys to get his point across to the young boys (p. 157).
2. Male Characters are Portrayed as Resolving Person-Against-Nature and Person-Against-Self Conflicts Through Thought, Reflection, and Help From Others.

Males are portrayed as resolving person-against-nature conflicts through thought, reflection, cooperation with others, and time-consuming work. This is particularly evident in the books River Runners (Houston, 1979), The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), and Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987). For example, in Hatchet, when Brian realizes that an animal may again steal the food that has taken so long to gather, he considers all the possibilities of how to store food before deciding to put it high above his shelter (p. 133). This is in contrast to many of the person-against-person conflicts seen in the books, for at no time does Brian even consider resolving his conflict with the skunk who stole his food by having a physical confrontation with the animal in some way. Throughout the story in The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), Matt constantly reflects on how best to survive in the wilderness and puts a great deal of time and effort into learning how to deal with his situation of being hungry. He works with the First Nations people to find out how to cooperate with nature instead of fighting against it.

The person-against-self conflicts seen in Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981), Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), and Missing May (Rylant, 1992) are resolved in a similar fashion to the person-against-nature conflicts. In these books,
the primary male characters resolve their conflicts through thought, reflection, and looking at various options for resolution. For example, in Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984) when Alex is confused about what it really means to be a man, he thinks long and hard about the situation on his own. It is after seeing Jake be frightened by a spider that Alex realizes that being a man means different things for different people. In Missing May (Rylant, 1992), Uncle Ob comes to the realization that the answers for how to live life once the person you loved most dies comes from within oneself, but he relies on Summer and Cletus for emotional support on his journey to resolving his inner conflict.

Studies in the past have said that males are portrayed as independent (Lach & Peterson, 1990), yet my observations were that very often males are portrayed as relying on others for help when resolving the conflicts they face. For example, in Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981), Mr. Quimby counts on his wife to help him through a period in which he struggles with the issue of whether to stay in university or to go back to work. In The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), Matt knows he needs help from the First Nations people in order to learn how to survive and gratefully accepts their assistance. In River Runners (Houston, 1979), Andrew looks for help from Pashak to learn how to cope with the hardships living in the north can bring.
Looking Beyond the Code of Conflict

As noted, in the code of "Conflict Resolution" there are common ways males resolve conflicts in which they find themselves. When there are person-against-person conflicts in a book, the characters are portrayed as seeing physical confrontations to resolve conflict as a viable option. When physical force is used, there is a definite progression that the characters go through. They move from thought to physical action. This is notable for two reasons. First, physical force and competition are seen as options only in person-against-person conflicts. No character is portrayed as learning that solving a person-against-person conflict through competition to see who is the strongest, fastest, or best is not a viable option. This is never seen in person-against-nature or person-against-self conflicts. Where person-against-nature conflicts are seen, cooperation with nature is seen as a necessity, for competing against nature would only bring more hardships. Second, the winner of the person-against-person conflicts that are resolved through competition is portrayed as the person in the right. Although this may be done to give the reader a sense of fair play, a message may be sent that the one who wins is the one who is correct.

There are instances where the male characters are portrayed as not using physical action to solve person-against-person conflicts, but often these conflicts are never as completely resolved as when physical force is used. For example, in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) the conflict between Moon Shadow and his cousin is only
resolved after his cousin's death. In The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), no resolution is ever made in the situation of Ben stealing Matt's gun.

At first I felt that there are no instances in the books that contradict the features in the code of "Conflict Resolution" as I broke it up. As I looked again, however, I saw that there are person-against-person conflicts where males are portrayed as never considering using force or competition. In Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981) there is an ongoing conflict between Danny and Ramona. At no time did they physically fight or get into a contest to see who is the "best," however. In Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), I feel Alex has an inner conflict that, in turn, causes a conflict between Alex and his stepfather. Again, no physical action is taken, however. In reflecting upon the differences between these characters and the ones in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983) and Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), it became clear that the difference is not in the conflict itself, but rather the life the characters are leading at the time. In the books where physical action in the form of a competition is taken to resolve a person-against-person conflict, the characters involved are portrayed as somehow oppressed by society or their environment. Perhaps the physical action taken is showing the males as fighting back against their oppression rather than fighting against a person.

The fact that males are portrayed as using physical force as a last resort to resolve person-against-person conflicts may be viewed in two ways. First, this may be a positive sign, for the males in these books are rarely shown to use physical
force to resolve a conflict against another person. They are shown to use other conflict resolution techniques first, and only use physical force when they see no other option. Second, this may be a negative sign, for except when Mars wants to fight Maniac in *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), males are portrayed as seeing physical force and competition as a viable option in deciding who is correct. One may claim that the fact that physical force is used at all is a negative portrayal of males.

Some have claimed that male characters are portrayed as aggressive (Lovelace & Kingston, 1977, p. 146), but I found this to be the exception, not the rule. In most of the books used in this study, males reflect on situations before acting on them, and there are instances in books such as *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981), *Like Jake and Me* (Jukes, 1984), and *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992) where the characters do not act on the situation that involves conflict right away, but stand back, reflect on the situation, and hope the conflict resolves itself. Studies in the past have said that males are portrayed as aggressive in children's literature, but only in *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975) is a primary male character shown who goes looking for, and finds, a fight.

**The Code of Emotions**

Characters' personalities are often shown to the reader through the emotions they have and the ways they express them. This led me to identify
"Emotions" as a code through which characters are portrayed. In the books examined, the central features of the code of emotions portray males as follows:

1. *Feelings and emotions of a sensitive nature are to be kept to oneself and not verbally shared fully with others.*

2. *Males exhibit nurturant behavior.*

1. **Sensitive Feelings and Emotions Are To Be Kept to Oneself and Not Verbally Shared Fully With Others.**

All males are portrayed as having feelings many consider "sensitive" in various ways. By "sensitive" feelings or emotion, I refer to those such as love, fondness, and sadness. Often in the books examined, the males are portrayed as having sensitive feelings about someone or something, but unable or unwilling to fully expose their feelings to others or even themselves. In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), neither Moon Shadow nor Windrider share the full extent of his true feelings for the other. For example, when these two characters meet for the first time after a long absence, Moon Shadow's father gives him a handmade kite. Although it is a special gift both to give and to receive, neither male is portrayed as indicating that this is the case (p. 28). Even the minor male characters with whom Moon Shadow and Windrider interact are portrayed as keeping their true feelings inside, especially the uncles, as is seen when they lose their business after an
Uncle supervised the stowing away of his ancient chair and then sat down on it. He turned around to look at the building for one last time. "It's just as well. That old building was too drafty anyway." But he was fighting back the tears. None of us said anything as Hand Clap clicked his tongue and Red Rabbit jerked the wagon forward. (p. 180)

In *River Runners* (Houston, 1979), there is a situation where there is a good possibility that Andrew and/or Pashak might be killed. Although they have become very close and the two boys are involved in a very terrifying situation, both primary male characters are portrayed as keeping the true extent of their feelings for each other unspoken.

"I go first," said Pashak. "you watch me carefully. And if I make it over, you do just the same. You hear me? If I'm lost - well - goodbye, Androoo. You try it same way different." (p. 129)

In *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981) Danny obviously likes Ramona, yet he is afraid to let this emotion be public knowledge (p. 71). One can only assume that this fear of sharing his true feelings is because he is afraid the other students will tease him, possibly because he is only eight years old. Regardless of
the reason, however, Danny is portrayed as unable to express his true feelings.

In certain cases, sensitive feelings are shared with others, but they are either tempered or not verbalized at all. For example, in Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), Jake is portrayed as expressing his feelings of love and closeness for his stepson by picking him up and dancing with him. Not once, however, does Jake say how he really feels. As Maniac and Grayson become acquainted in Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), Grayson offers to take Maniac to stay at his place as a sign of his affection for the boy, but claims it is because the floor Maniac is sleeping on is hard (p. 89). It is when Attean and Matt must say "Goodbye" for the last time that it becomes obvious the primary male characters temper their true feelings in The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983). These two boys offer gifts as symbols of their love for each other, but their true feelings are never verbalized. Males are often portrayed as people who express their feelings through symbolic gestures rather than sharing their feeling verbally.

In some of the books studied, there are times when a primary male character cries. It is not seen often, but when it does appear, it is something boys hide or think of as a wasted emotion and men are ashamed of. An example of a boy being able to cry, but finding it a wasted emotion is in Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987) when Brian feels he is going to die in an airplane crash.

And he started crying with the screams, crying and slamming his hands against the wheel of the plane, causing to jerk down, then back up. But
again, he heard nothing but the sound of his own sobs in the microphone, his own screams mocking him, coming back into his ears. (p. 18)

Brian is not ashamed of crying, but rather sees it as a futile act at that time. Another example of Brian being portrayed as a person who sees emotions being expressed through crying as a futile act is after he becomes sick from eating gut berries. "He sat back on the bank and fought crying. Then let it come and cried for perhaps three, four minutes. Long tears, self-pity tears, wasted tears" (p. 70).

In *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) there is a scene where Maniac cries over the death of his close friend, Mr. Grayson (p. 116). In this case, there is no stigma attached to this showing of emotion. Rather, Maniac is portrayed as a boy who sees crying as a natural way to express the emotion of sadness when someone close to you passes away. Something important to note, however, is that Maniac cries only when he finishes the work he has to do and can be alone. He never once shares his feelings of sadness and loss with others.

The only primary adult male character who is shown crying is Uncle Ob in *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992). When Uncle Ob finally breaks down over the death of his wife of many years, he feels humiliated.

"What is it, Ob?" I asked.

And in that gray cast, that fog in which we both sat, I could see, and feel, that tears were rolling down his face . . .
"You go on back to sleep if you want, Ob. I'll put some coffee on the stove. And I'll fix you some eggs and coca when you get up."

Ob didn't protest. He was humiliated, I knew, and wanted to be left alone. (p. 45)

This example shows that adult males are portrayed as not sharing with others how they really feel when their feelings are of sadness. Previous examples showed that males do not verbally share feelings of love or caring with others. These examples also show, however, that males are portrayed as having these feelings, so studies that have assumed males are not portrayed as having sensitive emotions are mistaken (Fox, 1993). It is the fact that male characters are not able to verbally express to others the full extent of their sensitive feelings that is a key element in their portrayal.

2. **Males Exhibit Nurturant Behavior**

Unlike other studies have suggested (Scott, 1981), males are portrayed as nurturant. In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), there is no question that Windrider loves his son a great deal and although he does not verbalize this, he shows it through the stories he tells and the gifts he gives his son. In *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981), Ramona's father often displays his love for his wife and his children. He is very much committed to his family, and enjoys being with his
daughters. In *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983), Attean's grandfather is very caring. Not only does he exhibit love for his own family, but also cares enough for Matt that he asks Matt to join the First Nations people when they move so that Matt is not left alone. Jake in *Like Jake and Me* (Jukes, 1984) shows that he really does care for and love Alex when he picks him up so that they can dance together. Some of the best examples of males exhibiting nurturant behavior are seen in *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990). Mr. Grayson cares for and loves Maniac even when they do not really know each other. Also, Maniac looks after various small children as if they are part of his own family. The fact that Maniac is extremely good with small children is an important part of his portrayal. In *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), Uncle Ob feels insecure about his abilities to care for Summer, but there is no doubt that he loves Summer and will do anything for her. Males are portrayed as more than just providers for their families, but also as loving, caring fathers, uncles, sons, and friends.

Males may not be portrayed as nurturing in the same way as females, but they are nurturing all the same. Often males have the situation of being a caregiver thrust upon them, and it is then their nurturant behavior is exhibited. It is not portrayed as an inherent quality, but rather one that evolves over time.

**Looking Beyond the Code of Emotions**

It was interesting to note that authors portray boys in a way that allow them
to cry without stigma being attached. Although this is just one of many ways a character displays the emotion of sadness, it is one that some researchers have singled out as an indication of a character's sensitivity (Fox, 1993). The fact that the men are never portrayed as showing their emotions through crying without a feeling of shame being attached or show no outward signs of sad emotions even in situations such as when a child of theirs has died (Speare, 1983, p.132) are examples of how the portrayal of males change for characters of different ages; it is important that males learn how to hide or cover up more sensitive feelings as they grow older.

As I was reading the novels, I questioned why some characters do not cry. For example, in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), when Moon Shadow is eight years old, he is separated from all the family members he knows, yet does not cry when he leaves. The cultural aspect of this finding is discussed further on in this chapter. In The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), the fear of being left alone that Matt feels is not expressed through tears, and neither Matt nor his father show any emotion when it is revealed that Matt's sibling has died (p. 132). In Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), Alex is portrayed as a very sensitive boy, yet he does not cry when he thinks that he will never be as manly as Jake, even though he wants this very badly. The fact that many of the eight authors studied do not portray their male characters as people who cry is as important to note as the fact that when boys do cry, though it may be a futile act, it is permissible. What is not said is pivotal. Another interesting observation is that in every situation a boy cries, it is in private.
No male is portrayed as sharing his feeling of sadness with others.

Some studies have said that male characters do not show the feelings associated with nurturing (Scott, 1981), yet this is not the impression I had while reading the eight books. In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981), *Like Jake and Me* (Jukes, 1984), *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), and *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), adult male caregivers are shown to be caring, loving, and nurturing people. Again, these qualities are portrayed through their actions more than their verbal expressions, but they are portrayed as nurturing all the same. Not all of the primary male characters are shown as loving and caring individuals, but if they are, it is a very narrow portrayal of males, for not everyone is nurturing in reality.

