Narrative Progression and Characters with Disabilities in Children's Picturebooks

PhD Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Leigh Anne Neithardt, B.A., M.F.A.

Graduate Program in Education: Teaching and Learning

The Ohio State University

2017

Dissertation Committee:

Barbara Z. Kiefer, Advisor

James Phelan

Amy Shuman

Abstract

Children with disabilities began to appear with increasing frequency as characters in children's books following the United States Congress's passage in 1975 of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the precursor to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Researchers have done important work over the past forty years by examining these books while thinking about the effects that this literature can have on its readers and their understanding of disability and disabled people, addressing elements including characters, plot, and representations of specific disabilities, pointing out problematic tropes and titles.

In this dissertation, I built on this research and brought together concepts in rhetorical narrative theory, specifically narrative progression, and disability studies in order to offer an even more in-depth analysis of the designs and effects of this corpus of children's books. By engaging in a close reading of 178 picturebooks featuring disabled characters from a rhetorical narrative theory approach, my research illuminated how the rhetorical choices that an author makes in both her text and illustrations have consequences for the way that disability is presented to her readers. Specifically, my dissertation undertook a two-step analysis of those rhetorical choices. The first step was to read the books on their own terms and the second was to assess those terms through the lens of disability studies. Each of my five chapters examined the use of one kind of narrative progression, centered around one or more disabled characters—and occasionally non-disabled characters— attending to how this progression situated its readers ethically and affectively. Each chapter also assessed the potential effects, positive and negative, on the reader's understanding of disability, its contexts, and its consequences.

I argued that readers need to be more cognizant of authorial purpose, because while many authors attempt to create narratives about disabled characters that conform to readers' desires for endings to be upbeat and for characters to have their problems resolved, the lived experience of disability is more complex. I felt that it was also necessary to highlight work that individual authors and illustrators are doing well, and areas that need to be examined further. Applying a disability studies perspective to these narratives allowed for a close examination of five different types of narrative progressions that were experienced by a reader familiar with concepts of disability studies. These progressions differed in some ways from each other and from the progressions that authors were interested in their audiences experiencing. These analyses contributed to the two larger goals of the dissertation: (1) demonstrating the value of attending to authorial purposes and readerly dynamics; and (2) and providing a model for more nuanced discussions of the achievements and limitations of these books.

Dedicated to the memory of five of my fiercest supporters:

my grandfather, my grandmothers, my aunt Maria, and E.F.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not exist were it not for the support of so many people; each of them deserves more thanks than what I offer here. First, to my committee, Barbara Kiefer, James Phelan, and Amy Shuman: I am so privileged to have been able to work on this project under your guidance. Thank you for challenging me and encouraging me in equal measure, and for believing that I could and should do this work, especially on the days when I was less certain of that.

To my LCYA family, past and present: I am so lucky to have met and worked with each of you. I owe a special thanks to Bettie Parsons, Hilary, Lisa, and Erin: I am thankful for your friendship and guidance when it came to navigating life at OSU. Sara, Mary Catherine, Anna, Karly, Sam, and Susan, I have always felt as though we were one cohort, a testament to how incredible each of you is. Wendy, thank you for your friendship and for all of your help—both academic and otherwise!—these past few years. Andrés, I am so grateful that we started this journey together. I am a better writer, and thinker because of you. Thank you for reading my work with a careful eye and for your ceaseless encouragement and friendship.

Outside my program, thanks to the folks in the Disability Studies Graduate Student Association, the disability studies program at OSU, and in the English Department, past and present, especially Lauren, Andrew, Chad, Jessie, Elizabeth, and

Matt. To everyone at potluck, thank you for your camaraderie and for your thoughtful consideration of my work; my dissertation is all the better for it. Jodi, thank you for your unwavering support. To Gretchen, Clint, Anya, and the entire staff at the Fine Arts Library, thank you for your tireless assistance during this process and for not minding when I would request books in groups of sixty-plus at a time.

To Brenda Brueggemann, thank you for your encouragement when I arrived here. The courses that I took with you during my first year solidified for me that I had made the right choice in coming back to school. The digital storytelling workshop remains a highlight of my coursework. Thank you to Dr. Heather Garrison at the University of East Stroudsburg for sharing with me your library of children's books featuring disabled characters; it was an invaluable resource when I began doing my research.

Carrie, Kate, and Heather, my time here has been richer in so many ways because of you. (Thanks for the emergency laptop, Zach!) Thank you to friends who are family and who have been among my constant cheerleaders: Pazi, Monica, Stephanie, Jen, Lisa, Brian, and Dan. Leslie, thank you for so much, especially for sharing with me your love of stories, and for being such an important part of my own.

Jeff Middents, you were one of the earliest, most enthusiastic champions of my returning to school to do this research. Thank you for that, and for continuing to be in my corner (and for all of your TV and movie recommendations). Linda Stamato, you have been invested in me and in my work since I first wrote about children's literature while I was an undergraduate. I am so grateful for your continued encouragement.

To the Cherrys, also friends who are family, thank you for always giving me a home when I needed it. Emily, you have been here since Day 1, and none of this would have been possible without your support. To the Martins, thank you for your love and your always-open door when I needed to escape. Rachael, I didn't imagine when we were first being read picturebooks that we'd reconnect years later, but I'm glad we did.

Finally, my family certainly deserves more thanks than I have room to give them here: Mom, Dad, Lisa, Tommy, and my three favorite little ones: Your love and support mean more than I could possibly tell you. To my extended family, thank you, too, for being excited about my work. To all of you, I am proud to call myself your daughter, sister, aunt, niece, and cousin: I could not have gone on this journey without your encouragement.

Vita

2002	B.A., English, Rutgers University
2007	M.F.A., Creative Writing, American University
2007 to 2011	Executive Assistant, American Association of University Professors
2012 to present	Graduate Research Associate and Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Teaching and Learning, The Ohio State University

Publications

Neithardt, L. A. (2016). What I Wish You Would Ask: Conversations about Cerebral Palsy. In. M. Jarman, L. Monaghan & A. Quaggin Harkin (Eds.), *Barriers & belonging: Personal narratives of disability* (pp. 126–131). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Education: Teaching and Learning

Specialization: Children for Literature and Young Adults

Specialization: Disability Studies

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Chapter 1: Introduction

July 2010 marked the twentieth anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, more commonly known as the ADA. I was on vacation and read an editorial commemorating the anniversary by Joni Eareckson Tada, a woman who became a quadriplegic following an accident in 1967. She wrote, “Unfortunately, many individuals’ discriminatory attitudes stem from childhood. Studies of preschoolers have shown that they will choose nondisabled playmates over those with disabilities” (para. 8). It occurred to me that children’s first exposure to people with disabilities might be in the picturebooks that they read or that are read to them, especially if they do not know anyone who is disabled. I wondered what messages children were getting about disabled individuals: How might the books be affecting children’s attitudes toward people with disabilities in both positive and negative ways? I eventually decided to return to school so that I could do research that would allow me to find out.

Once I began my doctoral program, I simultaneously began searching for and reading picturebooks featuring disabled protagonists and reading disability studies scholarship. In turn, that scholarship influenced my reading of the picturebooks. I began to notice issues of representation that I might otherwise not have paid attention to. In the autumn of my second year, at a friend’s suggestion, I took an introductory course in narrative theory; I followed that in the spring with a course in rhetorical narrative theory. The latter course helped me engage more thoughtfully with the picturebooks because, after being introduced to the concept of narrative progression, I began to understand what choices authors and illustrators had made in order to elicit certain responses from their readers. I further became aware of and was able to understand why, while there were places in a text to which I responded as I thought the authors and illustrators wanted me to, there were other places where I responded completely differently due to my background in disability studies.

That early work became the genesis for my dissertation, which will explore the representation of characters with disabilities in 178 children's fiction picturebooks published in the United States between 1995-2015. I am focusing on this particular period for several reasons: First, I wanted to research a manageable corpus. I began writing this dissertation in 2015, and so thought that the twenty-year period between 1995-2015 would allow me to examine a large but not unwieldy number of texts. Additionally, most of these books are still in print and are available for purchase or are available in libraries. 1995 was five years after the passage of the ADA; I thought that it was likely that more authors would have begun writing and publishing books featuring disabled characters.

Statement of the Problem

Writing about the need for diverse characters in children's books, Bishop (1990) explained that minority children need to be able to see themselves in the books that they read; such books can serve as "mirrors": "Reading, then, becomes a means of selfaffirmation" (para. 1). People with disabilities are the largest minority in the United States, accounting for 18.7% of the population: 56.7 million of 303.9 million people in the non-institutionalized population counted in the 2010 United States Census were disabled (Brault, M. W. 2012, p. 4). 5.2 million of those were children under the age of 15 (p. 13). However, there are not a large number of books featuring disabled characters, a comment often made in the research on children's books that include disabled characters, and so disabled children seldom "see themselves."

Thomson (1997) writing about physical disability in American literature for adult audiences, noted that an adult's understanding of and interaction in the world is "mediated" in some way by the books that she has read, and that "we grant [literature] power to further shape our perceptions of the world, especially regarding situations about which we have little direct knowledge" (p. 10). Though Thomson did not explicitly state so in this passage, given her larger project, she is suggesting that readers need to be aware of the "power" that literature can have, and that the resultant perceptions of the world might not always be positive. This same awareness can be brought to readers of children's books, especially to the teachers, parents, and other adults who most often purchase these books.

Researchers have examined children's picturebooks featuring disabled characters with an eye to Thomson's point about the effects that literature can have on its readers, addressing elements including characters, plot, and representations of specific disabilities, pointing out problematic tropes and titles, but I feel that this work needs to go further, and believe that combining concepts in both disability studies and rhetorical narrative theory, specifically narrative progression, will allow me to do this. In this way, I will be undertaking a two-step analysis with the first step being an effort to read the books on their own terms and the second step to critically examine those terms. The lens I will use for this critical examination comes from disability studies.

A Brief Introduction to Rhetorical Narrative Theory and Disability Studies

I will discuss both rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies in more detail in Chapter 2, but I wanted to offer brief explanations of key concepts here.

Rhetorical narrative theorists "see [narrative] as a purposive communication of a certain kind from one person (or group of persons) to one or more others" (Phelan and Rabinowitz, 2012a, p. 3). Because rhetorical narrative theorists believe that texts "are designed by authors in order to affect readers in particular ways" (Phelan, 2007, p. 4), they seek to understand how those affects have been achieved. This dissertation will therefore examine its corpus of picturebooks to understand how authors have made choices to affect their audiences' understanding of disability.

Rhetorical narrative theory recognizes four different audiences. I want to mention two of those audiences here (and will return to the others in my longer discussion in Chapter 2): the *actual audience* and the *authorial audience*. The actual audience is the flesh-and-blood reader outside the text. Actual readers try to join the authorial audience, one of the audiences encoded in the text; it is made up of the hypothetical readers that the author envisions as she writes. The best concept I have found for getting at all of an author's and illustrator's choices and their interrelationships is narrative progression, and it will be crucial to my step-one analyses.

Narrative progression is the synthesis of what Phelan and Rabinowitz refer to as *textual dynamics*: "the logic of the text's movement from beginning to middle through ending," and *readerly dynamics*: the audience's "evolving (or shifting) understandings, judgments, emotions (including desires), and expectations as it follows the textual dynamics," (2012b, p. 58). In the case of these texts, narrative progression allows for an analyst to closely observe how authors and illustrators have used both the text and illustrations to guide their audience to respond to characters with disabilities.

As I noted, my work also incorporates a disability studies framework. One of the fundamental aims of the field is to push back against the "medicalization of disability." Linton (1998) wrote, "Briefly, the medicalization of disability casts human variation as deviance from the norm, as pathological condition, as deficit, and, significantly, as an individual burden and personal tragedy" (p. 11). Disability studies scholars posit that "disabled" is an identity (cf. Linton, 1998; Siebers, 2008). "A disability" is not "lodged in" an individual, but is created by a society that is predominantly able-bodied (Siebers, 2008, p. 3). Disability studies therefore uses the term "disability" to name both the "social control" (Siebers, 2008, p. 4) of people with impairments—attitudinally and literally—and an identity claimed by those people (Siebers, 2008, p. 4).

And a Possible Solution

My approach seeks to go beyond these studies of disability representation in picturebooks that focus on discrete parts of narratives by considering the narrative progressions of individual narratives. This move requires me to pay attention to the synthesis of the aforementioned textual and readerly dynamics. Because I am examining picturebooks, those textual dynamics encompass both text and illustrations, as both elements elicit responses that contribute to the readerly dynamics. I will thus attend to the ways in which the parts of a narrative are integrated into a developing whole. And it is that whole that will determine the effects of the narrative on members of the authorial audience and on an individual actual reader. By offering a disability studies reading in my second-step analysis after discussing each narrative's expected progression, I will be able to share my own reactions to the narrative and, in turn, highlight ways in which using a disability studies lens to read these narratives is useful. A rhetorical analysis provides the basis for a more informed disability studies reading, which therefore adds another dimension to my textual and visual analysis as an actual reader.

There is precedent for using narrative theory to examine this corpus of books. Other children's literature scholars, notably Perry Nodelman and Maria Nikolajeva have both used narrative theory in their scholarship (e.g. Nodelman, 1991 and 2008; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Nikolajeva, 2003). Additionally, David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder in their often-cited 2000 disability studies text, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*, coined the term "narrative prosthesis" to discuss how "disability pervades literary narrative, first, as a stock feature of characterization and, second, as an opportunistic metaphorical device" (p. 47). They situated their work in narrative theory, though not in any particular approach.

Research Questions

My work here will be guided by three questions:

1. Using the concepts of rhetorical narrative theory to examine both current and older

picturebooks that form the basis of this research, how can they be classified according to their distinctive narrative progressions, and how does the analysis of these progressions shed light on the powers and limits of their engagement with disability?

2. How do the illustrations work with the text to affect the readerly dynamics of these picturebooks?

3. What are the affordances of using both narrative theory and disability studies to look at these texts in relation to the actual audience?

Specifically, my dissertation will examine the way that these picturebooks demonstrate use of five different types of narrative progressions, each of which follows one or more disabled characters—and occasionally non-disabled characters—along a distinct trajectory. Each of these types will be examined in its own chapter.

My dissertation will bring together rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies to move the exploration of this corpus of books beyond what has been researched. My work will use concepts from these two fields to explore alternate readings that may result if an actual reader finds herself unable to join the authorial audience. That is, there are a variety of reasons one may find herself unable to join the authorial audience of a given book, and there also is not a single "disability studies" reading of each of these picturebooks.

Nonetheless, these readings will offer new considerations of these books. While it is important to pay attention to their textual elements, as numerous researchers have explained, it is also important to examine the illustrations, and then to consider the effects of both the text and the illustrations in light of both authorial purposes and actual audience's responses.

Overview of the Dissertation

In my Introduction, I have shared a brief overview of my project, including the frameworks guiding my research: rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies. I have addressed he problem and questions that I am going to address in the subsequent chapters. I will also discuss the research that has been done on picturebooks featuring disabled characters.

In Chapter 2, I will outline relevant concepts in both disability studies and rhetorical narrative theory to situate the work that I will be doing. I will discuss the narrative progressions of two picturebooks about Helen Keller in order to draw comparisons between the two authors' aims, and then share one possible disability studies reading of each to address elements of the narratives that are noteworthy, and points that would need more interrogation. I also will use the books to discuss aspects of the Overcoming Narrative, which I also will explain in Chapter 2.

In Chapters 3 through 7, I will discuss the narrative progressions of some of the books in my corpus (178 books): both the expected progression and one influenced by disability studies. After reading all of these books multiple times, I have sorted the books into categories that are, in all except one case, determined by a particular relationship between different characters. In Chapter 3, I will examine three books whose protagonists go to the doctor and are diagnosed with conditions requiring that they wear eye patches, paying specific attention to how the doctors' appointments affect the narratives' progressions, as they are slightly different from each other.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss the narrative progressions of three books whose characters know at the outset that they are disabled or "different" in some way from their typical peers, and how, during the course of the narrative, because of an experience, the protagonists continue, begin, or show the potential to begin to develop confidence.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss books in which a relationship or interaction between a disabled and a nondisabled character leads to the change or potential change (in the way of growth, learning, or acceptance) of the nondisabled character. I will focus my discussion on agency, and similar to my aims in Chapter 3, I will examine the ways that the agency of disabled and nondisabled characters affected the narrative progressions.

In Chapter 6, I will examine the smallest number of books (11). In these narratives, there is some amount of reciprocity between a disabled character and a nondisabled one. I have determined that there are three different types of relationships that exist between or among characters: Relationships of Care, Relationships of Inevitability, and Relationships of Place, which I will explain in more detail at the start of the chapter. In most cases, over the course of the narrative, a relationship changes from one type to another because of the acts of reciprocity.

In Chapter 7, I will discuss narratives that are examples of portraiture. I chose narratives that will allow for the exploration of different kind of narrators. I also chose narratives that have varying amounts of narrativity, which will affect the narrative progressions in different ways.

Finally, the Conclusion will address the benefits of using narrative theory and disability studies concepts together, and possible directions for future research.

Review of the Research

Children with disabilities began to appear with increasing frequency as characters in children's books following the United States Congress's passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which mandated that all children with disabilities were entitled to a "free appropriate public education" and necessary special education services (Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, 1975), which was the precursor to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA. The law is even paraphrased at the beginning of *Nick Joins In* (Lasker, 1980), which tells the story of Nick, a boy with cerebral palsy, who is getting ready to attend public school for the first time. Scholars began publishing research on children's books featuring disabled characters shortly thereafter.

As I read the literature, I noticed that it falls into one of four different categories:

1. Work that offers a global discussion of the literature and did not focus on any one particular book or category of books. It addressed problems present in the books and the equally problematic lack of the literature itself.
2. Work that includes annotations of numerous picturebooks and novels to help teachers choose texts appropriate for their classrooms. Occasionally, researchers would make distinctions between what they felt was "good" and "bad" literature. These articles and books suggested what teachers should look for when trying to decide whether a book should be shared with students. Researchers whose work fell into the first category often made these suggestions as well, a logical counterpoint to addressing the perceived flaws of the texts. Some of the shorter

articles in this category (owing to a lack of space) only explained what aspects of the literature teachers needed to be aware of when selecting books for their classrooms, and did not offer lists of noteworthy books.

3. Individual studies that focus on books that feature a single condition or a handful of conditions. Sometimes this work was structured with elements of the first two categories: a.) what adults should be aware of when looking at the texts; and b.) suggested titles. Some of these studies were quantitative in nature and looked at specific elements in a collection of texts, for example.
4. Work about the use of books featuring children with disabilities in order to a.) expose children who may not have disabilities to characters who do in hopes of changing the children's attitudes so that they are more accepting of their peers with disabilities; b.) provide points of recognition to children with disabilities in hope of building their self-esteem.

After I give an overview of each category, I will address how I see my own work in relation to that scholarship.

Category 1: Problems present in the literature and the lack of the literature itself. Little (1986) authored one of the earliest articles discussing these books, addressing, in part, the way that portrayals of people with disabilities changed over time. She wrote: "Whenever we approach a topic from the perspective of time, development and change are likely to be the focus of our investigations" (p.181). She made a connection between the treatment of people with disabilities and their appearance in literature: "At the end of the eighteenth century we were only just beginning to recognize the abilities of handicapped people. Reform movements had not yet made their impact on society" (1986, p.181). She noted the language used to describe these characters: "The handicapped characters of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century books were described as 'delicate,' 'pale,' 'thin,' 'puny,' 'deformed,' 'frail'" (1986, p.181). She addressed her thoughts about the books being published at the time that she was writing: "Today the emphasis is on eliminating the stereotypes and stigmas attached to disabled people, and focusing on their achievements as well as their frustrations" (1986, p.181). This raises the question from the vantage point of nearly three decades later: How well was this done? After my reading of more recent picturebooks, it seems that this "emphasis" is unchanged.

She classified "early books" (those written in the nineteenth century) in three useful categories: "[They] seem to promote three major purposes: [1.] to inspire Christian piety and patience through examples of the sufferings of unfortunate handicapped characters, [2.] to show the accomplishments possible in spite of physical adversities, [3.] to educate the public about what is involved in various handicaps and overcoming them" (p. 182). The latter two purposes are still apparent in books published now. Little described "contemporary [(1960s—1980s)]" books by noting: "The accomplishments of the handicapped, especially how they are able to adapt to their disabilities is also a frequent theme in modern books" (p. 183). Again, this last theme is still common in today's books (as is, of course, the "overcoming narrative," which she referenced, albeit not with that specific designation).

Rubin and Watson (1987) highlighted the prevalence of disability bias in children's books, which I addressed earlier in this Introduction. This is their complete list of the 11 stereotypes, which would be mentioned by future authors:

> 1. Person with a disability portrayed as pitiable and pathetic. . . .
> 2. Person with a disability as the object of violence. . . .
> 3. Person with a disability as sinister and/or evil. . . .
> 4. Person with a disability used as "atmosphere." . . .
> 5. Person with a disability as "super crip." . . .
> 6. Person with a disability as laughable. . . .
> 7. Person with a disability as his/her own — and only — worst enemy. . . .
> 8. Person with a disability as a burden. . . .
> 9. Person with a disability as asexual. . . .
> 10. Person with a disability as incapable of fully participating in everyday life. . . .
> 11. Person with a disability as being isolated from disabled and nondisabled peers. . . . (pp. 60–62)

Biklen and Bogdan had noted the first ten stereotypes in their 1977 article for an issue of the *Bulletin* of the Council for Interracial Books for Children. Rubin and Watson connected the importance of their and Biklen and Bogdan's work to the passage in the 1970s of two federal laws concerning adults and children with disabilities (Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the aforementioned Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, now IDEA). Rubin and Watson concluded their article with annotations of several children's books that they felt offered both positive and negative depictions of people with disabilities to give examples of disability bias. They brought Biklen and Bogdan's work back to the fore after ten years by publishing it in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, an international journal dedicated to children's literature. The work of these five scholars together provided early useful frameworks by concisely reviewing a timeline and the content of the books as well as the problems *with* that content.

