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**GENDERING SPACES: GENDER IN THE CALDECOTT MEDAL AWARD**

**PICTUREBOOKS FROM 1980 TO 2007**

Curriculum and Instruction

by

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## ABSTRACT

The Caldecott Medal picturebooks usually have the reputation of being considered the most distinguished picturebooks for children in the United States, and they exert great influence on librarians, teachers, parents and children themselves. Reading the Caldecott winners exposes children to meanings, meanings about what it means to be male or female.

This study presents an analysis of the meanings of femininity and masculinity produced in the different places conveyed in the Caldecott Medal winners from 1980 to 2007. In the Caldecott Medal winners, although a few studies consider the sex-role stereotypes, which have raised consciousness among more conventional publishers, award committees, authors, parents, and teachers, these studies premise on a binary consisting of two stable variables, male and female, and they do not tend to the books themselves as productive of meanings. Working from a poststructuralist feminist perspective, this study attends to the meanings of masculinity and femininity, and multiple interpretations of a particular text. Also feminist geographers influenced this study through their proposition that the relationship between gendered, class, racial identity and space is mutually constitutive. In other words, the spaces in which social practices take place affect the nature of those practices, and in turn, the constructed spaces receive meaning through the social practices that define men and women as different and unequal.

This study examines 24 Caldecott Medal winners from 1980 to 2007, and investigates the relationships between meanings about femininity and masculinity and four different kinds of places depicted in the winners—home, public open spaces, workplace and displacement. This analysis suggests that while some medal winners continue to represent traditional versions of femininity in relation to the domestic sphere and traditional versions of masculinity in relation to

the public space, many other winners convey complex and contradictory meanings about masculinity and femininity constructed in the different places.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Each year one picturebook receives the Caldecott Medal from the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association. The award represents the most distinguished American picturebook for children chosen from those first published in the United States during the previous year. This small bronze medal has great significance: large consumption and great influence among librarians, teachers, parents and children themselves. All children's libraries in the United States order books on the list of winners; parents and teachers also encourage children to read the Caldecott Medal winners. As children read these "most distinguished" picturebooks, they are exposed to meanings, meanings about what it means to be male or female. The purpose of the study is to present an analysis of the meanings of femininity and masculinity produced in different places conveyed in the Caldecott Medal winners from 1980 to 2007.

Some studies have considered sex-role stereotypes in the Caldecott Medal winners since 1970s. Nilsen (1970) began examining sex-role stereotypes in the Caldecott winners and runners-up when "second wave" feminism was under way. She lamented the underrepresentation of female characters and their passive roles as wives and daughters in the 80 winners and runners-up she examined. Weitzman et al. (1972) furthered Nilsen's study by concentrating their intensive analysis on the Caldecott winners and runners-up from 1970 to 2006. They found that women were simply invisible in the books, and they were passive and immobile while men characters adopted more exciting and adventurous roles. Twelve years later, following Weitzman et al., Collins et al. (1984), using statistical analysis, examined sex-role distribution in the Caldecott Medal winners and runners-up from 1979 to 1982. Their findings revealed different

results from those of Weitzman et al.: male and female differences had decreased substantially towards more sexual equality; women as central roles, appeared to take on nontraditional characteristics and women not in central roles reverted to traditional female stereotypes.

A few more studies conducted in 1990s analyzed sex-role stereotyping in the Caldecott Medal winners. Assessing the winners from 1938 to 1940 and from 1986 to 1988, Allen et al. (1993) concluded that a comparison of the results from these two periods indicated a weak trend toward egalitarian representation in central characters and occupations. Examining the gender-typed portrayal of material culture in the winners published between 1937 and 1989, Crabb and Bielawski (1994) argued that a larger proportion of female characters are portrayed using household artifacts; whereas, a depiction of large portion of male characters included using nondomestic production artifacts. Creany's (1995) study on the winners published between 1980 and 1995 revealed that male main characters only slightly outnumbered female main characters and most female main characters had non-stereotypical portrayals.

Although these studies are significant in that, as Clark et al. (1999) observed, they have raised consciousness among more conventional publishers, award committees, authors, parents, and teachers. Their content analyses and experimentation exclude nuances and complexities of the issue of how books effect readers' gendered identity. What Clark's comment refers to is Weitzman's study's lack of attention to other variables, such as race, class and age, and thus Clark et al. advocate a liberal and multicultural-feminist perspective on children's books. Replicating Weitzman's study and employing the approach they advocate, the study of Clark et al. (1993) find evidence that female characters and female relationships receive considerably more attention in recent books by both conventional illustrators and black illustrators than they did in the 1960s, and that male and female characters appear in a more egalitarian fashion by

mainstream authors than in the late 1960s. Finally Clark et al. find that black illustrators are more apt than others to highlight women's involvement in an ethics of caring and personal accountability.

However, Clark et al. (1999) themselves admitted that their study is not a significant step forward from the Weitzman's study, and underlying their study and others' studies are two fundamental problems: one problem is actually pinpointed by Walkerdine (1990) in "Some Day My Prince Will Come." She argued that not only had they [sexist bias and stereotyping approaches] "...tended to minimize the importance of the text itself as productive of meanings" but also "offer a biased and distorted picture of reality" (p. 88). She gives an example that by only showing women always at the kitchen sink, books do not reveal that many women engage in paid labor outside the home. Walkerdine, here, repudiated realistic approaches to "reality" which is considered to have a material base, a lived reality, and suggested that meanings constructed in texts, which are not usually seen as "real", actually create places for identification. The other problem is that those studies' premise is a binary consisting of two stable variables, male and female, as Marshall (2004) argued from a poststructural perspective which views that discourses construct fluid, unstable and unfixed identity.

Two studies are particularly informative for the current study, although they do not consider the Caldecott Medal winners. They are: "Marshall's (2004) Stripping for the Wolf: Rethinking Representations of Gender in Children's Literature", and Jackson and Gee's (2005) "'Look Janet,' 'No you look John': Constructions of Gender in Early School Reader Illustrations across 50 Years." Both encompass a poststructuralist feminist perspective. The former examined the shifting and contradictory discourses of femininity that attempt to school the girl into a heterosexual body in several variants of "Little Red Riding Hood" across time. The latter, with

the question in mind of how gender is produced and reproduced in the 100 early school readers in New Zealand, investigated gendered meanings conveyed through the character's posture, gesture, clothing, adornment and activities.

The current research, influenced by the above two studies' poststructuralist feminist reading of meanings about femininity and masculinity, examines various meanings of femininity and masculinity produced in the different places in the Caldecott Medal picturebooks from 1980 to 2007. The term "poststructuralist" has a plurality of implication and generally applies to a range of theoretical positions (Weedon, 1997, p. 19), however, which share certain fundamental assumptions about language, meaning and subjectivity. One important proposition is that "Subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices...the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power" (Weedon, 1997, p. 21). The current study uses poststructuralist feminism to mean a theoretical orientation that "gender is fluid, negotiated and constructed across different social and cultural contexts" (Jackson & Gee, 2005, p. 116). Adopting this theoretical stance enables attending to the meanings of masculinity and femininity and invites multiple interpretations of a particular text.

This research is also influenced by the feminist geographers' studies (McDowell, 1999; McDowell, 1997; McDowell & Sharp, 1997; Massey, 1994) regarding the relationship between place and subjectivity. McDowell (1999) argues that places remain significant, since for most of the time, many of us live spatially restricted, geographically bounded lives, in a home, in a neighborhood, in a city, in a workplace and in a nation-state. McDowell and Sharp (1997) also suggested that the complexities of the relations between gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity and other socially-constructed divisions vary in their significance in different circumstances. Gender

is space specific, and the relationship between gendered, class, racial identity and spaces is mutually constitutive:

The spaces in which social practices occur affect the nature of those practices, who is in 'in place', who is 'out of place' and even who is allowed to be there at all. But the spaces themselves in turn are constructed and given meaning through the social practices that define men and women as different and unequal. Physical and social boundaries reinforce each other and spatial relations act to socialise people into the acceptance of gendered power relations—they reinforce power, privileges and oppression and literally keep women in their place. (McDowell & Sharp 1997, p.3)

Citing bell hooks, McDowell and Sharp also remind the reader that one can also push against oppressive boundaries to invent spaces of radical openness within which to challenge dominant power, taking it on from the margins. Therefore, my study examines various gendered meanings of places and how different versions of femininity and masculinity are produced in different places, such as home, public open spaces, workplace, etc.

This study aims to contribute to a small body of studies on representations of femininity and masculinity in children's literature, especially picturebooks, as well as offering a new perspective for discussion of representations of gender in children's literature by employing a spatial concept. However, the purpose is not to offer a "correct" reading of the meanings of femininity and masculinity conveyed in the award winners, but rather a reading based on my own social and family background, and the analysis in no way captures all possible interpretations. Yet the hope is that the reading will generate more ways of thinking about gender and children's literature.

This study examines all 28 winners except four: *The Three Pigs* (2001), *Tuesday* (1991), both by David Wiesner, *Shadow* (1983) translated and illustrated by Marcia Brown, and *Fables* (1980) by Arnold Lobel, for these four winners either feature ungendered animals (*The Three Pigs* and *Tuesday*) or the unanimated and ungendered object (*Shadow*), or too many main characters with significantly fewer illustrations (*Fables*).

Since one major feature (but not absolutely so) of the picturebook is its interaction between word and image (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Lewis, 2001; Nodelman, 1988; Schwarcz, 1982), attention to both word and image, and use picturebook theories to advance the arguments, if necessary. The following discussion considers four different kinds of places represented in the Caldecott winners—home, public open spaces, workplace and displacement. Although I discuss them separately, they are not disconnected to each other as McDowell (1999) suggests that places are constituted by connection and movement (p. 209).

## Chapter 2

### Home

McDowell (1999) contended, “The term ‘the home’ must be one of the most loaded words in the English language—indeed in many languages” (p. 71). “The home” is not only one of the most loaded words redolent with meanings and associations but also one of the most strongly gendered spatial locations (McDowell, 1999). The home is ideally associated with familial pleasure, a locus of love, a protective harbor, a haven in a heartless world, and perhaps most of all, it symbolizes spiritual qualities—nurturance, self-sacrifice and selflessness—that often women incarnate. During the nineteenth century in the west, women wore the crown of Angels of the House, which were constructed in opposition to the developing capitalist economy (McDowell, 1999). That is, during industrialization, in the western countries, the home was constructed as the proper place for women, and thus, the domestic sphere was particularly associated with women. Contrarily, the public sphere was constructed as the place of men, who ventured into the competitive commercial world and navigated through the bustling and hustling urban city. McDowell (1999) suggested that these naturalized associations became institutionalized in all sorts of ways in the early decades of the twentieth century in the developed western countries, despite the “blips” of the two world wars when women neglected their domestic work left the home in large numbers in response to labor shortages (p.79). Although the ideology of domesticity was challenged in the early 1970s and the ideology that women’s place is in the home and men venture into the public space is a white, patriarchal, Christian, middle class, liberal (McDowell, 1997, p.13) and heterosexual ideology in UK and USA, this ideology may also exert influence on women who do not belong to these categories.

However, it is important not to take for granted the division of space into a domestic sphere associated with women and a masculine public space of waged work and politics. On the one hand, the seemingly separate private and public spaces are not disconnected, as Ferree (1990) suggested, “Feminist scholars continue to stress that families are neither separate from wider systems of male domination nor automatically solidary and altruistic in their own right” (p. 866). Talking about gender regimes (meaning spaces in a geographical sense) such as the family, the state and the street, Connell (1987) also emphasized the relationships between them. On the other hand, the meanings of “the home” are contested, and its gendered meanings are complicated by other categories of identity like class, race, nationality and age. The following discussion examines how the different versions of femininity and masculinity are constructed at the different households portrayed in the winners, which both reflect the contemporary assumptions about gender and engender a body and a way of thinking about gender. Since age plays an important part in constructing the meaning of the home and of the relationship between the home and people, the following discussion classifies three parts based on age—grandparents, younger parents, and children,

### **Immobile Grandparents**

From the year 1980 through 2007 only two winners concern older people’s lives and their relationships with their grandchildren: *Song and Dance Man* (1988), written by Karen Ackerman and illustrated by Stephen Cammell, and *The Hello, Goodbye Widow* (2005), written by Norton Juster and illustrated by Chris Raschka. Discussing representations of old people in picturebooks, Schwarcz and Schwarcz (1991) argued, “the responsibilities of old people lessen, their social ties diminish and they have a need to fall back on their families” (p. 47), which reflects the

assumptions that older people have limited mobility and the home becomes a center of their lives. While such a situation is not to be excluded, this situation is not universal, and ignores different and complex lives of older people. For example, some older working-class people do not have the financial privilege to stay at home and enjoy a leisured life, and instead must venture into the competitive world to work. Yet argued here is not that the children's books which portray the older people only at home do not reflect "reality" but rather that these books contribute to the symbolic construction of older people as stable, immobile and fixed, characteristics traditionally associated with women (McDowell, 1999).

If following Schwarcz and Schwarcz's argument (1991), "Old people's lives are less complex than those of younger people..." (p. 47), discovering that both of the winners show the elder people, both the grandfathers and the grandmothers, *exclusively* at home entertaining their grandchildren is not surprising. However, this does not mean that the home becomes a gender neutral place. Those happy family scenarios portrayed in these two winners disguise masculine domination in the heterosexual middle-class households. Close examination of the two winners reveals the differentiated representations of the relationship between the home and the old men, and that between the home and the old women: while the home is portrayed as an arena of respite and leisure for the older men, the winners suggest that the home is either a place where the women only occupy marginalized space, or are even effaced, or is a location of a great deal of work for the women. Although sometimes the home is also portrayed a place of rest for women, implied in the winners are a silent, subservient, properly-behaved and oppressed version of femininity and a careless, lighthearted and anarchical version of masculinity.