It is important to note that when there is a mother figure in the family, the raising of the children is shown to be her responsibility. Therefore, males are portrayed as nurturant, but do not act as the primary caregiver when there is a female who will take this role.

Although characters are portrayed as being sensitive, it is difficult for them to express their emotions. For example, in *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), Windrider and Moon Shadow obviously love each other a great deal, yet neither one put this emotion into words and both males try to cover up the real reasons for some of their actions. The same situation can be seen between Attean and Matt in *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983). Unlike some studies have suggested (Pearson & Tetenbaum, 1989), male characters are portrayed as sensitive and caring. It is
the lack of the verbal expression of and self reflection about these feelings that differs from the way female characters are portrayed. Perhaps it is because males are not portrayed as verbally sharing their feelings that some researchers think male characters are portrayed as cold and distant.

There may be arguments about why the male characters are portrayed as not able to fully share their feelings, but I feel that these would simply be justifications for having traditional characters. For example, some may say that during the early 1900s it was common for men in Chinese society not to express their feelings of love verbally, and this is why it is not seen in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975). Also, some may say that the reason adult male characters do not cry is because most men do not cry in front of others in reality, and authors are trying to portray the characters realistically. These types of statements may be valid, but would simply be a defence for having traditional and narrowly portrayed characters. Many Chinese men have in the past expressed their feelings of love for their children and many males cry in front of others when they are feeling sad, so having these types of portrayals would be realistic, at least to some extent.

**The Code of Race**

Race plays a large role in the way characters are portrayed in books. A character's reaction to his or her own and another's race affects his or her portrayal a great deal. For this reason, I identified "Race" as a code through which a
character's portrayal is seen. Males are portrayed as:

1. Accepting and initiating friendships between people of different races.

2. Assuming that people of a certain race have knowledge unique to their heritage.

3. Stereotypes when of a different race from the story's protagonist.

1. Male Characters Develop Friendship With People of Different Races and This is Acceptable.

In four of the eight books examined, male characters develop strong friendships with people of races other than their own. Very rarely does race remain an issue to be dealt with for these characters for a long period of time. It is not that friendships between people of different races are shown as being easy or that there are not difficulties in gaining an understanding of others from a different race, but by the time the friendships are established, race no longer remains a conscious issue.

The primary male characters in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) are Chinese and they make very good friends with two White females. The fact that they are females is never an issue, but in the beginning there is the possibility that the racial difference will stop Moon Shadow from becoming friends with the woman and the girl:
"You'd think," I grumbled, "that we were visiting the Empress herself."

Father wet his towel in the pail and began to wash his face. "Your mother was always polite to everyone. She always said that you never knew if that person might have been some king or queen in a former life."

"But these are white demons," I protested. . . .

I think that the demoness had been waiting for us, because Father had no sooner knocked once than she opened the door. She was the first demoness that I had ever seen this close up, and I stared. I had expected her to be ten feet tall with blue skin and to have a face covered with warts and ear lobes that hung all the way down to her knees so that her ear lobes would bounce off the knees when she walked. And she might have a potbelly shiny as a mirror, and big sacs of flesh for breasts, and maybe she would only be wearing a loin cloth. (Yep, 1975, pp. 100-101)

After Moon Shadow and Windrider get to know these White females, they realize that coming from a White race does not prevent them from being kind and good people. In the course of their friendships, the issue of race is never discussed.

In River Runners (Houston, 1979), the story revolves around two close friends who are from different races. Andrew Stewart is from White Scottish ancestry while the boy that becomes his best friend, Pashak, is a Naskapi First Nations person. Because of the situation of traveling in the north, it is never
questioned why these boys become friends. It is just assumed that because of their situation, it is natural that a White boy and a First Nations boy can become friends.

Situations similar to those in River Runners (Houston, 1979) and Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) are found in The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983). At first, Matt is apprehensive about meeting "Indians" and has preconceived notions of what one will be like:

It was a good life, with only a few small annoyances buzzing like mosquitoes inside his head. One of these was the thought of Indians. Not that he feared them. His father had been assured by the proprietors that his new settlement would be safe. Since the last treaty with the tribes, there had not been an attack reported anywhere in this part of Maine. Still, one could not entirely forget all those horrid tales. (p. 9)

As he gets to know what First Nations people are really like and why they act the way they do, Matt becomes very good friends with Attean, a boy from the Beaver clan. Throughout their friendship, the two males never discuss how race affects them personally.

In Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), Maniac is portrayed as a person who tries to come to an understanding of why people judge others based on race and skin color. Maniac himself is friends with many Blacks and Whites, and questions the
whole idea of classifying people by their race:

For the life of him, he couldn’t figure why these East Enders called themselves black. He kept looking and looking, and the colors he found were gingersnap and light fudge and dark fudge and acorn and butter rum and cinnamon and burnt orange. But never licorice, which, to him, was real black. (p. 51)

Maniac kept trying, but he still couldn’t see it, this color business. He didn’t figure he was white any more than the East Enders were black. He looked himself over pretty hard and came up with at least seven different shades and colors right on his own skin, not one of them being what he would call white (except for his eyeballs, which weren’t any whiter than the eyeballs of the kids in the East End). (p. 58)

2. **It is Assumed that People of a Certain Race Have Knowledge Unique to Their Heritage.**

In the books that have characters of different races, primary male characters assume groups of people have knowledge particular to their race; that is, it is assumed people of one particular race possess a knowledge base that is inherent to that race.
In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975) there is a definite separation between the White and the Chinese people in the types of knowledge the different races have. The Chinese are portrayed as superior in understanding how to be a good person. Their knowledge is shown in the workings of humankind while White people's knowledge is based on how to make money.

Both *River Runners* (Houston, 1979) and *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983) show First Nations people as having great knowledge about how to be at one with nature. They know how to make the best clothes for the elements and how to be part of the land. The White people in these books have an ability to learn very quickly from others. Whereas the First Nations people are unable to adapt to others' ways, White people are depicted as being able to adapt very quickly and easily.

3. **Male Characters Who are a Different Race Than the Protagonist are often Stereotyped Individuals.**

In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), the point of view is from that of a Chinese family. Often the comments about White people are stereotyped. This may be understandable since it is the story about Moon Shadow's experiences of coming to a new country he knows little about, but over the eight years that the story covers, he makes friends with just two White people and does not change his racist views to a great degree. All of the non-Chinese males Moon Shadow and Windrider
come into contact with are portrayed as stereotypical White people. The non-Chinese males are shown to be racist, money-hungry and selfish in the eyes of the two primary male characters. The interactions with White males are often negative:

I had begun to think that the demons were not really so bad, but that very evening I found out that there can be some bad demons too. I was taking the trash out to the trash barrels when I saw a demon boy lounging against the wall of our alley. I passed by him, when he kicked me in the backs of my legs. I fell on my back, cracking my head against the ground, the breath driven out of me. Our garbage pail spilled out all over the alley. The boy leered down at me. And above me, on the back landing of the tenement house next door, I saw a half dozen boys begin to shout.

*Ching Chong Chinaman,*

*Sitting in a tree,*

*Wanted to pick a berry*

*But sat on a bee.* (p. 118)

Occasionally, the stereotypes exhibited are simple reversals of stereotypes some people have of Chinese. Although this may have been an attempt to portray the message to the reader that stereotypes are just the way one perceives his world, it is a stereotype all the same. An example of this can be seen when Moon Shadow describes the Roman Alphabet in the same way some people talk about
All during the day, Uncle and Father would keep up a conversation with me using what they knew of the demons' tongue, and they made me read and discuss the demon's magazines and newspapers... Demonic was easier to speak than to read. It was hard to understand a language that only used twenty-six symbols, the letters of their alphabet. The letters kept on rearranging themselves in the most confusing patterns. (Yep, 1975, p. 50)

In both River Runners (Houston, 1979) and The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983) the primary male characters who are White see the First Nation People as positive, but their perceptions of these people are stereotyped all the same. In both books, First Nations People are seen to be at one with nature, very wise in the ways of living off the land, and always wanting to stay with their own people. In each book, First Nations People are portrayed as teachers and we are able to see through them where European settlers have gone wrong. Their knowledge is trivialized into something that they are born with rather than learned through hard work. An example of portraying someone of a different race than the protagonist as a stereotype is seen in River Runners (Houston, 1979) when Andrew was put on a boat with Pashak:

"Aw, don't let him worry you," said Pashak. "Nakasuk here will find..."
the way. Eskimos are at their very best when piloting in heavy ice." (p. 13)

Even descriptions of the First Nations characters conjure up stereotypes, for they are compared to elements found in nature or are seen as somehow unusual since they are not like White people:

He [Pashak] was tall and lean, with a hawklike face burned dark brown by the glaring spring sun. He had large black eyes that moved as quick as any animal's. But when Pashak saw Andrew looking at him, he turned his head away shyly and even drew his sensitive, long-fingered hands up into his loose sleeves. (Houston, 1979, p. 14)

The two boys stared at each other. The Indian boy's black eyes held no expression whatever. Unlike the old man ['there was nothing in the least strange about this man' (p. 26)], he was naked except for a breechcloth held up by a string at his waist. It passed between his legs and hung down like a little apron back and front. His heavy black hair fell straight to his shoulders. (Speare, 1983, p. 28)

The way the First Nations people speak in River Runners (Houston, 1979) and even more so in The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983) sound like the way old western movies portray First Nations People. Their speech is simple and pigeon-
like, even when they are speaking to each other and not to someone who only speaks English:

"Packmen coming on the river! Dogs pulling two toboggans!" Mium-scum heard the sharp-eyed children warning him through the smoke-stained tent walls. "They come in secret without dog bells. They are true men, our men, coming up the river. See how their snowshoe trail curves in toward our camp." (Houston, 1979, p. 59)

"White boy know signs?" he asked.

Matt was puzzled.

"White boy read what white man write here?"

"Yes," Matt admitted. "I can read it."

For a long moment the Indian studied the book. Then, astonishingly, that rare white smile flashed.

"Good," he grunted. "Saknis make treaty."

"A treaty?" Matt was even more puzzled.


In The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), Attean sees White people as stereotypes. From the way their boots are made to the way White people treat the
land, Attean sees all White people as the same. He views them as people who are "book smart" but have no respect for or knowledge of how to work in harmony with nature. Attean is never portrayed as noticing how Matt lives a lifestyle similar to a First Nations person when he is on his own or how Matt is different from the White people his family had come into contact with in the past.

In Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), the main character is often fighting against prejudice and stereotyping, yet other primary male characters are stereotypes of specific races. For example, Mars Bar is a Black male who is good at, and consequently identifies himself with, sports. He is very competitive and does whatever he can to win, even if it means turning to violence. The descriptions of Mars Bar are at times very racist and stereotyped:

From the way the kid swaggered in, from the candy bar that jutted like a chocolate stogie from the corner of his mouth, from the rip-stone-evil scowl on his face, the kid had to be none other than Mars Bar Thompson himself. If black meant bad, if black meant in-your-face nastiness, if black meant as far from white as you could get, then Mars Bar Thompson was the blackest of the black. (p. 158)

**Looking Beyond the Code of Race**

If one looked simply at numbers, various racial groups are quite well
represented in the books examined, for four out of the eight books have characters from groups other than from a White background as primary male characters. When one scrutinizes these characters, however, clearly their portrayals are stereotyped much of the time. In Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) and Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), there are occasions that the characters from minority groups are stereotyped, but it is not as obvious as the stereotyping found in River Runners (Houston, 1979) or The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983).

Henderson and Kinman (1985) addressed the issue of stereotyping in Newbery Medal Award books. Citing books such as The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), they concluded that in historically based books the portrayals are of distinct personalities. "Any seemingly biased or stereotypic behavior was dictated by the mores of the time, locale, and culture of the story and necessary for an accurate account of the times" (p. 888). They were unclear about whether they meant the stereotyping of males or of minorities, but either way, they are just providing a reason for the stereotyping. If one follows their reasoning, the characters in River Runners (Houston, 1979) and The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983) had no choice but to be stereotyped. I found this reasoning hard to accept, for throughout history non-stereotyped people have been around. The books make it sound like all First Nations People have a relationship with nature that is inherent in their culture. It is the only part of their culture dealt with in any of the eight books used in this study.

The only book examined that shows characters of different races being more
similar than dissimilar is Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990). Even in this book, however, race is an issue dealt with in a superficial manner. The characters in the books reflect a trend toward multi-culturalism rather than anti-racism. The issue of race is not dealt with in any depth in the books in this study. Male characters are usually portrayed as people who are not racist, but ones who still view race as an inherent quality when identifying with other people. Those who have obvious racist views are portrayed as sympathetic characters because their views are based on ignorance. Racism is shown as an issue with no middle ground. Characters are either portrayed as racist or non-racist. Some begin as racist and change to non-racist, and the message might be that racism is something that can be dealt with quickly and easily. Characters who are portrayed as non-racist never see how they add to the problems of racism in society and there are no portrayals of males from mixed races.

Friendship between people of different races is seen as permissible by most male characters, but race is an issue never confronted in these friendships. It justifies the idea that race is not a factor in the development of friendships, and it is an issue not directly dealt with when racial differences occur. Characters are portrayed as ignoring the situations caused by ignorance of another's race rather than dealing with them. In the books read, males are portrayed as accepting people from other races, but view race as an identifying feature.

Primary male characters may have developed friendships with people from other races, but a feeling of "us and them" is evident. There is a feeling that race
always stands in the way of truly getting to know someone else. There is something that every person of a specific race can understand that others not of that race cannot. For example, in The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), Matt begins to live much like a First Nations person. For a year, they are his friends, his teachers, and his family, but he still sees First Nations people as "them" in the end of the story.

