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This study was designed to answer the question: *What are the similarities and differences between the portrayal of Mexican American females in realistic picture books published between 1998 and 2004 and such books published between 1990 and 1997?* A content analysis was performed on 48 picture books published between 1998 and 2004 that feature Mexican American female characters, and the results were compared to a study of similar books published between 1990 and 1997. The study found that the portrayal of Mexican American females in the more recent time period is more authentic and less stereotypical than their portrayal in the earlier time period and that fewer Mexican American females are now depicted as submitting to gender subordination. However, the results show that the portrayal of Mexican American females in picture books does not yet fully reflect the nontraditional gender roles that these females often take on in contemporary society.

Headings:

     Children's Literature/Evaluation/Racism

     Children's Literature/Evaluation/Sexism

     Content Analysis

     Minorities in Literature/Evaluation

     Picture Books/Evaluation

     Spanish American Literature/Evaluation

THE PORTRAYAL OF MEXICAN AMERICAN FEMALES
IN REALISTIC PICTURE BOOKS (1998 – 2004)

by
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of the School of Information and Library Science
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Approved by

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Brian Sturm

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INTRODUCTION

According to a study published by the U.S. Census Bureau entitled <u>We the People:</u> <u>Hispanics in the United States</u>, in the year 2000 there were approximately 35 million Hispanics living in the United States, making up 12.5% of the total U.S. population. A majority of these Hispanic residents (almost 21 million—7.4% of the total population) were of Mexican origin (1). Because many Hispanics have immigrated to the United States since the year 2000, we can only assume that these figures are continuing to rise.

Libraries are taking steps to try to meet the needs of this growing Hispanic population. For example, some local libraries have hired Spanish-speaking library workers, have begun to offer Spanish language programming, and are translating their web pages and print materials into Spanish. Many libraries have also added titles to their collections—in both Spanish and English—that they feel are relevant to their Hispanic patrons.

One way that public and school libraries are trying to meet the needs of young Hispanic patrons is by adding books to their collections that feature Hispanic American characters. This is important for a number of reasons. In the first place, common sense tells us that books with characters of a particular ethnic heritage are likely to appeal to students of that heritage. Additionally, "students who do not see any reflections of themselves or who see only distorted or comical ones come to understand that they have little value in society in general and in school in particular" (Bishop 4). In other words, it is important for students of particular groups—such as ethnic, gender, and

socioeconomic—to not only see characters like themselves in the books that they read, but to see authentic, realistic characters.

In this project, a content analysis was performed on recent realistic picture books (published between 1998 and 2004) to examine the portrayal of Mexican American females to see if this group is depicted in an authentic manner. This particular subgroup of Hispanic Americans was chosen for two reasons. First, Mexican Americans were chosen because Mexicans are the largest Hispanic group living in the United States. Second, females were chosen because females are often portrayed in a "sexist and biased" (Kortenhaus and Demarest 230) manner in children's literature. An examination of the portrayal of Mexican American females in picture books will show whether or not young Mexican American girls are seeing themselves portrayed positively and realistically in the books that they encounter in their public libraries and school media centers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>Minorities in Children's Books</u>

The concern about the portrayal of minorities in children's literature has only

been a fairly recent phenomenon, beginning in earnest with Nancy Larrick's 1965 article

in the *Saturday Review* entitled "The All-White World of Children's Books." In this

article, Larrick reported her discovery that Black children were virtually absent from

children's literature (63). She examined 5,206 children's books published between 1962

and 1964 and found that only 6.7% included one or more Black characters, and only 4/5

of 1% included contemporary Black Americans (63-64). She also noted that, of the

books that included Black characters, some depicted these characters in a stereotypical

manner, showing them, for example, in positions of servitude to whites, or portraying

them as violent (64-65). She argued that the underrepresentation of Black children in

children's books was likely causing "damage—much of it irreparable" (63) to Black

children. She also argued that this publishing trend had a negative effect on white

children as well, by exposing them to "gentle doses of racism through their books," and

therefore giving white children "little chance of developing the humility so urgently

needed for world cooperation" (63).

The publication of Larrick's landmark article, along with the formation in 1965 of

the Council on Interracial Books for Children, caused an increased interest in the

portrayal of minority groups in children's literature. This led to the publication of several

articles focusing on how children are influenced by multicultural vs. non-multicultural

children's books. In reviewing and summarizing these articles, Campbell and Wirtenberg noted that the research has shown that children's attitudes about race are affected by the attitudes portrayed in books, and that using non-biased books with children can make a positive difference in their attitudes toward themselves and members of other groups (3-4).

<u>Hispanic Americans in Children's Books</u>

As the years passed since Larrick's study and authors started to include more minority groups in children's books, researchers began to undertake in-depth content analyses to determine how specific minority groups were being portrayed in children's literature. The first studies focused on African Americans, but researchers soon began to study the portrayal of other groups, such as Asian Americans and Palestinian Americans. As the Hispanic population in the U.S. increased, researchers began to focus on this population, with one of the first significant studies being conducted by the Council on Interracial Books for Children in 1975. The study, entitled "Chicano Culture in Children's Literature: Stereotypes, Distortions and Omissions," painted a very negative picture of children's books featuring Mexican American themes, concluding that these books often portrayed a stereotyped view of Mexican American culture and did not reflect the actual issues facing Mexican Americans (7).

Since the publication of this important article, several studies have been undertaken to re-examine the portrayal of Hispanic Americans, and specific subgroups such as Mexican Americans, in children's literature. The findings of these studies have been mixed. Some have concluded that Hispanics and Hispanic Americans are portrayed in a stereotypical, rather than an authentic, manner. For example, in the 1981 article

"Recent Detrimental and Distinguished Books about Hispanic People and Cultures,"
Schon concluded that "The overwhelming majority of recent books incessantly repeat the
same stereotypes, misconceptions, and insensibilities that were prevalent in the books
published in the 1960s and the early 1970s" (79). Some of the more recent studies,
however, have had more positive findings. For example, in her 1995 presentation
"Images and Stereotyping of African Americans and Hispanic Americans in
Contemporary Children's Fiction," Cobb noted the presence of some stereotypes, but
concluded that, overall, the books "generally were favorable in their treatment of the
minority groups under consideration" (23).

Females in Children's Books

At the same time that researchers were looking at the depiction of racial and
ethnic minority groups in children's books, they were also beginning to examine the
portrayal of females in children's books. Beginning "In the early 1970s, research on
gender bias in children's literature emerged" (Louie 142), with various studies between
that time and the end of the twentieth century showing that males have been portrayed
more frequently than females in children's literature (142). One of the most important
studies was that of Suzanne Czaplinski, entitled "Sexism in Award Winning Picture
Books," in which she examined award-winning picture books and determined that only
20% of characters mentioned in the text were female and 30% of characters pictured in
illustrations were female (42-43).