In *Song and Dance Man*, the first opening spread after the dedication page shows the interior of a house: an old man with a yellow T-shirt and brown brace pants sits on a sofa with the left

foot suspending in the air on the right page and looking toward the right page of the spread, which shows three children in silhouetted form outside the door. The overt message is that the man's grandchildren come to visit him, and he is about to stand up and go to open the door. However, subtle messages, conveyed in this very first opening may suggest the grandmother's subordinate position in the household. At the upper left edge of the right page are three framed black-white pictures hanging on the wall; the uppermost shows a man in a top hat and a suit. Moving downward, the illustration reveals a small wooden stand on which is a cup of black liquid (presumably coffee) and two framed photos with blurry and unrecognizable the images (but one photo has three people in silhouetted form). Sweeping from the right to the left, the view is of a basket of books sitting on the floor beside the sofa where Grandpa sits. One open book perches on the handle of the basket. The color of the opening spread is vastly white, but also contains beams of yellows, purples and blues radiating from the edges of the double spread. The accompanying text, which says, "Grandpa was a song and dance man who once danced on the vaudeville stage", helps the viewer make sense of the radiant, increasing and decreasing hues of the yellows, blues, purples and browns shown on the page: The living-room where only Grandpa is visible now is already turned into a shining stage awaiting Grandpa's performance, which also foreshadows what is going to happen next in the story.

The illustrator's apparently effortless sketches impart an anarchical spirit to Grandpa's character. From the opened book and the cup of coffee, we can deduce that Grandpa must have spent a leisurely afternoon reading. Therefore, the very first opening impresses the reader with its sophisticated depiction of an anarchical and relaxed Grandpa, and a cozy and lovely home. However, something seems missing here: Where is Grandma? No grandma in this household?

With such questions in mind, the reader flips the page and come to the second double spread, which shows a panoramic view of the living room where Grandpa is holding his grandchildren's hands, telling them stories about "the song and dance days." The grandmother is still absent in this page. In the following double spread, Grandpa is climbing the steep wooden steps painted in various colors, and happily leading his grandchildren to the attic, depicted as radiating colorful lights—Grandpa is about to sing and dance! With such an exciting event ahead, something seemingly very inharmonious happens: "Supper in an hour!" This is Grandma's voice—"Grandma calls from the kitchen" (unpaged). This voice assures the reader of the existence of the grandmother, but still no image of her appears. Such distraction does not bother either Grandpa or the children, for Grandpa only wonders, "if my tap shoes still fit," and the children excitedly and attentively follow Grandpa, ignoring Grandma's mundane call. For the rest of the illustrations, Grandpa becomes what he was: a song and dance man; the attic becomes a shaking vaudeville stage. He taps, spins, jumps, sings, conjures and entertains; the children clap, shout, acclaim and hug. Grandpa and the children cuddle together at the end with the moving words lying at the bottom, "He [Grandpa] smiles, and whispers that he wouldn't trade a million good old days for the days he spends with us" (unpaged).

For Grandpa, the home seems a site of respite where he reads and relaxes, a temporary vaudeville stage where he sings, dances and enjoys himself, and a bridge where he and the children reunify. Immersed in these merry, exciting and moving scenarios, the reader hardly draws attention to a disturbing gendered message underlying: Grandma is excluded from where Grandpa rests, relaxes, entertains and plays with the children, and the only place for Grandma in the book is the kitchen where she prepares food for her husband and grandchildren. While the man reads in the living-room, she might be laboring in the kitchen; while the man dances in the

attic, she might be still laboring in the kitchen, and while the man and the children experience the happiness of mutual emotional support, she is still absent. Throughout the whole picturebook, the reader only hears a weak female voice coming from the kitchen and *sees* her nowhere. She is invisible. Interestingly, the writer is female and the illustrator is male. The picturebook itself seems to become a site where femininity and masculinity collide and compete. However, it seems that the male illustrator takes the lead, and tries to cover the feminine. All the photos shown in the first double spread are blurred except one that shows a man—the young Grandpa with mustache. If the reader still remembers the photo with three people in silhouetted form, a guess might be that one of them might be Grandma. However, throughout the book Grandma's existence in this household can only be claimed by the short line, "Supper in an hour!" which, however, not only Grandpa and the children ignore but also the male illustrator who shows no trace of Grandma in the accompanying illustration.

However, an illustration *does* acknowledge the old women's existence: Grandma's winter dresses hanging on the rack in the *attic*. The illustration shows the rack in the middle of the attic and a few "Song and Dance Man" posters crookedly hanging on the left wall. Such arrangement seemingly suggests feminine domination of the place. But this place is nowhere but the *attic*, the feminine place, the ignored and marginalized space at home—such a meaningful and rich image that occupied the nineteenth-century literary imagination of woman writers. The attic is an image of enclosure as well as escape for mad women who are psychologically oppressed in patriarchy and shut up in the attic (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979). The attic is depicted dark and having some spider webs hanging from the top of the wall. However, the men enter and disturb the dark but quiet attic: Grandpa and the youngest grandson (it is interesting that the granddaughter is absent from this scene) appear to push Grandma's dresses away (although the text says, "He [Grandpa]

moves some cardboard boxes and a rack of Grandma's winter dresses out of the way." This implies a gentle manner; the illustration adds the grandson to the scene and shows a much more careless and even rude manner)—the dresses dangling in the air, falling off from the hangers, and the pink and purple department store cardboard boxes teetering on the board above the rack. The feminine is endangered. In a minute, in the following illustration the attic has been completely transformed into a masculine show place, and none of Grandma's belongings are visible. Even the dark, ignored, but quiet attic, seemingly the only place revealing some feminine trace, is invaded by the men. The masculine power lies in its very ability to change and transform at will for its own use what is feminine.

*The Hello, Goodbye Widow* is about a little girl sent to her grandparents' home, "live in a big house in the middle of the town" (unpaged), because her parents must work. The book mainly portrays the manifold activities in which the girl and her grandparents engaged. The copyright page depicts a man with white skin and a woman with brown skin waving hands towards and watching a little girl, also with brown skin, on the right title page. The girl's back faces the reader and she is jumping towards the iron fence in front of a big house. Story's opening affords a panoramic and frontal view of the grandparents' house from a vantage point not at the girl's eye level but above that. The illustration bleeds onto the four sides, and the girl's two arms that reach to push the fence are cut off by the bottom border of the left page. Here, the looking eye is nobody's but the viewer's, watching the mixed-race older couple shown through the kitchen window of the big three-storey house with a red chimney extending into the sky. However, the reader is separated and distanced from the house by the fence, and the surrounding lush trees that hide part of the house make the house even more unapproachable. The accompanying text's emphasis is on the kitchen window—the Hello, Goodbye Window—

through which the old couple is seen and sees. This illustration imbues “the home” with a sense of privacy as well as distance and isolation (Is the mix-race couple isolated from the rest of the neighborhood because of their age or ethnicities?). Compared with the outside urban surroundings which suggest a sense of insecurity, detectable through the kitchen window, the home appears to be a place of safety, a protective boundary and exclusionary of unwanted others. However, the old couple seen through the window appears immobile—they squeeze together in front of the kitchen window which seems to be the only means by which they connect with the outside world. The rest of the book illustrates the old couple mostly at home, actually, in the kitchen, reading, making meals, playing with their granddaughter, and occasionally in their garden.

Like the old couple in *Song and Dance Man*, the little girl’s grandparents are only at home, but this does not say that the home is a gender neutral place for the old couple. Carefully examining the picturebook and reading gaps and lacks, the reader finds that it is still a gendered place, revealed by the housework in which the grandmother engages; housework is gendered labor, that is, a set of culturally and historically specific tasks that convey social meanings about masculinity and femininity, and therefore about power (Berk, 1985). Closely looking at the hidden messages in the picturebook reveals that the grandmother is constructed as gentle, nurturing and properly-behaved, and she probably is the person who shoulders a great deal of the housework. Conversely, the grandfather appears to be an anarchical, funny and high-spirited man who is only a playmate of the child.

The left page of the third double spread of the story shows the grandfather with an apron standing beside the kitchen sink and studying a potted plant he is holding on his left palm. In the middle of the page the little girl is drawing pictures by the kitchen table, and the Grandma is

holding a newspaper on the right page of the spread. This seems to be a depiction of the grandmother's leisured time (But interestingly, she is not actually reading but resting her eyes on the grandfather at the left corner). However, the accompanying text says something different. After introducing the kitchen from the child's perspective—a table to use for coloring, lots of drawers to take stuff out of and play with, a sink, and so on, the text ends with the sentence, "Nanna says she even used to give me a bath in the sink when I was little—really!" (unpaged). Here the emphasis is really on the sink from a child's point of view; as if to say, "I was even bathed in the sink!" However, such an unbelievable exclamation really unconsciously gives away something that perhaps has been repressed for long: the woman is the one who wholeheartedly nurtures the child.

In the sixth illustration, the house sketched in deep blues appears at the left bottom corner, surrounded by blues mixed with greens and blacks. Only three rooms are yellow—only three lights are on. Late night is encroaching. From the outside Nanna and the girl appear to be standing inside in front of the kitchen window, their faces close to the window, and the girl's head level with Nanna's (Nanna is holding her up and smiling). Here, the exuberant Poppy, who likes playing with the girl in front of the Hello, Goodbye Window during the day—looking their reflections and talking to it "in a real loud voice", is replaced by a gentle and soft Nanny holding her granddaughter on a quiet night. Apparently, the quiet night speaks to the version of femininity Nanna embodies—silent, subdued and invisible, and the rumbustious and lightful day is the representation of a loud and anarchical Poppy. The accompanying text says something more, "Just before I go up to bed, Nanna turns off *all* the lights and we stand by the window and say good night to the stars" (unpaged, emphasis added). While Poppy plays with the girl during

the day, it is Nanna who extinguishes *all* the lights and prepares the child for bed, which might be only two of Nanna's repetitive tasks at home.

In the following page, Poppy is placing his right hand on his granddaughter's shoulder and the girl is waving her right hand to the Hello, Goodbye Window—they are greeting the kitchen window in the morning. Behind them is Nanna, well secured in continuous thick black contour, pouring brown liquid from a pot to a cup, and beside her is the kitchen table with a toast on a plate. It is the morning, and it is the breakfast time. Nanna probably prepared the toast and is preparing coffee for Poppy and the girl while they are greeting the kitchen window. However, apparently, the illustrator's idea is to let Nanna pour the coffee, since the text in which the subject is "we" does not mention who makes the breakfast and only mentions the kitchen window. The illustrator and the writer (both of them are male) seem to have some dispute over who should make breakfast, for in the following double spread the text says "Poppy makes breakfast. He says it's his specialty" (unpaged). However, such a traditionally feminine chore (Kroska, 2003) is turned into a masculine prank, not only by the words—"My favorite is oatmeal with bananas and raisins that you can't see because he [Poppy] hides them down inside" (unpaged)—but also with the help of the accompanying illustration—the broken line, exaggerated gap between the nose and chin, disproportionate head and twisting torso well represent an anarchical and playful Poppy. Therefore, while the portrayal shows a well-behaved grandmother and the meal preparation signifies a traditional nurturing and caring version of femininity, this seemingly feminine activity is reinterpreted to embody socially designated versions of masculinity, and the feminine propriety is subverted by masculine anarchy.

The juxtaposition of masculine anarchy and feminine propriety is actually implicit throughout the apparently innocent picturebook. On one page Poppy plays his harmonica for the

girl perched on a rocking chair: he leans his back and crosses his legs—besides, he can play one song in “a lot of different ways,” for example, play it “sitting down or standing up,” and play it while drinking a glass of water at the same time, although “I’ve never seen him do that” (unpaged). On another page Poppy, wearing a red checkered T-shirt, chases his granddaughter with hose. Beside the “gone-wild” grandfather and granddaughter is a “properly” standing Nanna with a white apron. She wears a helpless smile and has her arms crossed, signifying “stop.” Here the reader also sees a small scoop shovel and a spading fork protruding from Nanna’s apron pocket and behind Nanna a cart filled with greenish grass—Nanna might have been laboring in the flower beds. Although traditionally yard work is associated with masculinity (Kroska, 2003), Jackson and Gee (2005) suggested that (grand)mothers’ positioning as nurturers extend to the garden, that is, taking care of the garden may also convey a nurturing version of femininity. Such juxtaposition is also evident on another page which shows two images, a dog with flowers in its mouth in the garden beds at the top of the page, and Poppy at the bottom with his eyes closed, a smiling face and flinging his left arm. While the accompanying text of the upper image says, “And you can see if the dog next door is doing stuff in Nanna’s flower beds. She hates that!” (unpaged), the accompanying text of the Poppy image says “Sometimes Poppy says in a real loud voice, ‘HELLO, WORLD! WHAT HAVE YOU GOT FOR US TODAY?’ Nobody ever answers, but he doesn’t care” (unpaged). So on the one hand, the effaced Nanna becomes a grumpy old woman who “hates” easily; on the other hand, Poppy is depicted as a lighthearted and good-tempered old man who does not really care. However, something might be hidden in the emotional word “hate” used to describe Nanna: the dog’s defiling the garden creates a great deal of extra work for Nanna who might already shoulder the onerous housework. Such a simple word discloses the very toil Nanna might be experiencing.