As one last note on how males are portrayed in the code of "Race," I feel it is important to point out that the situations characters from non-White groups are put in help to stereotype the characters. For example, First Nations males are seen living in the woods, Chinese males are shown as settlers trying to make money, and Black males are shown as leaders of families and sportsmen. It is extremely difficult to distinguish if characters are stereotyped or if the situations the authors choose to put their characters in allow for only stereotyped characters to exist.

**The Code of Relationships**

The way a character is portrayed is often greatly influenced by his or her interactions with other people. This led me to identify the code of "Relationships." Features that form the central elements of the code of "Relationships" show a portrayal of males as people who:
1. Do not base friendship on gender.
2. Are heterosexual.
3. Experience romantic love only in adult years.
4. Are part of families which vary in composition.
5. In adulthood have roles in families which are defined by gender.

1. **Males Do Not Form Friendships Based on the Gender of the Person.**

In four of the eight books, the "best friends" of the primary male characters are of the opposite sex. In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), Moon Shadow and Windrider both are very good friends with Mrs. Whitlaw and Robin, the "demonesses" who live next door. There is no consideration given to the fact that these two people are female, which shows that gender is not an issue for these males when forming friendships. Howie is Ramona's best friend in *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981), and even Danny seems to be becoming a good friend of hers. Ramona is not shown to have many friends, but the ones she does have are male. In *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), the first person who is shown to be a good friend of Maniac's is Amanda, and this friendship lasts throughout the story. From the first time they meet, Maniac is not afraid or ashamed to open up to Amanda about his love of reading (p. 13). In *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), Summer is Cletus' only friend. Although he is seen as a bit strange in Summer's eyes, they are friends by the end of the story. As Uncle Ob explains why he wants Cletus to travel to
Putnam County, he says, "Cletus is a boy just full of curiosity about the world, and . . . him and Summer, they get on real good, they're practically best friends" (p. 63).

2. **When a Male Character Experiences Sexual Love, it is Heterosexual Love.**

One feature that remains constant throughout the novels is that any form of sexual love is heterosexual. This love is either shown through the makeup of the couples or references to others in a sexual way. All couples to which boy and girl characters are exposed are limited to heterosexual relationships. Although many characters in the novels are adolescents, not one of them question sexuality in any way. This gives the impression that the only viable and natural form of sexual love is heterosexual love, for this is the only type portrayed in the books analyzed.

In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), there is no talk of love between man and man, or woman and woman. This may be due in part to the fact that the story takes place in the early 1900s and sex was not talked about openly. However, every form of love that appears in the book which is interpreted as sexual love (husband/wife, man/prostitute) is heterosexual. In *River Runners* (Houston, 1979), the only relationship between couples is male and female. The same can be said for *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983), where from Matt's parents to Attean's family, all couples are male and female. In *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981), Mr. Quimby is the only male shown in a relationship. This is a monogamous,
heterosexual married relationship. In the story Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984),
the only couple spoken about is the married heterosexual couple of Jake and Alex's
mother, Virginia. In Missing May (Rylant, 1992), much of the focus is on Uncle Ob
and Aunt May's love for each other. Cletus is portrayed as someone who wants to
marry a woman some day and there are hints that he secretly likes Summer.

3. **Romantic Love is an Inevitable Process that Only Forms in the Adult
Years of a Male Character’s Life.**

In all of the books examined, there is no sign of romantic or sexual love
involving anybody other than the adults. The closest thing mentioned to young
people having romantic feelings for another are in Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary,
1981) when there are subtle overtones that Ramona has a crush on Dennis, in
Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990) when Amanda's mother teases Amanda about liking
Maniac, and in Missing May (Rylant, 1992) when Cletus' mother hints that Cletus
has a crush on Summer. In none of the books are children or adolescents
portrayed as people who think about, question, have any sort of relationships with
another person other than in familial or friendly way. Even boys as old as fifteen do
not mention the desire to be in a romantic relationship with another person.

None of the books have child or juvenile male characters who are
developing "a crush" on another person. However, except for one character, every adult male is shown to be involved with a female in a romantic relationship. The differentiating factor is that some of these relationships are romantic and positive (River Runners, Ramona Quimby, Age 8, Like Jake and Me, Missing May), difficult (Hatchet, Maniac Magee), or neutral (Dragonwings, The Sign of the Beaver, Maniac Magee). Only one adult male in all of these books is shown to be a bachelor and not searching for romance.

4. Male Characters are Portrayed as Part of Families Which Vary in Composition.

Though all couples in the books are heterosexual, the families are varied in their composition. Part of the primary male character's portrayal is seen within the makeup of his family. In Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), the family focuses on Moon Shadow, Windrider, and Moon Shadow's mother and Windrider's wife. Father, mother, son - husband, wife, child - this may seem like a very traditional family until one examines it more closely. Windrider has been unable to see his son for over seven years and his wife for over 15 years due to his being away from home to work. Although the reason for Windrider to be far away from his wife and child is traditional (he moved away to find work so that he could better support his family), it changes the dynamics of his family makeup. Also, Moon Shadow and Windrider are part of an extended family made up of only males. This "family" includes
uncles and cousins and is shown to be as viable as any other type of family.

In *Ramona Quimbry, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981) and *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983) there are the very traditional families of father, mother, and two children. These are the only books of the eight in this study that have this type of family all living together at once. The family in *Like Jake and Me* (Jukes, 1984) is traditional in that Alex lives with a mother and father. What makes it nontraditional is that Jake is not Alex's biological father, but rather a stepfather who is having a child with Alex's mother. Brian comes from a traditional family, but his family dynamic is changing in *Hatchet* (Paulsen, 1987). He tries to figure out where he belongs now that his parents have separated. The plane Brian is on when the accident happens is on its way to take him to his father's house for the holidays, an experience Brian is trying to come to terms with. Family life for Maniac in *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) is anything but traditional. His parents are killed in a trolley accident and he is left an orphan to be raised by his relatives. Unable to cope with the fighting that goes on in the household, he soon runs away from his aunt and uncle's house. Maniac becomes a part of other families but the closest thing he feels to actually belonging to a family is when he meets Grayson and they set up house together. Grayson is an older man who has never been married and has no children. By the end of the story, Maniac becomes part of Amanda Beale's family - a traditional Black family. In *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), Uncle Ob's family is made up of his wife, May, and his niece, Summer, who comes to live with them after her parents die. Cletus' family is more traditional in its makeup for he lives with his
mother and his father.

Males are portrayed as members of families made up of varying compositions, yet none of the primary male characters or the people in their families is not "normal" in intelligence or physical appearance. There is no mention of physically or mentally handicapped, over or underweight, or physically disfigured characters who are part of any family.

5. **The Adult Male Characters' Roles Within their Families are Defined By Gender, the Male Children Characters' Roles are Not.**

Although the makeup of the families themselves are varied, the roles adult males play within the families are defined by gender. Roles change based on the age of the character, for male children's roles are not strongly defined by gender. Adult males play roles within the family that are traditionally thought of as "man's work" as opposed to "women's work." Men provide a house and food for the families, work a regular, steady job, and do not partake in household duties when there is a wife who lives at home. Also, the occupations they hold are well paying and/or traditional "male" jobs. Boys, on the other hand, are portrayed as people who do both "women's work" and "men's work." They clean up around the house and look after children as part of their daily routines. Due to a lack of evidence, it is hard to decide if the boys would do this work had there been a mother or sister at home full-time to look after the family.
In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), Windrider's role is very traditional. His role is to work to make money to provide a better life for his family. It is for this reason that he left China for America. Windrider does the work usually considered "woman's work," but only until Moon Shadow becomes older.

Father worked as a handyman or an all-around mechanic when he could, but he would cut firewood or do almost anything so long as it was legal and it paid. . . . Eventually I wound up running our household, or maybe our barnhold is a better word. Among other things, I planned our meals, washed our clothes, kept the barn as clean as I could under the circumstances, and oversaw the budget once Father showed me how to do it. That left Father all his free time to work on flying. (p. 204)

In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), Moon Shadow's role in the family is always an important one, but is not traditionally "male." After arriving in America, Moon Shadow seems to take over the role his mother used to play when the family was together. For example, Moon Shadow does the cleaning, writing, and cooking, which is stereotypically labeled as "women's work." Moon Shadow also shows signs of being a caregiver when he states that it is his role to protect his father from danger.

"What about me?" I asked.
"Boy, you stay here."

"I want to go with you."

Father shook his head. "Where I'm going, nobody should have to go. What would your mother say?"

"Before I left, she told me to look after you. You'll need someone to watch your back for you." (p. 70)

Another example of males being portrayed as having traditional male roles in their families is seen in River Runners (Houston, 1979) where there is a scene of Pashak's family going hunting. All members are involved in the hunt, each having a specific duty that is dependent on gender:

Without another word from anyone, Agawan's wife and their sons' wives, Phim and Shibush, stood up and started waving their arms and singing. Agawan and his two sons, crouching low, moved out to the west. Pashak and Andrew circled to the east of the caribou. . . . Agawan, his sons, and Pashak and Andrew approached the caribou at the same time, and spreading in a wide circle, they then started shouting. . . . Lungen out with his [Agawan] long knife, he stabbed the rearing animal in the heart. . . . The women sharpened their knives against whetstones and swiftly skinned and quartered the caribou before they froze. The men cut spruce and threw up a lodge shelter just big enough for all eleven of them to eat and sleep. (pp.
In *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981) the father is portrayed as a kind and gentle man who is artistic and studying to be an elementary school teacher because of his love for children. This portrayal goes against the traditional male stereotype, but Mr. Quimby's actions within the family are gender specific and traditional to a large degree. For example, when Ramona becomes sick, it is up to Mrs. Quimby to look after her. Even though Mrs. Quimby is supporting the family, it is decided that she should take time off work because Mr. Quimby would have to miss classes if he looked after Ramona. It is ironic how at the time he is unable to look after Ramona because he does not have the time, he is somehow able to take the car in to be repaired. Mr. Quimby's role in the family is also that of the disciplinarian. His word is law.

"Ramona, clean up your room!" Mrs. Quimby raised her voice.

"Well, you don't have to yell at me." Ramona's feelings were hurt by the tone of her mother's voice. The log in the fireplace settled, sending a puff of smoke into the living room.

"Then do it," snapped Mrs. Quimby. "Your room is a disaster area."

Mr. Quimby threw down his pencil. "Young lady, you do what your mother says, and you do it now. She shouldn't have to tell you three times."

"Well, all right, but you don't have to be so cross," said Ramona. (p.
The father "as boss" is seen at various points throughout Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981). Another example is seen when an argument about supper occurs. Throughout the meal it is Mr. Quimby who disciplines, and when he tells Ramona and her sister that they are to cook dinner the next day, he says to his wife, "I'll tell you what... You need a rest. Tomorrow the girls can get dinner and you can take it easy" (p. 85), yet not once is he shown cooking or cleaning. Mr. Quimby may exhibit nurturant behaviors, but his roles in the family are ultimately decided upon because he is male.

In The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), the roles of the males in the family are clearly different from those of the females. It is up to Matt and his father to venture across the wilderness in order to build a home for Matt's mother and sister. Due to the situation of living alone, Matt does much of the work usually done by his mother, but once Matt's mother returns, she takes over the duties of running the house. Matt's father has clearly defined roles. He builds the house, plants the crops, hunts for food, and leads his wife and daughter to their new home.

The roles of the men in Attean's family are even more clearly defined by gender in The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983). The men hunt to provide food for the family and the women prepare this food and clean up after the men. An example can be seen when Matt and Attean kill a bear:
The great head shuddered and sank toward the ground. With a wild yell, Attean sprang forward and thrust his knife deep, just behind his first arrow. . . The bear's sides were heaving. The boys stood watching, and in a few moments it lay still. . . . It certainly was too big for two boys to carry. It appeared that Attean had no intention of trying.

"Belong squaw now", he said. "I go tell."

"You mean a squaw is going to carry that heavy thing?"

"Cut up meat, then carry. Squaw work," Attean answered. It was plain that he had done the man's work and was finished with it. (pp. 73-74).

In Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), Jake's role is defined by gender. This is in contrast to Alex's role, for Alex is a young child who is trying to find out what his role as a male is. He enjoys dancing, and is given the freedom to express this through play. In fact, Alex is not allowed to partake in the "male" activities of cutting and hauling wood with his stepfather. Jake, on the other hand is shown as the provider for his pregnant wife. It is his role to chop and carry wood, but he does not have to look after Alex.

In Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), Maniac lives with various families. Maniac is shown not to fill the roles usually associated with males when he is in a family. This can be seen when he lives with the Beales:

He [Maniac] played with the little ones and read them stories and taught
them things. He took Bow Wow out for runs and he did the dishes without anybody asking. (Which made Amanda feel guilty, so she started to dry.) . . . He carried out the trash, mowed the grass, cleaned up his own spills, turned out lights, put the cap back on the toothpaste tube, flushed the toilet, and - Mrs. Beale called it "the miracle on Sycamore Street" - he kept his room neat. (pp. 45-46)

Maniac's nontraditional role in a family is also reflected in his dealings with the McNab boys. When he lives at their house, he soon takes over the duties of looking after the young boys and even wonders, "How could he act as a father to these boys when he himself ached to be somebody's son?" (p. 155). In comparison, every time that Maniac eats dinner at a "traditional family's" house, the adult male character of the father sits at the table after a day of work to be served by the wife and mother of the family. Mr. Beale, Amanda's father, works at a tire factory to support his family while Mrs. Beale stays home to care for the children. When Mr. Beale gets home from work, his wife serves the dinner. Men such as Grayson do stereotypical "woman's work" such as decorating, but as with all of the books examined, this is only seen in families without a wife.