Studies during the 1970s and early 1980s also showed that stereotyped gender
behaviors were widespread in children's literature (Ernst 67). For example, "Stereotyped
behaviors such as girls working in the kitchen and boys riding bikes were [. . .] prevalent"

(67). Additionally, females were often presented more negatively than males (67). Czaplinski's study showed that award-winning picture books portrayed female characters as having much less "physical, intellectual, and emotional strength" than their male counterparts (62).

Similar to the research on the effects of multicultural vs. non-multicultural children's books, research has been undertaken to determine the effects of sexist vs. non-sexist books on children. In their review article, Campbell and Wirtenberg conclude that, overall, most researchers have found that "non-sexist books [. . .] have positive effects on children." They cite several studies that demonstrate these effects, including one in which the "anti-sexist [. . .] material appeared to enable students to reduce their sex-role stereotyping" and another in which "Hearing stories about working mothers caused kindergarten girls to increase the number and types of jobs they thought were appropriate for women" (4).

As time has passed since the initial gender studies of the late 1960s and early 1970s, numerous content analyses have been undertaken to determine the changes in the prevalence and portrayal of male and female characters in children's books during the past decades. Studies have shown that there have been increases in the number of females portrayed in children's books. For example, a 1999 study designed to replicate Czaplinski's study with Caldecott Award-winning picture books from 1972 through 1997 showed that 39% of the characters mentioned in the text were female and 40% of the characters pictured in illustrations were female (Davis and McDaniel 533). These results indicate a fairly large increase over the percentages that Czaplinski found in her 1972

study, although they show that females are still not represented in picture books as frequently as males.

Additionally, recent studies have discovered improvements in the portrayal of males and females in children's books during the past several decades, but have still shown some problems in gender portrayal. For example, a study of 22 Caldecott winners and honor books published between 1986 and 1991 showed that only seven characters had a "clearly traditional gender role" (Oskamp, Kaufman, and Wolterbeek 34). The study also showed, however, that the "female characters were found to be dependent and submissive more often than males" (36). In other words, "gender-stereotypic behavioral patterns have faded [. . .] but have not disappeared completely" (36). Other researchers echo this sentiment. Louie, for example, said in her 2001 review article that "Although the number of females in books has increased over the years, they are portrayed with similar stereotypical behaviors [. . .] girls are often portrayed as demure, weak, dependent, problem causers, passive, and followers" (Louie 142-43).

Hispanic American Females in Children's Books

Although several content analyses have been done to analyze the portrayal of Hispanic Americans in children's books, and quite a few content analyses have been done to analyze the portrayal of females in children's books, until relatively recently, no content analyses were undertaken to examine the portrayal of Hispanic American females. This project was finally undertaken in 1993, when Osbelia Juárez Rocha and Frances Smardo Dowd conducted a study entitled "Are Mexican-American Females Portrayed Realistically in Fiction for Grades K-3?: A Content Analysis." Rocha and Dowd examined nine picture books written between 1950 and 1969 and twenty picture books

written between 1970 and 1990, seeking to determine the characteristics and stereotypes of Mexican American females conveyed in the books, and to compare the portrayal of Mexican American females during the two different time periods (60-62). Rocha and Dowd used a detailed evaluative instrument to note, among other things, the characterization of Mexican American females portrayed in the books, and they coded some traits with a "c" to indicate characteristics that they deemed authentic, and others with an "s" to indicate stereotypes of Mexican American females (Rocha and Dowd 61). The study showed that, while still having problems, books published during the more recent time period portrayed a more authentic image of Mexican American females and had fewer stereotypes than books published during the earlier time period (Rocha and Dowd 62).

In 1997, Melva Ramirez and Frances Smardo Dowd used a slightly modified version of Rocha and Dowd's evaluative instrument to replicate their study for books published between 1990 and 1997. They discovered that, although books published between 1990 and 1997 tended to convey "a more accurate and less stereotypical portrayal of Mexican-American females" than books published between 1970 and 1990, "sufficient negative traits still exist to warrant improvements toward a more authentic representation of females of Mexican descent" (54).

The past few years have seen a substantial increase in the number of picture books being published that feature Mexican Americans, causing this researcher to wonder whether or not the improvements that Ramirez and Dowd spoke of have actually taken place. In order to find out, a study was conducted, using an evaluative instrument similar to that used by Ramirez and Dowd, to examine the portrayal of Mexican American

females in realistic picture books published between 1998 and 2004. The study sought to answer the following primary question: *What are the similarities and differences between the portrayal of Mexican American females in realistic picture books published between 1998 and 2004 and such books published between 1990 and 1997?* Specifically, the following two questions were addressed: *Is the portrayal of Mexican American females in realistic picture books more authentic and less stereotypical between 1998 and 2004 than it was between 1990 and 1997? Does the portrayal of Mexican American females in realistic picture books reflect more nontraditional and fewer traditional gender roles between 1998 and 2004 than it did between 1990 and 1997?*

METHODOLOGY

Book Selection

The first step in the book selection process was to determine the criteria that must

be met for books to be included in the study. Beginning with the criteria used by

Ramirez and Dowd, other necessary criteria were added, and the meaning of each

criterion was specified in detail. The final list of criteria used in the study is included in

its entirety in Appendix A, and is summarized here: 1) The books must have been

published between 1998 and 2004. 2) The books must be children's picture books. 3)

The books must be original works of fiction. 4) The books must have distinct plots. 5)

The books must be realistic. 6) The books must be written in English or be bilingual. 7)

The books must feature Mexican American females (either Mexican immigrants or

descendents of Mexican immigrants). 8) The books must be appropriate for grades K-3.

In order to create a preliminary list of books that were likely to meet the above

criteria, various resources were examined. First, a search of WorldCat under the subject

headings "Mexican Americans – fiction," "Mexican Americans – juvenile fiction,"

"Hispanic Americans – fiction," and "Hispanic Americans – juvenile fiction" was

performed. Then the database NoveList K-8 was searched, as well as online booklists at

the following addresses: <http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/ChildrenLit/

hispanic.html> and <http://www.multiculturalchildrenslit.com/latinohispanic.html>.

Then lists of books that had won the following awards were examined: the Pura Belpré

Award for Latino writers and illustrators, the Tomás Rivera Mexican-American

Children's Book Award, and the Américas Award for books with Latino themes.