The reader may rarely see in picturebooks grandmothers portrayed as playful and anarchical as the grandfathers depicted in both *Song and Dance Man* and *The Hello, Goodbye Window*. Speculatively, if women, especially old women, appear that way, they are considered frivolous and transgressing the traditional feminine boundaries. The two winners, discussed above, confine the old couples to home, which may suggest the assumptions that old people's "proper" place is at home, and they have limited mobility, which are traditionally associated with women, but simultaneously construct the home as a relaxed, secure and pleasurable place imbued with love. However, being confined to the home has different implications for old men and old women. Obscured by those happy family scenarios are the differentiated representations of the relationship between the home and the old men and that between the home and the old women. While the home is portrayed as a playground and an arena of respite where the old men play out the anarchical, playful and careless version of masculinity, the home's implication is either a place to marginalize old women, or to efface, and subordinate them as in *Song and Dance Man*, or as a site of a great deal of work in *The Hello, Goodbye Window*. The old women portrayed in the winners embody the gentle, caring, nurturing and behavior-appropriate version of femininity. Although the two old men's playing with their grandchildren at home may be also interpreted as their involvement in the domestic labor—child-caring (and the old man in *The Hello, Goodbye Window* is indeed portrayed engaged in meal preparation), the domestic labor is actually reinterpreted and masculinized.

### **(Un)Conventional Younger Parents**

In the award winners from 1980 to 2007, all the younger parents are minor characters except the father in *Ox-Cart Man* (1980), and the picturebooks that show younger parents at home are

*Black and White* (1990), *Snowflake Bentley* (1998), *Jumanji* (1981), and *The Glorious Flight* (1983). However, the last picturebook shows parents at home only once. This section examines the gendered meanings of the home for the parents and conveyed meanings about femininity and masculinity in four of the five winners mentioned above: *Ox-Cart Man*, *Black and White*, *Snowflake Bentley*, and *Jumanji*.

Donald Hall's simple but rich lyric and Barbara Cooney's nostalgia-evoking illustrations for *Ox-Cart Man* collectively contribute to the book's enduring classic status among picturebooks. The picturebook tells stories about a self-sustaining farm-family of pre-industrial New England. The story begins with a full painting on the left page of the double spread and the text on the right page, which says, "In October he backed his ox into his cart / and he and his family filled it up / with everything they made or grew all year long / that was left over" (unpaged). So the accompanying illustration shows a man in farmer costume with his right side facing the viewer backing an ox into a cart. But the man and the ox look less significant than the backdrop—they only take up one quarter of the page and the rest of the page is a well painted autumn scene: The golden leaves hang on the oak tree in the foreground that bleeds onto the upper and left sides; the ground spreads with fallen leaves in a variety of colors, and some leaves are dancing in the air; the yellowy pathway extends from the brown wooden barn, and winds to the still green mountain slope. Also seen is the greenish blue sky hanging over the background and red maples planted on the sides of the path which resonates with the muted brown barn. The red, brown, and gold colors' warmth, the green's fertility and blue's serenity signify a pastoral world transitioning from fall to winter. At the particular moment, the only human seen in the page—the ox-cart man—and the man-made artifacts—the barn and the ox-cart—seem integrated

with nature, which is a reminder of Heidegger's ideal home where "...divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness..." (qtd. in McDowell, 1999, p.71).

Carefully looking at this illustration, the reader can detect the underlying geometry—circles. The pathway starting from the barn's doorsteps, rounds the oak tree, the man and ox, and bifurcates behind the ox-cart with one branch going back to the barn, forming a circle in front of the barn, and the other extending to the mountain slope on the right side of the barn, but actually looks connected with the slope on the right side of the barn through the barn, forming another circle. Referring to Brian Thomas, Shulevitz (1985) says, "the old masters often used an underlying geometry to increase the readability and expression of their pictures" (p. 181). Here Cooney might be using the underlying geometry to convey the very central idea of Hall's poetry and the picturebook as a whole—"a circular eternity." As Stanton (2005) so provocatively suggested, the poetry and the illustrations depict the labors of different seasons throughout the year the family involve in—the making of shingles, the bottling of maple syrup, the carving of brooms, the embroidering the linen, the making of candles, and so on, which leaves readers with an impression that all the tasks "...will happen next year in much the same way they have happened in the year we have witnessed" and that "...time could be escaped through attending to the circularity of the seasons" (Stanton, 2005, p. 29). Implicit in such circular eternity is a sense of self-sufficient security which is in turn reflected by the round circles, for round objects give a feeling of softness and security (Bang, 2000). However, such sense of security cannot be achieved without the presence of the home where "he and his family" labor and live. But this home, located in the remote countryside, is only part of nature. Here, the humans, the home, the work and nature become one, signifying a spiritual unity.

However, such spiritual unity seemingly only speaks to the ox-cart man who presides in this garden world, as Stanton (2005) points out, “The New England farmer seems fully in possession of his small domain,” and “Furthermore, the ox-cart man’s possession of his world and his mastery of the cycle of its seasons gives him command of the timeless realm captured in the images of the book” (p. 29). The most evident sign for the man’s mastery of the home is simply the poet’s use of “he” as the subject of the sentences throughout the whole picturebook. The woman and children are “his wife,” “his daughter” and “his son” deprived of their own names and a sense of agency. In sentences like, “He packed a shawl his wife wove on a loom,” and “He packed five pairs of mittens his daughter knit,” (unpaged) the wife and daughter are only positioned in the subordinate clauses, whereas he is the subject of the sentences.

The pictorial evidence seems more subtle. The seventh page, with a green backdrop and tree branches drooping from the top in the foreground, shows a girl in a red dress standing on the left and holding mittens, a woman in a blue checkered dress with a shawl hanging over her arms standing in the middle, and a man carrying a big bag standing on the right. The natural association is that these three people are respectively “his daughter” who knit “five pairs of mittens,” “his wife” who “wove” a shawl “on a loom” and the ox-cart man who “packed a bag of wool he sheared from the sheep in April” as the accompanying text suggests. This illustration could be categorized as an “introductory portrait,” as Nodelman (1988) suggested, which “...implies an acquiescence in the right of viewers to observe and to enjoy what they see” (p. 120). However, such a viewer’s gaze is usually a gendered gaze, as Nodelman observes, “...those who smile and invite the gaze of viewers are most often female, the others usually male” (p. 120), which, however, apparently does not apply here, since both the man and the wife gaze from the page and smile at the viewer. However, while the woman is passively standing,

being static, and seemingly prepared for a snapshot, the man is actually holding a big bad with his feet apart and his gaze is accidentally caught on the camera, That is, while the woman is *posing*, which suggests passivity, availability and vulnerability, the man is *doing* something—“moving, active, *not* posing” (Nodelman, p. 122, his emphasis). Suggested here are a passive version of femininity and an active version of masculinity.

In the pastoral home, the man and his wife engage different labor: while the master’s labor requires strength and power, such as making shingles and shearing sheep, the wife weaves, cooks and sometimes *helps* the man with heavy labors. For example, on one page, the wife is carrying a roll of fabric at her waist with both hands, waiting for the man, who is packing something inside the cart with his back facing her. Such a gesture also connotes a sense of submission, as Jackson and Gee (2005) suggest that postures and gesture embody highly gendered meanings. Here the male master of the garden home is constructed as strong and tough, whereas the picturebook suggests a weak and passive version of femininity. Moreover, such idealized Arcadia is constructed in opposite to the outside world represented by a developing New England city where only the ox-cart man is able to navigate, and where the wife and children are excluded, which signifies an outward version of masculinity and an inward version of femininity.

While the woman, as well as the children, are restricted to the home, the man as the master of the small household ventures into the competitive world. Having packed everything, he and his family make, he starts his long journey to the Portsmouth Market, and “he walked at his ox’s head ten days / over hills, through valleys, by streams / past farms and villages” (unpaged). Such a trek is well represented by the horizontal design of the book, which was Cooney’s idea (Smith and Schlangen, p. 185). The city is portrayed as prosperous: ships berthing at the shore, rows of elegant multiple-storey brick houses with smoking chimneys, various food booths visited by

customers, and the travelers and children moving back and forth. This scene is disparately different from the pastoral home—simple, serene and scarcely populated. In the vicissitudinous commercial world, the self-sufficient farmer suddenly becomes a capable merchant, selling *everything* he intends to sell and purchasing everything he needs buy. Having done with his business, the man then walks home.

The contrast between the fickle commercial center and the tranquil Arcadia is even more telling in the illustration immediately after the horizontal portrayals of the man's return trip. The warm browns and reds predominate the illustration, which shows the wife holding a kettle and a spoon, and standing in front of the fire and bending towards her husband, who is sitting on the wooden sofa opposite to her. The son whittles and the daughter stitches, both confronting the fire. Here the man rests with his feet relaxedly stretching, his right hand resting on a knee and his eyes staring at the flaming fire. He is also wearing a satisfied smile. This is the only picture that does not show the man *doing* something, and at this moment the home is portrayed as an arena of security, of love, and of respite for the man from the cruel world of work. While the man enjoys the precious and limited rest after the trek, the wife, with her eyes softly on her husband, prepares dinner while wearing her ever-present apron. Here again, the male poet and the female illustrator do not achieve consent on who cooks. While the words say "...and they cooked dinner in their new kettle," the female illustrator ignores her male counterpart and presents her interpretation of the gender relations in the ideal pastoral household.

The 1999 Caldecott winner, *Snowflake Bentley*, tells the true story of Wilson Bentley, a Vermont farm boy who developed his technique of microphotography to reveal to the world the mystery and grandeur of snowflakes. Mary Azarian's unique woodcut illustrations well imbue the story with nostalgic simplicity. The picturebook has a few illustrations showing Bentley's

parents, but they convey meanings about femininity and masculinity. While the mother knits indoor, the father is depicted holding ropes tied to the cows in the field—he has just come back from field. Like the woman in the *Ox-cart man*, the mother, here, also wears an apron whenever she is present except one illustration showing her knitting. This item—apron—is imbued with layered cultural meanings, as Jackson and Gee (2005) suggested, “One possible meaning is that the apron signifies domesticity and the positioning of women as workers in the home” (p. 123). Like in *Ox-Cart Man*, *Snowflake Bentley* may also signify an inward and weak version of femininity and an outward and strong version of masculinity. Moreover, the spaces that the mother and the father occupy may suggest the woman’s subordination and man’s mastery at home. The thirteenth page portrays the mother and the father sitting by the table with drinks and food. While the woman, wearing the apron, sits only at the upper left corner of the table, the man takes up the middle part of the upper longer side of the table; his left hand holds a cup, and most of the food is on the man’s side. The little space that the woman takes up and the much spatial and central space that the man occupies, and the arrangement of the food may imply that the woman suffers subordination at home, whereas the man dominates and controls. While both *Ox-Cart Man* and *Snowflake Bentley* portray pre-industrial farm families and convey traditional meanings of femininity and masculinity, the other two winners that situate the parents in the modern households represent gendered identity in more complex ways.

*Black and White* (1990) by David Macaulay is, as McClay (2000) suggested, a work posing several challenges typical of postmodern metafiction (p. 92). It presents four seemingly different stories in four different visual styles and in four quadrants. Although this story is relevant to the other three stories—“Seeing Things”, “A Waiting Game” and “Udder Chaos,” the primary focus is on only one story which is about the “Problem Parents,” always presented in the left bottom

quadrant of the double-spread. As the title of the story indicates, the parents in this household are a little bit unusual. The lower half of the first page, after the title page, shows a big table in the middle, a woman (the mother) in a dress sitting by the left side of the table and a man (the father) sitting by the right side of the table, both holding newspapers. Since the quadrant bleeds on the top, the reader cannot see the heads of the parents, but clearly they are concentrating on reading the newspapers: the father is pouring some liquid from a cup, and the mother is tilting a cup toward the liquid, but the liquid is not going into the woman's cup, but instead is pouring down onto a dog's head who is sitting under the table. Also seen is a girl (their daughter) and a boy (their son) lowering their heads under the table and staring at the dog. This very first page well illustrates the words shown under the dog: "Problem Parents"—the careless parents who are very different from the loving, caring and considerate parents usually shown in children's books.

As the story unfolds, the parents do not seem that "abnormal"—"Every morning at seven o'clock they leave for their offices in the city. And every evening at seven o'clock they come home, sort through the mail, ask about the homework, and send us to bed" (unpaged). The home is portrayed as a place of respite from work as well as of domestic work for both of them (one illustration shows the father lying on the sofa with eyes closed and with newspapers on his knees, and the mother sitting next to him and reading something). Until one night, they come home wearing newspapers—"They came in laughing, ignored the mail, and started marching around the living room singing..." (unpaged). The anarchical parents suddenly turn the home into a place of carnival which symbolizes inversion and transgression (Bakhtin, 1984). At that moment, the parents and children switch roles, and the boundaries between a woman and a man seem blurred. The parents ignore their daughter's request for a check of her homework and her action to "save them" by stuffing the mail into the father's hand. Instead they turn her into a "turkey,"

and “...started marching again...” (unpaged). But Macaulay also suggests that the home is only an extension of an outside world, not an isolated unit. While the parents are singing, laughing, and marching in newspaper costumes at home, the seemingly normal and orderly outside world is also transformed into an exuberant festival: people waiting at the railway station, shown in the top right quadrant, begin tearing newspapers, make costumes, decorate the station, and sing (the woman who started this event might be the mother portrayed in the bottom left quadrant, for they wear the same clothes and hair); the boy, sitting in the moving train shown in the top right quadrant, sees torn black-and-white paper swirling in the air and moving black-and-white “strange creatures.” He also hears people singing; the bottom right quadrant shows patches of black and white—the abstract “cow” shapes which are moving and passing the “Choir Festival.”

In sharp contrast to the traditional households portrayed in the *Ox-Cart Man* and *Snowflake Bentley* where order and gendered boundaries remain distinct, the home in *Black and White* seems an extension of a social carnival where anarchy, transgression, and inversion become the theme. In such a postmodern picturebook featuring decanonization, hybridity, boundary breaking and indeterminacy (Lewis 2001), and celebrating a ceaselessly overrunning carnival, the gender boundaries between the parents also seem blurry and fuzzy—no cooking, careful, gentle apron-clothed mom exists, and instead, the mom, who might be navigating through different places, is as anarchical and playful as the father.