In Missing May (Rylant, 1992), the roles in the families are again defined by gender, but the roles are not as distinct as in the other books. A scene that shows Uncle Ob's role in the family does not include "woman's work" is when he talks to Summer after the death of May:
"I never was no hand at housekeeping. Maybe there was a time I could've learned. But it's too late for me now, and I don't know that I can do all that needs to be done to keep this place running." (p. 49)

The roles in Cletus' family appear to be defined by gender for it is only Mrs. Underwood who serves the cake and coffee to the guests (p. 65) and it is Mr. Underwood who gives permission for Cletus to travel (p. 63).

Males are portrayed as having prestigious and/or masculine jobs. Windrider in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) first works in a Laundromat, but soon discovers that he works well with machines and so changes his line of work to repairing cars and small appliances. In River Runners (Houston, 1979), all occupations seen are ship workers, hunters, or in the case of the two main male characters, store clerks who tackle the wilderness to establish more trading posts. In Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981), the father works in a frozen food warehouse, but this is to put himself through university so that he can become an elementary teacher. This is the only male in all of the books who talks about working in a field that some would consider traditionally occupied by females. In Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), men are either trappers, hunters, explorers, or settlers. In Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), Jake is a "real cowboy." In Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987), Brian's father is an engineer, and the only other male shown is an airplane pilot. In Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990) the only adult male that has a major role is an ex-baseball player who turns out to be a caretaker at a zoo.
Finally, in Missing May (Rylant, 1992) an exception to the general rule that males
are portrayed as having prestigious or masculine jobs is seen. Uncle Ob's
occupation is never explicitly discussed, yet the reader gets the idea that he builds
"whirligigs" for a living, and this is presented as a form of art rather than a
construction activity.

In the books, there is very little mention made of what the boy characters
enjoy doing, but when there is, many of the activities are gender-neutral. For
example, in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), Moonrider enjoys flying kites, visiting with
his neighbors, and explaining the importance of dragons to his two White friends.
In Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), much of the story revolves around Alex's liking
to dance. It is important to note, however, that he feels embarrassed by this
activity. In Missing May (Rylant, 1992) Cletus enjoys collecting pictures from
magazines.

Looking Beyond the Code of Relationships

As previously stated, Ramona's best friend in Ramona Quimby, Age 8
(Cleary, 1981) is a male whose name is Howie. Howie does not have a major role
in Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981), but his friendships are interesting in their
makeup. When Howie is riding his bicycle, he asks Ramona if she wants to ride
"because Howie was kind and because Ramona was his friend" (p. 42), yet when
Ramona returns from her short ride, Howie leaves with "his friends" (p. 43) who
happen to be boys and does not ask Ramona to join them. The denial of having a female friend can be seen again in *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981) after Ramona breaks a raw egg on her face and Danny comes to get her to take her back to the classroom.

She expected him to go on ahead of her, but instead he walked beside her, as if they were friends instead of rivals. When they reached their classroom, Yard Ape, perhaps thinking he had been too nice to Ramona, turned and said to her with his old grin, "Egghead!" (p. 71)

I assumed that Danny is trying to stress to other boys that he is not friends with a girl because earlier in the story it is boys who, along with Danny, are teasing Ramona. In *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), even though Maniac does not hesitate to become friends with a girl, Amanda is the only female friend he makes. The rest of his friends, who include Grayson, Mars Bar, and the McNabs, are all male and Maniac never does things with both his male and female friends simultaneously. This illustrates a portrayal of males as people who separate their female friends from their male friends.

Males are portrayed as friendly with females, yet as I examined their relationships more closely, it became evident that these friendships are different from male/male friendships. In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981), and *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), each primary male character has
only one female friend of the same age. Therefore, males are portrayed as not choosing friends based on gender, but also as not able to have more than one female friend at a time.

In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975) and *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) Moon Shadow and Maniac make friends with girls, yet in each case the initial attraction is based on academic pursuits. For Moon Shadow, it is when Robin begins to teach him how to read (Yep, 1975, p. 128) and for Maniac, his friendship with Amanda is first based on a love of reading (Spinelli, 1990, p. 11). This is very different from the boys' friendships with other males, which are based more on physical activities (Yep, 1975, p. 145; Spinelli, 1990, p. 96). Male characters are portrayed as people who can become friends with females. However, these friendships are not as active as friendships males have with other males.

In the books examined, males are shown to be friends with females, but only in *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975) is this type of friendship seen with adults. The men in the other books are only friends with other males. Males are portrayed as people who, when they become older, cannot be platonic friends with females.

Kortenhaus and Demarest (1993) stated that "boys were characterized... as instrumental and independent... Fathers... are portrayed in a capable, take-charge manner, seldom consulting the mother about any decision" (p. 230). This statement over generalizes the independence of the primary male characters. It is true that both boys and men are portrayed as independent and men are often shown as decision makers, but they are also portrayed as dependent and passive.
In their relationships, male characters are often portrayed as reliant on others, such as when Mr. Quimby relies on his wife to support the family in Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981) and Uncle Ob relies on his wife for most things in his life in Missing May (Rylant, 1992).

There is only one time an adult male is not shown to have some sort of romantic or sexual relationship with a female in all of the books examined. This shows that adult males are portrayed as people who will inevitably fall in love with a female. All of the relationships shown are between one man and one woman. The absence of any form of sexual love other than male/female relationships appears to accept only heterosexuality. The absence of a positive portrayal of homosexual and bisexual characters was addressed in Virginia L. Wolf's article "The Gay Family in Literature for Young People" (1989):

No matter what an adult may feel or believe about homosexuality, the lack of information readily available to young people about the gay family is an injustice. Liana Lloyd, founder of Children of Gays, estimates that there are over six million children of gay parents. For the same reasons that minority children of all kinds need books with positive or at least realistic or neutral images of themselves, these children do, too. They need to know that being different from the majority does not make them bad or worthless, but rather special and valuable in their own way. But children of gay parents are not the only ones who need books about gay families. So do all children. (p.
The lack of relationships that are not heterosexual illustrate a narrow portrayal of males in this area, at least in the eight books read. The families shown may have been broad in how they are made up, but at the core, they are all similar in certain aspects. Besides not being shown as homosexual or bisexual, primary adult male characters are all shown as nurturing, hard working, and responsible. In striving for what society has deemed "positive characters," it seems that realism has been left behind.

**The Code of Success**

It became obvious that much of how a character is portrayed is through the successes and failures he or she encounters. This led me to identify "Success" as a code through which characters are portrayed. Through the following features that form the central elements of the code of success, males are portrayed as:

1. Usually successful in all areas of their lives.
2. Always successful in specific tasks when they persevere and believe in themselves.
3. Valuing the processes that lead to the success more than the success itself.
1. **Male Characters are Usually Successful in Most Areas.**

   It is undeniable that the males are portrayed as successful. What is meant by "male characters are usually successful in most areas" is that these boys and men experience success even if it is not something they are working towards. They are successful in the events that unfolded in the stories. This can be seen in all the books examined to a certain degree.

   In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975) Moon Shadow is successful in living in a new country. He has a good relationship with a father he has not seen for seven years, defends himself against those who would hurt him, and takes care of his father's needs. Windrider is successful in protecting himself and his son from violence and keeping his dignity in trying times. Both Andrew and Pashak are successful in their quest to travel across the wilderness, finding food to eat, surviving after their boat overturns in a swift river, and proving that they are able to handle tough work in *River Runners* (Houston, 1979). Although others in the novels face difficulties and even starve to death, these boys are successful in everything they do. In *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (Cleary, 1981), Mr. Quimby is successful in the raising of his children and showing Ramona and her sister not to take advantage of what they have. Matt is successful in surviving alone for an extended period in *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983). He successfully learns how to speak some Beaver language, keep house, and protect himself. In *Like Jake and Me* (Jukes, 1984)
Alex is successful in discovering that "a real man" can dance and that even a real cowboy is afraid of spiders. Jake is successful in establishing a positive relationship with his stepson without really seeming to have to try. Throughout Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987) Brian is successful in surviving very difficult situations. He lands a plane without hurting himself, discovers how to build a fire, builds a hut, and in the end is rescued. Maniac is successful in changing people’s lives for the better in Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990). He shows the Black people in his life that the lines between Black and White people are to be crossed and he shows the White people in his life that Black people are similar to themselves. On a more literal level, he is successful in academics even though he did not go to school, in football, baseball, and running, and even wins a contest for untying a knot that nobody else can untie. In Missing May (Rylant, 1992), Uncle Ob and Cletus are unsuccessful in their attempt to find a person to contact the spirit of May, but the journey itself leads to success for them in other ways. Uncle Ob is successful in realizing that life goes on for those who are living and that it is within himself to continue to be strong even after his wife has passed away. Cletus is successful in making two friends, which appears to be something he has never had before. Both males gain an inner strength that they did not have at the beginning of the story.
2. Male Characters Are Successful in Specific Tasks When They Persevere and Believe in Themselves.

In all but one of the books examined, the primary male characters are able to accomplish even difficult tasks if they persevere. This is evident in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) in various situations. One of the best examples is Windrider's quest to build and fly in an airplane, even when friends and family try to discourage him from this dream. To reach his goal, he works on small models, writes to the Wright brothers, and spends a great deal of money on the project. Although others doubt his success, in the end he does fly in his plane.

The wind roared over the hilltop, seeming to gather beneath the wings. The canvas of the wings bellied upward, taut and swollen and eager. Dragonwings seemed to leap into the air about five feet and hang suspended. I held my breath. I saw Father twist his hips to the right, and the wings began to curl and the rear rudder curved to the right. Slowly, ever so slowly, Father began to bank in that direction. He had controlled his flight! He was free in the sky. (p. 237)

In River Runners (Houston, 1979) Andrew is new to life in the north, but he does succeed in the tasks he sets out to accomplish. When Pashak speaks to
Andrew about walking on snowshoes, he says, "Keep on learning, Androoo. When you can run on snowshoes, you'll become a true man, maybe." (p. 35). After this, "every day, Andrew spent hours on his snowshoes, learning the rhythm and the tricks of walking in this strange way. With Pashak's help, he even learned to move with some speed" (p. 39). Andrew continues to practice at walking and running in snowshoes until he is adept enough to keep up with the First Nations people as they travel through the snow. Andrew and Pashak are successful in traveling across Northern Canada in harrowing conditions.

Matt in *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983) is successful in all he sets forth to accomplish. He is often portrayed as a character who works at attaining a goal and at achieving what he sets out to do. For example, Matt learns how to make a snare out of materials other than string or wire and then perseveres until he is able to use it successfully:

After Attean had gone, Matt managed to make two more snares. They were clumsy things, and he was not too proud of them. Splitting a slippery root, he discovered, was not so easy as it had looked. He spoiled a number of them before he mastered the trick of splicing them together. They did not slide as easily as the one Attean had made, but they seemed strong enough. . . . [O]n the third day one of his own snares had been upset, though the animal had got away. The day after that, to his joy, there was actually a partridge struggling to free itself in the bushes where the stick had caught.
In *Hatchet* (Paulsen, 1987), Brian is successful in all he tries to accomplish. An example of Brian's perseverance and ultimate success is the time he tries to catch fish. He first makes a spear, and then tries to catch fish with it.

He stood in the shallows and waited, again and again. The small fish came closer and closer and he lunged time after time but was always too slow. He tried throwing it, jabbing it, everything but flailing with it, and it didn't work. The fish were just too fast. (p. 110)

Brian tries various types of spears before finally becoming successful at the technique of being able to catch fish (p. 125). This type of success is also seen when Brian tries to start a fire with sparks made from his axe (p. 92).

In *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), Maniac attempts to find a place he can call home. Although he faces many set-backs throughout the story, in the end he is successful in attaining his goal for he finds a family with whom to live.

3. **Male Characters Value the Processes That Lead to the Success More Than the Success Itself.**

   It is not so much what the male character finally does, but his attempts at
making something work that are measured as worthy. This can be seen repeatedly in many of the books. This is not to say that success is not important to the characters, but rather that something more than the final product is important in the end.

In Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) it is not until Windrider actually flies his airplane that others see the contributions he makes. This does not appear to bother Windrider for he seems to know all along that flying the plane is just the end of his journey of self-discovery. Although others are happy to see him succeed, Moon Shadow states, "It did not matter whether Father flew or not. It was enough that the Company had come" (p. 233). When Moon Shadow fights the White boy (p. 145), it is not the fact that he wins that is important, but the realization that these boys are no different from the ones he knows in China and that he can protect himself.

It is not learning how to snowshoe or keeping up with other, more experienced travelers that is of the most importance to Andrew in River Runners (Houston, 1979). It is the satisfaction he gets out of knowing he can survive in the north. By the end of his adventure, Andrew knows that he has grown in ways he never could have predicted. "Andrew raised up his arms in joy. He felt as though he, too, had become a part of everything upon this earth" (p. 142).

In The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983) Matt and Attean are both successful in all they set out to accomplish. These successes, however, are only the foundation for what they see as their true successes. For Attean, being successful at hunting, fishing, and playing games is important to him because it is
the groundwork he needs to go through in order to find his Manitou. Being successful at finding his Manitou changes his appearance and his outlook on life (p. 110) and makes him feel more successful than all the learning he had done to that point. For Matt, too, it is not all the successes in hunting, fishing, and cooking that make him feel worthy, but rather the fact that he is able to take care of himself.

In Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987), Brian is very successful at all he tries to accomplish. Brian does not look at these individual successes as what is valuable, but rather how the combination of successes allows him to survive in a new and strange environment. After looking at pictures of where he had lived, Brian has dreams:

They were not nightmares, none of them were frightening, but he would awaken at times with them; just awaken and sit up and think of the lake, the forest, the fire at night, the night birds singing, the fish jumping - sit in the dark alone and think of them and it was not bad and would never be bad for him. (p. 194)

**Looking Beyond the Code of Success**

As previously stated, primary male characters are shown to be successful, especially if they persevere at a specific task. In all of the books analyzed, there is only one instance that primary male characters are not successful in what they set
out to accomplish. This is Uncle Ob and Cletus in *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992) when they are unsuccessful in their attempt to contact May’s spirit. The journey to talk with May's spirit is successful in other ways, however, for Uncle Ob realizes that the answers he is looking for comes from within himself and Cletus is able to make two friends.

It is up to the reader's definition of success that will make that reader decide whether Alex and Jake are successful in *Jake and Me*. It may be seen that Alex is successful since he sees that being a man is more than cutting wood and being strong and that Jake is successful in establishing a positive relationship with his son, but since neither male actually puts effort into this happening, it may be questioned if this is success or simply the unfolding of events. This brings up the question of what constitutes "success."

For the purpose of this thesis, I broke the definition of "success" into two areas. This was done because there is a separation in the ways characters view success based on how it occurs. The first area of success includes events that turned out positively, even if the character had not planned to work on the event in advance. For example, in *Hatchet* (Paulsen, 1987), Brian is successful in landing the airplane even though he did not plan to do so in advance. The second area of success is seen in the events that a character has planned to work on. Once he works on this event, success is achieved. An example of this in *Hatchet* (Paulsen, 1987) is when Brian works at and succeeds in learning how to fish.

In *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), the main goal of the primary male characters...
is to talk with May's spirit. Although these two primary male characters grow in other areas of their lives, they are unsuccessful in their quest. If they had been successful, the tone of this book would have changed extensively, and I would not have considered it to be realistic fiction. Therefore, males are portrayed as successful when what they are working towards is obtainable. Only if the situation is out of his control is a character shown as unsuccessful.

The most common way success is portrayed in the books is through events shown as conquests followed by a better understanding of oneself. In only one book is there any indication of a positive outcome from an unsuccessful experience. Winning physical or verbal fights, conquering nature, or winning at physical activities such as games and sports are what six of the eight books show as successful experiences. Surely there could be other events that make a male successful that do not involve a "conquest," but rather a cooperative outcome. In other words, boys and men are portrayed as being successful, but is this success always a positive portrayal? In my opinion, it is not.

Primary male characters are confident that they can succeed if they try hard enough. Never is there a character who lacks self-confidence. What I found interesting is that there are times that the attempt to succeed blinds the primary male characters to other things that are more important. I feel that most people view males being portrayed as successful as a positive feature, but I question the positiveness of success when the larger picture in which it occurs is examined.

In *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), Windrider is determined to fly an airplane even
though his original goal is to make money to help his family and hopefully to be able to afford to bring his wife to America. He spends a great deal of time and money building his airplane and is successful. What he does not seem to understand until after he flies the airplane is that his dream of flying got in the way of helping his family.

"I'm not going to build another Dragonwings. When I was up there on it, I found myself wishing you were up there, and your mother with you. And I realized I couldn't have the two of them together: my family and flying. And just as I saw the hill coming at me, I realized that my family meant more to me than flying. It's enough for me to know that I can fly." (p. 241)

I had to ask myself why it took Windrider so long to realize this. Hard work makes him successful, but this same drive to fulfill his dream shows him to be a selfish man. Throughout the book, Windrider expresses how hard his wife is working back in China and that in order for her to be able to come to America, a great deal of money is needed. By having Windrider shown as a "success," this male character is portrayed as someone who values success more than the happiness of his family.

As Mr. Quimby works towards his goal of becoming an elementary teacher in Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981), he is often portrayed as a hard working man who is trying to make a better life for his family. As one looks more closely at
what he does, however, he is sometimes selfish in the attempt to attain his goals. He is given the right to not look after Ramona when she is sick so that he will not miss any classes (p. 130). Also, sympathy is felt for Mr. Quimby when he has to work extra hours because his feet get cold in the warehouse (p. 144). There is no sympathy for the children who will have to be without a father or for the mother who will be left to work full time and look after the children on her own.

These are just two examples of how men are shown to be successful when they persevere, but their attempts to meet their goals are often selfish in nature. In not one book does any adult primary male character have a goal or success that is not of some direct benefit to himself. The males are shown to be self-confident and successful, but these traits also cause them to be characterized as somewhat selfish and self-centered.

By analyzing primary male characters using the codes of "Conflict Resolution," "Emotions," "Race," "Relationships," and "Success," I was able to discover how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. Males are portrayed as using a variety of means to solve conflicts and seeing physical competition as a viable option to solve only person-against-person conflicts. Males are also portrayed as having sensitive emotions they do not verbalize to others, and as being people who interact with others from various races in a multicultural way. They are heterosexual people who play many roles in society, and are successful in their lives. The features that make up the codes may make it appear that male characters have been portrayed in exactly the same way over the past twenty
years. However, the ways in which males have been portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction have changed in many areas over the past twenty years, even within the identified codes. A discussion of how the portrayal of males in realistic juvenile fiction has changed over the past twenty years will now be presented.

How the Portrayal of Males Has Changed

Over the Past Twenty Years

There appears to have been changes in the portrayal of males in award-winning realistic juvenile fiction over the past twenty years, but many elements in the way males are portrayed have stayed the same in this time frame. As with the character analysis, much depends on the way one interprets what is read as whether something is seen as a change. For example, there were times that I was unsure whether the portrayal of characters changed or if it was just a different situation that the characters were in that made the difference. Is Maniac in Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990) really more socially aware than Matt in The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), or is it just that Maniac's situation is different?

Since there was a relatively small sample of books used, generalizability of my results may be questioned. I feel, however, that I used a fair sample of books, and that my conclusions are based upon books that are available to students. What I present now is how the portrayal of males in realistic fiction has stayed the same or changed over the past twenty years. I first talk about the changes, and
then discuss areas that have stayed the same. The information gathered is based on the codes previously identified in this chapter.

One of the most noticeable changes in the portrayal of male characters during the past twenty years is the breadth of their makeup. Books published in Periods One and Two have primary male characters that are almost two dimensional. They are either good or bad, strong or weak, traditional or nontraditional. As time progressed, however, boys and men have become more multidimensional. In the books from Periods Three and Four, a male can have a "masculine" occupation, but be very nurturing, as seen in Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984). In Missing May (Rylant, 1992), the reader encounters a man who is ashamed to let his feelings be known to others, yet is shown to love his wife more than anything else on earth and unable to envision his life continuing after her death. In books from Periods One and Two, the characters do show a range within a given characteristic, but it is not as broad as what is seen in characters from Periods Three and Four.

In books written during Periods Three and Four, males are more willing to express their emotions than in books from Periods One and Two. Male characters are still likely to express their feelings in an indirect way in books from Periods Three and Four, but more boys and men are shown crying, expressing their love, and displaying an array of emotions. In the books from Period Four, males make more decisions based on emotions than are seen in books from the other periods.

Another way that the portrayal of males has changed over the past twenty
years is that males are shown with more imperfections in books from Periods Three and Four. For example, in *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), Windrider is portrayed as very hardworking, loyal, and intelligent. His lack of ability to bring his wife over from China is not portrayed as a weakness, but rather as something that is beyond his control. In *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983), the primary male characters are all friendly, hardworking, and successful. In later books such as *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) and *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), the primary male characters are shown to be more "human" and have their weak areas such as yelling at someone in anger or not noticing that another person needs help. In *River Runners* (Houston, 1979), both Andrew and Pashak are shown to be intelligent, kind, and hard working. Neither character have any features usually considered to be negative. In *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), Maniac is shown to have the qualities Andrew and Pashak have, but he is also shown to be selfish and able to lose his temper. In *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), Uncle Ob is portrayed as someone who many would view as unsuccessful, for he does not have a nice place to live or a "good" job. His kindness toward others, however, makes him a very successful person in his private life.

The ways in which racial issues are dealt with have changed over the past twenty years, but not all in a positive way. In only one of the four books written during the past ten years are there characters from minority backgrounds, whereas three of the four books in the first ten year period dealt with issues facing minority groups. The only book written around the experiences of a non-White male
character is Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), which is the oldest book used in this study. The only male character to try to fight against racism, however, is Maniac in Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), a book published in 1990. Another way the portrayal of characters has changed in regards to race is that in earlier books written from a White person's point of view, the White males are shown to accept racial differences as innate qualities that are neither good nor bad. In Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), racial issues are seen as something formed by society and as something that can be changed for the better.

Throughout the past twenty years, males have continued to be portrayed through a variety of characteristics. In Periods Three and Four, males are shown as exhibiting more types of characteristics than in Periods One and Two. More nontraditional characteristics are seen in characters in books written during the past ten years.

The portrayal of males has changed over the past few years, possibly because there has been a shift in the themes or plots. Books have moved from survival in historical times to survival in today's society. Also, young male characters do not find themselves in as many adult situations (e.g., surviving in the woods, dealing with the aftermath of an earthquake) in books from Period Four.

Although the portrayal of males has become broader in some aspects over the years, there have not been extensive changes in many areas. In some ways, males are portrayed as narrowly in the 1990s as they were in the 1970s. Based on my personal informal observations, female characters have gone through many
more changes than male characters since the 1970s. It seems to be easier to find popular books with a female character who obviously exhibits stereotypical "masculine" traits such as "independence" and "aggressiveness" than it is to find a male character who exhibits stereotypical "feminine" traits such as "passiveness" and "dependency" as a primary part of his portrayal.

One way male characters have stayed the same during the past twenty years is that they have not changed the ways they resolve various conflicts. Person-against-person conflicts are solved by physical competitions in books from Period One and Period Four. Never are the characters taught that cooperation with people is the only way a person-against-person conflict can be resolved.

All of the books examined show a tendency for male characters, and in particular, adult male characters, to be apprehensive regarding sharing their feelings with others. There is also a pattern of men not reflecting on how their feelings affect their decision making. Males are portrayed as very pragmatic and logical in decision making, and this remained constant throughout all the time periods.

Another area in which males have not changed over the past twenty years is in that of relationships. All of the features listed in the code of "Relationships" are constant throughout all of the books. For example, adult males in family situations are always portrayed as being the ones in charge. There are, however, subtle changes seen in the roles males play within the families. Both the roles for boys and for men during the past ten years have become less defined by gender. In the
books in Periods One and Period Two, males are portrayed as providers for the family. Although the books from Period Four show men as providers for their families, it is not shown as specifically a male trait. The roles of caregiver and provider for the family are not shown as either male or female duties, but rather activities done by both men and women. Over the past twenty years, all male characters have been heterosexual. There is no sign that any of the males in the eight books analyzed have difficulty in coming to grips with their sexuality or question what types of relationships are viable for them. In the books from Periods One to Four, all but one of the adult males are shown to be in or looking for a heterosexual, romantic relationship.

Males continued to be portrayed as successful over the past twenty years. They are shown to be hard working and able to succeed at what they set out to accomplish. In all but one book examined, males are successful in all they do. What has changed slightly, however, is the degree to which they are successful. The books in Period One, Period Two, and Period Three portray males as successful, and it is easy to state exactly where the characters have succeeded. In the books in Period Four, however, the success is not as easy to identify. Males have become a little more fallible in the past few years.

Finally, there has not been a noticeable increase in the types of males portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. Their physical characteristics, intelligence and sexuality have remained the same. Males are portrayed as being of "normal" height, weight, and appearance and heterosexual.
Summary

The analysis of Newbery Award and Honorable Mention and Canadian Library Association of the Year Award winners has shown that male characters are not portrayed as narrowly as some studies in the past would have one believe but not as broadly as some people, including myself, would like to see.

Males are portrayed as exhibiting a vast array of characteristics, including dependency, independency, success, sexist behavior, nonsexist behavior, aggressiveness, and passivity. The general portrayal would be seen as positive by many people for males are portrayed as successful, hardworking, nurturing people who are multidimensional in their behaviors. Boys are portrayed in a much broader fashion than are men. There is a definite progression from boyhood to manhood in all of the eight books examined.

Although there is a favorable portrayal of men in that they possess many characteristics, the types of males portrayed is still very narrow in scope. All males are heterosexual, intelligent, and of "normal" height, weight, and appearance. Males are portrayed narrowly in their physical, mental, and sexual characteristics.

The books I examined offered a fairly positive outlook on the way males are portrayed in books, for they are shown to exhibit a broad range of characteristics, ranging from the traditional to the non-traditional. There is still a need for more representation of all the types of males in society, however.
Chapter Five includes a summary of how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction, an analysis of the results of this study, reflections on the template created for the initial character descriptions, reflections on the codes identified, implications for teachers, parents, and publishers, and recommendations for further research.

Summary Of How Males Are Portrayed in Realistic Juvenile Fiction

The codes identified in Chapter Four are areas in which one can examine characters to find out how they are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. Although the features that make up the codes were developed from the eight books chosen for this study, the results might be generalized cautiously to a larger selection of books as the codes seem universal in nature. This generalization, however, is a matter for future research using a larger sample.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the results of this study and the conclusions made were based on my interpretation of eight award-winning books. My findings of how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction are difficult to conclude in a
few sentences. What I found is that there is not one definitive answer to the
question of how males are portrayed. I am surprised that studies in the past have
tried to state how males are portrayed in just a few sentences, most commonly by
saying that both women and men are stereotyped by authors.