Brittain (2004) provided another useful contemporary framework for researchers in her article on deaf characters in picturebooks. Little began a timeline of texts, and Rubin and Watson furthered a discussion of disability bias. Brattain addressed the most common problems with the literature that are still prevalent: "Six Pitfalls of Disability Fiction" culled by her research of other studies: "1. Portraying the character with an impairment as 'other' than human"; "2. Portraying the character with an impairment as 'extra-ordinary'"; "3. The 'second fiddle' phenomenon"; "4. Lack of realism and accuracy in the portrayal of the impairment"; "5. The outsider"; "6. Happy endings?" (The Six Pitfalls of Disability Fiction section). She offered a succinct list of "problem areas" that still remained in these books in the early 2000s. For the purposes of the article, Brittain discussed five of the 14 books that she had researched for her Master's thesis (of which this work was a part), and noted that, "Those books that are most successful are shaped by the visual aspect of deaf culture" (2004, Abstract, para. 1). Her article positions deafness as a cultural distinction rather than a medical one, implicitly addressing the "medical model"/ "social model" binary. Myers and Bersani (2008-2009) echoed similar cautions eight years ago. Recall Little's comment about "approach[ing] a topic from the perspective of time" (1986, p.181). The work of Brittain and Myers and

Bersani make it apparent that problems that Little noticed in 1986 were still present twenty years later (and indeed, had been noticed a decade before that by Biklen and Bogdan).

One last problem that articles in this category address is the lack of books featuring disabled characters. The issue may be most emphasized by pointing to research done with Caldecott and Newbery Medal and Honor books, with which many readers are familiar. While readers may not be able to name particular award winners, they may have some awareness that these are two awards given to children's literature and will recognize the gold and silver seals that are affixed to the covers of these award-winning books. Dyches, Prater, Jenson (2006) surveyed books awarded the Caldecott Medal and Honor distinctions between 1938, the year the Caldecott was first awarded, and 2005, "and found that 11 [of the total 276] included a character with a disability" (p. 1). In 2010, Dyches and Prater collaborated with Leininger and Heath and examined Newbery titles between 1975-2009 and found "Thirty-one Newbery Award and Honor books from 1975-2009 were identified and portrayed 41 main or supporting characters with disabilities" (p. 583). They chose 1975 as the starting date because that was the year that the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was passed. In both articles the authors called for a greater and more diverse representation of characters with disabilities.

In a study of American and Canadian picturebooks featuring characters with disabilities and published after 1994, (Emmerson, Fu, Lendsay, and Brenna, 2014) also noticed a lack of titles. Initially, the authors examined award-winning titles: those that won the Canadian Governor General's Award for Illustration (two of eighteen total winning titles), the Canadian Governor General's Award for Text (two of twenty total winning titles), the Caldecott Medal (one of nineteen) and the Schneider Family Book Award (seven of the awarded titles were picturebooks). They also included another twenty-five titles received after soliciting Canadian publishers for applicable books. A final one book was found after visits to two local bookstores (one of these led to an examination of 252 books). Eight of the titles, books of narrative nonfiction, were written by the same two authors and deemed to be "didactic" and "unexceptional in terms of both literary merit and merit of illustrations" (p. 16). Interestingly, they noted, "Seven of the twenty-nine Canadian books visually infer disability rather than specifically mentioning it" (p. 18).[1] I will address the use of illustrations in my subsequent chapters.

My step-two analyses will address, in part, problems that I notice in the literature in light of using a disability studies lens to respond to the narratives. As I have noted, I will also use that lens to discuss aspects of the texts that I find to be modeling positively ideas central to disability studies. While I did not focus exclusively on award-winning texts, I do close-readings of a couple in later chapters, and will note them as such. (I will discuss the different awards given to books featuring disabled characters that are published in the United States in Chapter 2.)

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[1] The authors clarified of the Award for Text that "Because the nature of books has generally advanced in this category, picture book titles are relatively rare. Two picture book award winners from the twenty winning titles (illustration and text) since 1995 have appeared, and both portray characters with disabilities" (p. 15).

Category 2: Work that aims to help teachers choose texts appropriate for their classrooms. Kiefer (2010) suggested that when evaluating multicultural children's literature (an umbrella under which she includes disability), in addition to "an emphasis on quality," four particular aspects of the books be considered: "1. Diversity and range of representation"; "2. Avoidance of stereotyping"; "3. Language considerations"; "4. The perspective of the book" (p. 86). The authors whose work make up this second category of research about children's books featuring characters with disabilities echo these claims. Heim (1994) wrote when reviewing books featuring mental disabilities that adults should look for "1. Accuracy of information"; "2. Lack of stereotypes"; "3. Literary quality"; "4. Confronting the disability"; "5. Not 'using' the disabled character" (pp. 139-140).

Prater and Dyches, who have contributed extensively to research on children's literature featuring characters with disabilities, noted that the following should be considered when reviewing a book for possible classroom use: "Literary quality"; "illustrative quality"; and the "characterization of the characters with disabilities" (2008a, p. 32). These suggestions were also made in their work with Johnstun (2006) on learning disabilities. Dyches and Prater created a thematic workbook for teachers, divided into five units about different disabilities. It featured an annotated reading list of suggested titles and activities for students. The reading list and activities were preceded by a general discussion of what teachers should pay attention to regarding the textual elements of theme, characterization, setting, plot, point of view and literary style, and the quality and content of the illustrations (2008b, x-xi). The authors wrote:

> Contemporary portrayals of disabilities should recognize society's current beliefs about people with disabilities:
>
> - Individuals with disabilities should be portrayed as more similar than dissimilar to individuals without disabilities. . . .
> - Nondiscriminatory language (such as person-first language) should be used. . . .
> - Characters with disabilities should appear in settings with, not isolated from, their nondisabled peers. . . .
> - Characters with disabilities should be portrayed in reciprocal relationships. . . . (xii)

These suggestions offer solutions to some of the problems highlighted by older research.

Baskin and Harris (1977, 1984) wrote the first annotated guides to assist teachers in finding fiction that featured characters with disabilities. The first examined books published between 1940 and 1975; the second, books published between 1976 and 1981. Both books addressed societal attitudes toward people with disabilities, and trends in the literature itself before discussing individual titles. Robertson (1992) followed their lead and continued by annotating fiction published between 1982 and 1991. Blaska's (2003) book, in addition to annotating various titles, explained *how* to talk to children about disabilities—what language to use and what language to avoid. She presented a useful guide to various disabilities and illnesses: A clear, simple explanation of each—which adults could appropriately tailor for a child—is followed by children's common questions about the disability and suggested responses.

As with the first category of research, I also see important connections between this category and my own. In Baskin and Harris's (1977) influential *Notes from a Different Drummer: A Guide to Juvenile Fiction Portraying the Handicapped*, which was a precursor to Blaska's work, the authors describe several different treatments of disability in books for children published between 1940-1975. Two of these are "Search for Self," (p. 28) and "The Handicapped as Catalysts in the Maturation of Others" (p. 31). My work in later chapters touches on these (or related) ideas, specifically in Chapters 4 and 5.

Category 3: Work about specific conditions. Several writers focused their research on individual conditions. Studies about books featuring characters who were deaf or who had developmental disabilities were the most common. [2] These studies often repeated guidelines for determining whether the books were worth reading with children. Some shared information about titles; for example, Leininger, Dyches, Prater, Heath, and Bascom's 2010 article on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder offered a "Top 10" list of picturebooks and novels. Other studies asked particular questions about the portrayal of a condition. Altieri's 2006 work examined 77 books featuring characters who had dyslexia. She coded for gender and issues that the character had to deal with as a result

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[2] A sample of additional research includes the following: **autism** (Dyches, Prater, Cramer, 2001; Barker, Kulyk, Knorr, & Brenna, 2011); **blindness** (Hughes, 2012); **deafness/hearing impairments** (Bailes, 2002; Brittain, 2004; Golos & Moses, 2011); **developmental disabilities** (Dyches, Prater, Cramer, 2001; Dyches and Prater, 2005; Mills 2002); **dyslexia** (Altieri 2005, 2006, 2008); and **learning disabilities** (Prater, 2003; Dyches, Prater, & Johnstun, 2006).

of the dyslexia. Barker, Kulyk, Knorr, and Brenna's work (2011) raised interesting points about society's "acceptance" of certain disabilities and their appearance in children's literature. The authors noted that fetal alcohol spectrum disorder [FASD] is more prevalent than autism spectrum disorders [ASD] in the general population: "the North American incidence of ASD (6-7 in 1000) and FASD (9 in 1000)," yet, "in comparison to the greater inclusion of characters with ASD in the children's novels of our sample, people with FASD seem to be underrepresented in children's literature." (pp. 173, 175). They examined 75 children's novels published in the United States and Canada, and found that of those, 15 books featured 16 characters with either FASD (2), or ASD (14) (p. 173). Given that autism still is widely discussed in the media while fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are not, I am sure that this disparity in books will continue.

I want to briefly discuss work by Golos and Moses (2011) on the portrayal of deafness in children's picturebooks because they specifically mentioned the medical and social models of disability. At one point, they referred to ideas associated with the former as a "disability (pathological) perspective," and referred to the latter as a "cultural perspective" (p. 217). I also want to look at their work because they only briefly discuss the illustrations.

The authors initially collected 70 picturebooks to examine; their final sample consisted of 20 titles. They found that the medical perspective was the most prevalent in the texts; the other books demonstrated the cultural model, or were what the authors classified as "General": "general labeling, general communication strategies (e.g., signing), services for the deaf (e.g., interpretation)" (p. 274):

> Of the three broad coding categories, the medical model was portrayed the most in the 20 books sampled (518 references to this model, or 71% of the broad coding categories found). Less often, the picture books included references to general strategies or categories (110 references, or 15%). A nearly equal number of references were found to Deaf culture or deafness from a cultural perspective (101 references, or 14%). (2011, p. 274)

When addressing the illustrations, they noted:

> In addition, nearly all of the picture books failed to show Deaf characters interacting with other Deaf characters or communicating with anyone through ASL [American Sign Language]. Furthermore, when characters signed in the texts, they communicated primarily through fingerspelling or by signing individual English words rather than using full and grammatically correct sentences in ASL. This gives the false impression that deaf people only interact with hearing people in a hearing world where they are primarily spoken to and must attempt to use their hearing or speechreading in order to communicate. It also fails to recognize ASL as a language with its own grammatical structure and complexities (pp. 279-280).

Golos and Moses were two of the few authors who specifically addressed the illustrations. One study where a more explicit discussion of illustrations might have been useful was in the enlightening work of Koc, Koc, and Ozdemir (2010), which reviewed forty-six picturebooks specifically to examine the relationships between “story characters with and without physical and sensory impairments” (p. 150). They mention that one "author draws a realistic picture of a young boy," and otherwise include brief descriptions of some illustrations. Their discussion could have provided a useful exploration of how the relationships were communicated visually by looking at, for example, the size of the characters, the characters' placement relative to each other and the rest of the page, their facial expressions, and the colors and media used in the illustrations.

Though I did not focus on a single disability as Golos and Moses did or on a small number, I will be referencing disability studies scholarship in my own step-two analyses of the books. Where relevant, I will call attention to the narrative treatment of a disability in a particular text, noting aspects that are helpful for authorial and actual audiences, and aspects that might rely on stereotypes or tropes.

Category 4: Work about using the literature in classrooms. A natural direction for this research is the exploration of its use in classrooms, and this specific body of scholarly work is growing. Domacasse (2009) asked whether children in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade "notice[d] disabilities" (p. 3) in three stories featuring disabled characters. She reported:

> Preschool, kindergarten, and first grade students all noticed the characters with physical disabilities. On the other hand 5% or less of the students in all grade levels surveyed noticed Down syndrome or hearing impairments. These results support the hypothesis that children notice physical disabilities more readily than less noticeable (visible) disabilities such as Down syndrome and hearing impairments" (pp. 32-33).

Konrad, Hef, and Itoi (2007) noted that "findings from postschool outcome studies also support the inclusion of self-determination instruction for students with disabilities," (p. 64). As others have done, they warned readers about stereotypes present in the literature and suggested discussing these with students when they were present in a story. The authors also offered activities for using the literature.

Students have reacted in a variety of ways to these books. Adomat (2014) found in a sixth-month study of children in two multi-age classrooms (second and third grade, and fourth and fifth grade) that after such reading, discussions and other supporting activities, for example, learning about disabilities beyond what was in a given book, children's attitudes changed.

> [Second-third-grade teacher] Ms. Schild related how, before the unit, students were resentful of a classmate with developmental disabilities who had an aide to help her; the classmates thought that she was receiving unfair privileges. After the unit, they understood why she needed assistance. One boy with autism, who was usually quiet and withdrawn during class time, participated actively in the book discussions and could identify with some of the characters in the stories. At one point he said, "That's like me. I have autism—a little bit." ("Discussion" section)

The student's disclosure of his autism, and also qualification of its severity, are examples of the agency favored by disability studies scholars, including Adomat, and disability rights activists for disabled people to be able to claim, define, and share their experience of disability rather than having another person do it for them.

In contrast with Adomat's study, in one conducted by Smith-D'Arezzo and Moore-Thomas (2010), "working with fifth grade children in an urban school setting, structured book discussion groups were held during the reading of two books that feature a main character with a learning disability" (p. 2). The authors found that "there was not a clear increase in positive attitudes toward peers with learning disabilities. In fact, the focus on the topic may have reinforced some children's negative attitudes" (p. 2). The findings might have been different had more books been shared, though, as the authors note, it reinforces the idea that "that [teachers] choose the books carefully" (p. 12). It also suggests that children's attitudes are (of course) shaped by more than books.

McGrail and Rieger (2014) examined in twenty-eight books (of fifty-two reviewed) with disabled characters different aspects of the use of humor in the stories, noting, "The prevalent message in the books reviewed is that characters with disabilities not only appreciate humor but also are capable of producing various types of humor" (p. 298). They noted that, "Reading about characters with disabilities, who, like their able-bodied peers, can appreciate and produce humor, helps children and adolescents to see individuals with disabilities as having potential for humor and perceiving their disability as a secondary issue" (2014, p. 289). Like Smith-D'Arezzo and Moore-Thomas, McGrail and Rieger (2014) emphasized that reading without discussion was not sufficient:

> To deepen young readers' understandings of humor in the context of disability, efforts must be made to help them develop knowledge about humor and its positive and negative functions as they read the literature featuring characters with disabilities who utilize various forms of humor (p. 299).

As other scholars have also done, they pointed out that even books judged to be problematic because of their use of "exclusive humor," in which a character is treated "stereotypically and prejudicially" (2014, p. 296) can be useful to share because, "these unflattering portrayals provide material to critically examine prejudices and purported humor generated at the expense of characters with disabilities" (2014, p. 300). In both this article and one co-written in 2015, which more broadly addresses using books that feature characters with disabilities in classrooms, they share titles and suggestions for how educators and other adults might guide discussion of these books.

My own research can be connected with this last group to the extent that I am examining books using rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies, mindful of the effects that this literature can have on its readers like the various students mentioned above. Teachers or other researchers could then use this research if they are sharing the books in my corpus (or others), keeping in mind the discussions that I will have in subsequent chapters, should they find aspects of the discussions illuminating and useful when talking with their students.

Concluding Thoughts

I have discussed what led me to my research and briefly touched on rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies frameworks. After outlining my dissertation, I addressed different categories of scholarship on children's books featuring disabled characters and noted where I saw connections or possible connections between this work and my own. In Chapter 2, I will discuss rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies in more detail, and address the specific gaps in the research that my work will aim to fill using both of these frameworks together. I will also examine the narrative progressions of two picturebooks about Helen Keller in an effort to model the work that I will be doing in future chapters.

Chapter 2: Disability Studies and Rhetorical Narrative Theory

In order to discuss the two frameworks that inform my research (disability studies and rhetorical narrative theory) I first want to highlight two large gaps in the research on this collection of books that currently exist. I briefly discussed rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies in my Introduction in order to explain the problem for which I would like to offer a solution in the remainder of this dissertation. I am going to expand on those ideas here. I will begin by exploring useful concepts in disability studies, followed by a critique of the so-called "Overcoming Narrative." This will then allow for a transition into a discussion about narrative theory, with a specific focus on rhetorical narrative theory and Phelan's concept of narrative progression. After that, I will discuss the narrative progressions of a picturebook in order to model that work that I will be doing in subsequent chapters.

The Gaps

First, many of the scholars who research books that feature disabled characters have not made explicit connections to the work of other disability studies scholars in their work. (A notable exception is Golos and Moses's 2011 article, "Representations of Deaf Characters in Children's Picture Books.") The foundational aspect of disability studies is the multiplicity of ways in which scholars conceptualize the term "disability." Bringing those ideas to research on picturebooks featuring disabled characters would move the discussion beyond the mainstream “medicalized” understanding of “disability.”

Second, in their necessary critique of the content of these picturebooks, scholars also neglect to address the way that this content has been shaped and presented to the reader by the different authors and illustrators who each have a specific purpose(s). These are issues among those that would be examined by a rhetorical narrative theorist, and would facilitate an examination of a book that goes beyond primary surface-level observations.

Disability Studies

Reframing. As I mentioned above, the foundation of disability studies is that it conceives of disability differently from a majority of the medical field and most laypeople. Disrupting common knowledge to reframe it by providing new definitions or by pointing out problematic aspects first requires defining terms. I therefore want to discuss “disability,” “impairment” and “normal,” as these three concepts will influence my later readings.

Medical and Social Models. Disability studies scholars conceptualize the term “disability” according to differently named “models.” Aspects of two of these, the “medical model” and “social model,” inform my work in later chapters. Linton (1998) wrote of the former, “Briefly, the medicalization of disability casts human variation as deviance from the norm, as pathological condition, as deficit, and, significantly, as an individual burden and personal tragedy” (p. 11). To avoid potential confusion, I will add that though this is termed the “medical model,” this approach was so-named by disability studies scholars, not medical professionals.

Conversely, the social model of disability most often posits that disability is not "lodged in" an individual, but is created by a society that is predominantly able-bodied (Siebers, 2008, p. 3). Finkelstein (1980), one of the first scholars to articulate this view, wrote: "[Disability] is defined in terms of the special form of discrimination, or social oppression, that is faced by people who are in some way physically impaired" (p. 1). His descriptor of "physically impaired" inexplicably ignores people with other impairments. Today, scholars do not make this qualification. It is possible that because Finkelstein was a founding member of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS)[3], that self-identification influenced his comments.

Hahn (1985), one of the early American scholars of disability studies, elaborated on these ideas while revisiting his pervious scholarship and writing about what he called the "socio-political definition" of disability:

Fundamentally, this model implies that disability stems from the failure of a

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[3] UPIAS and the Disability Alliance (DA) were two of the earliest disability rights activist groups. Both formed in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. They held a joint meeting in November 1975, during which they drafted what they called the *Fundamental Principles of Disability*. In the document, UPIAS "unequivocally" defined "disability" not as a medical designation, but a social one:

> "In our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments, by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society." (1976/1997, Summary of the Discussion section [following "Speakers and Observers" list], para. 10 [p.4]).

The work of disability rights activists led to the creation of disability studies.

> structured social environment to adjust to the needs and aspirations of disabled citizens rather than from the inability of a disabled individual to adapt to the demands of society. In viewing disability as a product of a dynamic interaction between humans and their surroundings, emphasis is shifted from the individual to the broader social, cultural, economic, and political environment. In fact, from this perspective, disability may even be regarded primarily as the consequence of a "disabling environment." (The Socio-Political Definition section, para. 1).

Hahn's use of the term "socio-political" rather than "social" underscores that the "medical" and "social" model nomenclatures are not fixed. Linton (1998) also addressed the political aspect inherent in the social model: "The disability studies' and disability rights movement's position is critical of the domination of the medical definition and views it as a major stumbling block to the reinterpretation of *disability* as a political category and to the social changes that could follow such a shift" (p. 11; emphasis in original). In the picturebooks that I will be examining, disability is often thought of and responded to as a medical "problem" or condition, rather than as a facet of identity or a social or political construct.

In the same way that the "medical" and "social" nomenclatures are not fixed, neither is the medical and social model binary universally accepted. Though many scholars now are wisely moving away from this particular binary, many of the picturebooks that I will discuss raise issues that can be understood by thinking about "medical" and "social" understandings of disability.

Oliver, credited "as one of the originators of discussions about disability models"

(1996, p. 30), described why he decided on a binary of "social" and "individual" models of disability:

> The individual model for me encompassed a whole range of issues and was underpinned by what I called the personal tragedy theory of disability.[4] But it also included psychological and medical aspects of disability; the latter being what I preferred and still prefer, to call the medicalisation rather than the medical model of disability (Manning and Oliver 1985). In short, for me, there is no such thing as the medical model of disability, there is instead, an individual model of disability of which medicalisation is one significant component. (p. 31)

His claim that the "medicalization" of disability does not exist completely apart from other related issues is one that is echoed by Shakespeare, whose objections to the "medical"/ "social" binary I will discuss shortly.