Chris Van Allsburg’s *Jumanji* features two sibling children, Judy and Peter, who play the jungle adventure game “Jumanji” at home as their parents go to see the opera, only finding themselves surrounded by a world of real lions, monkeys, rhinoceros and snakes. Although the parents do not appear in the illustrations until the very end of the book, the reader “hears” mother’s voice at the very beginning of the story asking the children to “keep the house neat”

(unpaged). The father only echoes the mother, “Quite so” (unpaged). While Father is “tucking his scarf inside his coat,” “Mother peered into the hall mirror and *carefully* pinned her hat in place, then knelt and kissed both” (unpaged, emphasis added). The contrast between the mother and father is already evident at the very beginning: a careful, clean, orderly and nurturing mom versus an uncaring and careless father who shows no concern about the cleanness of the house and no intimacy with his children. At the end of the book the parents return home bringing guests, and the accompanying illustration shows the two children standing with their backs facing the viewer and both having their arms crossed at their backs. Judy lowers her head to meet her younger brother Peter’s eyes, who is smiling and looking up at Judy with the left half of his face seen. Standing in front of the children are three adults, yet none of whose face is seen. The one standing in the middle is a woman in a dress, the mother. The other two men are standing beside her with only their sides seen. The mother not only visually dominates the illustration, but also her voice is predominately heard—she calls up her children, introduces the guests, and asks them to put on pajamas and to have some dinner. Apparently, this mother dominates the home and the father becomes a minor figure. The picturebook might be representing a strong and active version of femininity the mother embodies, whereas the father might have little domestic authority. However, also possible is that the implied message is quite conventional: The private arena only associates with the woman who shoulders the burdens of nurturing others and concerns herself with the cleanness of the house.

### **Inventive Children**

Four of the seven winners that feature children as the main characters from 1980 to 2007 set the stories at home, *Jumanji* (1981), *Polar Express* (1985), *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story*

*from China* (1989), and *Mirette on the High Wire* (1992). On the one hand, portraying most child characters in the winners at home may suggest the assumption that children's "proper" place is at home because they are young, naïve, weak and vulnerable, and thus the home can protect them from outside dangers. However, on the other hand, the home depicted in the four winners is not completely a site of respite, peace, safety and protection for the children, but rather the very place that opens children to adventures, social relationships, resistance, changes and possibilities.

Ed Young's *Lon Po Po* is more than a Chinese variant of one of the most popular Western fairy tales, Little Red Riding Hood. An amalgamation of the Western impressionist style and Chinese ink and water panel style, the picturebook dramatizes and visualizes an intensified battle between feminine cleverness and masculine aggression, and celebrates the triumph of feminine trickery over masculine violence. Yet the battlefield is the home, which is usually thought as an arena of protection, especially for children. Unlike the innocent Red Riding Hood of the western tale who strays from the path, is eaten by the wolf but finally saved by a brave male hunter, the three girls themselves in *Lon Po Po* transform the supposedly safe home into a place of battle and resistance.

The opening spread of the story depicted in the apricots and blacks already foreshadows the potential danger lurking behind the mysterious country house. The apricot and gray sky is pressing low to the mild slope painted in blacks which resembles the elongated head of a wolf (Huang, 1998), and the setting sun is only half visible. At dusk, the mother sets off to see the grandmother, leaving the three girls at home. The mother and the three girls are depicted as miniatures—the three girls shown in the first panel of the right page are like three dots in different colors. The mother in the right page is waving goodbye to the children. Set against the vast backdrop, the girls look small, weak and vulnerable in front of unpredictable nature. The

small house seems to be the only shelter that can protect the children. No other houses are visible; a big ginkgo tree overarches the house, and the tree looks vital and prosperous compared with the black and barren land. The mother warns her three girls, “I will not return tonight. Remember to close the door right at sunset and latch it well” (unpaged). The mother could sense the danger but believes that the home is a safe harbor.

As the darkness engulfs the house, a wolf in disguise as an old woman creeps to their front door. The wolf is, unsurprisingly, “he”—the wolf is a symbol of evil and darkness which are also thought masculine—aggressive, violent and wild. He is alone, while the girls themselves constitute a small community, being relative to and dependent on each other. Suggested here are a weak and innocent version of femininity and an aggressive and violent masculinity. The following double spread well represents the feminine innocence and masculine aggression. The second opening spread of the story has four panels with two on each page. The first panel on the right has words, and the two younger sisters, Tao and Paotze, are shown at the very bottom of the second panel on the left facing the book gutter. The eldest sister is shown in the middle of the first panel on the right, holding a candle, and the wolf is shown in the last panel on the right page. The two younger sisters keep close to each other, squeezing to the very bottom edge of the panel, and one of them has her hand covering her mouth. The eldest, Shang, is at the middle left, higher than her two sisters. All of the three girls are looking at the direction of the wolf, who is looking down in the direction of the children in the fourth panel colored in cold blues and pitch blacks. Only the side of his furry head and his eyes like empty holes looking at the children are apparent. The children look uncertain and alert, and the wolf looks dangerously mysterious. The three girls and the wolf form a diagonal line crossing from the bottom left to the upper right, suggesting tension (Bang, 2000). The wolf is at the highest point of the diagonal, and it is he who looks

down at the girls, threatens and dominates. Colliding colors strengthen the tension between the girls and the wolf: the warm oranges and reds that the candle radiates and immerse the girls meets the pitch blacks and cold blues the wolf wears. On the one hand, the viewer sees three vulnerable, gullible and innocent but also exuberant girls, and on the other hand a sly, aggressive and dangerous wolf.

Here the wolf is also a trickster, and a male cross-dresser—in an old woman’s clothes, he disguises himself as the children’s granny, “My little jewels...this is your grandmother, your Po Po” (unpaged). But this male trickster is different from a female trickster—while a female trickster is only a mischief-maker, clever and shape shifting, “he...may be vain, cruel, blundering, foolish, completely amoral, violent, rude, offensive, asocial, undisciplined, duplicitous, irresponsible, or self-destructive” (Mikkelsen, p. 25). And the temporary cross-dresser uses feminine traits only to reify his aggressive and violent masculinity—eat the girls. The following close-up of the wolf, whose frontal head takes up a whole panel and even breaks the frame, makes him look more gruesome. Even though the outside evil force is trying to break in, the girls unlatch the door, and the wolf enters. The wolf is the intruder in a peaceful household. All of them climb into the bed, and the wolf awaits his chance to have a delicious dinner. However, the eldest child lights the light, and sees the wolf’s hairy face. This young female trickster is going to outwit the unwelcome intruder.

She tricks the wolf by telling him that they will pick some ginkgo nuts for him, and they climb onto the top of the ginkgo tree next to their house in their yard. The wolf becomes impatient because none of them come back. He is tricked again into a big basket, for the girls say they will lift the wolf to the top of the tree because “ginkgo is magic only when it is plucked directly from the tree” and the wolf must pluck it from the tree himself. From here, the

illustrations reverse the positions of the girls and the wolf depicted at the beginning where the wolf towers over and looks down at the girls. The later frame shows the three girls sitting on the top branch of the ginkgo tree and looking down at the wolf who sits in the basket and looks up at the girls—as the positions change, the power switches. Moebius (1986) notes, “Height on the page may be an indication of an ecstatic condition...or dream-vision...or a mark of social status or power, or of a positive self-image. Being low on the page is often by contrast a signal of...unfavorable social status...those at the top of the page may signal a more competent character than those at the bottom” (p. 149). Here the female tricksters dominate the top, leaving the male intruder below. However, at that moment, the tricks are not done. The wolf is pulled up and dropped, and pulled up higher and dropped again. As he is nearly pulled to the top of the tree for the third time, the girls suddenly “...let go of the rope, and the basket fell down and down and down.” For the wolf, reaching the top of the tree and enjoying the same status with the tricksters is only an illusion, and now he has to hold to the ground for ever—“Not only did the wolf bump his head, but he broke his heart to pieces” (unpaged). While the picturebook conveys a violent, aggressive and sly version of masculinity the wolf embodies, it suggests seemingly contradictory versions of femininity—weak, vulnerable and innocent on one hand, and active, clever and plucky on the other.

As the intense battle gradually comes to an end, the background becomes brighter and brighter, indicating the advent of the day. The ending illustration is a panoramic view from a vantage point not in the house itself but beside and below it, which, along the apricot sky, echoes the beginning illustration that also shows a panoramic view from the outside of the house. Yet the last illustration’s changed perspective might suggest the mother’s return. While in the first illustration the viewer sees the mother approaching the steep mountain stairs which are yet

invisible, since the reader is looking from the other side of it—it seems that the viewer takes the wolf’s perspective, hiding at the other side of the path and observing the mother and the children from the side, the last illustration shows the opposite side of the slope—the viewer sees the path stretching and winding up to the house this time. Apparently, the viewer takes the returning mother’s point of view from the bottom of the mountain stairs, looking up to the house and being eager to see her children. Smoke rises from the chimney, endowing the picture with a sense of vitality and life. The home seems to resume its safety and harmony, although it is not completely so. Young leaves much to ponder in the last scene: Pitch blacks predominate the illustration—the mountains—despite some exuberantly sketched muted green grass—even the prosperous ginkgo tree is in shadow, losing its bright color. Perhaps this is not the mother’s perspective at all, but another beast’s, lurking in the darkness. Now the house does not look as safe and private as it did at first glance. It may be a constant battlefield of the external evil force and the internal resistance, of masculine violence and feminine trickery, and of adult’s repression and ignorance, and children’s inventiveness, agency and subversion.

Emily Arnold McCully’s *Mirette on the High Wire* is another book that subverts the idea of the home as an arena of privacy and respite, and instead presents the domestic space as a place of work as well as a magic gate to outside connections and possibilities. Although the picturebook celebrates the spirited female protagonist’s agency to transform the domestic confinement into a platform where she bravely embarks on her performance, it also conveys conventional versions of femininity. In the story, one hundred years ago in Paris when “theatres and music halls drew traveling players from all over the world,” the protagonist is Mirette, the daughter of the widow Gateau who owns a boardinghouse on English Street. For the first few pages, the viewer sees a red-haired girl going grocery shopping and serving food for the guests.

Like her mom, Mirret works hard to make her guests comfortable, and she is “an expert at washing linens, chopping leeks, paring potatoes, and mopping floors” (unpaged). Mirette is a happy little domestic worker, always wearing a gentle smile (Such representation of the home as a site for work may be a little disturbing for the contemporary young readers in the United States, who cannot be forced to labor. But the representation of another time and another culture can alleviate their anxiety).

While the home is a workplace for Mirrette, it is a place of rest and entertainment for the guests—acrobats, jugglers, actors, and mimes in splendid costumes—all of whom sit around the table, eating, talking, gesturing, laughing, retelling anecdotes and adventures. This life seems inaccessible for Mirrette but enchantingly attracts her, a life full of stories, possibilities and unexpected adventures—“Nothing pleased her more than to overhear the vagabond players tell of their adventures in this town and that along the road” (unpaged). The accompanying illustration captures this longing more vividly. The wooden rail that is on a diagonal starting from the left upper point to the right bottom divides the square illustration into two halves: the upper half depicts a group of guests in their fineries sitting around a table, eating, drinking and conversing with each other; the lower half shows Mirrette sitting alone on the stairs with her right side facing the reader, attentively watching and listening to the guests downstairs. She is in the shadow, whereas the guests are illuminated by strong white light—apparently, they are the exuberant performers on the stage, under dazzling spotlights, while Mirrette is a silent peeper hiding behind the curtain, longing to be there. The rail delineates a boundary between the two apparently different worlds unblended, and bars the domestic girl from the outside world she longs for. Not until one day does a retired male high-wire walker, Bellini, come to the Gateau’s, a chance to enter that world opens for Mirrette.

One afternoon, when Mirette comes to the courtyard for the sheets, she sees something unbelievable—Bellini is crossing the courtyard in the air! Mirette is enchanted, and works up the courage to beg the man to teach her to do that. However, she is refused, but determined—“Mirette watched him every day” (unpaged). The accompanying illustration shows Mirette in the foreground inside a room wearing an apron and holding a sponge with a pail in front of her. She is looking out the room’s window at the walker, Bellini, who is balancing himself on the wire in the courtyard. She looks amused and occupied, holding the sponge high to her chest and forgetting her task. The viewer is positioned inside the room too, standing next to her, and also gazing her and the walker. Such a perspective makes sympathizing with her and experiencing the felt longing Mirette is feeling easy—like the girl, the viewer, confined in the small interior domestic space, wants to fly through the window, and be there. However, “there,” is not merely the courtyard where Bellini is practicing, but the competitive and exciting outside world where people (usually adult men) venture. The distance between the man and Mirette is not far—like the physical distance between the room and the courtyard, yet very far—the distance is between an adult man and a girl in the fictional nineteenth century, living in the two seemingly unparallel cultures with two types of expectations and two sets of trainings. The interior space where Mirette stands seems more like a trap now. However, while the window symbolically becomes a barrier between the public life and domestic confinement (although the two apparently opposite spheres are not disconnected), it is also a threshold that opens the interior space to the outside world, as Moebius (1986) states “A character who looks out the window or stands in the door...is implicated in the unspoken meanings of thresholds” (p. 146), which seems even more significant, considering a girl, as an adult-to-be and as a woman-to-be.

In the following pages, Mirrette tries the wire herself, falling off, but perseverantly trying again and again until she can balance herself on the wire and “couldn’t wait to show Bellini,” who acknowledges her talent and becomes Mirette’s master. However, while Mirette practices for long hours on the wire, she does not forget her domestic responsibilities: “She got up two hours earlier every day to finish her chores before the sun shone in the courtyard” (unpaged). This plucky girl does not believe that her personal pursuit should take precedence over her domestic responsibility, and she has to reconcile the two seeming opposites. Therefore, while the picturebook portrays the girl’s adventurousness and perseverance, it also suggests a sacrificing and selfless version of femininity, the very virtue of the Angel of the House (Nelson, 1991).