Additionally, the following general children's literature reference books were consulted:

A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books (5th and 6thEditions), *Subject Guide*

to Children's Books in Print (1998 – 2004 Editions), *Best Books for Children: Preschool*

through Grade 6 (7th Edition and supplement), *The Elementary School Library Collection:*

A Guide to Books and Other Media, Phases 1-2-3 (22nd Edition), *Children's Catalog*

(16th and 17th Edition, and supplements), and the *Neal-Schuman Guide to Recommended*

Children's Books and Media for Use with Every Elementary Subject (2002 Edition). The

following reference books on multicultural children's literature were also consulted:

Open the Books and See All the People and *Many Peoples, One Land: A Guide to New*

Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults. Additionally, titles were located

by examining the websites of the following publishers that focus on children's books

with Hispanic and Hispanic American themes: Children's Book Press, Arte Público, and

Cinco Puntos Press. Finally, a WorldCat search was performed on each of the authors

already on the list of potential books to include, in order to determine if these authors had

written any additional books that might meet the criteria.

The preliminary list of books that seemed likely to meet the criteria included 114

books. An effort was made to obtain each of the books on the list, either from local

public libraries or through interlibrary loan. Ten of the books could not be obtained by

either of these two methods, and were therefore eliminated from the study. The

remaining 104 books were obtained, and were examined to see if they met the criteria

listed above. Fifty-six of the books did not meet at least one of the criteria, and 48 books

met all of the criteria. The 48 books that met all of the criteria were included in the final

study and are listed in Appendix B.

<u>Evaluative Instrument</u>

Because the main purpose of this study was to compare the portrayal of Mexican

American females in picture books written between 1998 and 2004 with the portrayal of

Mexican American females between 1990 and 1997, it was considered to be important to

perform the content analysis using an evaluative instrument similar to the one used in

Ramirez and Dowd's 1997 study. For this reason, the evaluative instrument from the

1997 study was used as the starting point for the evaluative instrument for this study.

Then several important modifications were made to the instrument. First, questions in

the instrument dealing with aspects of the books unrelated to the portrayal of Mexican

American females were eliminated from the instrument. For example, questions related

to setting, theme, and writing style were eliminated. Then some questions relating to the

portrayal of Mexican American females were either eliminated or re-worded because

their meanings were unclear. Additionally, several questions examining characteristics of

the plot as a whole were re-worded so that they examined only the characteristics of

Mexican American females. Then several questions created by this researcher were

added to the instrument.

The next step in the modification of the evaluative instrument was to create

definitions of vague terms that appeared in the evaluative instrument questions. Many of

the terms used in the evaluative instrument for the 1997 study, such as "major role,"

"strong and enduring," and "weak and docile," (Ramirez and Dowd 25) were not clearly

defined, so definitions for these terms were created in order to make the evaluative

instrument clear and to ensure objectivity on the part of the researcher. Then each question in the evaluative instrument was re-worded so that it could have two possible answers: 1) Yes and 2) No / Not Determinable. This consistency in possible answers to the questions was necessary in order to run the Cohen's Kappa test of inter-rater reliability, which is discussed later in this paper.

Then five sources were consulted in order to gather information on contemporary Mexican American culture and stereotypes of Mexican American females. These sources were Alma M. Garcia's 2002 book *The Mexican Americans*, Yolanda Flores Niemann's 2001 article in *The Counseling Psychologist*, "Stereotypes About Chicanas and Chicanos: Implications for Counseling," Irene I. Blea's 1992 book *La Chicana and the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender*, Gilbert R. Cadena and Lara Medina's chapter "Liberation Theology and Social Change: Chicanas and Chicanos in the Catholic Church" in Roberto M. De Anda's 1996 book *Chicanas and Chicanos in Contemporary Society*, and Angela Valenzuela and Sanford M. Dornbusch's chapter "Familism and Assimilation Among Mexican-Origin and Anglo High School Adolescents" in De Anda's book. (Note that the terms "Chicana" and "Chicano" refer to people living in the U.S. who are of Mexican descent and can thus be used interchangeably with the term "Mexican American" as this researcher has defined the term in this paper.)

The information found in these sources was used to code each of the questions in the evaluative instrument with a particular letter designation. Questions coded with an "s" are related to stereotypes of Mexican American females, and questions coded with a "c" are related to authentic characteristics of Mexican American females. Questions coded with an "o" are related to traditional gender roles of Mexican American females,

and questions coded with an "n" are related to nontraditional gender roles of Mexican American females. The remaining questions were given a designation of "g" and are intended to give the researcher a general understanding of the portrayal of Mexican American females in the books examined. It is important to note that, although letter designations of "s" and "c" were given to questions in the previous two studies to indicate stereotypical and authentic characteristics respectively, the "s" and "c" designations given in this study do not necessarily match the designations of the earlier studies because the readings that this researcher consulted at times indicated that a change in the letter designations was necessary. Additionally, the idea of giving letter designations of "o," "n," and "g" was conceived by this researcher; these letter designations were not used in the two previous studies.

The letter designations for each question were determined as follows. Questions were given a letter designation of "s" (related to stereotypes of Mexican American females) if the characteristic mentioned in the question was noted as a stereotype of Mexican Americans in general, or of Mexican American females in particular, in Niemann's article, and if the characteristic was never noted as authentic in any of the other three works consulted. The questions about being emotional and ill-tempered were given an "s" designation because Niemann indicates that "bad tempered" is a stereotype of Mexican American women, and "quick-tempered" is a stereotype of Mexican Americans in general (60). The question about being weak and docile was given an "s" designation because Niemann notes that "docile" is a stereotype of Mexican American women (60). Believing in superstitions is given an "s" designation because Niemann points out that "superstitious" is a stereotype of Mexican Americans (60).

Questions were given a letter designation of "c" (related to an authentic characteristic of Mexican American females) if the characteristic mentioned in the question was noted as a trait of Mexican Americans in general, or of Mexican American females in particular, in either the Garcia or Blea books, or the Cadena/Medina or Valenzuela/Dornbusch chapters. The majority of the characteristics represented in the questions receiving a "c" designation were discussed in the Garcia book. The two questions about family size (related to both a large/medium and a small sibling group) were given a "c" designation because Garcia notes that both sizes of families are authentic. "In 1999 [. . .] For Mexican and Central American immigrants, 40 percent of all families consisted of five or more people" (58). The question about valuing family relationships and family ties was given a "c" designation because Garcia notes that "Mexicans place a very strong value on the importance of family" (67) and "a high value on maintaining strong family ties" (68), and Valenzuela and Dornbusch indicate that "key aspects of Mexican culture, such as a sense of familism, survive the acculturation process" (53). The question about music and dancing was given a "c" designation because Garcia points out that "The influence of music traditions from Mexico, particularly regional music, has always played an important role in the lives of Mexican immigrants" (98). The question about celebrations/fiestas was given a "c" designation because Garcia focuses on the various "holidays and festivals" to which Mexican immigrants have "given [. . .] their own particular and recognizable Mexican motifs" (97). Finally, the question about Mexican American traditions and culture was given a "c" designation because Garcia notes that Mexican immigrants make "efforts to build new

American lives within socially created worlds of Mexican culture, traditions, and identity" (82).