Impairment: An Uneasy Relationship with Disability. "Disability" and "impairment" are often used interchangeably in the United States. Currently, this is likely influenced, in part, by the first definition of *disability* in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: "The term 'disability' means, with respect to an individual[:] (A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual" (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [ADA], 2012). The second definition is "(B) a record of such an impairment" (ADA, 2012). Given that

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[4] Oliver described "personal tragedy theory" as the "[suggestion] that disability is some terrible chance event which occurs at random to unfortunate individuals. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth" (1996, p. 32).

the medicalization of disability has been codified into law, it is no wonder that, as Linton (1998) wrote, "Divesting [the word *disability*] of its current meaning is no small feat" (p. 10). She named this divestment as one of the objectives of disability studies:

> While retaining the term *disability,* despite its medical origins, a premise of most of the literature in disability studies is that *disability* is best understood as a marker of identity. As such, it has been used to build a coalition of people with significant impairments, people with behavioral or anatomical characteristics marked as deviant, and people who have or are suspected of having conditions, such as AIDS or emotional illness, that make them targets of discrimination. (p. 12)

In much the same way that the UPIAS delineated the difference between *disability* and *impairment*, some American disabilities studies scholars, including Linton, have also adopted this distinction.

Siebers (2008) echoed Linton's comments about disability as a marker of identity and situated disability studies in direct opposition to the medical model of disability:

> The study of disability as a symbolic network is of a more recent date. Unlike the medical approach, the emerging field of disability studies defines disability not as an individual defect but as the product of social injustice, one that requires not the cure or elimination of the defective person but significant changes in the social and built environment. . . .
>
> Disability is not a physical or mental defect but a cultural and minority identity. To call disability an identity is to recognize that it is not a biological or

> natural property but an elastic social category both subject to social control and capable of effecting social change. (pp. 3-4)

Siebers's last sentence raises two contradictions about the term *disability* that disability studies scholars acknowledge: its use to describe both the "social control" or "oppression" of people with impairments—attitudinally and literally (as in the social model of disability)—and an identity claimed by those people. Siebers stressed: "Many disability theorists—and I count myself among them—would argue that disability as an identity is never negative" (p. 4). Disability as a socially constructed identity is also acknowledged by the ADA. While its first two definitions of *disability* reflect medical conceptions of the term, the third and final definition does not: *disability* can refer to "*being regarded* as having such impairment" (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 2012; emphasis mine). Therefore, disability becomes a marker of identity, rather than an impairment or a "record" of one. However, the ADA distinction casts disability as an identity that is conferred upon someone, contrasting the disability studies' perspective of disability as an identity claimed by someone.

Before discussing "normal," I want to bring together understandings of "disability" and "impairment" by returning to Shakespeare and his disagreement with the "medical"/ "social" binary. His dissent is useful to explore because it highlights again that these models are neither universally accepted nor completely fixed:

> In recent years, I have come to the conclusion that the British social model version of disability studies has reached a dead end, having taken a wrong turn back in the 1970s, when the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation

> (UPIAS) social model conception became the dominant UK understanding of disability. (2006, p. 2)

Shakespeare believes that:

> disability is always an interaction between individual and structural factors. Rather than getting fixated on defining disability either as a deficit or a structural disadvantage, a holistic understanding is required. The experience of a disabled person results from the relationship between factors intrinsic to the individual, and extrinsic factors arising from the wider context in which she finds herself. Among the intrinsic factors are issues such as: the nature and severity of her impairment, her own attitudes to it, her personal qualities and abilities, and her personality. Among the contextual factors are: the attitudes and reactions of others, the extent to which the environment is enabling or disabling, and wider cultural, social and economic issues relevant to disability in that society. (2006, pp. 55-56)

Shakespeare's proposal is useful because it is not an either/or binary. Negating the existence of bodily difference (and impairment) has always perplexed me because it seems short-sighted to try and claim that one's physical body, which is indisputably "real," has no impact whatsoever on one's experience—whether of disability or another aspect of personal identity.

Normal: A relatively recent definition. Normal is a ubiquitous term that has lost its import, and yet our collective understanding of it is central to disability studies, as Davis (1995) argued, it is worth discussing its meanings and the evolution of its usage. Merriam-Webster's dictionary lists the first four (of eight) definitions as:

> 1: perpendicular; especially: perpendicular to a tangent at a point of tangency . . .
>
> 2 a: according with, constituting, or not deviating from a norm, rule, or principle . . .
>
> b: conforming to a type, standard, or regular pattern . . .
>
> 3: occurring naturally . . .
>
> 4 a: of, relating to, or characterized by average intelligence or development . . .
>
> b: free from mental illness . . .(Normal, n.d.)

Davis (2013) wrote that the first of these definitions was the common one before the word *normal* became synonymous with the other, more contemporary meanings: “(Previously [before 1840], the word had meant ‘perpendicular’; the carpenter’s square, called a ‘norm’ provided the root meaning)” (pp. 1-2). He explored the beginnings of the idea of “normal” while writing about disability and deafness (1995). In a later essay (2002), which was an updated chapter from his 1995 book, he summarized his argument about the era before the use of “normal” in its contemporary context:

> Before the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, Western society lacked a concept of normalcy. Indeed, the word *normal* appeared in English only about 150 years ago, and in French fifty years before that. Before the rise of the concept of normalcy, there appears not to have been a concept of the normal; instead the regnant paradigm was one revolving around the word *ideal*. If people have a concept of the ideal, then all human beings fall below that standard and so exist in varying degrees of imperfection. The key point is that in a culture of the ideal, physical imperfections are seen not as absolute but part of a descending

> continuum from top to bottom. No one, for example, can have an ideal body, and therefore no one has to have an ideal body. (pp. 100-101; emphasis in original)

The rise of statistics prompted the shift from “ideal” to “normal,” and provided the modern definitions of the term:

> Around the beginning of the nineteenth century in Europe, we begin to see the development of statistics and of the concept of the bell curve, called early on the normal curve. With the development of statistics comes the idea of a norm. In this paradigm, the majority of bodies fall under the main umbrella of the curve. Those that do not are at the extremes—and therefore are abnormal. Thus, there is an imperative placed on people to conform, to fit in, under the rubric of normality. (Davis, 2002, p. 101)

The necessity of attempting to conform to the norm and “succeeding” is at the center of the Overcoming Narrative, which I will explain shortly.

Davis (1995) puts the construction of normalcy at the center of disability studies:

> The object of disability studies is not the person using the wheelchair or the Deaf person but the set of social, historical, economic, and cultural processes that regulate and control the way we think about and think through the body. In addition, the presumption that disability is simply a biological fact, a universal plight of humanity throughout the ages, needs to be challenged. This study aims to show that disability, as we know the concept, is really a socially driven relation to the body that became

> relatively organized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This relation is propelled by economic and social factors and can be seen as part of a more general project to control and regulate the body. (pp. 2-3)

Though Davis argues against viewing disability from a medical perspective and prefers to place it in a social context, he links it to a very specific cultural understanding of "normalcy" and how that has shaped the way that people think about bodies:

> Just as the conceptualization of race, class, and gender shapes the lives of those who are not black, poor, or female, so the concept of disability regulates the bodies of those who are 'normal.' In fact, the very concept of normalcy by which most people (by definition) shape their existence is in fact tied inexorably to the concept of disability, or rather, the concept of disability is a function of a concept of normalcy. Normalcy and disability are part of the same system. (1995, p. 2)

Davis asked people to consider a potentially unsettling idea: that one's state of being "normal" is inextricably tied to another's state of being "disabled"; that it is impossible to invoke one idea without simultaneously invoking the other: To be "normal" is to be "not disabled."

Overcoming Narrative. The Overcoming Narrative is routinely and emphatically criticized by disability studies scholars, moves that often confuse those who think of such narratives as heartening examples of people triumphing over adversity, and therefore worth sharing. Exploring the Overcoming Narrative will also allow me to move into a discussion of rhetorical narrative theory.

I want to make two points: First, the Overcoming Narrative is not the exclusive domain of "disability." People may certainly overcome challenges that are not disability-related. Second, there are many people who want to share their Overcoming Narratives to inspire and motivate others. One of the more problematic aspects of the disability Overcoming Narrative addresses the teller of the narrative, the teller's motivation for sharing it, and the chosen audience: *Who* is telling the narrative about *whom*, to *whom*, and *why/when*? I will return to these questions shortly as they are answered by the rhetorical definition of narrative. For the moment, these stories are often told shortly after someone has overcome her disability, and the purpose of the telling often is to inspire the listener(s); at the very least, the listener(s) should feel happy for the disabled person's triumph when the narrative is complete. Or, the occasion could be long after the "overcoming"; the telling could be for the purposes of raising awareness about a particular disability and inspiring the listeners. Often these narratives are so-called "human interest stories" that editors and producers believe are worth sharing with their audiences because the stories are cheerful, inspiring, and instructive.

First, and most importantly, the Overcoming Narrative is about someone who is kind. Or, someone who was not kind, but who has become that way—that may happen as she overcomes her disability. It is useful if the person is considered innocent. (Children are great subjects in this case.) There is usually a description of hardship that is experienced by this person: she has a disability, the "problems" of which are described in great detail. This part of the telling is meant to inspire some degree of sadness in the listener(s).

Eventually, Something Happens that enables the disability to be overcome by the Kind Innocent Person. She may enter a contest (and win), or she may decide do something previously thought impossible for Someone Like Her: Climb a mountain despite having only one leg; win a handwriting contest despite not having hands; get a good job or be accepted by a prestigious college despite being presumed to lack the intelligence and capabilities of others who also do such things. At this point, the disability has been "overcome" by the person who had it because the person appears to be "normal," like everyone else who climbs mountains, wins contests, gets good jobs and is accepted to prestigious schools. This individual feels elated, not just because of her success, but because her success makes her seem to be "normal" like everyone else. Recall Davis's comments about "the imperative placed on people to conform, to fit in, under the rubric of normality" (2002, p. 101).

The ability of this person to conform makes others—those in the life of the triumphant one-legged mountain climber and those who hear her story—happy and inspired to share it at every opportunity, and to try harder themselves, because if a woman with one leg can climb a mountain, then they, who are likely able-bodied, can deal with the minor setbacks they face every day. If they, too, are disabled, they can be inspired to overcome their disability. All the listeners have been given a sobering perspective on their lives. They are happy because this nice woman has overcome her disability and is really more like normal able-bodied people than not.

Disability Studies' Response to the Overcoming Narrative. Linton (1998) has a comprehensive discussion of the disability studies' response to "overcoming":

> The popular phrase *overcoming a disability* is used most often to describe someone with a disability who seems competent and successful in some way, in a sentence something like “She has overcome her disability and is a great success.” One interpretation of the phrase might be that the individual’s disability no longer limits her or him, that sheer strength or willpower has brought the person to the point where the disability is no longer a hindrance. Another implication of the phrase may be that the person has risen above society’s expectation for someone with those characteristics. (p. 17; emphasis in original)

I want to discuss these implications because they demonstrate two of the problematic aspects of the Overcoming Narrative that most people are not aware of because they are (understandably) focused on the “happy success” that is “overcoming.”

1. *The individual’s disability no longer limits her or him, that sheer strength or willpower has brought the person to the point where the disability is no longer a hindrance.*

In a case in which someone tells somebody else that a disability was overcome by a third person who climbed a mountain, it is very likely that the teller is making assumptions about whether this woman is still “limited” by her disability. It may *seem* to the teller that the disability “is no longer a hindrance,” but unless that mountain climber has explicitly said that this is the case, the teller is making an assumption that minimizes this woman’s experience of living with that disability. It also diminishes (however unintentionally) the import of her past experiences on her current circumstances. Alternatively, if the mountain climber never thought of herself as disabled in the first place, she is probably not qualifying her success as an “overcoming,” and the teller is demonstrating unintended condescension by framing her story as an Overcoming Narrative.

2. *The person has risen above society’s expectation for someone with those characteristics.*

When the teller is impressed by the person’s success based on her ability to “rise above” such expectations, and means to communicate this, condescension—again, unintended, one hopes—is apparent. Occasionally both the meanings that Linton offered surface, particularly when someone tells the person with the disability in a well-meaning, but misguided compliment: “You’ve clearly overcome your disability; look at how successful you are.” This also suggests that “success” would have been impossible had the person with the disability not overcome it.

Linton concluded her thoughts by making a surprising statement:

> Because it is physically impossible to *overcome* a disability, it seems that what is *overcome* is the social stigma of having a disability. This idea is reinforced by the equally confounding statement “I never think of you as disabled.” An implication of these statements is that the other members of the group from which the individual has supposedly moved beyond are not as brave, strong, or extraordinary as the person who has *overcome* that designation. (pp. 17-18; emphasis in original)

“I never think of you as disabled” also suggests that a disability identity would otherwise trump all others, and be the most defining when someone thought about “you.”

I have told able-bodied people that it is "physically impossible to *overcome* a disability," and some of them become offended. This is likely because, as Linton points out: "The idea that someone can *overcome* a disability has not been generated within the community; it is a wish fulfillment generated from the outside. It is a demand that you be plucky and resolute, and not let the obstacles get in your way" (p. 18; emphasis in original). Though there are some people who do tell stories of their own overcoming, most of these stories are told by an able-bodied someone else.

Linton added, "The phrase *overcome a disability* may also be a shorthand version of saying 'someone with a disability overcame many obstacles,'" and that "in both uses of *overcome,* the individual's responsibility for her or his own success is paramount" (pp. 18, 19; emphasis in originals). Success happens in two ways: First, there is the achievement of something considered noteworthy, for example, scoring the winning touchdown during a football game, winning a contest, or climbing a mountain. Second, by virtue of having made such an achievement, the individual has also achieved "normalcy," or the appearance of it. In subsequent chapters, I will call attention to the different ways in which the Overcoming Narrative manifests in different books.

I do want to stress that applying a disability studies perspective to these books (concerning the Overcoming Narrative or other elements of the text or illustrations) has the potential to lead toward both positive and negative assessments of the narratives. These authors are taking on important and difficult projects, given their subject matter and audiences, and it is not surprising that they would succeed in some ways and fall short in others.

The Rhetorical Approach to Narrative Theory

The different elements of the Overcoming Narrative—including its teller and the teller's motivation for sharing the narrative—can be further explored using the rhetorical approach to narrative theory. Phelan and Rabinowitz contrast the traditional definition of narrative with the rhetorical definition: "Narrative is often treated as a representation of a linked sequence of events, but we subsume that traditional viewpoint under a broader conception of narrative as itself an event . . ." (2012a, p. 3). I want to state here then, that, when comparing the Overcoming Narrative to a "representation of a linked sequence of events," as it stands, the "Overcoming Narrative" as an entity is not a narrative in and of itself. Rather, "Overcoming Narrative" is a designation given to any specific narrative that has certain elements and a certain linked chain of events, such as those that I mentioned above.

As I noted in my Introduction, Phelan and Rabinowitz explained that rhetorical narrative theorists, "look at narrative primarily as a rhetorical act rather than as an object. [They] see it as a purposive communication of a certain kind from one person (or group of persons) to one or more others" (2012a, p. 3). The approach defines narrative as: "*somebody telling somebody else, on some occasion, and for some purposes, that something happened to someone or something*" (2012a, p. 3; emphasis in original). When using this definition to interrogate the Overcoming Narrative, stories become interesting to able-bodied people in particular and "worth telling," when these disabilities have been overcome, because the person has triumphed over (pick your noun of choice) adversity/challenges/difficulties/struggles/suffering, and is now "just like everyone else."

Returning to Phelan and Rabinowitz's definition, in the case of the picturebooks that I will be examining, that audience is made of children who are, most often, defined by a facet of their identities—either being disabled or nondisabled. In some cases, (which I will point out) it is easy to notice that the author is writing more to one part of her audience than another, or, perhaps she is writing to both. Implicit in these interactions are, in part, desires by authors to communicate certain messages to the one or two groups in her audience: for the disabled readers, the author wants to share a narrative in which disabled readers will be able to see themselves and thus feel both validated as worthy of having stories told about their experiences, and see how someone else (albeit a fictional someone else) is navigating a particular disability. For the nondisabled audience, the author wants to fill a gap in their nondisabled readers' knowledge about disabilities that has utility in the real world, and allow them to also think about and appreciate the circumstances of those with disabilities.

> The [rhetorical] approach assumes that texts are *designed by authors in order to affect readers in particular ways*; that those designs are conveyed through the words, techniques, structures, forms, and dialogic relations of texts as well as the genres and conventions readers use to understand them. (Phelan, 2007, p. 4; emphasis added)

Several researchers whose work I referenced in my Introduction wrote about the importance of all children being able to see children with disabilities in books.

The rhetorical approach considers not only authorial intent, but the text and the reader: "[It] assumes a recursive relationship (or feedback loop) among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations), and reader response" (Phelan, 2007, p. 4). Thus, the experience of reading is a dynamic event in which the reader is continuously engaging with—thinking about and responding to—the choices that the author has made in the design of her text as well as the content of text itself (e.g., the characters and their choices). The approach is, therefore, "as concerned with narrative's affective, ethical, and aesthetic effects—and with their interactions—as [it is] with its thematic meanings" (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2012a, p. 3). I mentioned in my Introduction Thomson's (1997) comments about the influence that literature can have on its readers: "If we accept the convention that fiction has some mimetic relation to life, we grant it power to further shape our perceptions of the world, especially regarding situations about which we have little direct knowledge" (p. 10). Her comments are rooted implicitly in her concern about this influence, especially as it concerns people with disabilities/being disabled.

Authors, Narrators, and Their Audiences. I shortly will address readings of these picturebooks through a disability studies lens. I am thus a member of a particular audience. As I noted during my brief discussion of rhetorical narrative theory in the Introduction, rhetorical narrative theorists identify four different audiences: the first two are the *actual audience* and the *authorial audience*. The *actual audience* is the flesh-and-blood reader outside the text (me with a copy *Nick Joins In* in my hands. Actual readers try to join the *authorial audience*: the hypothetical readers that the author envisions as she writes. This is a "group that shares the knowledge, values, prejudices, fears, and experiences that the author expected in his or her readers and that ground his or her rhetorical choices" (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2012a, p. 6). These are the audiences envisioned by the authors of the picturebooks that I will discuss throughout my dissertation.

As there are different audiences, so, too, are there different authors. I briefly want to mention the concept of the *implied author*, as distinct from the *actual author*—the flesh-and-blood author—because of the utility it provides when talking about the "authorial agency" of the creators of picturebooks. Booth described the *implied author* as "always distinct from the 'real man'— whatever we may take him to be— who creates a superior version of himself, a 'second self,' as he creates his work" (1983, p. 151). While describing why they find the concept useful, Phelan and Rabinowitz noted that

> It gives us a way to talk about texts with problematic authorship. This includes, for instance, ghostwritten, anonymous, and fraudulent texts. It also includes collaboratively written texts . . . the two (or more) actual authors construct a hybrid version of their actual selves, and it is that hybrid version that readers come to know. (2012b, p. 33)

In an earlier discussion of the relationship between the actual author and the implied author, Phelan (2011) wrote:

> An analogy with another kind of craftsman may be helpful here. The implied author is to actual author and to the narratives she constructs as a carpenter is to her whole self and to the cabinets she makes. In each case, the craftsman draws on specific parts of herself that are particularly relevant to the construction project and in each case we can come to know that version of the craftsman revealed in

> the choices that give the construction the particular shape it has. But just as we would not regard the carpenter who made our kitchen table as either wholly revealed by or simply a product of the table, we ought not regard the author who constructed the narrative as either wholly revealed by or simply a product of that narrative. (p. 69)

This "collaboration" also occurs between authors and illustrators, so the term can be used when discussing picturebooks, or any books that feature images. When I refer to "the implied author" I am referring to a single authorial figure, formed by the collaboration of writer and illustrator. If I name a figure responsible for a particular narrative, I will refer to it as "Author Last Name-Illustrator Last Name" (unless the author also illustrated the book). Likewise, when I refer to "audience" or "reader(s)," unless I specify otherwise (for example, "actual reader(s)"), I am referring to the authorial audience.

It is not always easy for every actual reader to join a particular authorial audience because of a gap between an actual reader's "knowledge, values, prejudices, fears, and/or experiences" and those required of the authorial audience. For instance, a reader might not be able to suspend her disbelief when Lewis Carroll's Alice falls down a rabbit-hole, lands uninjured, and a short time later, changes size three times in a few minutes (shrinking after drinking a liquid that changed flavors the more she drank, growing after eating a tiny cake, and shrinking again after fanning herself). For this reader, because such things would be impossible in the actual world, she would resist joining the narrative's authorial audience.

The "somebody who tells" in the rhetorical definition of narrative is actually two separate tellers (at least), the implied author and her narrator(s). The audience in the text is the third audience identified by rhetorical narrative theorists, one which the authorial audience pretends to join, the *narrative audience*, "an audience that exists in the narrator's world, that regards the characters and events as real rather than invented, and that accepts the basic facts of the storyworld regardless of whether they conform to those of the actual world" (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2012a, p. 6). This audience is in an "observer position": The narrative audience is made of people who believe that Alice is real.