However, the housework might actually become comforting at one point. As she later learns that her respectable master has fear on the wire and seemingly cannot make it leave, she “...turned and ran to the *kitchen* as tears sprang to her eyes” (unpaged, my emphasis added). The accompanying illustration shows Mirette mopping the kitchen floor. She might be using her physical labor to alleviate her psychic pain. Thus, the housework seems more than oppressive at this moment, which might suggest a more complex relationship between her domestic role as a little worker and her professional dream. Mirette is not only portrayed as brave, adventurous and responsible but also inspiring—she finally helps the world-famous master conquer the fear he has had on the wire. She also accomplishes a high-wire performance with Bellini. The last illustration hints at a promising future and prospect for Mirette. She is shown at the corner of a street looking at a poster on the wall, which shows Mirette and Bellini performing on the high wire with the words “Stupendous feasts” above them—it is the agent from Astley’s Hippodrome “planning the world tour of Bellini and Mirette” (unpaged). While this final scene could be interpreted as fulfillment of Mirette’s dream, or (temporal) escape from the domestic

confinement and responsibility, this might also be an illusion—there is no guarantee that Mirette can succeed in transforming herself from a domestic worker to a world renowned professional high-wire walker like Bellini, since the barrier may come from not only herself or her family but also from the more powerful but invisible contested ideologies about what it means to be a woman.

Both *The Polar Express* and *Jumanji* are written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg, whose sculptural paintings and manipulation of light and perspective bring the reader/viewer to a mysterious dreamlike world that only the children can perceive and enter. Neumeyer (1990) notes that many of Allsburg's picturebooks including *The Polar Express* and *Jumanji*, depict children falling asleep, having extraordinary adventures and returning from whatever they inhabited during the sleep, only to find some incontestable and objective proof that the land they were in during their sleep was truly and objectively present. However, what Neumeyer does not state is that the very place that makes the adventures possible is the home, which is often associated with security, protection, a place of daily routines and with the least possibility of dramatic occurrences. Yet these two books depict these children as imaginative visionaries who transform the ordinary and boring "confinement"—the home—into a fantasy world full of adventures, excitement and dangers, all of which are inaccessible to and incomprehensible for the realistic adults. However, while the books celebrate the children's imaginative vision, they may also imply the conventional assumption that children, like women, belong to the domestic sphere.

Looking at the child characters in these two books, the conveyed messages about masculinity and femininity seem ambiguous, although the external features, such as clothes and toys, emphasize gendered differences (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). However, the "distance"

seems more of a matter of age than of gender in these two winners; that is, the children of different genders are constructed as intimate companions with mutual understanding, who have exceptional vision against the humdrum adults, who although physically inhabit the same space with the children, live in a monotonously realistic world different from children's imaginative world.

In *The Polar Express* the first-person narrator tells a story of many years ago when he was still a young boy. On a Christmas Eve, when sleeping inside his own room, he heard a sound like the ringing bells of Santa's sleigh. Late that night, a train arrived in front of his house. Still wearing his slippers and robe, he went aboard, and this was the Polar Express, as the conductor told him, heading towards the North Pole where Santa Clause and the elves lived. Having arrived at the much industrialized city, he received his first gift of Christmas from Santa, a silver bell cut from a reindeer's harness. After this Christmas adventure, he was sent home, and is seen standing at the doorway and waving good-bye towards the train. On the next morning, the silver bell, which he had lost on the way back home the night before, appeared in a small box behind the Christmas tree. Then, he shook the bell, and "it made the most beautiful sound my sister and I had ever heard" (unpaged). But the parents seem to hear nothing: the mother said, "Oh, that's too bad," and the father agreed, "Yes...it's broken." His parents' insensitiveness is confirmed by the following sentence, "When I'd shaken the bell, my parents had not heard a sound." Apparently, only children possess such perceptive faculty of seeing beyond the reality. Yet as children grow into adults, they lose their imaginative intuition—"At one time most of my friends could hear the bell, but as years passed, it fell silent for all of them." Allsburg's depiction of children as imaginative visionaries may reflect adults' perception of children that has its root in the Romantic movement, of which two notable representatives are William Wordsworth and

William Blake (Carpenter, 1985). Both of these poets believe that children have access to a kind of visionary simplicity denied to adults, and children are in a higher state of spiritual perception than adults (Natov, 2003). However, the narrator in *The Polar Express* also expresses, “Though I’ve grown old, the bell still rings for me as it does for all who truly believe.” This view may embody George MacDonald’s (who inherits as well as departs from the Romantic view on childhood) ideal of childhood that is “a state of being which everyone must aspire to” (Mcgillis p.152); that is, childhood is a “state of being” everyone can achieve by possessing childlike qualities. Therefore, since the narrator in *The Polar Express* is childlike, he still preserves the internal imaginative vision when grown.

The boy’s imaginative vision is embodied in his blurring boundaries of the real world and the dream world in which the boy takes the magic train, passes the dark forests where lean wolves roam, climbs the mountains and visits the fantasyland where the Santa and his elves work, and he receives the silver bell. In this sense, the interior space—the narrator’s home—plays an important part in making possible the transcendence, which is particularly well represented in the first illustration after the title page—a bedroom scene, as Moebius (1991) observed that the bedroom is the place in which to dream or to act out the spectacles of sleep (p.57). The illustration shows an interior room, which contains a big bed covered by a sheet, and a boy kneeling on his bed, his side facing the viewer and his front facing the opened window. Outside are flying snowflakes. While bedroom is depicted in shadow, the boy’s front is lit by a soft light coming from a mysterious unseen source outside, which might imply a heavenly glow (Nodelman, 1988, p.155). The picture is imbued with quietness, mysteriousness as well as a potential danger of boundary-breaking. The next illustration, which anticipates the beginning of the adventure, shows a streaming train that stops outside of the house. Here, the bedroom

signifies a fluidity between confinement and freedom—“confinement is the beginning of deliverance” (Moebius 1991, p.72). Additionally, the parents are absent from the illustrations throughout the picturebook, perhaps further emphasizing that the adults do not belong to the children’ imaginative world. Yet also this bedroom scene offers the viewer a chance to detect some gendered messages.

Hanging on the wall of the bedroom is a target and a picture of a man who wears a blue hat and is holding a baseball bat. As spatial representations—the artifacts a place contains—convey meanings about femininity and masculinity (Moss, 2006), the two objects shown in the boy’s bedroom may suggest his way of doing masculinity: becoming a macho and tough man like the baseball player. However, the differentiated depictions of the males and females in this picturebook seemingly only limit to the external features. While the male narrator wears pants, the girls found on the magic train with the boy wear pink dresses, and his sister shown in the penultimate illustration wears a light green dress. Other than the external features, the gendered difference is much less conspicuous than the symbolic distance between the realistic adults and the imaginative children with mutual understanding and a shared culture. For example, as mentioned earlier, the beautiful bell sound is apparent, not only to the male protagonist, but also to his sister and other child friends.

Like *The Polar Express*, *Jumanji* also involves two children’s adventure in a dream, although it is only suggested at the end of the story because the children are asleep when the parents come home. The story begins with Judy and Peter being bored while playing at home. Going outside, they find Jumanji, a jungle adventure game. As the sister and brother play with it, they find themselves trapped in a world of lions, monkeys, flood, rhinoceros, and snakes, a real jungle. As the sister, Judy, finally reaches the ultimate destination, Jumanji, the golden city on

the board, all the animals disappear and the house returns to normal. Compared to *The Polar Express*, the symbolic distance between the imaginative children and the dull adults are equally evident in this picturebook, if not more so. Contrary to the disordered, chaotic, precarious, perilous and exciting world which the children venture in and conquer, the “normal” house that their parents see is quiet, clean, neat, boring and monotonous. Like the boy in *The Polar Express*, the children in *Jumanji*, using their imaginations, also transform the confining domestic space into a boundless jungle fraught with adventures denied to the parents. When the parents arrive home, they awaken the children, and the mother asks whether they had an exciting afternoon. After hearing Peter answer that they had a flood, a stampede and a volcano, and he himself, had sleeping sickness, the mother simply dismisses Peter’s remarks as meaningless jokes and daydreams, “I think you both got sleeping sickness.” The contrast between the imaginativeness of the children and limitation of the adults is even made pictorially humorous in the accompanying picture (Neumeyer, 1990). Allsburg renders the parents as prosaic adults by means of a little joke: only visible are their not very imaginative costumes but not their faces in an illustration that shows the adults from knee level to neck. Also seen is, presumably of Judy and Peter’s father, a fountain pen clip protruding from the white dress shirt pocket—a man has his fountain pen clipped, accountant-fashion, into his white shirt, and goes to an opera! (Neumeyer, 1990).

Like the differentiated depictions of the girls and the boys in *The Polar Express*, the gender difference in *Jumanji* is also emphasized by external features, such as clothes and toys. Throughout this picturebook, the sister, Judy, wears a lacy white shirt and a dress, whereas the younger brother, Peter, wears a shirt and pants. However, Allsburg also makes Peter wear big glasses and his shirt, buttoned high up to the neck, which makes Peter look sort of bookish and

effeminate. The first illustration after the title page shows Peter kneeling on the sofa and looking down at the toy train running under the sofa, and Judy looking at a doll house. While Peter appearing in the foreground of the page, along with the sofa, nearly occupies two thirds of the whole page, Judy is at the far back at the bottom right corner of the page, which takes up much less than one third of the space, and her head even bleeds onto the right border of the page. Allsburg positions the viewer's gaze below Peter but above Judy. This makes the viewer look up at Peter and down at Judy. From such a perspective, Peter seems in control and more important, and Judy much less significant. While the viewer anticipates, according to the very first illustration, that Peter might play a more important role in the following events, Judy's initiative only contradicts this assumption throughout their jungle adventure. It is Judy who suggests to go outside and play when they become bored at home, who finds Jumanji and takes it home, who directs Peter while playing the jungle game, who calms a terrified Peter when lion attacks him and encourages him to finish the game, and who reaches the golden city, Jumanji, and saves them from any real dangers.

Apparently, Allsburg plays a joke on the viewer, who assumes that boys will lead in the following adventures, and subverts such assumption. However, while portrayals of a strong female character convey an anti-conventional version of femininity, the gendered markers like clothes and toys also suggest that Judy and Peter perform conventional versions of femininity and masculinity, although Allsburg might also imply an unconventional version of masculinity by presenting a bookish-looking Peter. However, age might be a consideration of the female leadership. Peter looks much younger than Judy, and not surprisingly, Judy looks stronger than her younger brother. Allsburg expresses ambiguousness on femininity and masculinity. However, the gendered differences between the children still seems less significant than the symbolic

distance between the realistic adults and imaginative children. In both of *The Polar Express* and *Jumanji*, the children are depicted as comrades with reciprocal understanding against the adults who are denied access to an imaginative world that finds its very origin in the domestic space the adults also inhabit.

The significant feature of the four winners, *Lon Po Po*, *Mirette on the High Wire*, *The Polar Express* and *Jumanji* (as well as *The Hello, Goodbye Window* in which the little girl imagines widely by watching the Hello, Goodbye Window at home), discussed in this section is the children's transformation of the ordinary homes into dramatic platforms where resistance and adventures take place. For the children, the home is both an enclosed interior space that is supposed to confine the children and protect them from unwanted dangers, and a place of freedom and transcendence where the children's imagines and invents. Lissa Paul (1987) suggests, "But the protagonists in children's literature transcend, and, for the most part win, even when the endings of stories are not conventionally happy. Though they have to deal with the same (often overlapping) forms of physical, economic and linguistic entrapment that women do, they are not yet closed in by the roles of adulthood" (p. 210). The suggestion here is that children, as a homogenized group, like women as another group, share the same culture—their otherness and their entrapment. While not completely opposing the view that some children's book illustrators/writers like Allsburg emphasize a shared children's culture rather than (gendered, racial or class) differences among them, such supposedly unitary children's culture is also shown stratified by gender. Additionally, while only two of the child protagonists in the discussed winners are boys playing at the home, four of them are girls. The domestic entrapment seems to speak more to the girls than the boys. However, what makes the winners outstanding perhaps is

their ability to endow the girls with the ability to resist and subvert traps and confinements, and blur the boundaries between the domestic and the public.

### Chapter 3

#### Outside Home: Places of play

McDowell (1999) suggested that when considering public spaces, the effect is evident of the associations of the public/private divide with gender divisions. She further explained that due to the strong associations between women and home, those interior spaces of domesticity, women experience fear and anxiety outside (p.148). However, she also maintained that the public spaces might also be significant locations in women's escape from male dominance, and proposed that the public open spaces like streets, parks, beaches and department stores display complex and sets of gender, race, age and sexuality relationships. Thus, this section discusses the relationships between the public open spaces and meanings about femininity and masculinity. Four of the five winners from 1980 to 2007 that belong to this category—*Owl Moon* (1987), *My Friend Rabbit* (2002), *Kitten's First Full Moon* (2004), and *Flotsam* (2007) feature children or childlike characters like animals (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003). These characters are portrayed playing in a variety of places: the first three winners situate their child characters respectively in the forest, on the prairie and in the wild field, and in *Flotsam*, the boy plays on a seemingly remote beach. The other winner that belongs to this category, *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* (1983), portrays an adult male character who becomes obsessed with flying and navigates through air.