The characteristics represented in the other three questions that received a "c" designation were discussed in Blea's book or in Cadena/Medina's chapter. The question about displaying respect and reverence for elders was given a "c" designation because Blea indicates that "Unlike in dominant American, in Mexican-American culture social influence increases with age. Seniors are the authorities on the subjects of values, norms, and culture [. . .] Chicanos have not adhered to a diminished role for seniors" (78). The question "Is the character strong and enduring" was given a "c" designation because Blea notes that "Women in Chicano culture are strong, strong as cultural and decision-making symbols and strong physically" (126). The question about expressions of religious faith was given a "c" designation because Cadena and Medina indicate that "Most studies suggest Chicanos and Latinos are very religious people" (100).

Questions were given a letter designation of "o" (related to traditional gender roles) if the characteristic mentioned in the question was noted as a traditional gender role for Mexican American women in either the Garcia or Blea books, or the Cadena/Medina or Valenzuela/Dornbusch chapters. The only question given this designation was "Does the character submit to gender subordination?" Garcia discusses this gender subordination, explaining that, in a traditional Mexican male-female relationship, there is "the belief that the Mexican male is the sole, unquestionable authority within the household," and that the relationship is characterized by "male dominance" (103).

Questions were given a letter designation of "n" (related to nontraditional gender roles) if the characteristic mentioned in the question was noted as a nontraditional gender

role for Mexican American women in either the Garcia or Blea books, or the

Cadena/Medina or Valenzuela/Dornbusch chapters. The question about outside

employment was given an "n" designation because Garcia notes "Increased [. . .]

participation in the paid labor force" (107) as a trend among Mexican American women.

The question about attending school was given an "n" designation because Garcia

discusses the changing focus on education for Mexican American females. She notes

"Increased levels of education" and says that, "In many cases, daughters of immigrant

parents, particularly immigrant mothers, received encouragement to better themselves,

usually through education" (107). The question about leadership in the home was given

an "n" designation because Garcia says that the structure of changing Mexican immigrant

families "may show signs of becoming less traditional and more egalitarian" (106). The

questions regarding community leadership and involvement in politics were given "n"

designations because Blea says that "Yet today, while the Chicana maintains her

traditional cultural roles, she ventures into nontraditional fields and plays, in addition,

nontraditional roles. She is a contemporary woman, involved as a community activist,

working in unions and politics [. . .] " (99).

Test of Inter-Rater Reliability

        In order to ensure that the results of the content analysis using the evaluative

instrument would not be entirely subjective, a test of inter-rater reliability was performed.

An independent coder used the instrument to code two of the books in the study, which

were randomly selected. The instructions given on the website <http://www-

class.unl.edu/psycrs/handcomp/hckappa.PDF> were then followed to generate a Cohen's

Kappa index of inter-rater reliability, which would measure the coding consistency

between this researcher and the independent coder. A Kappa of .70 or higher is generally

considered to be satisfactory. Unfortunately, the Kappas for the two books, *Carlos and*

the Carnival and *Maria Paints the Hills*, were below .70. In order to make the coding

more consistent, changes were made to the evaluative instrument to clarify the meanings

of several of the questions. Then two additional books from the study were selected

randomly to be coded by this researcher and the independent coder. A Cohen's Kappa

index was then calculated for each of the books examined, and was determined to be .82

for *Big Enough* and .74 for *Yes, We Can! : Janitor Strike in L.A*. The average of the two

Kappas, .78, is higher than the minimum acceptable index of .70. Therefore, the results

of the test of inter-rater reliability were determined to be satisfactory, and no additional

substantial changes to the evaluative instrument were made. The final evaluative

instrument, including letter designations and definitions of terms, is included in Appendix

C.

RESULTS

Each of the 48 books in the study was coded using the evaluative instrument (Appendix C). The results of this content analysis are given and discussed below. The general characteristics of the books are discussed first, and the remainder of the section focuses on the portrayal of Mexican American females in the books.

Book Characteristics

Number of Books

This researcher found 48 books published between 1998 and 2004 that met the criteria for inclusion in this study. In their 1997 study, Ramirez and Dowd found only 21 books published between 1990 and 1997 that met similar criteria for inclusion in the study (21). Regardless of the portrayal of Mexican American females in the books in this study, it is significant in itself that the number of realistic picture books that feature Mexican American females more than doubled from one seven-year period to the next six-year period. Even if several titles were overlooked in the 1997 study, the increase in titles from one study to the next would still be quite noteworthy.

Authorship

Of the 33 authors included in this study, 20 of them (61%) have a Hispanic name or surname. Of the authors in Ramirez and Dowd's 1997 study, only about 50% have a Hispanic name or surname (27). While trying to infer an author's ethnicity by looking at her name is somewhat imprecise, this measure nonetheless hints at an important trend: the growing contributions that Hispanic American authors are making to children's

literature focusing on their culture. Also of note is that 23 of the 33 authors (70%) are females. This statistic indicates that, to a large degree, women are telling their own stories in recent picture books featuring Mexican American females.

Publishers

The table below shows the distribution of the 48 titles included in the study among the 22 publishing companies responsible for their publication. The fact that so many presses published realistic picture books featuring Mexican Americans within such a small time frame is indicative of the growing prevalence of members of this culture in children's literature, and of the increasing importance of Hispanic American readers to publishers. However, only six of the 22 publishers (27%) are major presses, with the rest being small presses with, often, a multicultural or regional focus. None of the six major presses is responsible for more than two books in the study. This indicates that books featuring Mexican Americans, while more prevalent than they were in previous decades, are still not part of the mainstream of children's literature.