Phelan and Rabinowitz write that

> With some narratives (e.g., epistolary novels), it may also be useful to distinguish between the narrative audience and the narratee, the intratextual audience specifically addressed by the narrator. The terms are sometimes used almost as synonyms, but the differences are often significant. The narrative audience is a role that the actual reader takes on while reading; the narratee, in contrast, is a character position in the text, one that the narrative audience in a sense observes. (2012a, pp. 6-7)

Many of these narrators explicitly address a disembodied or uncharacterized "you" narratee; I will call attention to this in later chapters. Still others do not address a "you," but are providing information in such a way as to strongly imply a narratee. Gerald Prince introduced the term *narratee* in 1973:

> He constitutes a relay between the narrator and the reader, he helps establish the narrative framework, he serves to characterize the narrator, he emphasizes certain themes, he contributes to the development of the plot, he becomes a spokesman for the moral of the work. (1973/1980, p. 23)

Phelan and Rabinowitz explain that once actual readers begin reading and join the authorial and narrative audiences, readers develop three types of interests and responses to components of the narrative. The first are *mimetic* (the characters and their world are "possible"): "These responses to the mimetic component include our evolving judgments and emotions, our desires, hopes, expectations, satisfactions, and disappointments" (2012a, p. 7). Secondly, responses to the *thematic* component attend to how the characters and narrative are being used to address "cultural, ideological, philosophical, or ethical issues" (2012a, p. 7). Lastly, responses to the *synthetic* aspects of the narrative understand it (and all its elements, including characters) as synthetic constructs. A narrative's progression will affect the interaction of these different interests (Phelan, 2007, p. 6). The scholarship that addresses the problematic aspects of picturebooks featuring disabled characters often highlights the mimetic and synthetic aspects of these books (and not in ways that their authors would have hoped). Phelan points out that typically, "In most realistic narratives, the audience has a tacit awareness of the synthetic while it focuses on the mimetic and the thematic components" (Phelan, 2007, p. 6). I will be addressing some of these issues in my discussion of the narrative progression of individual books.

Because responses to the synthetic elements of the text understand them as constructed and used by the author in service of her goals, these responses affect our aesthetic judgment of a work (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2012a, p. 7). Readers make judgments of a text *as* they read, and once they have finished, they make judgments of the work as a whole. Rhetorical narratologists, then, "seek to understand and assess the variety of things narratives have done and the variety of ways they have done it" (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2012a, p. 5).

What about the Illustrations? Since I have addressed authors, narrators, and their audiences, before I return to a discussion of narrative progression that I began in my Introduction, I also want to address another textual element, illustrations. I want to call attention to a discrepancy often ignored when discussing picturebooks: that between the points of view (more on this term in a moment) offered by the text of a picturebook and its illustrations: "Whereas the texts of picturebooks tend conventionally to focalize events through their child protagonist, the pictures usually show that same child as seen from a distance and therefore, presumably, by someone else—someone whom [*sic*], it seems, has the ability to record all the visual surrounding details the child is not necessarily conscious of . . ." (Nodelman, 2010, p. 17). This discrepancy is one that readers have learned to accept: they take it for granted that even if a book's protagonist is telling her story, very often, she will be in the pictures, when, theoretically, if the text and the illustrations were more closely aligned, she would never be seen by readers, because readers would be positioned so they could see events from her point of view.

Nodelman uses the word *focalize*; Genette (1972/1980) developed (and later refined) a concept of *focalization*. Returning to *point of view*, Genette explained that narrative

> can choose to regulate the information it delivers . . . according to the capacities of knowledge of one or another participant in the story (a character or group of characters), with the narrative adopting or seeming to adopt what we ordinarily call the participant's “vision” or “point of view.” (p. 162)

Genette spoke specifically about text, so it is worth remembering that in picturebooks (or other illustrated materials for that matter) at least two streams of information are being delivered simultaneously via the words and the pictures. Genette (1972/1980) felt that *point of view* combined two aspects that needed to be acknowledged separately: “who speaks” (a narrator) and “who sees” (a character or characters) (p. 186). He later amended “who sees” to “who perceives” (1988, p. 64). He named this latter concept “focalization,” and drew on other theorists’ work as he differentiated between three different possible types of focalization (zero focalization, internal focalization, and external focalization)[5].

Zero focalization would correspond to what we often refer to as “omniscient” narration. When considering picturebooks, *internal focalization* would most often correspond to a picturebook narrated by a character in the narrative (what Genette named a *homodiegetic narrator*).

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[5] 1. Zero focalization: “the narrator knows more than the character, or more exactly, says more than any of the characters knows”

2. Internal focalization: “the narrator says only what a given character knows”

3. External focalization: “the narrator says less than the character knows.”

(1972/1980, pp. 188–89).

There has been considerable debate of Genette's taxonomy; other theorists have proposed revisions and alternatives, including Phelan (2005), whose work I will address shortly. For the moment, Genette, as stated above, used "focalization" to describe the text, not the illustrations. However, I am going to borrow the term while discussing them here. It is worth noting that while we can answer questions about "who speaks?" and "who sees" when looking at a text, those questions may be more difficult to answer when looking at illustrations. Quite literally, readers "see" the images, and, as Nodelman (2010) said, this occurs "from a distance" thanks to an unknown entity not present in the text: "someone whom [*sic*], it seems, has the ability to record all the visual surrounding details . . ." (p. 17). As for "who speaks"; one could argue that it is not a *who* but a *what*. Nodelman said of the relationship between pictures and words in picturebooks that, "In picture books, the pictures act as schema for the words and vice versa" (1988, p. 284). The totality of the text "tells" readers about the pictures, as the pictures also provide information about themselves—layout, for example, provides a guide.

Child readers often try to connect with the "child protagonist" that Nodelman mentioned. Stephens (1992) wrote about the interaction that child readers have with this character, who is usually, as Nodelman pointed out, the focalizing character:

> In aligning themselves with a focalizing character, readers match their own sense of selfhood with ideas of self constructed in and by the text, not principally because of the inherent nature of events and characters described, but through the mode which these are perceived. . . . .
>
> Reading establishes a relationship between the reader and a potential alter

> ego, the focalizer(s), but also a relationship between the reader and the reader's own selfhood, prompted by such responses to the text as: do I feel that way? Is this like my school (or family, or friends etc.?) What would I do in this situation? (pp. 68-69).

This "relationship" with "a potential alter ego" is one of the reasons to examine who is the focalizing character in these picturebooks. Many of the picturebooks feature character narrators who tell their stories, but a character narrator is not always a child with a disability, but her best friend or sibling.

The illustrations provide further information about the relationships between the characters, and often focus readers' attention on additional details and suggest how readers should feel. (Does a character have a sad expression? Are the colors dark, suggesting sadness? Bright, suggesting the opposite? Is she alone in a picture? Are other characters with whom she is talking looking at her (and is she looking at them)?

Narrative Progression. Dyches and Prater (2008b) identified six aspects of literature that should be examined to determine the quality of a children's book: *theme*, *characterization*, *setting*, *plot*, *point of view*, and *literary style* (pp. x-xi). When describing the ways that disability is used in relation to plot, they wrote:

> In most cases, books that portray a character with a disability use the disability as part of the plot or storyline. The role of the disability, however, may be major or minor. In some books, for example, the plot centers on the character's disability being identified and treated through special education services. Other books call attention to the disability only as necessary to the plot

> or the development of other characters. (2008b, p. xi)

Their definition of plot as a book's "storyline" is a traditional one, as described by Phelan and Rabinowitz as an introduction to the concept of "narrative progression": (2012c): "Definitions of plot range from minimalist ones that make it synonymous with *fabula*—the chronological sequence of events in a narrative—to maximalist ones that characterize it as the larger principle of organization of a narrative . . . " (p. 57; emphasis in original). In *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (1989), Phelan described his concept of narrative progression, an alternative to these definitions of plot as a particular "object":

> Progression, as I use the term, refers to a narrative as a dynamic event, one that must move, in both its telling and its reception, through time. In examining progression, then, we are concerned with how authors generate, sustain, develop, and resolve readers' interests in narrative. (p. 15)

Examining narrative progression allows one to look closely at the workings of the "feedback loop" connecting authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response that is central to the rhetorical approach to narrative theory.

Textual and Readerly Dynamics. Recall that narrative progression is the synthesis of what Phelan and Rabinowitz refer to as *textual dynamics*: "the logic of the text's movement from beginning to middle through ending," and *readerly dynamics*: "the audience's temporal experience . . . of that movement" (2012c, p. 58). More specifically, *readerly dynamics* are the audience's "evolving (or shifting) understandings, judgments, emotions (including desires), and expectations as it follows the textual dynamics," which are "not only the interconnections among events but also the interaction of those story-level dynamics with the discourse-level dynamics arising from the interrelations of implied author, narrator, and audience" (2012c, p. 58).

Instabilities and Tensions, Plot and Narratorial Dynamics. Phelan (1989) explained that narrative progression relies on: "the way in which an author introduces, complicates, and resolves (or fails to resolve) certain instabilities which are the developing focus of the authorial audience's interest in the narrative" (p. 15). He further defined two types of instabilities: "those occurring within the story, instabilities between characters, created by situations, and complicated and resolved through actions," and "those created by the discourse, instabilities—of value, belief, opinion, knowledge, expectation—between authors and/or narrators, on the one hand, and the authorial audience on the other" (p. 15). He called the first type, *instabilities*, and the second, *tensions*, and explained that, "some narratives progress primarily through the introduction and complication of instabilities, whereas others progress primarily through tensions, and still others progress by means of both" (p. 15). In the books that I will be discussing, I want to again note that the illustrations are an important part of the textual dynamics that will affect the readerly dynamics.

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, first published in 1865, generates its narrative progression through instabilities. Alice, who is bored while sitting on a riverbank with her sister and her cat, Dinah, notices a white rabbit scamper past her. The rabbit exclaims that he is "late," checks his pocket watch, and disappears down a nearby rabbit-hole. Here, Carroll introduces the global instability: "In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again" (2015, p. 12). People do not follow rabbits down rabbit-holes, certainly, but Alice's more pressing problem is that she has done so without thinking about the consequences, including the potential to be stuck down it, unable to get out.

The instabilities that follow cause Alice varying degrees of fear, frustration, and confusion. In addition to changing size twelve times throughout the narrative, Alice meets a variety of characters: most frustrate and confuse her rather than help her decide where she should go next in her quest to follow the White Rabbit.

Phelan went on to distinguish between *global* and *local* instabilities: "Local instabilities are those whose resolution does not signal the completeness of the progression; global instabilities are those that provide the main track of the progression and must be resolved for a narrative to attain completeness" (2007, p. 16). Thus, the *global instability* is Alice following a rabbit down a rabbit hole without first deciding how she might get out of it. *Local instabilities* are all of the problems that Alice faces while in Wonderland. They do not get resolved. Alice moves from one to the next. Readers might be as frustrated as Alice is, or just amused, but in any case, if they keep reading it is to discover how she'll eventually return home.

Of events such as these, Phelan and Rabinowitz wrote:

> Our concept of progression both subsumes and revises the maximalist definitions of plot by acknowledging the importance of events and their interconnections (the "something happened" that anchors our rhetorical definition) in the overall shape of a narrative but also reconceiving their role in the achievement of that shape

(2012c, p. 58).

Phelan and Rabinowitz went on to explain that a narrative's shape is created not only by "events and their interconnections (*plot dynamics*) but also the trajectory of the authorial audiences' judgments, interests, and responses, including the various interactions among them (readerly dynamics)" (2012c, p. 58; emphasis added). Because instabilities occur on the level of story, they are considered part of plot dynamics. Tensions, on the other hand, because they occur between (or among) authors, narrators, and audiences, on the level of discourse in a narrative, are part of *narratorial dynamics*, along with "the ongoing relationships established by the author's use of the resources of narration (narrator-narratee relationships, character-character dialogue, etc." (Phelan and Rabinowitz, 2012c, p. 59). Together, plot dynamics and narratorial dynamics constitute textual dynamics.

Beginnings, Middles, and Endings. Phelan (2007) created a model that links narrative progression with the beginnings, middles, and endings of narratives.

Beginning	Middle	Ending	Dynamics	
Exposition	Exposition	Exposition/ Closure	Instabilities and Their Contexts (Plot Dynamics)	Textual Dynamics
Launch	Voyage	Arrival		
Initiation	Interaction	Farewell	Narratorial Dynamics (inc. tensions)	
Entrance	Intermediate Configuration	Completion/ Coherence	Readerly Dynamics	

Table 1: Model linking narrative progression to the parts of narratives

The model was amended slightly in his work with Rabinowitz, adding “Coherence” with “Completion.” (2012c, p. 60) (I’ve added the “Dynamics” column for my own benefit so that I can have all of the distinctions in one spot.) The first two rows are plot dynamics; the third, narratorial dynamics. These textual dynamics, in turn, influence the readerly dynamics, which are noted in the fourth row. The Beginning *exposition* includes information about the narrative that helps to situate the audience—information about the setting, characters, and events, for example. The narrator may explain the occasion of the telling. Also included here is any information given before the start of the narrative. (Phelan, 2007, p. 17) In *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, this would include the description of both where Alice is, and whom she is with, and also her boredom. The initial exposition is followed by the *launch*, which introduces the first global instabilities or tensions, and is the transition from the Beginning to the Middle. (Phelan, 2007, p. 18) The launch may also be followed by relevant exposition. Phelan explained that, “The launch may come early or it may come late, but I set the boundary at the first global instability or tension because until then a narrative has not established a clear direction” (Phelan, 2007, p. 18). In *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, this would be Alice’s decision to follow the White Rabbit, which also signals her journey into the fantasy world of Wonderland. While she could have ignored the animal’s strange behavior, “burning with curiosity,” (Carroll, 2015, p. 12) she chose to follow it, and that action sets the narrative in motion.

The global instability is developed further before Alice meets more of

Wonderland's strange inhabitants. After Alice falls down the rabbit-hole, she enters a hallway full of doors, including a very tiny one, unlocked by a key that appears on a nearby table. Alice views a lovely garden that she wishes to visit, but she is too large to fit through the door. The initial exposition and launch are the plot dynamics of the narrative's beginning. The narratorial dynamics of the beginning, the *initiation*, is the first set of interactions among author, narrator, and audience. Carroll's narrator, beyond reporting Alice's journey, offers occasional asides. Several of these are shared while Alice is falling down the rabbit-hole and talking to herself. The narrator also provides occasional clarification for the audience. When Alice muses that, "'Dinah'll miss me very much to-night, I should think!'" (Carroll, 2015, p. 14), the narrator immediately follows with, "(Dinah was the cat.)" (Carroll, 2015, p. 14). The authorial audience perhaps senses that there is an adult presence who will be a useful guide through what promises to be a strange journey, precipitated by a child doing something that no other has done. These textual dynamics in turn influence the first readerly dynamics, the *entrance*, at which point, the author hopes, a reader will have joined the authorial audience:

> When the entrance is complete, the authorial audience has typically made numerous significant interpretive, ethical, and even aesthetic judgments, and these judgments influence what is arguably the most important element of the entrance: the authorial audience's hypothesis, implicit or explicit, about the direction and purpose of the whole narrative, what I will call its configuration. (2007, p. 19)

Since the audience at this point has made an initial hypothesis, Phelan notes, that it may change this hypothesis as the narrative progression continues.

The plot dynamics listed in the Middle column (*exposition* and *voyage*) serve to provide the reader with more information about the narrative, and the instabilities and tensions continue to develop. Similarly, the *interaction* is the collection of continuing relationships among author, narrator, and audience. "These exchanges have significant effects on our developing responses to the characters and events as well as to our ongoing relationship with the narrator and implied author" (Phelan, 2007, p. 20). Likewise, the *intermediate configuration*, is the "evolving responses of the authorial audience to the overall development of the narrative" (Phelan, 2007, p. 20). At this point, readers may revise (or confirm) their initial hypothesis.

After Alice shrinks, she finds herself in the pool of tears that she had cried earlier, surrounded by creatures from Wonderland. She begins to discover that they are a strange and frustrating collection of animals. For the audience, these animals and their interaction with Alice, most notably in the nonsensical Caucus Race, suggest what kind of encounters Alice is likely to have as the narrative progresses. The audience becomes aware, too, that the implied author likes to incorporate nonsense poetry and wordplay, some of which frustrates Alice, but is there for the amusement of the audience that notices it.

The *exposition/closure* is information that "includes a signal that the narrative is coming to an end, regardless of the state of the instabilities and tensions" (Phelan, 2007, p. 20). Alice eventually finds herself in the garden she had seen through the tiny door's keyhole, though she discovers to her chagrin that it belongs to a quick-tempered Queen of

Hearts, who is eager to order the beheading of anyone who displeases her. The White Rabbit is also there. Thus, though Alice has not yet left Wonderland, and there are still a handful of odd occurrences to come, Alice has finally had her "burning curiosity" sated upon discovering where the rabbit was going (and the audience also understands his nervousness at being late).

The strange events of the narrative culminate in a nonsensical trial for the Knave of Hearts, who supposedly stole the Queen's tarts. This is followed by the *arrival*, which is "the resolution, in whole or in part, of the global instabilities and tensions" (Phelan, 2007, p. 20). Alice, so angered by the ridiculousness of the trial, yells at the Queen of Hearts, who orders her beheaded. When Alice continues to shout at the Queen's anthropomorphized playing cards, they seemingly rise up and fall down on her, and while yelling and trying to bat them away, she wakes up and finds that she's fallen asleep in her sister's lap.

The closure and arrival are complemented by the *farewell*, "the concluding exchanges among implied author, narrator, and audiences" (Phelan, 2007, p. 21). Finally, then, *completion/coherence* is the "authorial audience's final and retrospective sense of the shape and purposes of the narrative as a whole" (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2012c, p. 61). At this point, the audience will also make "interpretive, ethical, and aesthetic judgments of the whole narrative" (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2012c, p. 61). A perusal of online book reviews yields responses to Carroll's work that range from enraptured to enraged.

Picturebooks In My Corpus

As I noted earlier, after the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, disabled children began appearing more frequently in children's books. In my Introduction, I mentioned the Randolph Caldecott and John Newbery Medals. I also wanted to briefly mention two awards given in the United States to picturebooks that explicitly feature disabled characters. I will examine a few of these in depth in later chapters. The *Dolly Gray Children's Literature Awards*, presented biannually, are given jointly by the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and Special Needs Project. The awards, which were first given in 2000, "recognize authors, illustrators, and publishers of high quality fictional and biographical children, intermediate, and young adult books that appropriately portray individuals with developmental disabilities" (Council for Exception Children - Division on Autism and Development Disabilities, 2012).

The Schneider Family Book Awards, given yearly by the American Library Association, "honor an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences" (American Library Association, n.d.). The awards were first given in 2004, and are determined by the age of the audience rather than by a particular feature of a book: "younger children, ages 0 to 8; middle grades, ages 9 to 13; teens, ages 14 to 18" (American Library Association, 2014, [p. 5]).

Locating and Examining the Picturebooks. My dissertation will use as its corpus 178 fiction picturebooks for children published between 1995-2015. I found the books using a variety of electronic sources: the Ohio State University's WorldCat@OSU online library catalog, Amazon.com, and the *Horn Book Guide Online*, which reviews "virtually every hardcover trade book published in the United States for young people" (The Horn Book Inc., 2017). One of the limitations of catalog searches is that subject headings are not always consistent: looking up "disability" will not necessarily return books that only include the names of specific conditions in their subject headings. After I read many of these books, I went back to the catalog and used the specific disabilities as search terms in an effort to ensure that I was not neglecting a large number of books published between 1995-2015. I also used Dr. Heather Garrison's comprehensive list of over 1,000 children's picturebooks and novels that feature characters with disabilities. My hope is that by using a variety of sources, I have managed to locate a reasonable number of these titles.

I have read each book numerous times; the first time was to attempt to get a sense of the work as a whole, paying special attention to the interactions between text and illustrations. During the second reading, I would pay more attention to the narrative progression, noting the one that the implied author wanted the authorial audience to experience while attempting to discount the narrative progression that I was experiencing in light of a disability studies lens. On the third reading, I would pay attention to the narrative progression that was being influenced by an understanding of disability studies concepts. I would often reread the book sometime later to see whether I noticed different elements in either progression, and whether I was accurately reflecting (as much as possible) either progression. If I had questions about either of those readings, I would often ask another friend who uses rhetorical narrative theory and narrative progression in his own work to read a book to see whether I was misinterpreting an element of the expected narrative progression, or whether there were elements of it that I was neglecting.

Books that Were Excluded from This Corpus. In an effort to make this project more manageable, recalling the ADA's first definition of disability, "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual" (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [ADA], 2012), I did not include books that discussed illness or disease, though those may certainly be disabling conditions, for example, AIDS and HIV, allergies, arthritis, asthma, cancer and cystic fibrosis. The one exception is mental illness, because I felt that conversations about mental illness as disability are beginning to happen more frequently, and that there is a stigma attached to mental illness that I believe is unique when compared to other disabilities. I also excluded books that featured animal characters and fantastic elements, particularly where the fantastic had a direct impact on a character's disability.

Narrative Progression and Disability Picturebooks

Narrative progression provides a guide for paying attention to elements of the text (textual dynamics) and to understand how they are influencing our responses (readerly dynamics). It allows us to understand how an implied author's design of her text is guiding us, and how she is hoping that we will respond. This means that, as actual readers, we will have an awareness of when our reactions are different than what she is hoping for—should that even happen—and we find ourselves no longer part of the authorial audience. Turning to the books that I will be examining in this dissertation, narrative progression, then, allows for an analyst to closely examine how authors are guiding their audience to respond to people with disabilities. At the same time, it allows for the analyst to be aware of her own personal response if and when it differs from the response that the implied author wants from her authorial audience.

While narrative progression has not been applied often to nonfiction, I want to use it here to explore two fictionalized biographies about Helen Keller. In this type of biography, “authors . . . will dramatize certain events and personalize the subject” (Kiefer, 2010, p. 535). Authors also “may invent dialogue and even ascribe unspoken thought to the subject. These conversations might be based on facts taken from diaries, journals, or other period sources . . .” (Kiefer, 2010, p. 535). Because these authors are writing about an actual person, they must work within specific parameters (the details of Keller’s life), and do not have the complete freedom to create characters and stories about them, though authors may fictionalize parts of their books about her, most commonly by inventing conversations between characters.