Males are often portrayed as having traditional or stereotyped occupations
and familial roles, but other features, such as emotions and interactions with family
members are quite nontraditional. If one looks only for stereotypes, they will be
found in any character, but based on the results of my study, I cannot make the
sweeping statement that "Males are stereotyped in realistic juvenile fiction," for I
found far too many contradictions to this statement.

Males are portrayed as people who resolve conflicts through a variety of
methods, ranging from reflection to physical competition, but who do not back away
from the conflict itself. The only time males are portrayed as violent or revengeful
is when they encounter a person-against-person conflict. The other conflicts are all
resolved through nonviolent means. Males are portrayed as reflective in that they
think about a situation before acting on it.

Although males are portrayed as people who find it difficult to verbally
express their feelings to others, they are shown as having feelings such as sorrow,
love, and the need for human contact. These feelings are expressed through
physical representations such as the giving of gifts or dancing with a child.

Boys and men are portrayed as people who do not see a person's race as a
measure of a person's worth, but believe that race is a differentiating factor. Males
are shown as accepting the belief that there is an inherent knowledge possessed by members of each individual race. Also, males are portrayed as stereotypes of a race when they are of a different race than the protagonist.

Boys and men are portrayed as heterosexuals who do not base their friendships on the gender of the other person. They do, however, treat their female friends differently from their male friends. Males are portrayed as destined to experience romantic love, but not until well into their adult years. They are also portrayed as being part of a family, but this family can take many forms. The roles they play in the family are often dictated by gender, and men in particular are portrayed as doing "man's work."

Whether they are working towards a specific goal or not, males are portrayed as successful people who work hard to get what they want. They are also portrayed as people who value the processes that leads to the success more than the success itself.

There are no discrete behavioral characteristics that I found to be constant for all the male characters, even when men and boys were looked at separately. There are characters who behave aggressively, others who are passive, and even more who show a combination of these traits. There are also characters who are sexist, others who are nonsexist, and others who display sexist behaviors in some circumstances, but not in others. This indicates that males are portrayed as people who exhibit an array of characteristics, making them multidimensional in character.

Based on the data collected from the eight books used in this study, the
ways males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction would in all likelihood be seen as positive by many people, especially by those males who reflect the qualities seen in the characters. The descriptors I refer to as "positive" are "successful," "loving," "nurturing," "hard working," and "kind." Although the portrayal may be positive, it is also narrow, for there are many types of males not represented in the books. For example, there are no physically challenged males or males who are hard of hearing.

A narrow portrayal of males can be seen in some areas. It may be that this has happened for two reasons. First, some characteristics present are overshadowed by other characteristics. For example, in *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975), Windrider is portrayed as nurturing, but his inability to verbally express his feelings and determination to succeed at flying may overshadow this fact. Characters do possess a wide array of characteristics, but some of these characteristics seem to play a minor role in a character's portrayal on many occasions. Second, although there are a variety of characteristics portrayed by male characters, many other characteristics I feel are prevalent in today's society are not present in the books analyzed for this study. There are no primary male characters who are extremely emotional and let their emotions guide their decisions, nor primary male characters who do not see race as a distinguishing feature in people, nor primary male characters who are bisexual or homosexual, nor primary male characters who are not successful in some way. There are also no primary male characters who are physically or mentally challenged, or in some other way not considered "normal."
This has resulted in the seemingly contradictory situation of having a broad array of characteristics present in male characters, but there is still a narrow portrayal of males in realistic juvenile fiction. From my findings, I conclude that the individual characteristics males do exhibit are wide ranging. For example, males are portrayed as being very passive to very aggressive, and everywhere in between. However, the type of characteristics that are broad are limited to behavioral characteristics, which results in a narrow portrayal of the types of males portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction. It may be that in an attempt to portray "positive" characters, reality has been forgotten.

Analysis of the Results

The books I examined made me feel there may be a positive, but narrow, portrayal of males in realistic juvenile fiction. The portrayal of male characters may be positive in that within a given characteristic, males are portrayed in a variety of ways. For example, in terms of "aggressiveness," males can be seen as being very aggressive as is evident in the code of "Success" when Brian in Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987) does not give in to his situation, but fights to overcome it. However, characters can also be seen as passive. For example, in the code of "Emotions" Uncle Ob in Missing May (Rylant, 1992) first deals with his wife's death by sitting back and doing nothing about his situation. Also, the portrayal of male characters is positive when one considers the types of characteristics they possess. Most
people would probably agree that "independence," "success," and "nurturing" are all positive features, and males reflect all of these. It is also positive that male characters are sometimes also portrayed as "dependent," "unsuccessful," and "loners." What seems to be missing, however, are any portrayals of characteristics that do not fit into society's definition of what is "normal" in physical, mental, and sexual characteristics. There are no physically or mentally challenged, bisexual, or homosexual males in any of the books examined.

A major concern continues to be the negative and narrow portrayal of females in literature. The results of my study have shown that in the books examined males are portrayed in a positive light, but the type of male characters is as narrow as what has been seen of female characters in the past. For example, males are portrayed as nurturing, yet there are no nurturing physically challenged males.

If children learn what is right and wrong, how they should act, and what they can and should be when they grow up from literature (Doughery & Engel, 1987), then there may be mixed signals being sent out about males in realistic juvenile fiction. What is present in the books offers a positive outlook of what males could and should be, but there are males who are not portrayed in the books at all. How can a child who comes from parents of two different races relate to characters who are all from one distinct race? Does a child who is lacking in intelligence see hope for himself when every male character shown as successful is also intelligent? Can a child who is questioning his or her sexuality or has a homosexual parent relate to
any of the characters in the books since they are all heterosexual? What seems to be the message is that males in books are portrayed as mainstream society feels they should be, not as they are in reality. Although this may appear to create a positive portrayal of males, it is also a very narrow one in that it does not reflect society as a whole.

As studies have shown, there has been a concerted effort to provide more realistic and varied female characters in literature over the past twenty years (Kinman & Henderson, 1985). From the results of my study, it is obvious the same cannot be said for males. To a limited extent, the portrayal of males has changed over the past twenty years, but the variation of the characters has remained minimal. There is a variation of races, occupations, and family organizations, but throughout the past twenty years males have been portrayed as successful, hard-working, nurturing, heterosexual people with no physical or emotional abnormalities. The portrayal of males has remained positive, but narrow.

One goal of my study was to address the statement made by Percell and Stewart (1990) that "Such narrowly defined sex-role definitions have been found by prior research in children’s literature" (p. 178). The evidence they offered for this statement was not sufficient, for it only focused on how females are portrayed in literature. The results of my study show that their assumption may be correct to a certain degree for the depiction of males as well. Males are portrayed in a narrow fashion, but I do not feel that they reflect "narrowly defined sex-role definitions." The ways in which males are portrayed narrowly are not just to do with sex-role
definitions. Males are portrayed narrowly in the fact that they are usually shown as heterosexual, nurturing, successful, and physically and mentally "normal." I did not find these characteristics to be sex-specific, and so I feel that Purcell and Stewart's assumption would better read: "The portrayal of both males and females is narrow in scope."

Studies have shown that there are benefits to having stories that portray males in nontraditional roles (Bordelon, 1985). Although my study did not specifically address the issue of whether the male characters are shown in traditional roles or nontraditional roles I feel that, based on Scott's (1981) definition of "nontraditional male characters" which is "those not expected according to traditional stereotypes" (p. 137), the results show that males are portrayed traditionally in some areas such as what they do for a living and nontraditionally in other areas such as being nurturing. What this shows, then, is that teachers and parents who want to present nontraditional portrayals of males have the option of focusing on the nontraditional elements of characters rather than providing books that have obviously nontraditional characters.

As stated in Chapter Two, I feel that a major weakness of studies from the past is that the researchers isolated specific features to find out how males and females are being portrayed. Results from my study have shown that a literary character is too complex to focus on predetermined discrete behaviors when looking to see how males or females are portrayed. I feel that my study has shown one character may exhibit nontraditional and traditional or stereotyped and
nonstereotyped behaviors, and therefore a reevaluation of the usefulness of studies which focused on discrete behaviors is needed.

**Reflections on the Template Used for Character Analysis**

Since the methodology I developed has never been used before, it is important to reflect on its effectiveness. The analysis of each of the eight books began by using a template of my own design to do a preliminary description of each primary character. This template was used as a tool to help group information about the primary characters found in books into discrete categories. The information gathered was then used for finding similarities among the primary characters. After the similarities were found, codes were identified and used for a more all-encompassing analysis of primary male characters. Each category found in the template was assessed for usefulness in the following areas: describing a primary character, identifying similarities amongst the various characters, and identifying codes.

**Physical Appearance**

I feel that the category of "Physical Appearance" was useful in identifying the physical characteristics of individual characters. Although this category was useful in describing how the characters look, in none of the books does physical
appearance have anything to do with the character's actions or feelings. Its usefulness was limited to putting an image of the character into the reader's mind.

When first analyzing the data located in the category of "Physical Appearance," I felt that there were no commonalities amongst the primary characters found in the books. I soon began to realize, however, that a character's physical racial features affect the groups to which he belongs, as reflected in Dragonwings (Yep, 1975) and Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990).

What became obvious in the category of "Physical Appearance" was that there are entire groups of characters not portrayed at all in the books. For example, in none of the books is there a mentally or physically disabled character, an over or under weight character, or a character with a facial disfigurment. All of the characters presented are what many would consider of "normal" weight, height, and build. Racial features are the only distinguishing factors as far as physical features are concerned.

With regard to its usefulness in discovering the codes identified in Chapter Four, this category provided important information, for it showed the ways in which minority groups are described. It helped me see where and in what ways racial stereotypes are evident in realistic juvenile fiction. There were no codes based solely on the physical appearance of the characters, but this category did provide data for the formulation of the codes of "Race" and "Relationships." The category of "Physical Appearance" is an important one, and should stay in the template.
Ethnic Background

The category of "Ethnic Background" was useful in distinguishing the backgrounds of each character. However, it was effective in a limited sense in showing how a character is portrayed for it only provided information such as what the color of the character's skin is, where he or she was born, and activities the character does that are race-specific.

The books examined did include characters from a variety of races, but again, when looking for similarities within the category of "Ethnic Background," what became obvious is what is missing in the books rather than what is there. What is missing are characters from mixed ethnic families, a sense of culture from any of the White characters, or characters from backgrounds other than Western European whose race is not an issue in the stories.

Although no codes came specifically from this category, it had a role in helping me identify the code of "Race" when combined with the findings from the category of "Interactions With Others" and "Additional Findings," for I could see how a character's race affected his or her portrayal.

Perhaps a change to this category that would have made my template more effective would be to include how the race of the characters is presented and which characteristics are race related. This would make it clear as to when the author relies on racial stereotypes to present the character and when the character's
personality is developed separately from race.

Social Class

The category of "Social Class" did not show any similarities amongst the portrayal of the primary characters, but it did show that they come from a variety of backgrounds. In Dragonwings (Yep, 1975), Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990), and Missing May (Rylant, 1992) the primary characters come from lower and middle socioeconomic backgrounds, as is evident from the clothes they wear, the jobs they have, and the homes in which they live. In River Runners (Houston, 1979), Ramona Quimby, Age 8 (Cleary, 1981), The Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983), and Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), the primary characters come from middle class backgrounds. The only character who appears to come from an upper-class family is Brian in Hatchet (Paulsen, 1987). Although it is not said he is rich, this could be assumed based on his father's occupation and the fact that his family can afford to fly him by airplane to his father's place for his holidays.

Although this finding is positive in that the books in my study showed that characters are portrayed broadly in the characteristic of "Social Class," it gave limited information concerning commonalities among the primary characters. What it would be a good category for is a study done on how characters differ from each other.
Methods Used to Resolve Conflict

The category "Methods Used to Resolve Conflict" proved to be a valuable one. Not only did it show that each character's portrayal is affected by the way he or she resolves conflict, but it also provided excellent data to help identify similarities amongst the various primary characters.

At first, I felt that the category of "Methods Used to Resolve Conflict" would only show various behavioral characteristics that the characters exhibit. I was surprised to see it develop into a code of its own. This category was definitely needed in my template, for it allowed me the opportunity to compare the types of conflicts in the books and the ways characters deal with these conflicts.

It would be best to divide "Methods Used to Resolve Conflict" into three separate categories. This would change to "Methods Used to Resolve Person-against-Person Conflicts," "Methods Used to Resolve Person-Against-Nature Conflicts," and "Methods Used to Resolve Person-Against-Self Conflicts." This separation of categories would provide a tool for the analysis of how the characters resolve conflicts in various situations rather than beginning a study with the assumption that the characters solve all their conflicts in similar ways.
**Interactions With Others**

Leaving the category of "Interaction With Others" broad made it possible to describe each character in greater detail than if a list of discrete behavioral characteristics such as "independent," "nurturant," and "aggressive" had been used. This category showed that the primary characters interact with others in differing ways and that the ways they interact are situationally dependent. For example, through this category, it was possible to note that Alex in *Jake and Me* is open about his feelings with his mother, yet does not want to share any of his "feminine" side with his stepfather. Alex is both open and closed when it comes to expressing his feelings, and if I had used preset definitions to describe behavior, I would have had to choose the best descriptor.