PUBLISHERS		
Publishing Company	**Number of Titles**	**Percent of Total**
Albert Whitman and Company	3	6
Alfred A. Knopf	1	2
Arte Público (Piñata Books)	14	29
Atheneum Books for Young Readers	1	2
Centering Corporation	1	2
Children's Book Press	6	13
Cinco Puntos Press	4	8
Curbstone Press	1	2
Eakin Press	1	2
Free Will Press	1	2
G.P. Putnam's Sons	1	2
Houghton Mifflin Company	2	4
Hyperion Books for Children	1	2
Kane Press	1	2
Laredo Publishing	1	2
Lee & Low Books	3	6
Lothrop, Lee & Shepherd	1	2
Museum of New Mexico Press	1	2
Puffin Books	1	2
Quarter Inch Designs and Publishing	1	2
Rising Moon	1	2
Tilbury House Publishers	1	2

Portrayal of Mexican American Females

Each of the questions discussed in this section was answered, in the current study,
about the one Mexican American female in each book who has the greatest role in the
unfolding plot of the story. In the 1997 study (to which the results of this study are
compared), most of the questions discussed were answered about the Mexican American
female with the greatest role. However, several questions (which are marked with a "*"
in the tables) were answered about the book as a whole, rather than only about the
Mexican American female character with the greatest role in the book. In other words, a
percent with a "*" indicates what percent of the books examined show the characteristic

in question, rather than what percent of the Mexican American females examined shows the characteristic. Thus, although the answers to the 1997 questions with a "*" (examining books as a whole) are compared to the current study questions without a "*" (examining Mexican American females), these comparisons must be made with caution. Additionally, note that "N/A" in the 1997 column of the tables indicates that the given question was not examined in the 1997 study.

General Portrayal

Four of the questions included in the study, given a designation of "g," were designed to examine the general portrayal of Mexican American females in the books examined. These questions, along with the number and percent of these questions that were answered with a "yes," are included in the table below. The fact that the females analyzed in 88% of the books play a major role in the story is quite significant, showing that Mexican American female characters are not only present in contemporary picture books, but have important roles in the plots of these books. They are not as invisible as women have typically been in children's literature. The fact that 23% of the books are written from the main Mexican American female character's point of view is also quite noteworthy. Writing a book from a character's point of view indicates a focus on that character.

GENERAL PORTRAYAL (G)		
Question	Number "yes"	% "yes"
(g) Major role in the story?	42	88
(g) Written from her point of view?	11	23
(g) Is she a child?	29	60
(g) Does she solve a problem?	14	29

In this study, 29 out of 48 (60%) of the Mexican American female characters analyzed are children. In Ramirez and Dowd's 1997 study, 16 out of 19 (84%) of the female characters analyzed were children (22). These differences indicate that children and adult Mexican American female characters are both becoming much more prevalent in picture books, but that the presence of adult Mexican American female characters is increasing faster than that of children.

29% of the Mexican American females analyzed solve, or help to solve, a central, tangible problem in the story. At first glance, this statistic seems to indicate that the role of Mexican American females in the stories is not very strong. However, because the problems that the characters solved must be tangible ones in order to be included in this measure, this question leaves out personal struggles overcome or situations endured. For example, although the unnamed main character in *Just Like Home* does not solve a tangible problem in the story, she endures a difficult situation—her family's move to the United States—with strength and grace. Thus she still plays an exceptionally strong role in the story, even though she does not solve a tangible problem.

Stereotypical Characteristics

Overall, the results indicate that the portrayal of Mexican American females in realistic picture books between 1998 and 2004 is less stereotypical than the portrayal between 1990 and 1997. Two of the questions coded with an "s" and designed to show stereotypical characteristics of Mexican American females had a decrease in percentages of answers of "yes" between the two time periods. The percentage of Mexican American females who are prone to emotion (inappropriate outbursts or tantrums)—a common stereotype of Hispanic women—decreased from 21% to only 4%. Thus a large majority

of the females analyzed were not overly emotional, even when faced with difficult

situations. For example, in *Big Enough*, when Lupita discovers that Mr. Grabb has stolen

her family's beloved wooden bird carving, she does not have an emotional outburst but

instead quickly takes action to retrieve the stolen carving. The percentage of Mexican

American females who are weak and docile decreased as well, from 11% to 2%. Only

one character analyzed showed this characteristic—Marisa, in *The Perfect Piñata*, when

she is incapable of appropriately dealing with her sadness and anger when her butterfly

piñata is about to be broken.

Another question coded with an "s," related to a belief in superstition, showed

almost no change from the previous study to the current study, increasing only from 5%

to 6%--still a small percentage. An example of a superstitious belief is that, in *A Gift*

from Papá Diego, Mamá believes that "champurrado [a hot chocolate drink] helps you

speak Spanish." Additionally, the final question coded with an "s," related to ill-

tempered behavior, also had a very low percentage—10%.

STEREOTYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS (S)			
Characterization	1990-1997: % yes	1998 – 2004: % yes	Change in %
(s) Prone to Emotion	21	4	-17
(s) Weak/Docile	11	2	-9
(s) Ill-Tempered	N/A	10	N/A
(s) Superstitions	* 5	6	+1

Authentic Characteristics

Overall, the results indicate that the portrayal of Mexican American females in

realistic picture books between 1998 and 2004 is more authentic than the portrayal

between 1990 and 1997. Out of eight questions coded with a "c" and designed to

compare authentic characteristics of Mexican American females between the two time periods, the majority (five) had an increase in percentages of answers of "yes."

Three of the questions had a very large increase in percentages of answers of "yes," indicating that Mexican American females are now being portrayed much more authentically in relation to the four characteristics described in those questions. The first of those characteristics is "valuing family relationships and family ties." The percentage of answers of "yes" to the question about valuing family increased from 53% to 90%, showing that most women in the books examined accurately portray this cultural trait. For example, Amada in *My Diary From Here to There* exhibits this trait when she says, of moving from Mexico to the United States, "I can't imagine leaving anyone in our family behind."

A second characteristic with a large net increase is "strong/enduring," meaning that the character effectively handles situations encountered and/or shows strength when faced with hardships. The percentage of females who exhibit this trait increased from 74% in the 1997 study to 94% in the current study. This indicates that authors are making huge strides in depicting Mexican American females as the strong, enduring people that they actually are. For example, in *It Doesn't Have To Be This Way*, Dreamer effectively deals with gang violence in her neighborhood, encouraging her cousin not to become involved and remaining strong even after she has been shot by gang members.

The third and final authentic characteristic with a large net increase is "enjoys music/dancing," which is often exhibited as a character participates in music of her Mexican heritage. The percentage of females who enjoy music or dancing increased from 32% to 50%, with many characters participating in such cultural music as mariachi.