These real-life “boundaries” allow for an examination of the ways in which the structure of the Overcoming Narrative can be used to reframe the story of a person’s life. Finally, the gaps among multiple books or between any single book and the actual events in her life highlight the very specific, deliberate construction of these narratives. Examining the narrative progressions will allow me to model the work that I will be doing in later chapters.

300 Visits to the Kellers’ Water Pump. Lesa Cline-Ransome’s *Helen Keller: The World in Her Heart* (2008), illustrated by James Ransome, and Holly M. Barry’s

Helen Keller's Best Friend Belle (2013), illustrated by Jennifer Thermes, are partial biographies; they do not attempt to share the story of Helen's entire life in 32 pages, though Barry's includes after the story-proper a nearly page-long biography of Keller (in addition to a page of information about her fondness for dogs).

In *Living to Tell about It* (2005), Phelan made the case that narrators can be focalizers—this is often the case in these two books—and so proposed a model that differs from Genette's, as "a typology of possible relations between speaker and perceiver": 1. narrator's focalization and voice; 2. character's focalization and narrator's voice; 3. character's focalization and voice; 4. blends of narrator's focalization and voice with character's focalization and voice; 5. narrator's focalization and character's voice (p. 117). Phelan also explained that narrators have three functions: reporting, interpreting, and evaluating (p. 50). I will highlight instances where this narration has very explicit purposes in communicating something to the audience beyond what Helen (or another character) seems to know. Likewise, I will do the same when discussing the illustrations. Often, what the audience sees is from the view of the unnamed observer mentioned by Nodelman, but there are several departures worth discussion.

As we read, we make judgments. Phelan (2007) wrote of them that, "The judgments we readers of narrative make about characters and tellers (both narrators and authors) are crucial to our experience—and understanding—of narrative form" (p. 3). Narrative judgments, in turn, are, "the point of intersection for narrative form, narrative ethics, and narrative aesthetics" (p. 7). The authorial audience both observes and judges as it experiences the narrative:

> The authorial audience perceives the characters as external to themselves and as distinct from their implied authors, and the authorial audience passes interpretive and ethical judgments on them, their situations, and their choices. The audience's observer role is what makes the judgment role possible, and the particular judgments are integral to our emotional responses as well as to our desires about future events. (Phelan, 2007, p. 7)

Because the audience responds to the characters in these books as synthetic constructions, the impression of them translates to an aesthetic judgment of the authors' work.

Phelan (2007) described four different ethical situations, divided into two categories:

> one involving the *ethics of the told* (the character-character relations); two involving the *ethics of the telling* (the narrator's relation to the characters, the task of narrating, and to the audience; and the implied author's relation to these things); and one involving the flesh-and-blood audience's responses to the first three positions. (p. 11)

Looking at these picturebooks through the lens of disability studies leads to a heightened awareness of narrative ethics. Those actual readers will pass judgment not only on the behavior of characters, but on the author who has created them and is using them for her own ends, and who may be giving children their introduction to people with disabilities.

This circumstance speaks to Phelan's contention that "readers need to evaluate the ethical standards and purposes of individual narratives, and they are likely to do so in different ways" (2007, p. 13). Indeed, someone not reading the books through this lens will make certain judgments that might be very different from the judgments made by a person who is using this lens. So, too, multiple readers who are using this lens may also make different judgments. Phelan continued:

> The point here is that rhetorical ethics involves a two-step process: reconstruction and evaluation. That is, it attempts to identify the relevant underlying ethical principles, to apply them to specific behavior of the characters and techniques of the telling, and, ultimately, to determine the ethics of the overall narrative purpose. Then, having done that reconstruction, rhetorical ethics moves to evaluation (2007, p. 13).

I will address this process at the end of each section, and then at the end of the discussion about both narratives in their entirety. When considering the entire narratives, I will also consider rhetorical aesthetics.

Covers and Front End Pages. Both front covers depict Helen outside. Cline-Ransome-Ransome's is an illustration of Helen from the torso up, perhaps kneeling, in a garden of flowers that appear to be both orange and white lilies. A butterfly is just beneath the title, and to Helen's right. Helen is holding a white lily in her right hand, and gazing down to the right, past the lily, rather than at it. A slight smile is on her face. The sky behind her is peach that fades into light yellow behind her. The end pages are pale yellow, and the cover page features Helen standing in outside in a green field that is dotted with tiny flowers. She holds a doll in her right hand, and with her left, is bending a tall stem dotted with pink flowers toward her nose. The back cover is a deep periwinkle; there is a circle in the center; it has a thin brown line around its edge, as though it is a picture frame or a window in which Helen is depicted from the shoulders up, her face tilted toward the sky. A steady rain is falling. Helen's eyes are closed and she is smiling. Underneath the image is a line of text: "You cannot touch love, but you can feel the sweetness that it pours into everything" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, n. p.). Readers might assume that this is something that Helen will say in the text itself.

The illustration on Barry-Thermes's cover is similar; Helen is kneeling outside between two large trees, and she is also gazing down and smiling. She hugs Belle, a tall reddish-brown dog, against her. Helen's house is visible, small and distant behind them. The back cover is a light blue that fades into white. Centered on it is an image of Belle drawn into a picture frame. Underneath her, the name "Belle" is written in script on a small horizontal scroll that is attached to the bottom of the "frame." Below the image are centered lines of text: "Helen had an old setter named Belle. Helen followed her everywhere. Belle was beside Helen on the most important day of her life . . ." (Barry, 2013, n. p.). Readers might pay attention to the structure of the second sentence—rather than a dog following her owner, the owner is following her dog. The book's end pages feature what look like 26 tiny slips of paper that are each colored almost half-and-half pale blue-grey and yellow. Each paper features a hand fingerspelling a letter of the English alphabet. The cover page is white, and an image of Belle is centered on it, drawn in an oval, as though it is a framed picture. Indeed, the entire page appears to be inside a brown picture frame; the whitespace serving as a large mat.

Beginnings. Barry-Thermes's narrator opens the narrative with the initial exposition by reporting to her audience when and where Helen was born, and that, "She was a bright and beautiful baby. She started talking when she was six months old. By her first birthday, she could walk" (Barry, 2013, [p. 3]). The accompanying illustration is of Helen smiling and walking across the lawn of her family's property, a teddy bear in her right hand. A small white dog runs beside her. Her also-smiling parents hold hands and stand a few paces behind Helen and the dog. The page itself is white, and the illustration above the text looks like the one on the cover page: a photograph of a happy child, a pet by her side, her loving parents watching out for her, as though it is meant to capture and memorialize a particular moment in time.

An illustration of Helen's bedroom fills the next two pages; her parents stand on the left side of the room, which has yellow wallpaper, or is bathed in bright yellow light. Mr. and Mrs. Keller are again holding hands; Mrs. Keller appears to be leaning against Mr. Keller, but now their eyes are downcast; they don't look at Helen, who is sitting on the floor across the room. The narrative's global instability is introduced here: "But six months later, Helen became very sick with a high fever. It caused her to lose her sight and hearing. Helen's world became quiet and dark" (Barry, 2013, [p. 4]). On the right page, the yellow fades into a dark grey. Helen, wearing a nightgown that is the same shade of yellow as the side of the room where her parents stand, sits in a corner, also looking down toward the floor; a tall black-and-white dog sits behind her, resting its snout on her shoulder. The instability is further developed with the text on this page: "She could no longer talk to her parents. She forgot the words she had learned. Helen didn't know how to explain what she was thinking and feeling. She felt alone and afraid" ([p. 5]). These first pages therefore serve as the narrative's launch; the narrative has established its direction (Phelan, 2007, p. 18) with the reporting on Helen's loss of sight and hearing. It moves from a happy moment to a problematic one.

By this point, readers have completed their entrance, have likely situated themselves in the authorial audience, and have likely made various judgments: ethical, interpretive, and aesthetic. In most of Barry-Thermes's work the ethics of the telling are particularly important as they concern the narrator's actions because Helen speaks only briefly, and at the end of the narrative. As readers learn from the above, she initially cannot. The audience has to rely solely on the narrator for information about what Helen might be thinking or feeling. So far, in these few pages, the narrator's reporting is not at odds with what is in the illustrations, and the authorial audience would therefore likely judge that the narrator is trustworthy. That audience will worry for Helen, and wonder what will happen next. It will notice that, though the narrator has not mentioned this, Helen has at least two dogs (or three, if including Belle, not yet seen in the narrative). When looking at the right page, the bright color of Helen's nightgown stands in stark contrast to the grey of the walls around her, and readers' eyes are immediately drawn to her. In turn, the audience will notice the contrast between the darkness of Helen's side of the room and the brightness where her parents stand, a literal depiction of the metaphorical movement from "lightness" to "darkness" for Helen. At the same time, the contrast also emphasizes that Helen and her parents now have vastly different experiences of the world, because Mr. and Mrs. Keller are still able to see, hear, and speak.

As a point of contrast, Cline-Ransome-Ransome's book opens with Helen sitting at a kitchen table, a breeze blowing the white curtains that hang on the window behind her. As in Barry-Thermes's book, light color is striking here, because while Helen is wearing a dark brown dress (that matches her brown eyes), the wallpaper and tablecloth are shades of yellow, and the table is dotted with (among other things) a yellow-and-white mixing bowl, and a white vase, measuring cup, and several eggs. In contrast to the black dog sitting next to Helen, who has its eyes closed, Helen's eyes are open, but they don't appear to be focused on anything; she appears to be looking at something beyond the boundary of the page, but her face is expressionless. The narrator explains, "It was March in Alabama, and the warm spring air slipped through the open windows and mingled with the scent of sugar and vanilla" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 3]). Helen, the audience learns, wants to go outside, but, in anticipation of having some of the cake that is baking, waits.

In the next opening, Helen's gaze is still toward something beyond the page, but she has been joined at the table by Martha, the daughter of the family's cook, Viney. Martha is holding Helen's hand, and Viney stands at the table, holding a hot cake pan, looking toward the girls. Italicized and bolded text is introduced to communicate Helen's thoughts:

> Into the kitchen came Viney, the family cook, with a long, sure stride.
>
> ***She's sure in a hurry.*** (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 4]; italics and emphasis in original)

Thus, in an important contrast between the two books, here Helen's thoughts are offered as though she were speaking them. Though the narrator does report Helen's actions throughout the text, her thoughts are not filtered through the narrator, only the implied author. The text therefore makes use of both the narrator's focalization and voice and Helen's focalization and voice, or, perhaps more accurately, thought. The next opening features illustrations drawn into circles, similar to the way that Barry-Thermes's first illustration was in an oval; the page background is a faded yellow-and-rose-print that mimics the kitchen wallpaper. On the left page:

> Heels click-clacked across the room and then came the soft scent of lavender.
>
> ***Mother.***
>
> The tender warm of her mother's lips on Helen's forehead followed. A skirt of silk brushed Helen's arm.
>
> ***Why is Mother wearing her fancy dress today?***
>
> ***Are we having visitors?*** (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 6]]; italics and emphasis in original)

In the drawing of Helen's mother kissing her forehead, Helen's eyes gaze upward toward her mother, whose eyes are closed. Thus, both a global instability and a tension are introduced. Helen has questions that go unanswered, and the authorial audience, like Helen, may be curious. However, this is coupled with a tension that, while perhaps present on the preceding pages when Viney brought in the cake, is made clearer here: Why is Helen not *asking* her mother these questions? While the audience may have thought Helen's gaze was unusual previously, as she does not appear to be looking at anything the audience can see. Helen is looking up toward her mother, but her mother's eyes remain closed. Though Mrs. Keller's closed eyes are not in themselves strange, the close-up allows the audience to notice that Helen's eyes are in the exact same position that they were in on the previous pages; her gaze has not changed even though, ostensibly, she "should" be seeing something right in front of her: her mother's face.

The focalization of these two pages shifts from the typical view in which the audience can see all of the characters, as though it is sitting next to the narrator, able to see the entire scene at once. Two of the images on the page—Mrs. Keller from her upper arms down to the floor and of Mr. Keller's legs down to the floor—correspond to what Helen feels—her mother's silk skirt, and the "scrape of [her father's] boots" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 7]).

While it is impossible to know what Helen might have envisioned, if anything at all, the audience is being directed to look at the objects that give Helen the only specific information that she is getting through the use of her other senses, while also being reminded of its own limitations—looking at the pictures, the audience cannot smell Mrs. Keller's perfume or feel Mr. Keller's boots scrape along the floor.

The other two images—that of Mrs. Keller kissing Helen's forehead and of Helen sitting on a chair, her hand resting on Belle's back, the dog standing next to her—are the view that the narrator might have, but the focus is still tight—on only part of Helen's and Mrs. Keller's faces so that the audience pays attention to Mrs. Keller's kiss, and on Helen's profile from just below her nose nearly down to the floor, and on most of Belle, because Belle is the conduit for more information for Helen: "She felt Belle's body tense and her fur rise and fall" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 7]). By putting together the information she has received Helen wonders whether visitors are coming and then deduces that they are because Belle has reacted to the arrival of the Keller's horses, her father is home early, and she also "sensed the rumble of an approaching train. . . ." ([p. 7]; ellipses in original).

The next opening resolves this tension when the narrator explains, "Once, the world had been filed with the sound of her mother's lullabies . . . She still enjoyed the soft scent of honeysuckle and the tangy sweetness of the season's first berries, but Helen's world was now silent and dark" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 8]). The majority of this double-page spread is taken up with Helen's bed; she stares up at the ceiling; her parents (and Belle, as the dog is later named) sit around the bed, looking at Helen. The narrator explains: "Just before her second birthday, an illness took away her sight and hearing forever" ([p. 8]). Thus, unlike in Barry-Thermes's book, where Helen's loss of sight and hearing is introduced on the second page, Cline-Ransome-Ransome waits to introduce this instability, perhaps, to encourage the audience to focus first on what Helen was focused on—a curiosity about what was happening in her house on a particular afternoon, rather than on Helen's inability to see and hear.

Unlike Barry-Thermes, who has structured her narrative to begin with Helen as a toddler (who is able to see and hear), Cline-Ransome-Ransome begins her narrative when Helen is older, and then briefly moves backward in time. In her book then, perhaps, one might feel that there are two global instabilities: What is going on in the Kellers' house on the day that the narrative starts? And, how is Helen going to know what is happening around her, and how will she communicate with others, and they with her? Both of these together constitute the narrative's launch. In Barry-Thermes's book, the audience is meant to direct the majority of its focus on Helen's loss of sight and hearing.

Having introduced Helen's blindness and deafness, both books' next moves are markedly different. Barry-Thermes's narrator explains the relationship between Helen and her dogs: "Often, the only ones who could comfort Helen were her dogs. They were patient, gentle, and affectionate" (Barry, 2013, [p. 6]). Though these pages are still the dark grey of Helen's side of the room on the previous page, the illustration that accompanies this text is a picture of a smiling Helen, who is surrounded by three dogs—the two who have been previously pictured, and, for the first time, Belle.

In Cline-Ransome-Ransome's next pages, the narrator explains the signs that Helen created to name her parents and her baby sister, Mildred and then complicates the instability of Helen's inability to communicate and understand what is happening around her, reporting, "But each day [Helen] grew more frustrated and angry, hitting Mildred, kicking at her family, and crying. Her parents tried to make her happy, but Helen's behavior only got worse" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 10]).

The accompanying illustration, of the Kellers' dining room, is filled with beiges, browns, and dark greens—the wall, the floor, large area rug, the bookshelves, a footstool, a large plant, and books. The only bright colors in the room, the red of a rug in an adjoining room, and light blue of Helen's dress, draw readers' eyes to her: She is on her knees in the doorway between rooms, hair covering her face, one fist raised, the other hitting the floor. The dining room table is in disarray. Plates and books are on the floor, furniture is tipped over, and even photographs hanging on the ways are crooked. Belle, who has been by Helen's side whenever previously pictured, is closer to the audience, peering at Helen from around the dining room table, as if now even she is frightened of Helen. Thus, the instability mentioned here in the text about Helen's frustration and anger is magnified by the addition of an unspoken but illustrated comment about Helen's anger leading her to make a mess in a room that goes beyond not putting things away, for example, but knocking over furniture and books, and tugging on a tablecloth so dishes fall and break. For the first time, too, the audience cannot see Helen's face, and so perhaps, pays less attention to her, and more to the disarray she has caused in the dining room.

Some Initial Thoughts from a Disability Studies Perspective. Both narrators use nearly identical phrases to describe Helen's becoming blind and deaf: "Helen's world became quiet and dark" (Barry, 2013, [p. 4]) and "Helen's world was now silent and dark" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 8]). It is, understandably, important to these authors that their audience understand very explicitly what Helen's circumstances become, though they each have their narrator provide different information about her illness. Barry-Thermes's narrator is very matter-of-fact: "But six months later, Helen became very sick with a high fever. It caused her to lose her sight and hearing. Helen's world became quiet and dark" (Barry, 2013, [p. 4]). Cline-Ransome-Ransome's narrator, on the other hand, devotes an entire paragraph beforehand to describing what Helen had been able to hear ("her mother's lullabies"), feel ("lush green lawn on bare toes"), and see ("gardens overflowing with colorful blossoms") (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 8]). The narrator then says, “She still enjoyed the soft scent of honeysuckle and the tangy sweetness of the season’s first berries, but Helen’s world was silent and dark” (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 8]). On one hand, Cline-Ransome-Ransome is having her narrator describe the intensity with which Helen had experienced the world via her senses so that her audience can attempt to understand the magnitude of Helen’s loss. The narrator explicitly says that Helen has lost her sight and hearing “forever.” On the other hand, the descriptive paragraph works to evoke pity that would likely already exist.

Cline-Ransome-Ransome’s narrator also personifies Helen’s illness, which “took away her sight and hearing forever” (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 8]), as though the illness made a conscious decision to harm Helen. Barry-Thermes has her narrator comment that the illness “caused” the loss of those senses for Helen, which seems to be a more passive action. Barry-Thermes has perhaps also done a bit of unnecessary work, but in her illustrations. The shift in colors in Helen’s room is a literal representation of Helen’s losing her sight, which some young readers might appreciate, but as Cline-Ransome-Ransome’s book demonstrates, is not a requirement for getting readers to understand that Helen is blind, deaf, and unable to speak.

Both of the biographies emphasize, in some way the “light/dark” dichotomy, a move common in biographies of Keller. In his examination of Helen Keller biographies for children, “What We Talk about When We Talk about Helen Keller,” Kunze (2013) wrote that, “Granted, Keller herself refers to darkness and light in describing her world,” (p. 310), but points out that this “this ‘silence and darkness,’ however, was more accurately a literary metaphor than a lived reality. According to Kunze (2013), Keller’s biographer Dorothy Herrmann asserts that '[t]hose of the blind who lack functional retinas [like Helen Keller] perceive neither light nor darkness' (162n)" (p. 310). As a result, he noted, "Writers' perpetuation of this artistic decision amounts to little more than reusing the familiar metaphors Keller invoked to make her story tangible to that group in the first place" (Kunze, 2013, p. 310). These two implied authors and others use the contrast between light and dark to attempt to explain how abrupt and confusing the loss of sight and hearing was for Helen, and also, therefore, what the experience of being able to communicate again meant to her. It might be worth pointing out to older children that this is a metaphor rather than a description of Helen's actual reality.

Kunze (2013) noted that a trope in biographies of Keller is the "'wild child,'" shortly after she has lost her sight and her hearing (p. 310). Addressing a book's particularly distressing illustration of Helen dumping her baby sister Mildred out of her cradle while Mrs. Keller looks on in horror, Kunze wrote, "This overdramatic moment envisions the young Helen as a terror, but does not offer any explanation or understanding of her frustration over her inability to communicate with her parents" (2013, p. 310). This "wildness" is communicated in the illustration in Cline-Ransome-Ransome's book that depicts a messy dining room, Helen, on her knees, one fist raised while the other one hits the floor, though Cline-Ransome-Ransome, thankfully does not label Helen "wild" or an "animal" as others have done and does point out that Helen was "frustrated."

Middles. Each narrator has introduced Helen's becoming deaf and blind, but cast it differently: Barry-Thermes's narrator focuses on the love that Helen's dogs show her, not on her frustration and consequent lashing out: "It didn't matter that she couldn't see, hear, or talk to them. Whenever she reached out to touch them, they were always close beside her" (Barry, 2013, [p. 6]). Cline-Ransome-Ransome's narrator remarks that, as a result of Helen's behavior, "her parents needed help, so they sent for a teacher from the Perkins Institute or the Blind, a school in Boston" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 10]). Following these introductions, both narratives' narrators make the same move: They describe the arrival of Anne Sullivan, which is in both cases a significant complication of the global instabilities in the narratives' voyages, and has the potential to alter their trajectories: Anne is there because the Kellers hope that she will be able to help Helen. The different tones of the beginnings, even when similar information is shared, have distinct consequences for the narratives' middles.