In both *My Friend Rabbit* and *Kitten's First Full Moon*, the main characters are animals, gendered and humanized animals. Nodelman and Reimer (2003) suggested that many characters in children's literature are animals, for adults tend to think of "kids" as basically animal-like beings who must be taught how to act like civilized humans. Thus, animals may represent the animal-like condition of children. In *My Friend Rabbit*, written and illustrated by Eric Rohmann,

the narrator Mouse tells stories about his male friend, Rabbit, who always means well but always brings trouble (although the text does not explicitly say Mouse's gender, Rabbit is referred as "his," Mouse's friend in the front flap). The olive green endpapers already suggest the setting of the story—perhaps in grassland—and also the mood of the story—perhaps a cheerful and upbeat story, as Sipe and McGuire (2006) proposed that picturebook endpapers are resources for literary and aesthetic interpretation, and that plain colored endpapers can refer to elements of the story.

The title page shows a mouse sitting in a toy airplane with the rear part still in the gift box, and a white rabbit standing in front of the plane with front arms wide open, seemingly very excited. As the endpapers suggest, they are shown on a prairie. The following page shows the rabbit holding the plane where the mouse is sitting—the rabbit is about to send the plane off into the sky. In the facing illustration, the plane is not in the scene, but a broken line suggests the plane's path, and the mouse is in the air, but falling. The accompanying text says, "My friend Rabbit means well. But whatever he does, wherever he goes / trouble follows." So the reader sees the plane stuck in the tree, and the rabbit, who holds the mouse, looks helpless below. So the rest of the story depicts how the rabbit tries to retrieve the plane: He brings all kinds of animals, first an elephant, then a rhino, hippo, deer, alligator, squirrel, bear, and ducks, and piles them up with the mouse on the top in order to reach the plane. But then, a disaster—everyone falls, out of balance except the mouse who has reached the plane and is flying. The words say, "But Rabbit means well. And he is my friend," and the accompanying illustration shows the mouse flying in the plane and the rabbit holding the end of the plane in the air. As the two friends happily flying, what has happened happens again: In the last page the plane becomes stuck in the tree again.

At first glance, the prairie seems a playground where two male animals, Mouse and Rabbit, consolidate their friendship. However, upon careful examination, the wide and wild prairie

(whose width is emphasized by the horizontal design of the book) is also a place of hierarchy and oppression where a particular version of masculinity is valorized. The main part of the picturebook is about how the rabbit tries to get the plane, which is from the seventh page to twentieth page (thirty-two pages in total). How the rabbit collects a variety of animals is by no means other than physical strength and force. The seventh page shows the rabbit strenuously pulling the tail of some giant animal, and in the next page, that animal appears to be an elephant who bleeds onto the upper border of the page and takes up two thirds of the page. The elephant grovels on the ground, and looks exhausted but also angry with the eye bulging. Apparently, the elephant tries to rise to its feet and to resist, for its left front leg stretches out. The mouse is shown hanging on the elephant's left leg, seemingly to secure the rabbit's prey. The rabbit is depicted running towards the next page, which shows an equally giant rhino pushed by the rabbit at the bottom. Even though the rabbit takes the lead, the rhino's resistance is more evident in the illustration: the mud under the grass has been turned over by the rhino's front legs which stretch straight out and support itself. On the following page, the rhino is piled on the elephant, and both look helpless. Having conquered the biggest animals, the rabbit looks much more confident, lifting a hippo above his head. The next "continuous narrative" illustration shows (Schwarcs, 1982) the rabbit lifting the deer, alligator, bear and duck who look irritated, puzzled and helpless. With these animals piled for the rabbit to reach the plane, all of them look exhausted and lack control.

This picturebook portrays the rabbit as an animal king and conqueror, achieving status by incomparable physical strength on the one hand. However, to make a white rabbit who is traditionally associated with femininity a conqueror and make the big animals losers also undermine the big, muscular and manly image of the idealized macho man (in the case of the

animal kingdom, it is the “manly” biggest animal). However, even though the rabbit physically looks more feminine, at the core a traditional violent and strong version of masculinity is valorized, in spite of it looking unstable and is constantly challenged by other animals.

*Kitten's First Full Moon* is, as suggested by the title, about a kitten, and it is unsurprisingly a “she.” When the kitten, who is shown sitting on the porch, first sees the full moon hanging in the darkness, she wants it, for she thinks it is a bowl of milk. She starts to chase it, “down the sidewalk, through the garden, past the field and by the pond.” The accompanying illustrations show her climbing the tree by the pond, sees the moon in the pond, leaps into the pond, and gets wet. Then the kitten goes home, only to find a real bowl of milk on the porch. As some readers may have already observed, the female kitten is not as wild as the male mouse and rabbit portrayed in the *My Friend Rabbit*, and she is domesticated. The wide field looks intimidating to her who does not have any control. One full illustration shows a close-up of a much frustrated kitten soaked in the pond water. Her eyes are wide open, her paws helplessly rising above the water, and the water drips from her head. She looks defeated, and the two strokes above her eyes make her look like about to cry. Compared to the defeated kitten out in the wild, she looks happy and satisfied when approaching home and seeing the bowl of milk. The last illustration highlights her content at home. The illustration shows a sleeping kitten lying besides an empty bowl lit by the shimmering moon hanging in the sky. She looks so peaceful, contented and comfortable. Also two words at the bottom of the page, “Lucky Kitten!” further assert the “right” place for the kitten, the home. While the rabbit plays and conquers on the wild prairie, the outside adventure only serves as a testimony of the home’s comfort and security for the kitten, which conveys an inward and domesticated version of femininity.

*Owl Moon* and *Flotsam* are about children, not children-like animals, with the former about a girl and her father going owling in a forest, and the latter about a boy discovering a fantastic underwater world on the beach. On the title page of *Owl Moon*, on the left of the word “Owl,” shows a child wrapped in winter clothes standing inside at the opened door and looking into the dark winter night. The first double spread after the dedication page shows a panoramic view of a rural area covered in snow from a vantage point up in the air. The viewer sees mountains at the backdrop, bare trees around, two farm houses in the middle, and only two small figures in front of a house walking outward. From the text, the first-person narrator is a little girl shown on the title page and in this illustration, the girl and Pa are just leaving their house to go owling on a late winter night.

As the girl and her father step into the forest, the viewer sees huge bare trees covered in snow, “black and pointy” pine trees, hiding wolves, and deer in the shadows late on a cold winter late night, the wild forest is a place of hidden dangers but also of pleasure and play—owling. In such an intimating but also enticing place, a young girl needs her father, and it is never a place that she is able to venture alone—“I had been waiting / to go owling with Pa / a long, long time.” This sentence may signify her weakness and dependence: She needs the guide and protection from her father, but it also suggests her adventurousness and pushing the boundary. In the illustrations, the father is shown walking in front of her most of the time—“I had to run after him / every now and then/ keep up...” The father is an experienced owling goer: He knows when to keep silent and when to call out, he reads stars for direction, and he can even talk to the owl. Arguably, the wild forest is traditionally a masculine place with its hidden dangers as well as its mysterious charms where men exercise their abilities to explore, conquer and know, and where, without men accompanying, women and children, traditionally constructed as weak, dependent

and inward, are excluded. Even being with her experienced father, the girl still cannot help feeling nervous and fearful in the wild territory: “I didn’t ask / what kinds of things / hide behind black trees / in the middle of the night.” However, once having entered this fearful but also attracting place, she has to bolster her nerve: “When you go owling / you have to be brave.” Even father has to be prepared for any sudden attacks. As he calls, a real owl echoes. The illustration shows both the father and the girl bringing their forearms to their chests with their fists clenched and their eyes staring at a far corner where the owl might be.

However, the forest is also a place of leisure and pleasure. The girl’s excitement of seeing the owl could be known from her repressing it: “I knew then I could talk, / I could even laugh out loud.” But this pleasure is also conditional: Only under her father’s protection and guidance, she is able to venture into the mysterious forest and experience the pleasure. Conveyed here are a knowing, calm, protective version of masculinity and two different versions of femininity—a dependent and fragile version of femininity on the one hand, and an adventurous and plucky version of femininity on the other hand.

David Wiesner’s *Flotsam* brings the viewer to a summer beach. *Flotsam* is a wordless picturebook, and thus the viewer only sees Wiesner’s meticulously detailed paintings. This beach seems remote with only a few tiny features portrayed at the background. The focus is on a boy, closely examining the items and animals washed in from the sea, depicted in the foreground of the full paintings. In the second double spread after the title page, the boy in his shorts lies on his stomach, holds a beetle on his left palm and examines it through a magnifier in his right hand. Beside him are an array of “scientific” tools including a telescope, a microscope, a treasure box, shovels, fishnets, and several plastic pails full of starfish, shells and sea plants. In the left background are two adults, presumably his parents, in their beach chairs, reading. For the boy,

the beach seems more than a place of pure leisure and play: He also turns it into a natural scientific laboratory where he examines, discovers, makes changes and contributes. The enjoyable beach is also full of secrets and excitement, if examined and explored with sharp eyes, an inquisitive mind and scientific methods, all of which are associated with traditional masculinity, and all of which the boy possesses as the rest of the story further proves.

Later, an old camera washes onto shore, and the curious boy has its film developed at a nearby shop. The photos reveal a fantastic underwater world where a robot fish swims among real tropical fishes; an octopus reads aloud to its offspring; small fish fly in the sky; sea turtles swim carrying shell cities on their backs; aliens invade the sea world, and giant starfishes do exercises with islands on their backs. What is more amazing is the link between him and other children, across time and space (Stevenson, 2007): A sea side photo of a girl holding a picture of a boy, who is holding a seaside photo of another child, ad infinitum. Using his “scientific” tools, the magnifier and microscope, the boy can see further and further into the photo. The children shown on the photo wear different clothes coming from different times, seasons and places. The boy, using the same old camera takes a photo of himself holding the photo, and throws it back into the sea. Having experienced a series of adventures, the old camera finally reaches a girl sitting on a tropical void beach. Here the boy is curious, scientific and creative enough to discover the buried secrets and make a change to the fantasy world by adding himself to it.

*The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* (1983) is about Louis Bleriot who is a merchant in the twentieth century and his obsession with flying. In this picturebook, the boundless sky becomes the man’s playground but it is also a place of dangers—he risks his life. The illustrations and the words collaboratively portray his heroic conquest: Having overcome difficulties and tried very hard, the man finally accomplishes a daring flight across the English

Channel. The infinite sky is a place where the man conquers, and enjoys, and the picturebook conveys a heroic and adventurous version of masculinity.

## Chapter 4

### Workplace

Work, as McDowell and Sharp (1997) noted, is central to women's and men's lives and in the social construct of masculine and feminine identities (p.319). What jobs women and men do and do not do, and the places within which those jobs occur convey meanings about masculinity and femininity. The winners' representations of the relationship between men and women and workplaces contribute to the symbolic construction of femininity and masculinity. Thus, this section discusses the winners' representations of the relationships between workplaces and meanings about femininity and masculinity. Although the workplace is often considered a public sphere, and work often refers to waged labors, the workplace is not disconnected with the private space as in the home where labors are often uncompensated. However, in this section, workplace means public space where physical and mental efforts are involved to accomplish something; however, workplace may refer to labors without paid wages.

Five winners published from 1979 to 2006 mainly portray their main characters at work, *Saint George and the Dragon* (1984), *Officer Buckle and Gloria* (1995), *Golem* (1996), *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* (1999), and *So You Want to be President?*(2000). The main characters are portrayed doing a variety of jobs: They are warriors, political and religious leaders, police officers, farmers and presidents. However, all of the protagonists are exclusively men. Such gender asymmetry signifies meanings about masculinity as well as femininity, and may suggest that men still dominate the public sphere, and that women's place are not in the public space. So a traditional outward version of masculinity and an inward version of femininity are suggested. Additionally, these male protagonists are young and middle-aged men, which means that old men are also excluded in this category, which may further suggest gender intersecting with

age—the old men do not perform an outward version of masculinity similar to women. However, such an association of men at work with an outward version of masculinity is too simplistic, for some winners actually represent unconventional and contradictory versions of masculinity that the male characters perform at work, although all of the male characters engage in “men’s” jobs.

Two of the six winners, *Saint George and the Dragon* and *Golem*, set in old times, are about the male protagonists’ heroic endeavors to save their countries. Although, at first glance what they do may seem not to be “jobs,” their service, or their mission to save their countries can be considered jobs in a pre-industrial era. In *Saint George and the Dragon*, a young Red Cross Knight, who wears heavy armor and carries “an ancient silver shield marked with a red cross,” embarks on the Queen of the Fairies’s mission to “try his young strength against a deadly enemy, a dragon grim and horrible,” who threatens Princess Una’s kingdom. Through wild woods, perils and dangers and after days of trek, the knight finally confronts the fearful dragon, and then they engage in battle. While the words depict the dragon’s monstrous body and seemingly indefectible strength, and the intrepid knight’s quick actions, might and determination, the pictures show the glorious and spectacular battle scenes: With black smoke, fumes and fires at the background, the knight strikes with his shining spear; the beast throws flames of fire from his nostrils, and they wrestle, tussle and struggle. Even though the knight fails to kill the beast at first and he lies on the ground (But his initial defeat is portrayed with dignity: He lies on the ground beside his shield, sword, and helmet, wounded and bleeding, he looks calm and solemn without showing pain or suffering), he finally succeeds in slaying the dreadful beast. With his mission accomplished, the victorious knight receives the rewards of marrying the princess and living happily ever after.

The workplace for the knight is the battlefield in which he performs with strength, toughness, bravery, ambition, and perseverance, and from which the gentle princess is excluded—“The knight bade his lady stand apart, out of danger, to watch the fight...” This fairy tale knight is the incarnation of the idealized masculinity: He is tough, strong, both physically and mentally, unemotional, responsible, and heterosexual. The workplace is a site where the traditional macho version of masculinity is reified and consolidated, and other versions of masculinity and femininity are expelled. While both *Saint George and the Dragon* and *Golem* tell stories about the male protagonists’ heroic missions and make the battlefield as their workplaces, *Golem* represents more complicated relationships among different versions of masculinity and between the workplace and meanings about masculinity.