AUTHENTIC CHARACTERISTICS (C)			
Characterization	1990-1997: % yes	1998 – 2004: % yes	Change in %
(c) Large/Medium Family	11	15	+4
(c) Small Family	68	60	-8
(c) Strong/Enduring	74	94	+20
(c) Values Family	* 53	90	+37
(c) Respect for Elders	42	50	+8
(c) Religious Faith	* 32	29	-3
(c) Enjoys Music/Dancing	32	50	+18
(c) Celebration/Fiesta	* 53	50	-3
(c) Mexican Traditions	N/A	69	N/A

One of the authentic characteristics had a small increase, indicating that Mexican American females are now being portrayed somewhat more authentically in regard to that characteristic. That characteristic is "having respect or reverence for elders." The percentage of females who exhibit this trait increased from 42% to 50%. This indicates that Mexican American females are now being portrayed somewhat more authentically in their reverence for elders, but that authors should try to show this trait even more in order to be completely authentic in their portrayal of Mexican American culture. Examples of respectful and reverent behavior toward elders exhibited in the books included obeying them, taking care of them when they are physically ill, and showing appreciation towards them.

Two authentic characteristics had a small decrease in percentage, indicating that authors are doing a slightly less effective job at realistically portraying those character traits. The first is "having religious faith." The percent of answers of "yes" to the question about religious faith decreased from 32% to 29%, indicating that few authors incorporate this important cultural trait into their books. Of the 29% that do incorporate this characteristic, it is included in various ways, such as statues of saints in the home, pictures of the Virgin Mary, or references to God in the characters' speech. It is possible

that authors are reluctant to portray characters' religious faith because they want the books to appeal to all readers, whether they are religious or not. Also, the decrease in this trait could reflect a general trend that this researcher has noticed with picture books to not include any references to religion.

The second characteristic that had a small decrease is "participating in a celebration or fiesta." The percentage of answers of "yes" to the question about this characteristic decreased from 53% to 50%, showing that these important cultural celebrations are being incorporated into stories slightly less by recent authors. Of the authors that do include celebrations, a wide variety are incorporated, including celebrations of American holidays such as the Fourth Of July and celebrations of Mexican holidays such as Cinco de Mayo. The authors that do not include celebrations and fiestas, even though they are culturally authentic, could have decided not to do so because many American children are quite familiar with these holidays, and authors may want to focus on aspects of Mexican American culture that American children are not as familiar with and would be more interested in learning about.

Two other characteristics that were included in the table for both the 1997 and the current study have not yet been discussed: "having a large/medium family" and "having a small family." Both of these characteristics are coded with a "c" because it is accurate to portray Mexican American families as being of various sizes. The results show that, in the current study, the size of Mexican American families varies, with some 15% being large or medium, and 60% being small (25% were of indeterminate size). This variety in family size shows that Mexican American families are being depicted authentically in current picture books. The slight changes in percentages of large/medium and small

family sizes from the 1997 study is relatively unimportant because a variety of family sizes continues to be depicted.

Finally, the question related to the portrayal of Mexican and Mexican American cultural traditions was coded with a "c" but was not asked in the 1997 study. The "percent yes" for this question was 69%, showing that this authentic characteristic of Mexican American females is portrayed fairly accurately in recent books.

Traditional Gender Roles

The results indicate that Mexican American females are rarely portrayed in current picture books as submitting to gender subordination, which is a traditional cultural phenomenon that has been present in some Mexican American families. The percentage of Mexican American females that submit to gender subordination decreased from 5% to 4%. Only two of the women analyzed in this study submit to gender subordination. Mamá in *A Gift from Papá Diego* yields to the authority of her husband in the selection of birthday presents for their son, and Mrs. Garcia in *Muffler Man* yields to the authority of her husband when she plans to make her decision about when to move to the United States based on when he will "be sending for" her.

TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES (O)			
Characterization	1990-1997: % yes	1998 – 2004: % yes	Change in %
(o) Gender Subordination	5	4	-1

Nontraditional Gender Roles

The characteristics of Mexican American females in picture books, however, do not yet completely reflect the nontraditional gender roles of twenty-first century Mexican American culture. Only 27% of the females examined are leaders in their home (make important decisions or lead their family emotionally), a decrease from 53% in Ramirez

and Dowd's study. Many of the women, such as Mama in *Uncle Chente's Picnic*, simply

engage in such tasks as cooking and organizing parties, while the males in the story make

the important family decisions.

Only one female character analyzed in this study is involved in politics. Mamá, in

Yes, We Can! is involved in a janitor strike to earn higher wages and more benefits.

Although having 2% of characters involved in politics is an increase from Ramirez and

Dowd's study, in which politics was not mentioned in any of the books examined, it is

still extremely low. It is possible, however, that many authors do not choose to include

political involvement in their books because young children do not always understand

political issues, and they are rarely an important component of children's books.

NONTRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES			
Characterization	**1990-1997: % yes**	**1998 – 2004: % yes**	**Change in %**
(n) Employment	16	4	-12
(n) School/Education	21	42	+21
(n) Leader in Home	53	27	-26
(n) Leader in Community	N/A	4	N/A
(n) Involved in Politics	* 0	2	+2

Only 4% of females analyzed in the current study (11% of adult females) were

depicted as being employed outside of the home, a decrease from 16% in Ramirez and

Dowd's 1997 study. Only two characters—Mamá in *Yes, We Can!*, who is a janitor, and

Mom in *The Christmas Gift*, who is a migrant worker, are portrayed as having jobs

outside of the home. In a day when many women are employed outside of the home, this

portrayal of females is not authentic. Additionally, only 4% of characters are portrayed

as being leaders in their communities.

One nontraditional characteristic, "attended, or having attended school," did have

a substantial increase—from 21% to 42%, showing that authors are now depicting this

trait more accurately than they were during the early and mid 1990s. However, because

42% is still a fairly small percentage, a bigger focus on school attendance is still

necessary in order for this trait to be fully reflective of the changing status of U.S.

females, particularly girls, of Mexican heritage.

SYNOPSIS AND CONCLUSION

Studies have shown that groups that have often experienced discrimination, such as Mexican Americans and women, are often underrepresented in children's literature (Louie 142), and, when they are included, are portrayed in a negative, stereotypical way (Ernst 67). Research has also shown that, when groups such as these are portrayed positively in children's books, children's attitudes towards themselves and others improve (Campbell and Wirtenberg 3-5). Because Mexican American females are now such a large group in the United States, a content analysis was undertaken to examine the portrayal of Mexican American females in recent realistic picture books (1998 through 2004).