Barry-Thermes gives the date of Anne Sullivan's arrival as March 7, 1887, framing the incident within the relationship between Helen and Belle: "Belle was beside Helen on the most important day of her life" (Barry, 2013, [p. 8]). If the audience has read the back cover, it may recall this line. Helen and Belle take up most of the left side page of this particular spread; Anne Sullivan stands in the open front door on the top of the right page; beams of light seem to emanate from her, and pass through both Helen's parents and "hit" both Helen and Belle, who have spots of yellow on them. The only eyes the audience can see here belong to Belle—it can see her right eye in profile, and Anne Sullivan's eyes (though she is wearing glasses with grey-tinted lenses). The narrator explains:

"On March 3, 1887, Anne Sullivan came to Alabama to live with Helen and her family. Anne was a teacher from the Perkins School for the Blind. She came to help Helen and open up a whole new world for her" (Barry, 2013, [p. 9]). While the audience might be curious about Sullivan, it has basic information about her and understands why she is there, and has this information before Helen gets it.

Cline-Ransome-Ransome sets the meeting between Helen and Anne outside. Anne is leaning down and toward Helen, who has raised her left hand to Anne's face:

> A stranger was here. Helen reached forward to touch her.
>
> A smooth, round face with no lines.
>
> ***Young*** (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 13]; italics and emphasis in original).

Helen's touching Anne is mirrored by her parents, who hold each other's hands. Mr. Keller's free hand is wrapped around his wife's back. Viney stands behind Martha on the porch, her hands on Martha's shoulders. Belle sits close to them.

Whereas Barry-Thermes's narrator immediately explains who Anne Sullivan is, Cline-Ransome-Ransome's narrator still labels Anne "a stranger" during this meeting. Upon Anne Sullivan's arrival, both of the global instabilities introduced at the beginning of the narrative become linked: The first, what is going on in the Kellers' house on the day that the narrative starts? has been answered: A stranger has come. It raises another question, "Who is she?" The second global instability, how is Helen going to know what is happening around her, and how will she communicate with others? has a potential answer: Cline-Ransome-Ransome's audience knows more than Helen. This is the teacher from the Perkins Institute. Here, then, the audience may adjust its expectations for what might happen in the rest of the narrative. What is happening "today" has been explained, and it is likely that the teacher will try to teach Helen to communicate so that she can be understood by her parents and they by her, but how that will happen and whether it will be successful are as yet unanswered.

Simultaneously though, though there is also a tension between the implied author, the narrator and the audience: the narrator could have mentioned Anne Sullivan's name when explaining that a teacher came from the Perkins Institute, but did not. Perhaps the implied author has the narrator withhold this information so that the audience will be more likely to sympathize with Helen's frustration over not knowing who the "stranger" is.

The narrator explains the interaction between Anne and Helen as difficult, further developing this instability:

> The stranger will not leave. Each day there is something new. The stranger's hand in hers. Fingers tracing, fists pounding, so many unfamiliar shapes.
>
> ***What do they mean?*** (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [14]; italics and emphasis in original).

Helen also thinks: "***I don't like her***," and "***I want my mother***" ([p. 14]; italics and emphasis in original). The global instability is being complicated further. Helen is shown frowning, sitting behind a couch, hugging her knees against her chest; Anne stands in a doorway, looking toward her, and Belle walks toward Helen. Additional, less clearly defined "tails" are painted on both sides of Belle's actual tail to indicate that she is wagging it as she walks toward Helen. The narrator also withholds here an explanation of what the "finger tracing" is, introducing another tension. While the audience may or may not be as upset as Helen, it, too, may be wondering what the "unfamiliar shapes" are and why the stranger is drawing them.

By contrast, though Barry-Thermes's narrator also explains a similar interaction between Anne and Helen, this audience knows Anne's name, and none of the stress between teacher and pupil is mentioned; Helen does not appear to be confused or upset by Anne's arrival, and no mention is made of Helen not knowing Anne's name. The voyage in Barry-Thermes's narrative develops the global instability via the narrator's reporting: "Anne taught Helen how to communicate by using finger spelling in the palm of her hand. At first Helen did not understand the meaning of the words" (Barry, 2013, [p. 10]). On the opposite page, a doll and a hat are lying above what look like the slips of paper that are on the front end pages and illustrate the finger-spellings for "D-O-L-L" and "H-A-T." These "slips of paper," then, are a communication from the narrator to her audience. These are not papers that Anne is giving Helen. The focalization of the illustration on this page is therefore a blend of what Helen has a tactile awareness of (the doll and hat), and of what the narrator is showing to her audience (the fingerspellings of each letter in the words "doll" and "hat"). As Cline-Ransome-Ransome's audience may have done, Barry-Thermes's may now focus its attention on wondering how Helen will learn to communicate with Anne's help, rather than simply wondering whether Helen would ever be able to again communicate.

Even with the same basic sequence of events, the interactions up to this point between the narrators and audiences in particular are different: Barry-Thermes's narrator has given her audience basic but useful details about people—specifically Helen and Anne—so that her audience might be sympathetic to Helen's feelings of sadness, but not be distracted by not knowing who Anne Sullivan is when she arrives or why she is there. Barry-Thermes's narrator wants her audience's focus to be Helen and Belle. Cline-Ransome-Ransome's narrator, on the other hand, does not tell her audience who Anne is, because the implied author likely wants the audience to not only sympathize with Helen, but to empathize with her, and be likewise frustrated.

Following the development of Helen and Anne's relationship, both books' next openings depict the moment at the Kellers' water pump when Helen finally makes the connection between the movements that Anne is making with her fingers on Helen's palms and a particular "thing," in this case, water. Barry-Thermes's narrator explains: "One day, Anne held Helen's hand under the water flowing from a pump. She spelled *w-a-t-e-r* in her palm" (Barry, 2013, [p. 12]). Above this is an oval-shaped picture of Anne and Helen at the pump; again the shape mimics a framed photograph: Another moment worth remembering. Underneath the text are the "slips of paper" that illustrate the signs for the five letters in "water." The opposite page is filled with an illustration of a smiling Helen holding out her hands which are getting wet: "At last Helen understood that water was something cool that she could feel running down her hand. For Helen, making the connection was electric!" (Barry, 2013, [p. 13]).

Cline Ransome-Ransome's narrator says,

> Helen learned her first word at the pump. A cool splash, slippery and wet. *Water*. She learned quickly. With the stranger's help she discovered that each of

> the movements in her hand was the shape of a letter. And that all of the letters put together made words (Ransome, 2008, [p. 16]).

On the opposite page, Helen and Anne are sitting in front of a large water-filled basin that is under a bright pink pump. The pump is one of the two brightest objects in the picture, and is in the foreground of the page. (The other object is Helen's doll; the same pink is used in its dress, but it lies behind Helen and is painted with softer strokes, making it appear slightly more abstract than the clearly defined pump.)

Cline-Ransome-Ransome's next page finally resolves the instability of Helen and Anne's fraught relationship at the same time that Helen finds out who Anne is—almost. As Helen is touching objects and Anne is spelling their names into her palm, Helen finally asks who Anne is:

> ***Is there a name for everything?***
>
> *Y-e-s*, the stranger responded.
>
> ***But who are you?*** Helen asked by pointing and placing a hand on the stranger's chest.
>
> The letters were spelled slowly into her hand. *T-e-a-c-h-e-r*.
>
> *T-e-a-c-h-e-r*. Helen spelled back.
>
> ***I like her.*** (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [18]; italics and emphasis in original).

In the accompanying illustration, for the first time, Helen appears to be looking directly at Anne.

After the scene at the water pump, Barry-Thermes emphasizes Helen's growing vocabulary and its importance to her by having her narrator reference the metaphor from the beginning of the text: "The moment Helen learned that first word, her world went from darkness into the light. She learned thirty words that day" (Barry, 2013, [p. 14]). That page is illustrated with the houses on the Kellers' land, the water pump, and a tiny Anne Sullivan. On the facing page, however, a gigantic Helen kneels in front of Belle, holding her paw, as she tries to share her new knowledge with her beloved pet. She is making the sign for the letter *W* against Belle's front right paw. The size discrepancy is, in part due to perspective—Anne and the houses and water pump are further from the audience than Helen and Belle. But the two are drawn large, out of scale—their heads almost reaching the top of the physical page—perhaps to further underscore both the import of Helen's learning and her relationship with Belle.

Shortly after, Barry-Thermes's narrator then reports a role-reversal between Anne and Helen: "One morning Helen came running upstairs to find Anne. She was filled with excitement. Helen spelled 'dog-baby' and then held up her five fingers. Anne did not understand what Helen was trying to tell her" (Barry, 2013, [p. 18]). For the first time in the narrative, Helen has more knowledge than another character and is completely certain of how she can communicate it. "Helen took Anne's hand and led her outside" ([p. 19].). Readers likely understand Helen's message, but this local instability is quickly resolved with the narrator's comment that five puppies have been born to one of Helen's dogs.

More Thoughts from a Disability Studies Perspective. Both books, though about Helen Keller, focus a great deal on the arrival of Anne Sullivan and the moment that Helen finally makes a connection between the movements that Anne is making in

Helen's hand and objects and people in the world around them. Barry-Thermes and Cline-Ransome-Ransome want to focus on the events of Spring 1887. They want to emphasize for their readers, in part, the confusion and frustration Helen felt upon losing her ability to see and hear, contrasted with her joy at being able to communicate again. Given that Helen lived for nearly 88 years, any biographer wanting to write a picturebook about her has a wealth of material at their disposal. Kunze noted of children's biographies of Keller that he examined:

> The content of these books manages to perpetuate the perception that Keller conquered adversity. To achieve this end goal, they noticeably expand on her childhood while condensing her adulthood—that is, the eighty years that followed the water pump scene—into the second half (or even less) of their narratives" (2013, p. 311).

Neither of these books addresses Helen's adulthood in their narrative proper; Barry-Thermes's biography includes an opening discussing Helen's love of dogs, followed by a one-page biography of Keller at the end, which, incidentally, concludes with a note about how inspirational Keller is. In fairness to the two authors, one of the largest problems with "the water pump" story is that it is the one that many authors most often choose to retell, so they are not alone in focusing on it. As Kunze suggests, they likely want to highlight Keller's triumph over being deaf and blind. Barry-Thermes's narrator describes that moment: "At last Helen understood that water was something cool that she could feel running down on her hand. For Helen, making the connection was electric!" (Barry, 2013, [p. 13]). Discussion of the water pump story aside, Barry-Thermes choosing to have her narrator then tell the story of how one of Helen's dog has puppies is an interesting change from the stories people usually learn about Keller. Barry-Thermes also has her narrator report Helen's signing "dog-baby" and Anne's confusion, but does not comment on this moment where Helen knows exactly how to explain what she means while a hearing (and seeing) adult is confused. Barry-Thermes trusts that her young audience might notice this, or in any case, be excited about the new puppies.

Cline-Ransome-Ransome's narrator describes the moment at the water pump differently:

> Helen learned her first word at the pump. A cool splash, slippery and wet. *Water*. She learned quickly. With the stranger's help she discovered that each of the moments in her hand was the shape of a letter. And that all of the letters put together made words" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 16]).

Here, Cline-Ransome-Ransome's narrator is relying on the audience to have a reaction to this information without needing to convey in specific description or through the use of exclamation marks, how important the moment was for Helen. The moment is also followed by the resolution of the second global instability, when Helen finally learns that Anne is "Teacher," a circumstance that the narrative has been moving toward since its beginning.

Endings. Barry-Thermes's narrator moves from describing an extended scene in which Helen uses her knowledge to communicate with Anne about one of the family's dogs to reporting that Anne began to teach Helen how to read braille. The braille alphabet is illustrated opposite this page, a second example of information that the narrator is giving to her audience. I believe this is the narrative's closure, signaling the ending precisely because the implied author has moved from the events of Helen finally being able to communicate, and doing so successfully upon the birth of the puppies, to Helen learning another skill. The global instability of whether Helen would be able to communicate has been resolved. In moving to Helen's learning braille, the narrator summarizes in a single page what almost certainly occurred over more than one afternoon. Rather than concluding her narrative after Helen has learned to communicate, as Cline-Ransome-Ransome did, Barry-Thermes continues, addressing Helen's learning to read and speak. Barry-Thermes does not want to create more instabilities (will Helen learn to read and speak?), but still feels that it is necessary to share with her audience that Helen has learned to do them.

The narrator then reports that Anne took Helen to Boston because Helen "wanted to learn how to speak with her voice so everyone could understand her" (Barry, 2013, [p. 24]). As with the explanation of learning braille, Barry-Thermes dedicates only a page to Helen being taught to speak by Sarah Fuller, the principal of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf "After many hours of practicing, Helen said her first sentence: 'It is warm'" ([p. 27]). Barry-Thermes's narrative ends in the next opening: Helen and Anne return home: "Helen called out to her dog, 'Come, Belle!' Belle came running to Helen and licked her hand. In that moment, Helen was filled with joy. Now Belle could understand her, too!" ([p. 29]). This is the narrative's farewell: Helen has, seemingly, come full-circle from the scared toddler that she was at the beginning of the narrative who lived in a world that became "quiet and dark" ([p. 4]). It is possible at this point that the completion/coherence will include a slight readjustment of the audience's expectations for what the narrative's purpose was. While it may have seemed, for most of the duration of the narrative, that the narrative would be moving toward resolving the question of whether Helen would ever be able to communicate in some way, after that had been resolved in the affirmative, the audience gained another piece of information. Not only did Helen learn to communicate successfully in a way that might be unfamiliar to many of them, but she also learned to speak, a skill that the majority of her hearing audience likely has, and may have assumed that Helen would never learn to do.[6]

After the ending of Barry-Thermes's narrative proper, there is a double-page spread that includes five "photographs" of Helen with various dogs. Barry-Thermes uses Helen's love of dogs to mention some of the events in Helen's life when she was an adult, namely Helen's matriculation at college and her speaking tours.

> Years later at Radcliffe College, Helen's classmates gave her a Boston terrier as a reward for completing her midterm exams. . . .
>
> In 1937, when Helen was a on a speaking tour in Japan, she admired an Akita, a Japanese dog breed. The Akita's owner gave her one as a gift. The dog was named Kamikaze-Go and Helen was the first person to bring an Akita to the United States. (Barry, 2013, [p. 31])

This opening is followed by the final page in the book, a biography of Keller, which ends, "Helen was a remarkable woman who devoted her life to helping those in

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[6] In Lynch's *Life and Times: Helen Keller* (2005), an update of an earlier biography by the same publisher, Lynch's narrator erroneously states of Keller, "She would never learn to talk" (p. 7).

need. She is an inspiration to millions of people" (Barry, 2013, [p. 32]). These last pages serve as an epilogue. It is not necessary to read this in order to understand the narrative that Barry-Thermes's narrator has told. On the other hand, both it and the discussion of Helen's dogs give more context to the reader that might be useful, and it is likely that an adult reading the narrative to a child will read both of these; thus these will shape their final impressions of Keller, rather than the ending of the narrative when she returns home and speaks to Belle.

Cline-Ransome-Ransome's narrator, following the "water pump" scene, as Barry-Thermes's has done, moves from the scene at the water pump to reporting what is also likely an extended period of time on one page:

> Soon Helen could spell nearly six hundred words. Stepping onto a well-worn path, leading Teacher down past the old barn, Helen paid close attention. She felt the sharp crunch of pine needles underfoot, then the spongy cushion of moss, and the rickety planks of a bridge. (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 20])

I think that Cline-Ransome-Ransome's ending is signaled in ways similar to Barry-Thermes's, with a similarly structured closure: The global instability surrounding Helen's ability to communicate has been resolved—and her vocabulary is growing quickly. Helen and the audience still do not yet know Sullivan's actual name, though knows her as "Teacher." The narrator moves from describing a very specific scene over several pages—and one that includes conversation, the first conversation between Anne and Helen and in the narrative itself—back to reporting. In a scene similar to one in Barry-Thermes's narrative, Helen also takes charge in this reporting, as she "leads

Teacher," rather than being led by "Teacher."

The narrator describes more words that Helen learns over the next several pages and then says, "But it was in the family garden, fragrant with perfumed blossoms that Helen discovered her favorite spot" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 26]). She learns the names of flowers, and the narrator comments that, "With so many new words came many new questions. . . . The words and questions became stories. In her hand, Teacher spelled stories of faraway places from times before Helen was born . . ." ([p. 26]). This double-page spread is decorated with flowers and insects on the left page. The right page also contains a flower, a bee and two large butterflies, but the dominant image is of a man wearing a red cape and a blue crown, sitting astride a white horse. Behind him is a brown castle, which, at its bottom, morphs into the top of Belle's head. The dog has her yellow eyes focused on the audience. This double-page spread is the only one that does not feature Helen in its illustrations. While the text is focalized through the narrator, the illustrations are a combination of what Helen is actually surrounded by and can touch—the flowers and insects in the garden—and what she imagines—the man on a horse, and a castle. Belle's head seems to suggest that the dog is often present in Helen's thoughts.

The last two openings depict a conversation between Anne and Helen. I consider both of them parts of the arrival because the narrator again begins to discuss a particular conversation on a particular day, rather than summarizing what Helen and Anne are doing over many days. In this first opening, Anne spells, "***I love Helen***," and then tries to explain to a questioning Helen what love is (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 28]; italics and emphasis in original). While Helen has already decided that she likes Teacher, Anne "loves" Helen and tells this to her (and the audience) directly, rather than having it reported by the narrator. She communicates to both Helen and the audience that, whatever frustration she has possibly felt over Helen's earlier behavior is irrelevant.

In the last opening, Anne explains: "***You cannot touch love, but you can feel the sweetness that it pours into everything. Without love you would not be happy or want to play***" (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [31]; italics and emphasis in original). On this last page, the narrator refers to "Teacher" as "Annie":

> [Helen] stopped and placed Annie's hand on her chest.
>
> ***H-e-l-e-n l-o-v-e-s T-e-a-c-h-e-r***, she spelled. When Helen reached to Annie to touch her smooth, round face, all she could feel was a smile that seemed to stretch from ear to ear. (Cline-Ransome, 2008, [p. 31]; italics and emphasis in original). This sentence also functions as the farewell.

While Helen had been satisfied to learn "Teacher" as Anne's name, an audience might still be wondering what Annie's name was, understanding that "Teacher" is an occupation, but not a name that one would typically use in the United States as a form of address. With this conversation, then, the instability of Helen's uneasy relationship with Anne has been completely resolved for the audience—both have communicated their love for each other, and the audience has also learned Teacher's actual first name.

Cline-Ransome-Ransome's biography is one of the few about Keller that does not attempt to give readers additional information beyond what is necessary to tell this particular narrative. The audience does not need to assimilate at the last minute additional facts that are not part of the natural unfolding of the narrative in the interest of having even more information about Keller. Instead, the audience can be satisfied that the instabilities that were introduced and developed throughout the preceding pages have been resolved. The book's subtitle, "*The World in Her Heart*" also makes sense in light of the final conversation that Helen and Anne have had.

Considering the Endings from a Disability Studies Perspective. Both Barry-Thermes and Cline-Ransome-Ransome at different times do work that seems unnecessary to elicit their audiences' reactions—whether it be pity for Helen's hearing and sight loss or happiness when Helen finally makes the connection between objects and people that she can touch and the movements that Anne is making in her hand. Barry-Thermes also concludes her one-page biography of Keller by proclaiming her "inspirational," rather than letting her young audience make that determination (or not). That said, it is also worth noting that a majority of the only direct communication in the entire narrative belongs to Helen: when she spells "dog-baby" and then "small" to Anne, when explaining that the puppies have arrived and commenting on their size (Barry, 2013, pp. [18, 20]); when Helen speaks her first sentence: "'It is warm,'" ([p. 27]) and at the end of the narrative when she calls Belle to her.

Beyond that, the neat endings are worth discussing. Creative license seems to have been exercised in order to provide cheerful endings with specific resolutions, and to elicit, to some degree, a sense of happiness for Helen and a satisfaction that both narratives concluded with everyone happy. Barry-Thermes's narrative would have seemed strange had Helen and Anne gone to Boston and not returned by the narrative's end. Home is where Belle is, and, after the scene with the puppies (in which Belle is pictured, though not mentioned), the narrative would have been incomplete if she and Helen weren't together again. In her autobiography, Keller notes that her family (no mention of Belle) met her and Anne at the train station. It makes sense that Barry-Thermes would instead place the meeting at home where Belle was. But, if the scene is imagined, why include it in the first place? Barry-Thermes wants the last image that readers have to be of Helen talking to Belle, and of being *understood* by her, bringing back together two important elements of the narrative: Belle, and the potential that Helen would not be able to communicate in a way that would help others understand her after becoming deaf and blind. Though her parents and younger sister are smiling at her and walking toward her, Belle is the one to whom Helen first speaks.

It is also not entirely clear why Barry-Thermes felt the need to condense the three years between 1887 and 1890. The narrative could have easily ended shortly after the episode with the puppies. Helen had learned to communicate, to her own delight, as well as that of the authorial audience. Barry-Thermes feels that it is important to end the narrative with Helen *speaking*, potentially being more relatable to her hearing audience. This audience can appreciate the importance of being able to speak in order to communicate more than they might be able to appreciate fingerspelling as a means of communication. Keller mentions in her autobiography the great deal of time that she spent learning to speak:

> But it must not be supposed that I could really talk in this short time. I had learned only the elements of speech. Miss Fuller and Miss Sullivan could understand me, but most people would not have understood one word in a

> hundred. . . . I laboured night and day before I could be understood even by my most intimate friends. . . . (Keller, 2017, Part 1, Chapter 13)

It is not impossible that she would have spoken to Belle and been understood upon returning home, but Barry-Thermes's presentation of Helen learning to speak and return home over the course of four pages makes that learning process seem deceptively simple and quick. It has to be if Helen is to return home and speak to and be understood by Belle, and it is a fittingly positive ending to the narrative.