In *Golem*, David Wisniewski’s intricately cut paper illustrations not only make the popular Jewish legend compelling but also add layers of meaning to the old tale. Wisniewski sets the legend in medieval Prague, in the year of 1580. The tale begins with a danger: The Jews of Prague, accused by their enemies, the Catholics, of using Christian children’s blood to make Passover matzoh, confront the threat of potential massacre. Judah Loew ben Bezalel, chief rabbi of Prague, troubled by the violence that lies ahead, prayed for wisdom and fell into restless slumber, in which he receives a sacred message from God: Protect the Jews by creating a golem out of clay using mystical. He did so, and a clay giant named Joseph was born. Golem’s mission is to guard the ghetto and catch those planting false evidence of the Blood Lie. However, in the battle with the mob, Golem loses his control, unleashes his anger, and creates too much destruction. Faced with the new threat and also receiving pressure from the emperor, the rabbi ends the life of Golem by returning him to the earth.

Here, the main male characters, the rabbi and Golem, represent two conventional versions of masculinity. On one hand, the elder rabbi represents a wise, unemotional and rational version of masculinity with rhetorical and intellectual power, and Golem represents a strong, hard-bodied version of masculinity. Both of the men work for their people and make the land as their workplace. Their difference seems to be that the rabbi does mental labor and Golem manual labor, which conjures masculine associations of brain and brawn, respectively (McDowell & Sharp, 1997). This workplace is a place where different versions of masculinity contest and compete. However, Wisniewski actually problematizes the idealized masculine model: Golem, highlights tensions within himself between the hegemonic version of masculinity and a non-hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987), and also complicates the relations between his gendered identity and his workplace: The ghetto is not only a place that valorizes the strong and tough version of masculinity but also a place that lets him develop a gentle and emotional version of masculinity. However, as Sonheim (2003) provocatively suggested, the seemingly different Golem may not be anybody else but the rabbi himself. Thus, the rabbi himself also becomes a site of contested versions of masculinity. However, a particular version of masculinity wins and stands out—the rational and wise version of masculinity—required by his workplace and his relation to it.

The invented Golem's mission is to guard the ghetto, hardly a night passes that Golem does not carry out his task to frustrate efforts to spread the Blood Lie. However, one morning, Golem is standing "motionless" in the lane. He is shown standing in the right foreground with his back facing the viewer and his right hand still holding a dead body. Also seen are rows of houses—brick ones and clay ones, the rabbi and on the right page another two males, who are looking at Golem, who is so tall that he nearly protrudes beyond the frame. The background is

filled with reds, yellows, blues—rosy sun glow, scarlet clouds, half-rising orange sun, and a sky with a variety of blues. The scene is soothing, peaceful and calm, and this is the ghetto where Golem works. Golem speaks, “The sun is rising...The sky changes from black to blue. It is very beautiful.” Such emotional expression betrays his muscular and strong body. Wisniewski subverts the myth of the men’s stoic world. This workplace is not only a place Golem performs his macho masculinity but also a place that develops his sensitivity to beauty and love for his land as well as a softer version of masculinity. However, later in the story, the strong, violent and indefectible Golem snaps giant battering ram, sweeps people aside and kills them. Now the “beautiful” ghetto becomes a battlefield where Golem plays out the traditional macho version of masculinity.

However, this strong and indefectible man is a threat not only to the wise rabbi but also to the powerful emperor—who summons the rabbi to his palace and pressures him to “destroy Golem”—and other less strong men. In that country, the workplace for Golem, where the emperor and the rabbi rule and Golem serves, anyone appears stronger than them must be a potential danger. This actually testifies to struggles and contests among different forms of masculinity and how one form (forms) of masculinity is (are) expelled (Connell, 1987). As the rabbi has promised, he ends the life of Golem, who collapses into lifeless clay. The violence between the men is fateful, and only for one reason: Domination (Connell, 1987). However, Sonheim (2003) proposed that Wisniewski expresses the violence of the created Golem as latent within the character of its creator, the rabbi, and Golem comes from the rabbi himself, which Wisniewski’s use of shadows reinforces. For example, as Sonheim suggests, the most evident illustration is the cover itself which shows the rabbi in the central foreground with not his own shadow, but Golem’s huge and dark one looming behind him. Such an interpretation allows

seeing the individual as the site of contested meanings about masculinity. However, in the precarious political and religious world which valorizes a kind of cool rationality, the rabbi has to repress the savage, violent, aggressive version of masculinity within himself, and perform, in the workplace, the rational and wise version of masculinity of an intellectual.

The remaining winners in this category set their stories in contemporary time. These winners still portray the dominant version of masculinity that is valorized in particular workplaces; however, they also challenge it by providing alternatives. *Officer Buckle and Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann is about a male police officer, Buckle, and his police dog, Gloria. In this picturebook, while the police are traditionally “hypermuscular” (Wannamaker, 2008) —strong, tough, hard-bodies, muscular, agile, unemotional and grim, Buckle is actually a little clumsy, bookish and benign. In the title page, under the title is a police officer shown in his uniform writing safety tips alone at an office desk. Wearing glasses, he bends his head closely to the desk, which makes him look clumsy. This clumsiness is confirmed by the following double spread which provides a better view of Buckle, who is a little overweight, short, half bald and round faced. The background of the right page is a painted bulletin board full of safety tips, and at the bottom the left page is a swivel chair about to fall onto the ground. Buckle is in the air with his hat and glasses off—he is falling. His left thumb and index fingers are still on a thumbtack stuck in the board, and under the thumbtack is a piece of paper with words on, “NEVER STAND ON A SWIVEL CHAIR.” For the rest of the picturebook, Buckle does not take on any other work tasks except going alone to schools to do safety speeches, and dealing with children. This makes him appear less manly than the police officer who handles crimes and adults.

Furthermore, Officer Buckle has one problem: children do not listen to his safety speech, and afterward, business is as usual. He appears on the stage, holding speech notes and facing the

audience of children, who are doing all sorts of things except listening to the speech—one boy is snoring, one girl is eating, and another boy is doing a crossword puzzle. Buckle, standing on the stage alone, looks rather dismayed. On this stage, his workplace, he performs an unthreatening and less authoritative version of masculinity. Yet this problem disappears as a police dog, Gloria, comes to Buckle. With Gloria, he travels to many schools for the safety speech. While standing on the stage or in the classroom, he looks much more confident, serious and authoritative than before. Although he later comes to know that the children seem to be attracted to the dog, who can do all kind of tricks on the stage without Buckle's awareness, finally Buckle and Gloria realize that they cannot do their jobs without each other. The last illustration shows Buckle and Gloria standing on the stage and smiling at the audience who is applauding. The accompanying text says, "Safety Tip #101 'ALWAYS STICK WITH YOUR BUDDY!'" The book here seems to suggest a masculine masculinity built from shared difficulties.

Moreover, this structure—"of anxiety, doubt, conflict, challenge, temporary setback, then final success and triumph"—is what Stephens (1996) terms "a male career pattern" in children's literature (p. 19), whereas no paradigmatic female "career" structure exists that is comparable to this male pattern. Therefore, on the one hand, the picturebook represents a softer and unthreatening version of masculinity, which seems subverting the traditional macho and hard-bodied image of the police officer; however, on the other hand, it also implies a masculine triumph through camaraderie and a male career pattern characteristic of children's literature that seems only applicable to male workers.

*So You Want to be President?* and *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*, also portray conventional versions of masculinity at workplace on the one hand, and unconventional versions of masculinity on the other hand. In *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*, while the represented farmer

labors on the farm, he is dexterous at turning his worn out overcoat into a jacket, and when that is worn out, he turns it into a vest, a scarf, a necktie and so on. His skill may be traditionally considered a feminine virtue. *So You Want to be President?* is a comical rendering of the forty-two American presidents from George Washington to Bill Clinton. Most scenes in the picturebook portray the presidents at work, but their tasks vary and their workplaces are also flexible and fluid, not confined in a particular office, building and even in a country. In this picturebook a traditional rational, confident and authoritative version of masculinity usually associated with the politician continues to operate. For example, one illustration of William Howard Taft shows him standing on the stage and holding a cabbage—he is giving a speech to his audience, and looks undisturbed and confident. The text explains that people become angry at the Presidents, and someone once threw a cabbage to Taft, but he coolly, calmly and humorously responded, “I see that one of my adversaries had lost his head.” In another illustration the presidents are fighting on a battlefield, and the accompanying words say that if one wants to be President, one might consider joining the army, because many presidents were generals, but if being a general is not possible, be a hero like Theodore Roosevelt or John Kennedy whose accomplishments in the Spanish-American War and World War II are explained in the parentheses.

However, the picturebook also subverts the rational and heroic version of masculinity at times. For instance, a picture of Theodore Roosevelt has him kneeling on the ground and playing with toy trucks, and the words say, “Theodore Roosevelt at forty-two was the youngest. He had pillow fights with his children and played football on the White House Lawn.” Two messages are implied: First, while the rational version of masculinity traditionally associated with the politician is clearly challenged, Roosevelt is still performing another traditional or even

hegemonic version of masculinity—he is aggressive (having fights) and athletic (playing football). Second, while the president performs a rational, unemotional, objective version of masculinity at work, he performs an aggressive, athletic but “childish” version of masculinity at home, which signifies, as McDowell and Court (1994) said, citing Butler, “gender as performance open to resignification and recontextualization” (p. 236).

Two scenes seem particularly subversive; they play on the male body. One illustration shows four presidents, William Harrison, William McKinley, William Taft and William Clinton, wearing short striped skirts and tight shirts, holding pom poms above their heads and cheerleading! (The text only mentions that four Williams have become President). Another double spread depicts in an elegant auditorium with a full audience, Warren Harding with a golden crown perched on his head and wrapped in rosy feather gown, standing on the front part of a stage with his left hand uplifted, and smiling at the viewer. Rows of other presidents stand at the back of the stage, and applaud. Above them is a banner saying, “Presidential Beauty Contest.” The text assures the reader not to worry about looks, because a good President can be quite homely like Lincoln who is shown at the foreground of the illustration with other beauty contest losers (They are all presidents), whereas the handsome president, Warren Harding, can be one of the worst. For the former scene, the male presidents become cross-dressers, which could be seen as a critical examination of socially constructed gender categories, and the latter scene puts the men on display and offers subversive viewing, as Mallan (2002) suggested, “To associate men with spectacle is perhaps another inversion of what is regarded as normal, for the modern era such attention-making displays have been regarded as the province of the female” (p. 31).

However, neither of the two portrayals could be subversive. Closely examining the cheerleading presidents, some of them are not that happy—Harrison looks very solemn, McKinley slightly upset, Taft indifferent, and only Clinton shows a reluctantly smiling face. Perhaps their cross-dressing is unwillingly forced upon them by the illustrator who is famous for his “mischievously rendered drawings” (back flap). Flanagan (2008) suggests, “Male cross-dressing is presented as comic, trivial, and humiliating for the masculine subject...it reinforces socially prescribed gender categories rather than interrogating or challenging them” (p.133). Rather than learning how to behave as women, they seem resentful and ashamed of femininity, which is actually “a confirmation of the superiority and indestructibility of his inherent masculinity” (Flanagan, 2008, p.54). Also a close look at Harding reveals his crooked right eye brow and a grin that may be an embarrassing smile. So the male president can also be seen, forced against his will, to make a spectacle of himself, and femininity is represented humiliatingly, embarrassingly and shamefully, that is, masculinity is defined against femininity. Moreover, these two portrayals might be, after all, only jokes played on those men and aim at eliciting the reader’s laugh, and being laughed at could be very traditionally masculine (Wharton, 2005).

## Chapter 5

### Out of Place

The last category concerns being out of place, of movement and travel (McDowell, 1999), which is imbued with gendered connotations. Travel, which signifies outward mobility and exploration, is traditionally associated with masculinity, and both the practices and ideologies of which operate to exclude or pathologize women (Wolff, 1993, p. 224). However, this does not mean that women do not travel, but rather the history of their movement was ignored, since taken for granted for so long was that women's places were in homes (McDowell, 1999). McDowell (1999) argued, "Travel, even the idea of traveling, challenges the spatial association between home and women that has been so important in structuring the social construction of femininity in the 'West'" (p. 208). Also necessary is the realization of the diverse ways of travel ranging from, as Wolff (1993) listed, tourism, exploring and other voluntary activity to forced mobility of immigrant workers and 'guest workers' in many countries, and to the extremes of political and economic exile, that differentially construct meanings about femininity and masculinity and that gendered identities take different forms in these different ways of travel. Therefore, this section, discusses the symbolic constructions of femininity and masculinity in relation to travel. Five winners from the years 1980 to 2007 portray travel or displacement: *The Man who Walked between the Towers* (2003) by Mordicai Gerstein, *Rapunzel* (1997) by Paul O. Zelinsky, *Smoky Night* (1994) and *Grandfather's Journey* (1993) by Ellen Say, and *Hey, Al* (1986) written by Arthur Yorinks and illustrated by Richard Egielski. Except *Rapunzel* which is a retelling of a traditional fairy tale, the rest occur in contemporary times.

*Grandfather's Journey*, told by a first-person narrator, concerns three generations' immigration experiences. The picturebook begins with the narrator's grandfather who "left his

home in Japan and went to see the world.” The double spread after the dedication page shows a young man in a traditional Japanese kimono on the left page and the same young man in “European clothes” on a steamship on the right page. This opening double spread seems to suggest the apparently conflicting cultures within the grandfather. The following pages portray the grandfather traveling alone to various places in America. These illustrations and words create a reminder of a flaneur wandering in a modern America. The illustrations portray a rapidly industrializing modern America, “the New World.” The sixth page shows a serene blue sea lit by the soft golden light radiating from the rising sun half hidden behind the rolling mountains, and the apricot sunglow imbues the scene with softness and a sense of aspiration. This is a picture of hope, which is brought by “the New World” that is welcoming the advent of modernity. In the following pages, an explorative, adventurous and ambitious grandfather travels to nearly every part of the modern country aided by modern transportation. He appears in front of the giant steaming train, passing “Huge cities of factories and tall buildings...,” meeting “black men,” “white men,” “yellow men” and “red men,” and also passing rocks, deserts, fields and towering mountains.