When the results of the content analysis were compared to an earlier content analysis done by Ramirez and Dowd on realistic picture books published between 1990 and 1997, several positive conclusions were reached. First, substantially more books are being published about Mexican Americans now than were being published several years ago. Second, a larger percentage of these books are being written by Mexican Americans than were written several years ago. Third, the portrayal of Mexican American females in these books is more authentic and less stereotypical than it was in Ramirez and Dowd's study. Fourth, fewer Mexican American females are depicted as submitting to gender subordination than in Ramirez and Dowd's study.

However, two negative conclusions were reached. First, few major presses are publishing books about Mexican American characters and culture. Second, the

characteristics of Mexican American females in picture books do not yet fully reflect the nontraditional gender roles that Mexican American females often take on in contemporary society. In order to enable more young Mexican American girls to have access to books in which they are portrayed positively and authentically, it will be necessary for the major presses to publish more books about Mexican Americans, and it will be necessary for authors to begin to reflect the changing gender roles of twenty-first century Mexican American culture.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Because this study indicates that there have been significant improvements in the authenticity of the portrayal of Mexican American females in picture books during recent years, it would be logical to replicate the study again in five to ten years to see if the authenticity of the portrayal continues to improve. It would also be interesting to find out if picture books published in the future better reflect nontraditional gender roles of Mexican American females.

Because the primary area in which current picture books seem to be lacking in authenticity is in their portrayal of Mexican American gender roles, it would be logical to undertake a content analysis focusing specifically on Mexican American gender roles in picture books. A study of this sort could incorporate the questions from this study that are designated with an "o" and "n," as well as other relevant questions dealing with the portrayal of Mexican American men as well as women. Only by analyzing the depiction of both genders of characters can a true study of Mexican American gender roles be carried out.

Another interesting direction would be to gather detailed information on the traits of the authors and illustrators of the picture books studied (such as their ethnicity, gender, and knowledge of Mexican American culture) to see what effect these factors have on the portrayal of Mexican American females. It would be interesting to find out, for example, if Mexican American authors more accurately portray Mexican American females than do authors of other ethnic heritages.

APPENDIX A: CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION OF BOOKS IN THE STUDY

(Note: The criteria used in the 1997 study were the basis for these criteria; then additional criteria were added, and the meaning of each criterion was specified.)

1) <u>The books must have been published between 1998 and 2004</u>: The first English language (or bilingual) edition of the text must have been published in this range.

2) <u>The books must be children's picture books</u>: The books must be of the type generally considered by librarians to be a "picture book." They must be written for children. They must include illustrations and words, both of which contribute to the meaning of the book. They must be forty pages in length or less. They must not be written at a predetermined reading level, with the controlled vocabulary characteristic of "easy readers." They must not have chapter delineations.

3) <u>The books must be original works of fiction</u>: The books cannot be nonfiction books, books based on television shows, poetry collections, or folktales. However, fictionalized accounts of events in real people's lives are allowable, and narratives written in verse are allowable.

4) <u>The books must have distinct plots</u>: The books cannot be simple concept books such as alphabet or counting books, or books in which characters simply describe or reflect on their lives.

5) <u>The books must be realistic</u>: The plots of the books must be able to take place in the real world; they must not go against the laws of nature or science. For example, books with magic, anthropomorphic characters, or "miracles" attributed to the supernatural or to religious or spiritual beings are not included in the study.

6) <u>The books must be written in English or be bilingual</u>: The books must be "written solely in English or bilingually with both the English and Spanish texts containing the same word meaning" (Ramirez 21).

7) <u>The books must feature Mexican American females</u>: This criterion has three parts.
a) <u>The books must take place in the United States</u>: At least part of the book must take place in the U.S. It must be stated that the book takes place in the U.S., or the book must appear to take place in the U.S. For example, clues must be given in the text or pictures, such as signs with words in English or people speaking English.
b) <u>The books must feature at least one character with a Mexican heritage</u>: The character must have been born in Mexico, must have an ancestor that was born in Mexico, or must have ancestors who lived in the Southwestern United States when that area was still part of Mexico. This Mexican heritage must be stated directly, it must be apparent from clues given in the text or pictures, such as Mexican flags in the home. Books with characters of other Hispanic heritages

(such as Puerto Rican or Colombian) were not included in the study, but books with characters who appear to have a Hispanic heritage but whose specific heritage is not given and could just as likely be of any Hispanic group, including Mexican, were included in the study.

c) <u>At least one of the Mexican American characters featured must be female</u>: The female character (who can be of any age) must be a "main or secondary" (Ramirez 21) character, meaning that the female must be mentioned at least once in the text and must appear at least once in the illustrations, and must have at least a small role in the unfolding plot of the story.

8) <u>The books must be appropriate for grades K-3</u>: At least one age recommendation for the book (either listed on the book itself, listed in the WorldCat catalog entry for the book, or listed in a published review) must indicate that the book is appropriate for at least one grade level in the K-3 range. If no published age range can be found, the book was included if this researcher felt that the book was appropriate (in terms of length, text difficulty, and content) for at least one grade level in the K-3 range.

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BOOKS ANALYZED

<u>1998</u>:
- Anaya, Rudolfo   Farolitos for Abuelo
- Heide, Florence Parry   Tío Armando
- Jiménez, Francisco   La Mariposa
- Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas   Big Enough
- Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas   Pepita Thinks Pink
- Rodríguez, Luis J.   América Is Her Name
- Sáenz, Benjamin Alire   A Gift from Papá Diego
- Soto, Gary   Big Bushy Mustache

<u>1999</u>:
- Bertrand, Diane Gonzales   Family
- deRubertis, Barbara   Count on Pablo
- Levy, Janice   Abuelito Eats With His Fingers
- Miller, Elizabeth I.   Just Like Home
- Mora, Pat   The Rainbow Tulip
- Rodríguez, Luis J.   It Doesn't Have To Be This Way: A Barrio Story
- Sáenz, Benjamin Alire   Grandma Fina And Her Wonderful Umbrellas
- Stevens, Jan Romero   Carlos and the Carnival
- Tenorio-Coscarelli, Jane   The Piñata Quilt

<u>2000</u>:
- Cano, Robin B.   North with Ramona
- Chavarría-Cháirez, Becky   Magda's Tortillas
- English, Karen   Speak English for Us, Marisol!
- Herrera, Juan Felipe   The Upside Down Boy
- Jiménez, Francisco   The Christmas Gift
- Pérez, Amada Irma   My Very Own Room

<u>2001</u>:
- Bertrand, Diane Gonzales   Uncle Chente's Picnic
- Campos, Tito   Muffler Man
- Chavarría-Cháirez, Becky   Magda's Piñata Magic
- De Anda, Diane   Dancing Miranda
- Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas   Pepita Takes Time
- Mora, Pat   The Bakery Lady
- Perry, Michael   Daniel's Ride
- Schreck, Karen Halvorsen   Lucy's Family Tree
- Vigil-Piñón, Evangelina   Marina's Muumuu