Though Cline-Ransome-Ransome does not note this, Anne's comments to Helen about love are taken from Keller's recollection in her autobiography, originally published in 1903. According to Keller, they occurred over two conversations (Keller, 2017, Part 1, Chapter 6). The incident is notable as Keller describes it, because after the initial conversation with Sullivan, she was still confused about what love was, but several days later, came to understand that "love" was "an abstract idea" (Keller, 2017, Part 1, Chapter 6). Certainly, understanding "an abstract idea" does not have the same potential to move readers the way that understanding the more specific idea of "love" does, because children are (one hopes) able to relate to having a loving relationship with an adult. They may recognize Helen's early reactions to Anne as ones that they themselves have had when an adult has frustrated them. Appreciating what it is to be loved by someone, they may be happy that Helen is having the same experience. It is possible, of course, that Keller is taking creative license herself in writing her recollections. She has likely forgotten conversations in whole or in part. That said, given that she addresses this incident in her autobiography, it would seem odd for her *not* to mention that she had responded in kind to Sullivan.

Why, then, did Cline-Ransome-Ransome feel that it was important to include the scene *and* embellish it? The scene demonstrates that since Helen has learned to communicate, she is happier and calmer than she was at the start of the narrative. She is eager to be with Anne, whom she had attempted to avoid, and is less likely to become enraged and wreak havoc in the house; she has learned, or is learning, self-control. Finally, having Helen spell, “Helen loves Teacher,” mirrors Anne’s comment to her. We are accustomed to hearing an “I love you,” returned in kind, so the narrative would have seemed incomplete without it. The authorial audience can be satisfied with both books’ endings because Helen became deaf and blind and learned to communicate—by fingerspelling and eventually, speaking—and was no longer angry, confused, and “trapped” in a “dark and silent” world.

Concluding Overall Thoughts from a Disability Studies Perspective. Considering Barry-Thermes’s and Cline-Ransome-Ransome’s books, the former does engage briefly in an aspect of the Overcoming Narrative—the idea that someone who is disabled has the potential to be inspiring. Barry-Thermes’s book includes a biography of Helen, and the final paragraph reads:

> Helen worked until she was 81 years old. Six years later, on June 1, 1968, she died peacefully in her sleep. Helen was a remarkable woman who devoted her life to helping those in need. She is an inspiration to millions of people. (Barry, 2013, [p. 32]).

Understandably, Barry-Thermes likely did not want to end on a sad note (Keller’s death), but she felt the need to mention that Helen was “remarkable” and an “inspiration,” states of being that have implicitly been communicated by her earlier narrative. The biography itself is unnecessary, as the picturebook’s main foci are what happened after Anne Sullivan arrived and Helen’s relationship with Belle and her other dogs.

On the other hand, Cline-Ransome-Ransome’s narrative, by focusing on Helen’s relationship with Anne Sullivan, does not attempt to make as much use out of the Overcoming Narrative, but focuses on both Helen’s learning to fingerspell and to eventually trust and love Anne. Whatever the audience thinks of Helen at the narrative’s end is due to what Cline-Ransome-Ransome has had her narrator and characters communicate indirectly. Her implied author does not provide additional final commentary on either Helen or Anne.

Disability Studies and Rhetorical Narrative Theory Working Together

Rhetorical narrative theory allows actual readers to answer questions about how an author “did something”—how she constructed her narrative, and for what purposes. Siebers (2008) wrote: “Undoubtedly, the central purpose of disability studies is to reverse the negative connotations of disability” (p. 4). Given the recurring presence of the Overcoming Narrative in children’s books centered on disabilities, authors clearly want to do their part to help. “Reader responses are a function of and, thus, a guide to how designs are created through textual and intertextual phenomena. At the same time, reader responses are also a test of the efficacy of those designs” (Phelan, 2007, p. 4). A perusal of Amazon.com reviews for many of the books that I will be examining in subsequent chapters suggests implied authors’ efforts are working. Recall Phelan and Rabinowitz’s point that readers develop interests in and responses to the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic components of character. Gary Saul Morson, discussing Bakhtin's views on literature (and, by extension, how teachers can teach literature) noted,

> For Bakhtin, fictional people are not (as some would say) simply words on a page or conventional constructs. They are *possible* people—otherwise, who would be interested in them?—and what we learn to do with possible people we may carry over to actual ones. (p. 353; emphasis in original)

His editorializing lends support to my view that it is useful to pay attention to the construction and representation of disabilities in picturebooks. Narrative progression, as applied to picturebooks like these, allows for a thoughtful way to proceed, recognizing both the narrative progression that the implied author is interested in her audience following, and the problems that it may cause for an analyst in light of the concepts of disability studies. Such a discussion would help those not familiar with disability studies' concerns about the representation and treatment of people with disabilities to be more aware of the designs of these books, and to understand both what works well and what is problematic about them, or at least, what other issues are worth raising when talking about them. In the chapters that follow, I will use concepts in both rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies to examine picturebooks, and offer answers to that question.

Chapter 3: Thank Goodness for the Doctor

In the previous chapter, I discussed aspects of rhetorical narrative theory and disability studies that are going to inform the work that I will do in the remainder of this dissertation. I examined the expected (and one unexpected) narrative progressions of two picturebooks about Helen Keller to model the discussions in subsequent chapters. This also allowed me to address issues relating to the Overcoming Narrative, and how it might manifest in children's books about people with disabilities. In this chapter, I will examine books that feature a visit to a doctor by the main character—most often, but not always—after the character has experienced one or more difficulties—for example, seeing or hearing clearly, or paying attention at school. Over the course of one or more visits, the doctor diagnoses the character's disability. Though it could rightly be argued that these books fall into the other categories—indeed, visits to the doctor are often included in the picturebooks that I will discuss in Chapter 7—I examine them here because these appointments dictate the direction of the remainder of the narrative, rather than being one of several consequential events in a narrative. In these books, the visits provide the characters and audience with information about a disability, and precipitate change in the characters' lives. This occurs in only 13 picturebooks, but this transformation allows for a closer examination of the medical model of disability, which is a useful starting point for any discussions about the representation of disability in books, since many people—both disabled and nondisabled—conceptualize disability as a "medical issue."

Three Books

I will focus my discussion on three books that address eye-related disabilities—amblyopia ("lazy-eye"), strabismus ("traveling eye"), and double vision—to draw attention to the ways in which different authors make similar moves when writing about the same topic, while also highlighting the places where they diverge[7]. Specifically, I will examine how the doctor's visit(s) in each book affect its narrative progression. I will also address when relevant how particular illustrations in each of the books affect its readerly dynamics. I will conclude each section with my evaluation.

In *The Patch* (written by Justina Chen Headley and illustrated by Mitch Vane; 2006), 5-year-old Becca is given an eye patch during her annual visit to the doctor. After initially protesting needing to wear both the patch and newly prescribed eyeglasses, Becca relents. She refuses to go to school the next morning, however, until her older brother offers her his pirate costume. When various classmates ask why she is wearing a patch, Becca tells them that she is a number of imagined versions of herself: a ballerina pirate, private eye, and one-eyed monster.

The protagonist of *My Travelin' Eye* (written and illustrated by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw; 2008), Jenny Sue, tells her audience that when she was born, someone

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[7] I am choosing three representative cases from a larger corpus of narratives with doctor visits. I chose these three because they are all about visual impairment and because the doctor visit has a different function in the progression of each.

said that she had a “wandering eye.” She quickly points out that she chose to think of it as a “travelin’ eye,” because she would “follow” wherever it looked (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [pp. 7, 8]). During a visit to the eye doctor, she, too, is given an eye patch and eyeglasses. Her mother suggests making different “fashion patches” to make the experience of wearing the patch more fun as Jenny Sue’s eye gradually grows stronger ([p. 32]).

While *The Patch* (Headley, 2006) invokes pirates in the context of one of Becca’s imagined personas, *The Pirate of Kindergarten* (written by George Ella Lyon and illustrated by Lynne Avril, 2010) calls attention to the persona in its title. The picturebook, which won the “Young Children’s Book” Schneider Book Award in 2011 shares the story of Ginny, who, the illustrations quickly demonstrate, has double vision, which causes her both mishaps and embarrassment at school. She is referred to an ophthalmologist after a school-wide vision screening, and he gives her an eye patch. As a result of the visit, “Ginny became a Kindergarten Pirate,” and is able to successfully do the things that she could not do before (Lyon, 2010, [p. 38]).

The implied authors of *The Patch*, *My Travelin’ Eye*, and *The Pirate of Kindergarten* place the initial visit to the doctor at slightly different points in the narrative: the beginning, middle, and end, respectively. Jenny Sue returns to her doctor at the end of the narrative, and, as noted above, Ginny has a vision screening that necessitates her visit. Because of its location, each event has different consequences for the progression of its narrative, despite the events being similar in nature: three girls go to the doctor and have their eyes examined and get eye patches and eyeglasses as a result:

the visits either introduce, complicate, or resolve the narratives' global instabilities.

The Patch (2006). *The Patch* was written by Justina Chen Headley and illustrated by Mitch Vane. The book's cover features a girl nearly as tall as the book cover standing next to a black and white dog. The girl's blonde hair is in pigtails, and she is wearing pink ballerina outfit (leotard, tutu, and slippers), along with matching pink glasses. A pink patch is over her right eye. She is gazing down toward her dog, who is looking up at her; its tail is raised and lines indicating that the dog is wagging it are drawn underneath. The title, author's, and illustrator's names are written to resemble the slightly messy handwriting of a young child: the letters are not all evenly spaced and capital letters are interspersed among the lowercase ones.

The half-title page shows the same girl posing underneath the book's title. She is in front of a full-length mirror, as though she is about to pirouette, or has just done so. There are faint curved lines next to her left arm and leg, indicating that she is, or was, moving. The dog watches her, holding something torn in its mouth, while again wagging its tail. The next opening, which includes the title page, shows the girl standing on one foot, her arms overhead—she has completed another pirouette. The dog stands on its hind paws at the bottom of the title page, raising its front paws in an imitation of the girl. In both of these first images of the girl, she is wearing neither the glasses nor the eye patch. The audience might assume, based on the title, *The Patch*, that the narrative explains how and why she gets them.

The first opening situates the audience, providing exposition as the narrator introduces the girl on the cover. The narrative has a non-character (extradiegetic) narrator: “On the day Becca turned five, she pirouetted into the doctor’s office” (Headley, 2006, [p. 4]). In addition to identifying Becca, the sentence provides insight into her character. She does not simply “walk” into the doctor’s office: Wearing the ballerina outfit, she “pirouettes” into the waiting room, suggesting that she is playful. The image below the text shows Becca, mid-pirouette, being followed by her mother. Becca’s eyes are closed, and she has a wide smile on her face. The narrator describes for the narrative audience what Becca does after arriving: she draws. “She spelled her name: B-E-C-C-A. And then her dog’s name: F-I-G-A-R-O. She counted to seventy-seven” ([p. 4]). The narrator transitions into a description of her appointment: “And when Becca got her shots, she didn’t cry more than three tears. Maybe four . . .” ([p. 4]; ellipsis in original). The opposite page shows Becca three times, crouching, sitting, and lying on the floor of the waiting room and drawing. Above the first image, Becca’s mother and another adult sit on a couch next to a table stacked with magazines; a beige wall behind them. This first image anchors the others of Becca, which are surrounded entirely by white space, as all of these illustrations are. They are watercolor, and often, the walls of the rooms that Becca is in are in either muted (beige) or grey tones. The audience’s eyes are continually drawn to Becca. Her attention-catching exuberance, as described by the narrator (pirouetting into the doctor’s office rather than walking, and her activity in the waiting room) is mirrored in the way that she is depicted on the page.

The next opening includes the narrative’s launch. On the left page is a full-page illustration of Becca and the doctor. He is standing behind her and is holding a square piece of paper in front of her right eye. On the right page, is the text that introduces the global instability:

> . . . until she stood in front of the eye chart and her left eye read fuzz balls instead of letters.
>
> The doctor told Becca, “You get to wear glasses to help you see better and an eye patch to make your left eye stronger” (Headley, 2006, [p. 7]; ellipsis in original).

This text is surrounded by letters that are pale grey and fuzzy: H, L, S, D, E, R, Q, and B. While nearly all of the book’s illustrations provide views that align closely with the narrator’s reporting; she serves as the focalizer for both the text and the illustrations—the audience always sees Becca and whomever she is with—this particular illustration departs from that, slightly. Liberties are taken with the placement of the fuzzy letters. It would seem that the audience is being shown the eye chart from Becca’s point of view: she sees “fuzz balls instead of letters,” and so does the audience. However, the fuzz-ball letters are placed haphazardly above and below the text on the page. The narrator does not mention that in addition to seeing fuzz balls, Becca noticed that they were floating or bouncing in front of her. That detail aside, because they are the only illustration on the page, and they are a visual representation of what the narrator reports Becca sees, the audience has an understanding of how Becca’s eyes are allowing her to view the world. The audience understands why Becca needs glasses.

The global instability is further developed over the next two openings as Becca protests wearing glasses because “‘Ballerinas don’t wear glasses,’ . . . ‘And they especially do NOT wear patches!’” (Headley, 2006, [p. 8]). Becca’s mother tells her, "'Ballerinas who want to see the stage when they dance do.'" The narrator comments after this, "and that was that" ([p. 8]). This following opening again depicts Becca three times, refusing pairs of eyeglasses (on the left page). On the right page under this text, Becca stands wearing the approved eyeglasses, holding a small mirror to look at her face. Her mother stands behind her, smiling, and a colorful pile of discarded pairs of glasses (that would make an ophthalmologist cringe) sit on a counter to their left.

The narrator continues,

> Still, Becca shook her head at the glittery gold eyeglasses. She frowned at the flamingo pink frames. She even turned her back on the ruby red ones. Finally, Becca decided purple glasses and a pink patch might be an acceptable fashion statement for a prima ballerina (Headley, 2006, [p. 11]).

In a few short pages, the narrative's initiation, the audience has "met" Becca, has gotten a sense of part of her personality and imagination—she sees herself not as just a five-year-old girl, but as a five-year-old prima ballerina—and understands how Becca has come to wear the eyeglasses and "the patch" of the title, circumstances about which she is not completely happy, evident because of what she and the narrator say, and her face in the illustrations.

The narrator reports on, but does not judge Becca's behavior when she is being obstinate in the doctor's office about wearing glasses and an eye patch. At the start of the narrative, the narrator relays to the audience in detail Becca's flurry of activity before her appointment, suggesting that she is paying close attention to everything that Becca is doing. When the narrator reports that Becca cried "no more than three tears" (Headley, 2006, [p. 4]) while getting her shot, and then admitted it might have been four, the narrator is voicing Becca herself as she might report it were she asked: slightly hyperbolic, though the narrator similarly does not editorialize this.

The audience might hypothesize that the narrative's configuration will explore what happens next after Becca begins to wear her glasses. They may also assume that the narrative will address whether the eye patch and glasses help Becca, and if so, how, knowing that doctors work to help their patients. At this point, readers who continue will have completed the entrance, joining the authorial audience.

The next opening signals a shift to the narrative's middle with a complication of the narrative's global instability: The morning after her doctor's appointment, Becca does not want to go to school:

> "Everyone is going to think I look stupid," bawled Becca.
>
> "Lots of kids your age wear glasses," her mother replied. "Like your friend Kusiima."
>
> "But he doesn't have to wear a patch," said Becca.
>
> (Headley, 2006, [p. 12])

Thus, there are both "medical" and "social" components to the global instability, resulting from the doctor's visit: Medically, will the eye patch and glasses help Becca? Socially, what will the reaction of Becca's classmates be? Becca finds the latter especially problematic because no one else in her class wears an eye patch. The focus (pardon the pun), then, for Becca, and therefore, the audience, is not about her difficulty seeing, and the fact that wearing both likely will help her "left eye [get] stronger," but about how she will deal with the need to wear the glasses and the patch, including her worries about what other people, specifically her classmates, will think about how she looks ([p. 7]).

I want to briefly discuss the remainder of the narrative in order to address the consequences of the doctor's visit on the narrative's progression. With the exception of a few openings, the rest of the narrative takes place the following day at school. At this point, the illustrations make use of more and brighter colors, and more of them take up entire pages or spread across both pages of an opening. On the page following Brian's offer, Becca is wearing bright purple wide-leg pants, a two-tone green striped shirt, a red cape and an orange bandana around her waist. She stands on her right leg, and bends her left, resting her foot against her right leg, in perhaps a subtle acknowledgement of the stereotypical pirate who is missing the lower part of one of his legs and a foot and has a wood prosthetic in their place. This gesture is not addressed in the narrative by the narrator or the characters, and so would only be noticed by an audience that is aware of the referent. She dubs herself, "Becca the Ballerina Pirate" (Headley, 2006, [p. 15]), and when three of her friends ask her why she is wearing the patch, she tells them, that she is "'in search of a secret treasure," "Becca The Private Eye, who can find anything"; and finally, "Becca the One-Eyed Monster" ([p. 17, 21, 25]).

In each case, her friends accept these personas, and in the first and last case, willingly play in the imaginary worlds that Becca spontaneously creates. In the second instance, she finds her friend's lost sweater, hidden "under a stack of popsicle [*sic*] sticks" (Headley, 2006, [p. 22]). At the end of the day, "the entire class demanded patches of their own," and Becca's teacher asks her to explain,

> "why you're really wearing eyeglasses and a patch?"
>
> "Because I have a lazy eye," Becca said importantly.
>
> "No fair!" grumbled Kusiima. ([p. 29]);

The next opening takes place "a few weeks later":

> Sophia Lou returned from a skiing trip with a cast on her arm.
>
> "Why are you wearing a cast?" asked Becca during recess.
>
> "Because I am Sophia Lou the Superhero, who can freeze anything with just one wave of my elbow," she answered. ([p. 30])

The narrative ends with the girls imagining themselves as superheroes.

Both the medical and social aspects of the global instability are resolved by the time that Becca and Sophia Lou enter an imaginary world of play, this time inspired by Sophia Lou's imagination: In the former case, Becca's eyeglasses and eye patch have helped improve her eyesight. The social aspect—How would Becca's classmates react and treat her—also has been resolved favorably. Becca's classmates were eager to indulge in Becca's imagined scenarios and all wanted eye patches, too. Kusiima commented that Becca's having a "lazy eye" wasn't "fair" (Headley, 2006, [p. 29]). Becca's "difference" is seen as a positive attribute—or at least one that enables her to wear something that everybody else also wants to be able to wear. Becca's eye patch also inspires at least one classmate to similarly embrace the temporary disability of a broken arm.

That does not mean, of course, that actual readers will not be curious about what happens to Becca after the narrative ends, though the authorial audience will feel satisfied by the way the narrative ends—Becca and Sophia Lou run off to be imagined superheroes together. Because the implied author was concerned with addressing Becca's worry about her friends' potential teasing while also suggesting that using one's imagination is a helpful way to deal with an unexpected and unpleasant circumstance, the audience will note how the implied author did that successfully, and not focus on the missing medical information.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. In *The Patch* (Headley, 2006), the doctor's visit acts in the narrative's progression to reveal the narrative's global instability: she has trouble seeing clearly, and as a catalyst for Becca's growing creativity. How Becca assimilates her diagnosis into her sense of who she is—by using her imagination—is more important to the narrative than information about her diagnosis. In these later illustrations, many of the images are larger, and they are all more colorful, reflecting Becca's growing imagination, and drawing the audience into, or closer to, that playful space, as they think about what Becca is imagining. This is a particular strength of Headley's work because she uses her narrator to help us understand Becca's changing sense of her self as a whole person—she become a Ballerina Pirate, a Private Eye, and a One-Eyed Monster—as she incorporates her diagnosis into her play.

The more practical implications of the doctor's visit—being diagnosed with so-called "lazy-eye"—are not addressed again. If the doctor explained to Becca and her mother what "exercises" Becca was supposed to do to strengthen her right eye, or if they made a follow-up appointment, the audience was not privy to it. In fact, while Becca later is able to tell her class that she has a "lazy eye" (Headley, 2006, [p. 29]), there is no point in the narrative when either the doctor or her mother tells her this. Nor is there any point at which the narrator explains it to the audience, who may not notice this gap—when was Becca given this information? Nothing about the doctor's visit is mentioned further, and the narrative quickly skips ahead after Becca's return to school to "a few weeks later," when Sophia Lou has a cast on her arm and declares herself a superhero in the vein of Becca's Ballerina Pirate ([p. 30]). I think, like the authorial audience, that Headley was successful in the project she set out for herself; I'm a bit intrigued as to what Sophia Lou does next.

I do not believe that the lack of Becca's finding out in the narrative about her "lazy eye," is meant to be read as a tension between the implied author and her audience because of how the doctor's visit served the narrative. While it would have been easy to have Becca's nameless doctor briefly tell her that she had "lazy-eye," not including this information also aligns with the doctor not explaining the exercises that Becca needs to do, and the implied author not showing Becca doing them in the illustrations or text. Becca sharing that information with the audience at the same time as she shares it with her classmates also (perhaps unintentionally) fairly gives her control over it—she shares a personal piece of information about herself with her classmates and so the narrator then is able to share it with us. This issue of sharing diagnoses will come up again; I will explicitly discuss it in Chapter 5.

My Travelin' Eye (2008). *My Travelin' Eye* was written and illustrated by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw. It is another narrative about a girl who has a "lazy eye" and strabismus though unlike *The Patch* (Headley, 2006), Jenny Sue[8] is the narrator. The cover of this book, unlike *The Patch*, is deep red, and is filled mostly with a smiling child; the title, *My Travelin' Eye*, curves around the top of the child's head, in big cursive, and readers would likely assume that this is the person who has a "travelin' eye." Readers' own eyes will be drawn to the child's glasses; the front of the frames and the bridge are covered with numerous round designs made out of colored paper. A large butterfly, also made out of multi-colored paper is glued to the top of the left frame. Readers looking at it may notice that the child's left iris and pupil are closer to the top of that eye, rather than in the center. The head is almost, or nearly life-size, giving readers the impression that the child is looking right at them.