If I had simply used categories such as "Used Controlling Behavior" or "Listens to Authority," my eventual findings would have been severely limited by my research tools. Characters who are well developed would have been made flat and lifeless if this category as presented had not been included in my template.

The category of "Interactions With Others" provided me with the opportunity to see that there are similarities in the ways primary characters act when put in situations with other characters. It was an even greater assistance in helping me identify the codes of "Conflict Resolution," "Emotions," "Race," and "Relationships," for many of the features of these codes deal with how the primary male characters
interact with others. I feel that this category should stay in the template.

**Types of Emotions Exhibited and Ways Expressed**

Characters are not always portrayed as expressing emotions in the same ways, and so by leaving the category of "Types of Emotions Exhibited and Ways Expressed" broad, I was able to allow for personal perceptions of a character’s emotions. For example, in *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), Uncle Ob has difficulty in going on with his life after his wife's death. He never verbalizes or shows his emotions, but he is grief stricken and needs to work his grief out for himself. I feel that Uncle Ob is sensitive and lonely, others may label him as maudlin. It is a matter of interpretation how a reader views a character, and if I had not left the category of "Emotions Exhibited" broad, my findings would have been much more narrow.

This category helped me identify the code of "Emotions," for I was able to see that primary characters display a huge range of emotions and the way they deal with their emotions has a large affect on the way these characters are portrayed. It should remain a category in the template.

**Occupation**

It proved to be important to have the category of "Occupation" in my
template, for primary characters are often subtly identified by what they do for a living. Primary characters' occupations are never really shown as a large factor in their portrayal, but this might have been because authors rely on preconceived notions of what type of person does a certain type of job. For instance, in Like Jake and Me (Jukes, 1984), Jake is a "real cowboy," but there is never any description of what type of person this has made him, it is just assumed the reader will think this means Jake is stereotypically manly.

Although the category of "Occupation" had limited affect on the identification of the codes, by having this category I was able to note that adult males hold stereotypical jobs. I feel that in the future I would broaden this category to include hobbies, extracurricular activities, and roles played in the family. I found that semantics got in the way of my analysis, for "occupation" seemed to equal "job" in many ways. Many activities the characters do are not considered "jobs" in the traditional sense, for they do not get paid for their actions. Nevertheless, these activities were taken into account.

**Intelligence**

It was my experience that intelligence does not play a large role in the way authors portray their characters. Too many assumptions that could not be verified would have to be made for a character's intelligence to be a viable category. I can see this being an important category to be used in character analysis when a
researcher does a comparison between male and female characters in order to determine how males and females solve problems. One thing that did become evident is that the majority of characters are shown to be stereotyped according to their intelligence. People of high intelligence are successful and leaders. People who have difficulty in academic areas are shown to be odd people who have problems living in our society.

I feel that the category of "Intelligence" is limited in its effectiveness when developing codes for books. In the future, I would leave this category out of the template for I feel that if intelligence is an area that plays a major role in a character's portrayal, this would become obvious in other categories.

**Self Concepts**

Very little information was found about how the characters feel about themselves. There is only one instance where a character assumes she is annoying to other people, but by the end of the story she knows this is not true. No other character assumes he or she would have succeeded or failed, done well or poorly on a task, or was inherently good or bad. What is important again, then, is what is not said. By not portraying characters who are concerned about what others think about them, a reader may get the feeling that all primary characters are self-confident.

As far as finding similarities amongst the primary characters, realistic
juvenile fiction books portray many characters as people who do not reflect on their feelings and their lives. This, in turn, helped me identify the code of "Emotions" and "Relationships."

As for being a category in the template for character analysis, I feel "Self Concepts" is important to include. If not for showing what is there, then for showing what is missing.

**Sexual Orientation**

The category of "Sexual Orientation" proved to be invaluable as a way to examine how primary characters are portrayed for it has an impact on their actions toward other people and family composition. This category showed definite similarities amongst primary characters and the information gathered had a large influence in the identification of the code of "Relationships."

A change I may make in the future if I were to use this template again would be to change this to "Perceived Sexual Orientation," for I found myself assuming a character's orientation to be heterosexual even if there is no mention of this in the book.

**Notes on the Overall Effectiveness of Template**

In the template used for the initial description of the primary characters, the
categories of "Intelligence" and "Social Class" provided little in the way of showing commonalities in the portrayals of the primary characters. I feel that these two categories could be left out of the template, and instead be part of the "Additional Findings" section.

The template does need some modification for future use. A category of "Racial Presentation" could cover "Physical Appearance" and "Ethnic Background" while providing the researcher with a more encompassing category. It is not so much where the character's family comes from as it is the way the character's race influences his or her perceptions of life that is important.

Another change I would make to the template if it were to be used in the future would be to create a section that categorizes the observations into "Stereotyped Behavior," "Non-Stereotyped Behavior," or "Not Applicable," for as much as I tried to avoid thinking about whether the behavior examined was stereotyped, it was difficult. By classifying the observations, a pattern of just when stereotypes are evident and when they are not may emerge.

Overall, the template used was successful for my needs. It proved to be indispensable that the template was left open-ended for some of the most important observations were put into the "Additional Notes" section. The template was essential as a means by which to develop the codes "Conflict Resolution," "Emotions," "Race," "Relationships," and "Success."
Reflections on the Codes Identified

A major part of my study was to identify codes in which one could analyze the portrayal of male characters in realistic juvenile fiction. The codes identified are "Conflict Resolution," "Emotions," "Race," "Relationships," and "Success." I feel confident that these are areas in which a male character can be portrayed.

As an informal check to see if the codes I identified were indeed areas that one could use to analyze male characters in realistic juvenile fiction, I analyzed the male characters in two books from outside the sample using these codes. The codes did offer areas in which the portrayal of the male characters can be analyzed.

"Conflict Resolution" proved to be an invaluable code for analyzing the portrayal of males. It allowed me to examine how the characters react to the situations in which they find themselves and showed similarities and differences in the ways primary male characters deal with life in general. The code of "Emotions" allowed for a great many of a character's behaviors to be analyzed. It made me more aware of how a specific primary male character is feeling and in what way the character expresses his emotions. This code was important in discovering that primary male characters exhibit a huge array of emotions, but often these different emotions are expressed in similar ways. "Race" was essential for analyzing the ways in which characters are portrayed. It allowed not only for analyzing what a
character's background is, but also how he interacts with those from his own and
other races. "Relationships" was an imperative code to have. It let me examine
how the characters relate to others in their lives. I was not restricted by discrete
behavioral characteristics such as "aggressive" or "independent," but rather was
able to see the various ways that one character interacts with others in his life.
The code of "Success" allowed me to look into a character's successes and
failures and see how they affect his portrayal. It was very important in discovering
how males are portrayed when they are able to accomplish a task or are unable to
complete what they have set out to do. It also allowed me to see how often males
are successful, how often they fail, and how these experiences affect their
portrayals. Each of the codes were open enough that a character's physical,
mental, and behavioral characteristics could be considered when identifying the
specific features that make up the codes. This allowed for the entire character to
be analyzed.

I feel that this study has established that using a deconstructionist approach
to analyze the portrayal of males in realistic juvenile fiction was a useful technique
to choose. It allowed me the opportunity to examine to what extent various
characters reflect the codes I identified. If I had not used deconstruction, I could
not have made all my observations part of this study, for I would have only been
able to examine where characters reflect the codes, not how and why they
contradict the codes in certain cases.

I found that using the five codes worked well for analyzing the portrayal of
males in the eight books used in this study. I suspect that these codes are
generalizable and may be used to analyze the portrayal of males in any realistic
juvenile fiction book. This, however, needs to be verified by further research.

Since the development of the codes included describing male and female
characters using the template, it may be possible to analyze female characters
using the codes I identified. I did not analyze any female characters, however, so
further research needs to be done to test this hypothesis.

Implications for Teachers, Parents, and Publishers

The qualitative data presented in this study have shown that the portrayal of
males in children's realistic fictional literature is positive but narrow. As with the
results themselves, it is up to individual teachers and parents to decide how this
information may affect them personally. What I will present is how the information
collected will affect me as a teacher, and advice I would give to parents and
publishers.

Some may question the applicability of my findings to books not used in my
study. I do feel, however, that I can defend my position that my methods and
findings may be applicable for many books written for children. First, the template I
used is very open-ended, and so it is a tool that may be used to do an initial
analysis of characters. Second, the codes I identified are areas in which
characters in realistic fiction are often portrayed. It is how the characters are
shown in these areas that makes the difference from one character to the next. I never claimed that these are the only codes found in realistic juvenile fiction; they are the codes that I feel most reflect the areas in which characters are portrayed. Third, the features that make up the codes may be specific to the eight books used in this study, but the books were chosen at random and covered a twenty year time frame, and so they are in my opinion, a reflection of what is available in award winning realistic juvenile fiction.

Also, some may argue that there are reasons for some characters to be portrayed as they are. For example, one may argue that there is no romantic love shown in young characters because these books are meant for children or that the very distinct roles shown by the First Nations People reflect the time periods of the books; I do not disagree. My study, however, was not a critique of the books, but rather an interpretation of how the male characters are portrayed. All I could do was present what is there and what is missing, not try to guess an author’s intention.

Since there appears to be a narrow portrayal of males in realistic juvenile fiction, it is important that teachers take the time and effort to select books that do portray males in different lights. This does not mean, for example, that one looks for books on the topic of mentally challenged males, but rather finds books that have mentally challenged characters within them. Although perhaps numerous, there are fine books written which have primary male characters who are disabled, homosexual, and sometimes unsuccessful. The difficulty is to find good literature
that have these types of characters without these characteristics being the focus of the story. What is needed is to present books with primary male characters that show just because someone has a characteristic that is not "the norm," it does not mean they are any less of a person.

As a teacher, I feel it is extremely important that I allow my students to obtain the skill of critically examining characters found in books. I must have students question why characters are shown the way they are, discuss how characters are portrayed and in what ways they feel characters are realistic or idealistic. Students need to be shown that a positive portrayal of a character does not necessarily mean a broad portrayal, for I do not believe that this has been the case in the past.

Analyzing books by using the codes identified in my study is a way for teachers to start finding materials that have a broad portrayal of males. Using the five codes, one can examine realistic juvenile fiction to see if there are characters who show an array of emotions, resolve person-against-person conflicts through peaceful means, have racial minorities, are involved in various types of relationships with different types of people, and deal with unsuccessful experiences. It may be a great deal of work for the teacher or parent, but if it helps narrow the gap of gender inequalities and expand the acceptance of all types of people, it will be well worth the work.

Since there appears to be a narrow portrayal of male characters in children's realistic fiction, I feel that publishers of children's books might publish and promote more books with a broader range of male characters. This would allow for more
males to have primary characters with which they can identify and offer females the opportunity to see males in various lights. There may be entire sections of society not portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction, which means there is an untapped market to be reached. Although I do not know a great deal about the publishing field, I do know that as a reader I enjoy characters who intrigue me and with whom I can identify. Books with characters who are narrow in scope do not interest me, and I will choose not to read this literature. Surely the same can be said of children. There are books written with male characters who do not fit into the narrow portrayal identified in my study. For example, there are books with a male homosexual character or a male character with a homosexual parent, but often they are confined to gay bookshops or sociology sections of bookstores and libraries. What is now needed is for publishers to bring these into the mass market instead of keeping them in special subject categories in bookstores and libraries.

**Implications for Future Studies**

One of the outcomes of this study was the realization that it is not possible to put distinct labels on characters in children's literature. One primary male character in one book may be portrayed as sexist, nonsexist, nurturing, and emotionally distant. For example, in *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983), Matt is shown as a stereotyped male in that he enjoys fishing, hunting, and playing aggressive games. However, when his friend's dog is caught in a trap, he feels
empathy for the animal and goes far out of his way to help him get free. It is impossible to say that Matt is a stereotyped character, for there are situations that show him in a different light. Yes, there are times when the male characters are stereotyped or sexist, but there are also times that they are not. This affects studies in the future, for I feel that gone are the times researchers can make sweeping statements such as "Males are portrayed as aggressive" or "Males are shown as being in control of their situations," for they are only true in specific situations. For a more realistic picture of the way characters are portrayed, studies will need to turn to qualitative methods of research. This will allow for the whole character to be analyzed rather than discrete sections of a character's persona.

The first study that should be done is a replication of this study with different books. If possible, more than eight books should be used. A study such as this that analyzes different male characters using the codes I identified would verify or refute my findings of how males are portrayed in realistic juvenile fiction.

A follow-up study based on my research might be to discover how the portrayal of males in literature affects a child's perception of how males should resolve conflict, express their emotions, deal with racial issues, develop relationships, and succeed in life. Another area of research might be to do case studies on how male children reflect or refute the portrayals found in realistic juvenile fiction. Another suggested study is to find out what percentage of boys feel they can identify with primary male characters in books and why they feel this way. Finally, I would suggest that a study be done using the codes I have identified to
compare female and male characters found in children's realistic fiction. All of these studies move beyond what has been done in the past concerning the portrayal of males in children's literature.

**Conclusion**

The analysis of Newbery Award and Honorable Mention and Canadian Library Association of the Year Award winners has shown that male characters are portrayed in a positive way and are not as stereotypical as some studies in the past would have one believe. This does not mean, however, that there is a broad portrayal of male characters. One of my most important findings was that there are many groups of people not represented in the books in any fashion. For example, there are no homosexual, bisexual, or mentally or physically challenged males. As Scott, Smith, and Greenlaw (1987) illustrate,

Ethnic minorities, the elderly, and the disabled receive short shrift in... books [used in their study].... People with disabilities have neither positive or negative images included in these selections; they are excluded.... Basically, however, the issue related to the images of minorities, the elderly, and the mentally or physically challenged in books... is one of omission, rather than commission. (pp. 405-407)
An argument against my findings may be that I only examined eight books and therefore my conclusions are based on limited and possibly constricting data. However, the books in the sample used in my study cover a large time period and have been judged as being of superior quality. Although a small sample of books was used, they may a more positive picture than what is actually available in that all books were award-winners.