<u>2002</u>:
- Ada, Alma Flor   I Love Saturdays y domingos

- Alexander, Alesia K.   A Mural for Mamita
- Cohn, Diana   Yes, We Can! : Janitor Strike in L.A.
- Dominguez, Kelli Kyle   The Perfect Piñata
- Elya, Susan Middleton   Home at Last
- Herrera, Juan Felipe   Grandma and Me at the Flea
- Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas   Pepita Finds Out
- Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas   Tina and the Scarecrow Skins
- Mora, Pat   Maria Paints the Hills
- O'Neill, Alexis   Estela's Swap
- Pérez, Amada Irma   My Diary from Here to There
- Pérez, L. King   First Day in Grapes
- Soto, Gary   If the Shoe Fits

2003:
- Brammer, Ethriam Cash   The Rowdy, Rowdy Ranch
- Byrd, Lee Merrill   The Treasure on Gold Street

2004:
- Herrera, Juan Felipe   Featherless

APPENDIX C: EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENT USED IN ANALYSIS

(Note: The evaluative instrument from the 1997 study was modified and used here with the permission of Frances Smardo Dowd, a co-author of the 1997 study.)

a) Title: _____

b) Author: _____

c) Illustrator: _____

d) Publisher: _____

e) Place of Publication: _____

f) Year of Publication: _____

g) Name of the Mexican American female character with the greatest role in the unfolding plot of the story: _____

Please answer the questions below about the character written in blank "g" above, considering both text and illustrations.

1) Does the character have a major role in the story? (g) *("Major role" means that the character either makes a critical impact on the unfolding plot, or is the focus of the story.)*
        __ Yes
        __ No / Not Determinable

2) Is the story written from the character's point of view? (g)
        __ Yes
        __ No / Not Determinable

3) Is the character a child? (g) *(A "child" is a character who appears to be in the age range 0 – 12 years.)*
        __ Yes
        __ No / Not Determinable

4) Does the character have (if an adult) or is the character a part of (if a child) a large or medium sibling group (4-6 siblings)? (c)
        __ Yes
        __ No / Not Determinable

5) Does the character have (if an adult) or is the character a part of (if a child) a small sibling group (0-3 siblings)? (c)
        __ Yes
        __ No / Not Determinable

6) Is the character employed outside the home? (n) *("Employed" means that the character is formally employed for pay in any type of work. Helping out at a family business without pay does not count as being "employed.")*
>   __ Yes
>   __ No / Not Determinable

7) Does the character attend, or has the character attended, school? (n) *("School" means any level of education, including K-12 or higher education.)*
>   __ Yes
>   __ No / Not Determinable

8) Is the character prone to emotion? (s) *("Emotion" means emotional outbursts or tantrums that are inappropriate for the character's age and situation.)*
>   __ Yes
>   __ No / Not Determinable

9) Is the character strong and enduring? (c) *("Strong and enduring" means that the character effectively handles the situations encountered and/or shows strength when faced with hardships. The character must consistently show this trait throughout the book, or must gain this trait during the course of the story.)*
>   __ Yes
>   __ No / Not Determinable

10) Is the character weak and docile? (s) *("Weak and docile" means that the character is incapable of handling the situations encountered and/or shows weakness or yields when faced with hardships.)*
>   __ Yes
>   __ No / Not Determinable

11) Is the character ill-tempered? (s) *("Ill-tempered" means that the character has a negative or disagreeable temperament or demeanor.)*
>   __ Yes
>   __ No / Not Determinable

12) Does the character value family relationships and family ties)? (c) *("Valuing family relationships and family ties" can be shown by the character's words or actions. For example, the character might say that she values her family, might choose to spend a great deal of time with family, might appear to enjoy the time spent with her family, or might show dedication to her family in some other way.)*
>   __ Yes
>   __ No / Not Determinable

13) Does the character display respect and/or reverence for elders? (c) *("Respect and/or reverence for elders" can be shown by the character's words or actions, which can be either obvious or subtle. For example, the character might say that she has respect for her elders, might speak politely to her elders, might obey her elders, might assist or take care of her elders, or might show appreciation for her elders in some way.)*
    __ Yes
    __ No / Not Determinable

14) Does the character submit to gender subordination? (o) *("Submitting to gender subordination" means that the character either obeys / yields to the authority of males simply because they are male, or that the character thinks of herself as inferior to males / accepts a lower status than males.)*
    __ Yes
    __ No / Not Determinable

15) Does the character exhibit any expressions of religious faith? (c) *("Expressions of religious faith" can be either obvious or subtle. For example, statues of saints are "expressions of religious faith," as are references to religious holidays.)*
    __ Yes
    __ No / Not Determinable

16) Does the character appear to believe in any superstitions (unrelated to religion)? (s)
    __ Yes
    __ No / Not Determinable

17) Is the character a leader in the home? (n) *(Being "a leader in the home" means that the character makes important decisions concerning the immediate or extended family, or leads the immediate or extended family emotionally. For children, being "a leader in the home" means taking on a major role usually filled by an adult.)*
    __ Yes
    __ No / Not Determinable

18) Is the character a leader in the community? (n) *(Being "a leader in the community" means that the character either has an official position of leadership in the city, town, or neighborhood, or is regarded by others, unofficially, as a community leader.)*
    __ Yes
    __ No / Not Determinable

19) Is the character involved in politics? (n)
    __ Yes
    __ No / Not Determinable

20) Does the character solve, or help to solve, a problem in the book? (g) *(A "problem" is defined as a central, tangible problem in the story. Personal attitudes that must undergo a change are not considered "problems," and situations that must be endured are also not considered "problems.")*
　　__ Yes
　　__ No / Not Determinable

21) Does the character enjoy music and/or dancing? (c) *("Enjoying music and/or dancing" means that the character either says that she enjoys music and/or dancing, or participates in one of these actions in some way—either by singing, playing music, dancing, listening to music, or watching people dance.)*
　　__ Yes
　　__ No / Not Determinable

22) Is the character involved in a celebration or fiesta? (c) *(Being "involved in a celebration or fiesta" means that the character either helps to plan or participates in a celebration or fiesta. The celebration or fiesta can be either formal and planned, or informal and impromptu.)*
　　__ Yes
　　__ No / Not Determinable

23) Does the character participate in any Mexican/Mexican American traditions or expressions of Mexican/Mexican American culture? (c)
　　__ Yes
　　__ No / Not Determinable

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