This is a flaneur, “the stroller in the crowd, observing but not observed” (Massey, 1994), experiencing modernity. However, citing Wolff, Massey also points out the problem of one-way-ness of the gaze, and one illustration particularly proves this point: The grandfather is in front of a barber shop with other people of different ethnicities, all in a row, and all of them stare from the page and look at the viewer—the viewer takes the position of the picture-taker. But the flaneur is “irretrievably male” and “the modern gaze belonged (belongs?) to men” (Massey, 1994). However, this gaze not only belongs to a man, but a bourgeois man who can afford the enormous expenses of his travel. Furthermore, this traveling man hardly experiences a sense of

loss in the new world at first, and for him, travel is freedom and provides him an opportunity to gain rather than lose—“The more he traveled, the more he longed to see new places, and never thought of returning home.” Yet later he finally returns home to marry his “childhood sweetheart,” and “brought his bride to the new country.” As the grandfather grows older, he begins missing his hometown in Japan, and finally moves back to Japan. But being in Japan, he starts missing America again. The picturebook ends with the narrator’s (he was born in Japan and also immigrated to America) statement of his understanding of his grandfather, because “...the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other” just as his grandfather was. For both the grandfather and his grandson, the narrator, what they really miss perhaps is not one land or the other but mobility and movement without a real destination—a desire to escape the bounds of the specificity—rather than fixity, locality and immobility that are traditionally associated with femininity.

*The Man Who Walked between the Towers* involves a young male street performer, Philippe, who comes from Paris to the New York City, and who rides the unicycle, juggles balls and fiery torches on the street, and walks and dances on a rope tied between two trees. He goes where he wants, belongs nowhere and finds satisfaction in mobility and freedom. Like the grandfather in *Grandfather’s Journey*, the male performer is equally adventurous, but not for exploring different places of a country but different parts of a city. These city travels bring him new experience, excitement and freedom, which implies a traditional outward, explorative and unrestrained version of masculinity.

One day, as Philippe stands on the rope tied between the trees in front of the twin towers, he looks at the space between them, and thinks, “What a wonderful place to stretch a rope.” He is a person portrayed as freewheeling: “Once the idea came to him he knew he had to do it!” which

also conveys a sense of motion and instability. However, the place he desires to go is currently a forbidden territory: Not only are the buildings not finished but the police will not allow him to do this, for they believe he will fall. But he decides to disguise himself as a construction worker, and successfully passes security. Overcoming the difficulties of carrying and setting up the “four-hundred-and-forty-pound” reel of cable, Philippe finally stands on the wire tied between the highest buildings in New York City. As the sun lights up the towers, he steps onto the wire. In the illustration, from a vantage point above the top of the towers the viewer sees Philippe walking on the wire with his two hands holding a balancing pole. Beside him are seagulls and moving clouds; below him are miniature cars and houses. His hair is floating, as “Many winds whirled up from between the towers, and he swayed with them.” However, “he felt alone and happy and absolutely free.” By walking between the highest buildings in the New York, this young man rejects restraints, confinements, commitments and immobility, and being free brings a status of fluidity and movement, which is traditionally masculine. This man is “traveling” on the wire in the air where he can experience absolute freedom: “For almost an hour, back and forth, he walked, danced, ran, and knelt in a salute upon the wire.” He is completely confident and happy: The movement satisfies, pleases and comforts him. “When he felt completely satisfied,” he walked back to the roof and held out his wrists for the handcuffs.” He is brought to court, and the judge sentences him to perform in the park for the children of the city. So “he did happily,” because “As long as he stayed on the wire, he was free.”

While in *Grandfather's Journey* and *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*, the main male characters travel, and enjoy movement, mobility and freedom, the main female characters in *Smoky Night* and *Rapunzel* long for fixity, security, locality and home, even though they are involved in movement but forced. Although in *Rapunzel*, the female main character, Rapunzel,

experiences homelessness—the sorceress sent her to “a wild country,” she finally united with the prince, found his kingdom, and lived happily ever after. Here the homelessness and movement serve only as a temporary obstacle to and test for a later settled happy life, which is traditionally associated with a feminine ideal. However, the home/away/home pattern (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003, 197) is also found in *Hey, Al* (1986), which features a male adult. *Hey, Al* (1986) makes problematic a traditional aspiring, competitive, successful and outward version of masculinity, and represents a destitute working-class bachelor whose outward adventures cannot be separated from domestic security.

The main male character, Al, works as a janitor, and lives on the West Side with his companion, the dog, Eddie. The words tell the reader that the life is not easy for Al and Eddie and they are always struggling. The illustrations show their small and shabby apartment, and they are not satisfied with their lives. However, one day a big and colorful bird comes to them and takes them to a magnificent island in the sky, like a heaven, where they seemingly lead a happy life without anxieties and worries until one day they find themselves becoming birds themselves, which makes them want to go home. As they finally get home, they find that Heaven is actually at home, and through this adventure, the friendship between Al and Eddie also strengthens. The picturebook here suggests a different relationship between man and home from that portrayed in *Grandfather's Journey* and *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*—home is a comfort and heaven for Al and Eddie, which might signify a uncompetitive and inward version of masculinity. But this picturebook may also suggest a working-class masculine camaraderie—difficulties and hardships can only be overcome by “sticking with your buddies” (Rathmann, 1995).

*Smoky Night* is set in the context of the Los Angeles riots. This story begins with the first person narrator, a young boy, Daniel, and his mother witnessing a riot in the street from their apartment window. They see people smashing shop windows, stealing TVs and clothes, and taking food from Mrs. Kim's shop where "my mama and I don't go," because "Mama says it's better if we buy from our own people." In the night, the boy's mother awakens him—their building is on fire. As they evacuate, Daniel loses his cat, but is told that cats are smart and should be gone. Led by a lady, the boy and his mother, with other community people, come to a shelter and receive food. Later that night, a fire fighter brings back two cats: one is Daniel's, and the other Mrs. Kim's. Daniel could not believe that these two cats were together, because "he is fat and mean." However, as these two cats drink milk from the same dish, Mama is amazed, "I thought those two didn't like each other." Daniel explains, "They probably didn't know each other before." Daniel's remark brings silence to the room, but later Mama begins introducing herself to Mrs. Kim and invites Mrs. Kim and her cat to their house when things settle down. And Mrs. Kim responds, "We will come."

In this story, the main characters, Daniel and his mother and Mrs. Kim are forced to leave their houses for shelter during the urban riots. Compared to the male characters' voluntary activity in *Grandfather's Journey* and *The Man who Walked between the Towers*, the forced mobility could hardly be interpreted as subversive and liberating for both the women—Daniel's mother and Mrs. Kim—and the male child, who also tends to be deprived of mobility and portrayed as weak and dependent as women (Paul, 1987). The forced mobility is constructed in direct opposition to the women and the child's desire for locality, stability and security, and actually reinforces the conventional association between immobility and femininity (Although someone may argue that under the riot condition, nobody wants to lose a home and be forced to

move, interestingly, no male character appears either in Daniel's household or Mrs. Kim's household, and this omission of male figures may suggest differentiated representations of the relationship between the home and movement for females and males). Although the writer does not depict the mental activities of the main characters, women's terror and anger at the possibility of their homes is apparent. Strehle (1999) suggested, "...the portrayal of Daniel in his apartment gazing out the window with his mother's hand around his shoulder gives the reader a feeling of safety and intensifies the horror of losing this haven during a riot" (p.217). One illustration shows Mrs. Kim standing in front of her shop with her two arms lifted and her mouth wide open—people are dragging food from her market and she looks angry, nervous and terrified. A later illustration shows a group of people, only one of whom is an adult man who is actually hard to be seen, walking on the sidewalk in a destroyed neighborhood. Pictured is Daniel, his mother and Mrs. Kim who is trailing behind. In the accompanying text, the lady who leads the group asks Mrs. Kim if she is all right, and Mrs. Kim only "nods." Even although emotional portrayal is absent, Mrs. Kim's pain is still acutely felt. Such movement is forced and unwillingly undertaken, which only makes more prominent the importance of security and locality for the women's and the child's lives.

Furthermore, one strong theme is "caring for others in a community" (Strehle, 1999), which is best embodied in the last scene where Daniel's mother introduces herself to Mrs. Kim and offers an invitation for a visit. Mrs. Kim's positive answer suggests their mutual understanding and sympathy, which are associated with femininity (Wannamaker, 2008; Trites, 1997). Therefore, in *Smoky Night*, the portrayed forced mobility only intensifies the main female characters and the child's longing for fixity and locality, but it also offers an opportunity for the women to foster community and sisterhood.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Places are exclusive: there are close associations between place and a set of social divisions including gender, class and nationality and ethnicity (McDowell, 1997). Looking at the Caldecott Medal winners from 1980 to 2007, as McDowell and Sharp (1997) stated, "...who is 'in place,' who is 'out of place' and even who is allowed to be there at all" (p.3) is apparent. While the older characters, the child characters, and the woman characters portrayed in the pre-modern households tend to be confined to home, public open spaces are predominately the domain of the male characters, and workplaces are exclusively occupied by the male adult characters, most of whose jobs are traditionally men's jobs, such as pilots, police officers, warriors and presidents. The representation of the home as the place of the marginalized groups, the older people, the children and the women in pre-industrial households, may suggest the perception that these groups are considered weak and spatially inward, which is traditionally associated with femininity, and the representation of the workplaces and public open spaces as men's places may imply an outward version of masculinity.

However, confinement in the domestic sphere does not necessarily mean passivity and oppression for everyone, regardless of age, gender and nationality, and the male characters' navigation in public spaces and involvement in the traditionally masculine jobs does not necessarily mean a hegemonic version of masculinity. Some winners actually present unconventional and contradictory versions of masculinity. Although *Song and Dance Man* and *The Hello, Goodbye Widow* restrict both the older women and the older men to home, the place has different meanings for the older women and the older men. While the picturebooks may suggest the older women's subordinate positions at home and a quiet and gentle version of

femininity, they might convey a dominant and anarchical version of masculinity. While for the older women, the home might be a place of onerous domestic labor, the home might be constructed as a site of respite and a playground for the older men (even though the old men are seen doing housework like preparing a meal, once, or their playing with their grandchildren as proving care and doing domestic work, their involvement in the domestic work is differentially represented from the women's, and is actually masculinized).

Similar to the older couples, the young children portrayed in the winners also trend to be confined to home. However, many child characters portrayed in the winners “push against oppressive boundaries” and “invent spaces of radical openness” (hooks, 1990, p.145 and p.148). For example, the three Chinese girls in *Lon Po Po* turn the home into a place of feminine resistance against masculine violence and aggression; the girl in *Mirette on the High Wire* pushes the domestic boundaries to connect to the outside world where her dream to become a high wire walker might be fulfilled; the children in *The Polar Express* and *Jumanji* transform the restricting home into imaginative spaces denied to their unimaginative and realistic parents. For these last two picturebooks, ambiguousness toward femininity and masculinity is also implied, and Allsburg seems to emphasize more a shared children culture and the difference between imaginative children and realistic adults than gendered differences which only limit to external features. Doubtlessly, these most inventive, creative and boundary-breaking characters depicted in the Caldecott Medal picturebooks mentioned earlier are children, which may suggest the adult writers/illustrators' romantic views of children.

While some winners, or some parts of a winner, continue to represent conventional versions of masculinity, such as the tough, strong and heroic version of masculinity represented in *Saint George and the Dragon* (1984) and the adventurous, explorative and outward version of

masculinity represented in *Grandfather's Journey* and *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*, some winners present unconventional and also contradictory versions of masculinity unresolved within the male characters. Golem is marked as being macho, tough and strong, but he is also portrayed as sensitive and emotional, signifying an unconventional version of masculinity. In *Hey, Al* (1986), the male janitor finds Heaven at home rather than in the public sphere, which may be traditionally associated with femininity, but this home heaven is also established through a masculine camaraderie. While in *So You Want to Be President?* some presidents, like Lincoln, George Washington, and Taft, well represent a rational version of masculinity and some like Roosevelt and Kennedy represent an heroic and aggressive version of masculinity, Roosevelt is also portrayed as childishly playing toy trucks, and Harding is put on display, competing for the beauty crown with many other presidents such as Lincoln, Kennedy and Reagan. Four Williams are even shown wearing short skirts dancing. However, both putting the presidents on display and making them wear mini skirts can also be interpreted as the picturebook creator's playing jokes on the men, aiming at making the reader laugh, which may actually reinforce a masculine buffoon image.

Bereska (2003) suggested, "...some variations and contradictions in masculinity are permitted...However, the variations and contradictions are permissible only within a larger context of No Sissy Stuff. That is, a male can deviate from the ideal on one, or even a few components of manhood, as long as he lives up to most of the ideals. If he deviates from too many of the ideals, then he runs the risk of being labeled a Sissy. At that point, he is removed from the realm of manhood, and becomes a...non-Man" (p.163). Yet asking authors/illustrators to create characters that deviate entirely from dominant gender expectations seems impossible, as Wannamaker (2008) suggested in her book. Marshall (2004) also argued that books'

representations of males and females exist as historically and culturally bound textual constructions that rely on certain ways of speaking and thinking about males and females within a particular cultural moment and tradition. So perhaps what is “distinguishable” among these winners is their complex and contradictory representations of femininity and masculinity.

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