What I hope my study has done is illustrate that in at least some realistic juvenile fiction, there is a positive portrayal of males, for they are not as stereotyped or traditional as studies in the past have stated. However, this portrayal is narrow in that many types of males are not represented. Although speaking about Aboriginal people, Mem Fox's statement can be applicable to physically challenged males, or gay males:

If I were an Aboriginal child, the task of learning to read, even in a warm and wonderful whole language classroom, would be a strange and devastating experience. I'd be looking for *me* in the books I was reading. I'd be asking, "Where am I?" I'd be searching for some acknowledgement of my existence, let alone my worth, but I wouldn't be able to find myself. I'd be puzzled. I'd be angry. I'd be thinking that no one cared about me. I'd go to pieces.

(Fox, 1993, p. 655)

The portrayal of males in realistic juvenile fiction has not changed a great
deal over the past twenty years. Characters have become somewhat more multidimensional over the past ten years, but there still are many types of males not portrayed in these books.

It is time we make a conscious effort to offer students books that contain a balanced representation of all the people in society, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or race. Books still have a major influence on the socialization process of children, despite the dominant role television plays in children's lives. There is a long-term influence that books have on children, and the ways a character is portrayed help mold a child's conception of values and socially accepted roles and indicate how males and females are supposed to act (Demarest & Kortenhaus, 1993, p. 220). This means that there needs to be a broad portrayal of male characters so that every child, regardless of race or abilities can identify with the characters in books and learn to accept others who are different.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED TEMPLATE

The following is an example of how I used the template to initially describe the characters in the books. It has been taken directly from the data collection "as is" and so some sections may seem incomplete and others may include information that seem irrelevant. This is because this part of the study was done as the first step in the identification of the codes and is not meant to be a complete assessment of how characters are portrayed. I feel it is important to include an example of what I did, however, so that the reader can gain a better understanding of what this step entails. I will present the template completed for the book Sign of the Beaver (Speare, 1983).

Template for The Sign of the Beaver

The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare (1983) is the story of thirteen year old Matt who must live and survive by himself in a cabin in the wilderness. Finding himself without a gun, Matt must learn to survive in the forest. It is after he meets a First Nations boy and learns of the Bear clan's way of life that he adapts to his new environment while waiting for his parents to return.
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Attean "was naked except for a breechcloth held up by a string at his waist. It passed between his legs and hung down like a little apron back and front. His heavy black hair fell straight to his shoulders" (p. 28).

Attean is described as a "brown savage" (p. 57)

"The Indian boy had washed his body, and it shone with fresh grease. He had combed his tangled black locks. Down his cheeks on either side and on his forehead ran broad streaks of blue and white paint. On a cord around his neck dangled a row of new bear's claws" (p. 77).

After finding his Manitou, Attean "had changed. He stood straighter and taller. He looked older" (p. 110).

ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Attean and his grandfather are from the Bear tribe.

Matt and his family are White.

SOCIAL CLASS

Attean comes from a very well-respected family, for his grandmother's cabin is "the most substantial cabin in the clearing" (p. 94).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Matt and Attean seem to have an ongoing friendly competition. Attean
always wants to show Matt how well he can do things, and Matt feels a need to learn how to do these things as well as Attean.

"Matt could not find an answer (why white man hunts only for the skin of the animal). Tramping beside Attean he was confused and angry as well. He couldn't understand the Indian code that left an animal to suffer just because of a mark on a tree. And he was fed up with Attean's scorn for white men. It was ridiculous to think that he and Attean could ever really be friends. Sometimes he wished he could never see Attean again" (P. 65). Although Matt knew this was not really true, he wished he could be a hero just once and save Attean from some grave danger.

When Matt and Attean come across a bear, Matt distracts the bear while Attean shoots it in the head with his bow and arrow (why not use a gun? People had them then). (p. 74). Attean follows an Indian ritual, asking forgiveness from the bear. "The Indians did not kill for sport" (p. 75).

**INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS**

Matt works with his father to build a cabin (p. 1), at times not speaking a single word to each other as they work (p. 2).

When Matt first hears a noise in the bush, he is nervous that it may be a First Nations person, but after he sees it is a White man, he is quite accommodating (p. 13). It is not until after the man robbed Matt that he thought he might not be trustworthy. No resolution is made of the situation of Matt having his gun stolen.
Saknis, the old First Nations man, helps Matt out selflessly when the bees sting him severely (p. 26).

At first, Attean is very unfriendly to Matt (p. 28).

Attean teaches Matt to look at history in a different way. For example, he tells Matt that not everyone will bow at the feet of a White person, no matter what had happened (p. 43).

Matt and Attean become closer through the activities of fishing, hunting, and playing rough games. These activities always seemed to have an element of competition to them. The activity of learning to read almost split them apart.

Matt is invited to a party celebrating the killing of a bear by Attean. As Attean relates the story to the others, he makes fun of Matt's contribution, but Matt does not get too angry (p. 80). Words the author use to describe this event are "The line of figures followed after him, aping him and stamping their feet in response. . . He (Matt) was one of them" (p. 80).

It is Matt's going far out of his way for Attean's dog that helps Attean's grandmother change her mind about White men.

Matt and Attean both do whatever people in authority have told them to do (father, grandmother - p. 99). They ask no questions as to why, but rather just do whatever they are told. This changes near the end of the story, for Matt will not go with Attean's family, even after Attean's grandfather instructs him to do so.

Matt enjoys himself once he begins playing a rough game. "Squirming free, he seized a black head in both hands, and the two boys went down together. They
came up gasping and grinning. Suddenly Matt was enjoying himself. It was almost as good as being back in Quincy again. . . . There was a lump as big as an egg on his forehead, and his right eye was probably turning black" (p. 103).

It is not until Matt played this rough game that he is accepted by the First Nations boys (p. 105).

Matt will always somehow be separate from the First Nations people, especially as Attean finds his Manitou. As they become older, the differences become more important than the similarities (p. 109).

**EMOTIONS EXHIBITED**

Matt's father gives him gifts of a watch and a rifle, but no emotions are shown because "They just weren't a family to put things into words" (p. 4).

Matt is only nervous about living alone for one night, and then he becomes comfortable being by himself.

After the gun is discovered to be missing, Matt becomes nervous (p. 18).

Attean is proud and somewhat boastful about how First Nations people are smarter about life than are Whites (p. 38).

Attean is contemptuous and felt that the knowledge of the White people was nonsense (p. 41).

Attean is proud of his dog, yet tries to hide this from Matt (p. 53).

There are hints that Matt misses his friend Attean coming around to visit, yet his feelings about this are never explicitely expressed (p. 92).
Matt shows an empathy for animals (p. 97), while Attean shows that animals are like trees or any other part of nature.

The boys are sad to be saying goodbye to each other, yet neither of them say their feelings aloud. Instead, they give gifts of things that are very important to each of them (p. 119).

Matt's mother is emotionally distraught over the death of her child. Even though this is Matt's sibling and also his father's child, the two males show no outward emotion.

**OCCUPATION**

Like his father, Matt enjoys fishing (p. 10).

**INTELLIGENCE**

Matt had an intuition that someone was watching him, and this turned out to be true (p. 9).

Matt appears more intelligent than Attean in academic ways (p. 30), but Attean was more capable at hunting, fishing, and knowing the ways of nature. Attean becomes Matt's pupil (p. 31), but he is not a good student (p. 35). Matt, however learns the ways of the Beaver Clan very quickly, and if he cannot do something at first, he works hard until the task is mastered (p. 40, 49).

The First Nations people in the story, including Attean, speak like the First Nations people are portrayed in old movies.
SELF CONCEPTS

Attean has pride in his people, in himself, and in his dog (p. 53).

Matt is confident in his abilities and is sure that things will work for him if he just tries hard enough (p. 61).

Matt must go through a type of initiation into manhood by living in the forest alone.

Attean goes through his initiation by going to find his Manitou (p. 107).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Relationships shown: Matt's parents, Attean's grandparents.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Matt would be one of the first settlers in a new township in 1768 (p. 2). He is left alone to guard the cabin and crops while his father returned to pick up Matt's mother, sister, and new baby sibling (p. 2). He does a "man's" job of building a house in which to live.

The first thing Matt does with the gun his father gave him is shoot at a squirrel for pure sport (p. 5).

Matt's days were taken up with tending the fields, cooking his meals, and planning when he would hunt.
Matt is able to find berries and fish to survive, but things are difficult, for he desires tastier food. In the attempt to get some honey, Matt is attacked by bees. It is an old First Nations man who helps him through his pain (p. 24).

It appears that everything the First Nations people do is better than the ways Matt has seen before. For example, the boots they make are better (p. 29).

Matt and Attean have a disagreement whether something is "squaw work" or "man's work" (p. 52).

There are situations that all First Nations people understand, but Matt cannot decide if there is anything that all White people have in common (p. 56).

There are often references of Robinson Crusoe and Friday, and it is made obvious who is Crusoe and who is Friday (p. 57), even though Matt does not want to be Attean's master and it is Attean who helps Matt most often (p. 58).

Attean states that "Indians not use iron trap. Iron trap bad." (p. 63), yet when Matt asked if a white man set the trap, Attean says, "No. Some white man pay for bad Indian to hunt for him. White man not know how to hide trap so good." (p. 64).

Much of the way the author describes the First Nations people is in a way often heard before. Words to describe their women (squaws) and their homes (wigwams) are used. The character of Matt says things like, "No wonder she hates us (referring to White people)" (p. 88).

Matt finds it difficult to do the hunting, etc. that Attean and the other males do, but after practice, he succeeds. The "squaw" work he sees being done is easy
and can be done just by watching the women at work (p. 100, 122).

Everything that Matt and Attean enjoy doing together is physical - hunting, fishing, playing games (p. 102). The academic work is what they do not do well together.

The dog was a very important possession to the boys.

Symbols of Matt and Attean's becoming men are guns. Each is given one as they pass into their initiations (p. 111).

Matt knew he had a responsibility to look after the cabin, and so he did not leave with the First Nations people, even after the old man insisted he go with them (p. 114).
APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE OF HOW CODES WERE IDENTIFIED

The first step in the analysis of the male characters was to isolate their various characteristics and write them down in the appropriate section of the template. As an example, I have isolated various entries from three of the characteristics in the template. I have limited this example to four of the books used in the study:

Book: *Dragonwings* (Yep, 1975)

Template Category: Interactions With Others

Windrider treats his son as a friend, but is also a protector.

For example, when Mood Shadow first arrives to America, his father jokes around with him as he does his friends and male family members, but also says, "Stick close to me, Moon Shadow, and don't be afraid" (p. 17).

Template Category: Emotions-Ways Expressed

Windrider does not show his love for his son through his words, but rather through his actions. For example, when Moon Shadow first arrives in America, Windrider expresses his love through the offering of a handmade kite (p. 27).
Book: *Sign of the Beaver* (Speares, 1983)

Template Category: Interactions With Others

When Matt first hears a noise in the bush, he is nervous that it may be a First Nations person, but after he sees it is a white man, he is accommodating (p. 13).

Matt and Attean become closer through the activities of fishing and hunting.

Template Category: Emotions-Ways Expressed

Matt's father gives him gifts of a watch and a rifle, but no emotions are shown because, "They just weren't a family to put things into words" (p. 4).

Attean is proud of his dog, yet tries to hide this from Matt (p. 53).

Book: *Like Jake and Me* (Jukes, 1984)

Template Category: Emotions-Ways Expressed

Alex' mother is very gentle and non-threatening as she lets Alex know she loves everything about him and will support whatever he likes to do.

Jake never comes out and says that he loves Alex. Jake understood that his stepson needed to be reassured that he is
loved, however, and this is why Jake picked Alex up to dance (p. 28)

Template Category: Additional Notes

Jake is shown as a "real cowboy," but he also is shown to be afraid of spiders (p. 20).

Book: Missing May (Rylant, 1992)

Template Category: Emotions-Ways Expressed

Summer is upset that Uncle Ob has not confided to her all his experiences with being contacted by May, but she does not confront him about this. Instead, she takes it out on Cletus and is not overly friendly with him.

Template Category: Additional Notes

Uncle Ob expressed his love more often through actions and indirect statements. For example, he is willing to get anything Summer wants to make her happy when she first arrives (p. 7). To show his feelings towards Cletus, Ob's "arm would lie softly about Cletus's shoulders as they read the words off an old yellowed newspaper" (p. 81). When Summer is crying over the death of May, Ob lifts her up and carries her to her room. "But for every bit of life I cried away, Ob held me hard against him and he put more life back
The next step was to look for similarities amongst the characteristics. Although the examples came from different categories within the template, I felt that they were all similar in that they showed that primary characters characteristics are portrayed through their emotions. This led to the identification of the code "Emotions."

The third step was to return to the books and see how the male characters reflected the code of emotions. I observed a pattern of males not expressing their feelings verbally, but still being nurturing a large portion of the time. It was this observation that led me to conclude that the features that made up the code of emotions for realistic juvenile fiction were (1) feelings and emotions are to be shown, not spoken, and (2) males exhibit nurturant behavior.