Jenny Sue begins with a declaration about her congenital difference: "When I was born, I came out looking both ways." She follows this with an improbable statement: "I remember hearing someone whisper, 'She's got a wandering eye!'" (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 7]) She comments, "But I prefer to call it a 'travelin' eye,' because everywhere it goes . . . I follow" ([p. 8]; ellipsis in original). How is her audience supposed to react to her statement that she remembers something that someone said about her when she was born? Is the audience supposed to assume that she is consciously lying? Or that she

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[8] The paratext of the book, in this case, the author's note on the back flap, confirms that the story is "based on her own experiences," so the identical first name is not a coincidence. (While I don't intend to talk about the actual author of the book, it would be an oversight to not acknowledge the connection between her and the fictional Jenny Sue.) Additionally, the peritext includes a note explaining both strabismus ("traveling eye") and amblyopia ("lazy eye") noting, "Jenny Sue has both" (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 2]). In the narrative, however, Jenny Sue refers to her "travelin' eye," and the doctor refers to her "lazy eye."

is knowingly exaggerating? Will the comments make it difficult for actual readers to join the authorial audience? Two pages later, she says, “Sometimes kids make fun of me because I am looking in two directions at the same time. They say I have ‘iguana eyes.’ But I think iguanas are cool, so I must be, too” ([p. 9]). The implied author needs the audience to understand as soon as possible after the narrative’s beginning that Jenny Sue is aware of her “travelin’ eye.” Jenny Sue’s impossible memory therefore momentarily privileges the synthetic nature of her character over its mimetic component.

I also think that read collectively, Jenny Sue’s statements underscore her decisiveness and her own perceptions of the world; she does not appear to be lying for the purposes of tricking her audience: She is sure that she remembers a comment someone made about her when she was born; she renames her “wandering eye”; and rather than say she is upset about being called “iguana eyes,” she comments on her positive feelings about iguanas and connects this to a perception of herself. Most readers might believe that the revelation of a vision impairment here is the narrative’s global instability. At the moment, though, Jenny Sue does not seem troubled by her vision.

Jenny Sue’s imagination, like Becca’s, has a prominent role in the narrative. Unlike Becca, Jenny Sue is already aware of her atypical eyesight at the start of the narrative, but considers it an asset:

> My right eye is the navigator. It sees numbers. It’s my guide.
>
> My travelin’ eye is the artist. It sees colors. It’s the adventurer. Together, we make a great team. (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [pp. 10, 11])

The illustrations make use of acrylics, crayon, pencil, collage, and tissue paper on

Strathmore illustration board, according to the book's peritext. On many pages, paper of different sizes and colors are arranged to create the images. On these particular two pages, the audience's eyes are drawn to two large eyes made from paper that are hovering above other pieces of paper that are assembled in approximations of human bodies, with the large eyes standing in for human heads. On the page about Jenny Sue's right eye, different color numbers surround the eye. On the page about her travelin' eye, the eye is wearing a beret and holding a paintbrush and a palette. In the next opening, Jenny Sue elaborates on what her travelin' eye allows her to do—notice the world around her.

After Jenny Sue elaborates on what her travelin' eye allows her to do—notice the world around her—she concedes, "other times, its wandering nature gets me into trouble" (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 14]). The double-page spread shows Jenny Sue sitting in class, her teacher calling, "'Yoooooooooooooohooooooooooooo, Jenny Sue!'" [(pp. 14-15]). "Trouble" is written in a slightly bigger and bolder font than the rest of the line, and the letters are not written in a straight line; some sit on different angles, titling toward or away from each other as though they are "stumbling." "Yoohoo" is shown coming out of the teacher's mouth, written with an excessive number of "Os," and curving in a curved wave shape in Jenny Sue's direction. Our eyes are drawn to it—a visual marker of Jenny Sue getting into "trouble,"—and follow the teacher's remark across the page until it eventually curves over Jenny Sue's desk. Our gaze mirrors that of some of her classmates, who are also looking at her.

This leads to the global instability, which is revealed on the following page, marking the narrative's launch. Jenny Sue's teacher sends a note home, she says,, "suggesting I see an ophthalmologist to 'fix' my eye so it wouldn't stare out the window" (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 17]). Phelan (2007) wrote that when identifying the launch, "from a first-time reader's perspective, the identification will initially be a tentative one, something for which the reader will seek confirmation or disconfirmation in the subsequent progression" (p. 18). As I mentioned earlier, actual readers could reasonably assume that the initial revelation of Jenny Sue's vision impairment might be the narrative's global instability. It does not become explicit until several openings later when Jenny Sue states that her eye can cause "trouble."

At the same time, though, Jenny Sue also makes it clear that she is not happy about having to go to the doctor because she does not feel that her eye needs to be "fixed.":

> "No thank you," I said to my mom and dad. "My eye isn't broken." (Plus, I was scared to see an ophthalmologist.) (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 17])

The implied author puts quotation marks around "fix," and Jenny Sue states that her eye is not broken, introducing the instability between her teacher's suggestion and her own feelings about it, not believing that there is anything wrong with her eye. This is emphasized by Jenny Sue's explanation of the note: a young audience is likely to realize that an ophthalmologist could not "fix" a single, specific behavior (staring out the window), but rather, could possibly "fix" Jenny Sue's actual eye. Jenny Sue uses her explanation to emphasize that as far as she is concerned, what the teacher feels needs to be corrected is precisely an ability that she is glad to have—noticing her surroundings thanks to her travelin' eye. The global instability therefore has two, seemingly paradoxical elements: Jenny Sue recognizes that she has a visual impairment that causes problems for her. At the same time, she is not eager to get her eye "fixed" because she believes that what would be called an "impairment" is an asset. The instability is further developed with Jenny Sue's reluctance to see an ophthalmologist, which her mother ignores.

The audience has, at this point, made ethical judgments about Jenny Sue. Her refusal to view herself as "broken" is useful because it immediately provides an alternative view of disability (or differences more generally): Jenny Sue is not bothered by her travelin' eye. The combination of what she has told us and what we have "seen"—both in the quasi-anthropomorphism of her eyes, and how they "help" her, and then in how her traveling eye "reminds [her] to look around"—invites us to understand and appreciate her experience of having a travelin' eye (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 12]). Because Jenny Sue has taken the time to explain this experience, which she views as a benefit, while also acknowledging that her travelin' eye "gets [her] in trouble," her audience finds her a trustworthy narrator, is likewise not bothered by her travelin' eye, and understands why she does not want to go to the doctor ([p. 14]).

Readers may hypothesize that the narrative's configuration will explore Jenny Sue's experience at the doctor, and its implications for her sight. (The book's cover shows her wearing glasses that she does not yet have.) Assuming that they are able to accept her initial impossible-to-believe comments, and feel that she is a trustworthy narrator, they will allow themselves to join the authorial audience.

Unlike in *The Patch*, in which the doctor's visit reveals the narrative's global instability at its start, in *My Travelin' Eye*, the doctor's visit is part of the voyage, an important complication of the global instability. Jenny Sue goes to her appointment with Dr. Dave, who tells her that she has "'a gen-u-ine lazy eye" (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 22]) and patches her right eye and gives her glasses. Dr. Dave is attempting to correct Jenny Sue's vision, which she is still quietly defiant about, Kostecki-Shaw uses the visit to highlight the conflict between a disabled person's view of herself as "not broken" and the medical profession's belief or knowledge that something needs to be "fixed."

The illustration of one of the openings that report the visit is the first of its kind in the narrative, and has notable consequences for the readerly dynamics. Most of the illustrations in the text are typical in the way described by Nodelman (2010): Jenny Sue is visible despite also being the narrator. In this particular opening, the focalization of the illustrations aligns with the focalization of the text. The entire spread is dark brown. It depicts Jenny Sue's view after Dr. Dave has given her an eye patch to wear over her travelin' eye. Jenny Sue's audience is given the opportunity to see what Jenny-Sue saw through her one open eye, a rare chance to, as the saying goes, see the world through someone else's eyes. The left page is dark brown except for a circle through which a tiny Dr. Dave is visible—Jenny Sue's open left eye. The right page features Jenny Sue's narration: "Everything became mostly black and white and confusing. / Dr. / Dave / looked / so / small / and / so / far / away (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 25]). The placement and size of the text on the right page also mirrors Jenny-Sue's vision. "Everything became mostly black and confusing" is on its own line: a description of what happened.

The rest of the text is stacked one word per line, the lines getting smaller as they go down the page as Dr. Dave seemed to shrink. While the audience has been hearing Jenny Sue's narrative directly from her, in this instance, here, we have an opportunity to "see" what having a patched eye might be like (or at least, a slight sense afforded by an artistic rendering). This is likely to increase the audience's empathy with Jenny Sue, as it appreciates how distorted and limiting such vision is.

The next page is painted in two different colors—the top half is light blue. The global instability is complicated. There is a small version of Jenny Sue standing in the middle of the page, and she says, "At school, kids pointed" (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p 26]). Five hands unattached to bodies point at her, and three speech bubbles are filled with the words, "hee, hee, hee," "cyclops," and "3 eyes!" The bottom half of the page is light green; Jenny Sue stands in front of a chalkboard covered with letters: "Letters floated around the chalkboard, and I couldn't make sense of them." The facing page has her reporting that her math teacher told her, "three bananas + three apples does NOT equal six oranges," and, "At recess, I ran the bases in reverse" ([p. 27]). After a frustrating day, Jenny Sue "crie[s herself] to sleep" ([p. 30]).

There are introductions of what I consider to be two tensions: the math problem, while illogical, does not (to me) make sense, nor does running the bases in reverse, the way that not being able to see the chalkboard does,. That said, the blend of truth and fantasy also continues what readers have seen of Jenny Sue's imagination. In the interaction, the ongoing relationships between the narrator, implied author and their respective audiences, Jenny Sue is narrating both events that seem realistic and unrealistic as a way to explain to the narrative audience what her particular experience of wearing an eye patch is, while the implied author is using the narration to get her authorial audience to pay attention to the issues that a child who wears an eye patch may experience both in class and with other children.

After being teased at school the day after her first visit, Jenny Sue walks home, and is frustrated because she no longer has her travelin' eye to help. I think this event serves as an important part of the narrative's intermediate configuration. As it did in Dr. Dave's office, the audience "sees" what Jenny Sue sees as she walks home, though this time, Jenny Sue is also visible: her back is to the audience as she walks along the sidewalk. She is the only "clear" image on the page; everything else is blurry. She says, "I thought I saw an elephant sitting in a tree," and the audience also sees a blurry elephant in the tree, as well as others playing on the other side of the street (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 28]). The fantastic has completely dropped out of the narrative, though—Jenny Sue is no longer adding apples and bananas to come up with oranges or imagining her eyes as anthropomorphic.

Because the authorial audience might not be able to precisely visualize what Jenny Sue sees if they do not have the same congenital condition (and might find it difficult to imagine), the implied author again uses the double-page spread to provide visual "evidence" that Jenny Sue is accurately reporting what she sees, and the authorial audience has a better understanding of how difficult Jenny Sue finds moving through the world with the aid of only one eye. The audience can compare this view to the one offered in Dr. Dave's office and notice that while Jenny Sue's vision was not blurred then, it has changed as a result of wearing the patch, and that, while it might be frustrating to wear a patch while sitting still, wearing a patch while moving is trickier.

The next morning, after crying herself to sleep, Jenny Sue tells her mother that she does not “want to go back to school.” Her mother responds, “‘Jenny Sue, I think we just have to get creative!’” (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 32]). Jenny Sue is happy again, which she has not been since before wearing her eye-patch, and the audience senses that this turn serves to change the trajectory of the voyage, moving it closer to the narrative’s arrival. Jenny Sue and her mom then make the “fashion patches” that she uses to cover her right eyeglass lens ([p. 32]).

Jenny Sue tells her audience that everyone at school wants one, too, and while the previous speech balloons from her classmates featured taunts, the speech balloons on this page are filled with positive comments about her fashion patches and a request to wear them. One also says, “No fashion patch wearing without a note from your doctor” (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 33]). These comments and request are a noticeable change in the behavior of others. The implied author never fully developed the instabilities between Jenny Sue and her teasing classmates, but this change in their conversation is the beginning of the narrative’s arrival. Jenny Sue says that “Little by little, my world came into focus,” and again mentions that “My travelin’ eye was far from being a lazy eye! It was busy noticing all sorts of things” ([p. 35]). This text is written over a double-page spread of 24 patches that Jenny Sue has made; the audience sees again how creative Jenny Sue is, despite only having one eye to help her as she draws.

When she returns to Dr. Dave, he examines her eye. After he removes the patch, Jenny Sue notes, came “the real test,” the phrase written in bold font. Jenny Sue needed to “follow his finger again, this time with both eyes” (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 36). When she successfully does this, Dr. Dave proclaims, “‘Miraculous! Brilliant! It has woken up!’” ([p. 38-39]). A thought bubble over Jenny Sue’s head reads, “It was awake all along” ([p. 39]). The farewell includes Jenny Sue’s comments about “fashion[ing] up [her] new glasses,” and that “all the kids at school wanted . . . [them], but they couldn’t [get them], not without a special note from their ophthalmologist” ([p. 40]). At the bottom of the page is hand-written text that the audience reads as from the actual author: “My travelin’ eye still wanders sometimes, but that’s the true nature of an artist—to see the world in her own unique way” ([p. 40]).

This second visit to Dr. Dave resolves one of the two parts of the narrative’s global instability—Jenny Sue had been unwilling to go to the doctor, but also understood that her eye sometimes caused “trouble.” Dr. Dave has pronounced her eye’s behavior as nothing short of “miraculous” and “brilliant.” It is therefore less likely to get her into “trouble” going forward. The second part of the global instability—the disagreement about whether Jenny Sue’s eye is “broken”—still is not resolved. Jenny Sue muses to herself that, despite Dr. Dave’s comments about its waking up that it was never asleep in the first place.

This message culminates in the book’s final line: Her eye has not “miraculously” healed or been cured; it still “travels,” and she is grateful for that because it allows her to maintain her “unique” view of the world, which contributes to her art. As part of the narrative’s completion, then, the audience understands that visits to a doctor might be complicated in ways that they had not previously considered, and that the implied author constructed her narrative in a way that helped them consider a “different point of view” of a particular disabling condition: While Jenny Sue’s eye does “wake up,” indicating that Dr. Dave has helped, a doctor might also “take away” an ability (or trait) that is important to the patient.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. Because Jenny Sue’s initial visit to Dr. Dave is positioned slightly later in the narrative, more specifically, in its middle, complicating the narrative’s global instability, an audience understands the event differently than it would understand Becca’s (Headley, 2006). In Becca’s case, the audience is understanding and empathetic about a five-year-old’s reluctance to wear a patch and eyeglasses. It also understands that the patch and glasses will help Becca and understands how Becca ends up using her imagination as a result of the visit. In *My Travelin’ Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008), the audience is told about Jenny Sue’s atypical vision by Jenny Sue herself, who knows that it causes problems for her, but she also explains why she does not believe that it is problematic, a circumstance that the audience is likely to have not considered before. While Kostecki-Shaw’s narrative follows an expected trajectory between diagnosis and, if not medically approved cure, medically approved improvement, the implied author uses Jenny Sue’s thoughts throughout to push back at that notion, if not directly in conversation between characters, at least in a way that is clear to her audience: If the doctor “fixes” her eye so that it “wakes up,” and ceases causing difficulties for her, how might that also affect Jenny Sue’s unique view of the world? She thinks of her two eyes (and presumably herself) as “a team” (Kostecki-

Shaw, 2008, [p. 11]). Each of her eyes helps her in different ways; what will happen if she "loses" a "teammate"? The audience has the opportunity to "see" the result of this when Jenny Sue walks home and sees an elephant in a tree, which frustrates her.

I think that the paradox (or apparent paradox) between recognizing the difficulties that her eye caused her and being proud of what it enabled her to do was a strength of Kostecki-Shaw's narrative—Jenny Sue embraces her "difference" as an asset—as were the illustrations in which she attempted to help the audience "see" the world from Jenny Sue's perspective. At the same time, noting that her travelin' eye "sees colors," for example, is true, of course, but there is nothing that suggests that her right eye cannot literally see colors (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008, [p. 11]). The blending of facts and the fantastic underscore Jenny Sue's creativity, which she links directly to her eyesight, and so the stakes of getting her eye "fixed" are high, and understood well by the audience. She considers the unique way that she sees a central part of her identity, one of the foundational ways, of course, that disability studies understands disability.

Another important issue that Kostecki-Shaw raises is being teased for being different: While Becca in *The Patch* (Headley, 2006) immediately was embraced by her classmates and shared her imagined personas with them, Jenny Sue is teased, and that teasing leads her, at her mother's suggestion, to imagine ways that she can still be an artist. She uses her imagination to create the patches for herself, and herself alone. Her visit with Dr. Dave has led her to use her imagination to create fashion patches (and then fashion glasses), but, as her "travelin' eye" is important to her identity and sense of self, she outlines the guidelines for who else may create fashion glasses. In the way that doctors are considered authorities on “fixing” bodies, she is claiming authority on the creation of fashion glasses.

Unlike Becca, while Jenny Sue’s eye may have been “fixed” as a result of her appointment, as far as Dr. Dave is concerned, while Jenny Sue might be glad that her travelin’ eye does not get her into “trouble,” she is happiest that her travelin’ eye still wanders and still allows her to see the world in her own way. Because Kostecki-Shaw managed to keep both of those seemingly contradictory states of being balanced at the end of the narrative, she was able to acknowledge the medical benefits of “correcting” eyesight and celebrating a character’s embracing of what is, to her, a central piece of her identity.

The Pirate of Kindergarten (2010). *The Pirate of Kindergarten* was written by George Ella Lyon and illustrated by Lynne Avril. Its configuration somewhat unfolds like that of *My Travelin’ Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008), and many of its illustrations are also views of the way that its main character, Ginny, sees the world. In the first opening, on the left page, a girl with brown braids sits at a green desk. Her arms are crossed over a book that has a ship on it, an allusion to the book’s title. Readers will recognize this girl from the cover. As on the cover of *The Patch* (Headley, 2006), the girl is almost as tall as the book itself. She is wearing a blue-and-white sailor dress. Her hands are on her hips, and she is smiling; her left eye has a black patch covering it. The title sits to her right, with each word on its own line, “Kindergarten” partially overlaps the girl’s dress. In another similarity to *The Patch*, in the narrative’s first illustration, the character does not have an eye patch, suggesting to the audience that it will find out how this girl becomes "the pirate of kindergarten."

On this first page, the girl is looking to her right; on the right page is part of her classroom; we see a blue oval rug, several orange chairs, an easel, and a bookshelf. The text underneath reads, "Ginny loved Reading Circle" (Lyon, 2010, [p. 5]). The audience immediately learns the name of the girl on the cover and opposite page. A tension is introduced between the narrator and the audience. The narrator does not explain an unusual aspect of the illustration—nearly all of the objects are partially overlapped by a fainter version of themselves. This is somewhat addressed in the next opening:

> Getting there was hard, though, with all those chairs.
>
> She knew only half of them were real, but which ones?
>
> ([pp. 6-7])

The lower half of Ginny's torso and arms, and her legs are visible on the top of the left page. She has walked closer to the blue carpet, and next to her and in front of her are six chairs, most on the carpet's edge, each of them partially overlapped with a fainter identical image of themselves.

These pages resolve the initial tension and introduce the narrative's global instability: Ginny sees two of everything. The next opening further develops it. Ginny "always ran into some [chairs]. Someone always laughed" (Lyon, 2010, [p. 8]). The audience, who sees what Ginny sees, and understands why she runs into chairs, will be even more empathetic toward her and annoyed by anyone who would tease her. The focalization in some of the illustrations is a blending of the narrator's and Ginny's. That is, we often see Ginny, while simultaneously seeing her surroundings as she does, again a variation on Phelan's combinations of narrators' and characters' focalization and voice (2005, p. 117).

As in *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008), Ginny has two medical appointments, and the first one occurs in the narrative's middle: The audience has seen some of the difficulties that Ginny has because of her eyesight; the launch suggested by the first illustration of Ginny's classroom, but fully stated by the narrator in the next opening at which point the audience understands that Ginny sees two of everything, a fact again supported by that opening's illustrations. Ginny has been teased by her classmates and gently corrected by her teacher, Ms. Cleo, circumstances that, as in *My Travelin' Eye*, the audience may find relatable. Because many of the illustrations depict Ginny's point of view, the audience is likely sympathetic toward her—they are able to "see" what she sees and appreciate the ways in which her vision complicates what may seem to be simple tasks, including walking across a room, reading a book, and cutting something out of paper. In the opening illustrating Ginny's perspective of the book she is reading, on the left page, the audience sees her bent over the book, her nose practically touching the page as Ms. Cleo stands next to her. On the right page the audience sees the book as Ginny sees it. The narrator notes:

> But Ginny's eyes played tricks.
>
> She read: (Lyon, 2010, [p. 13])

Underneath is the book, open to show a cat leaping across both pages. The accompanying text, "Cat ran fast" along with the cat and the book itself, is duplicated, a fainter version overlapping with itself. Underneath, the narrator explains:

> She thought everyone saw this way.
>
> She didn’t know they were tricks. ([p. 13])

The audience is being given the opportunity to see something from Ginny’s perspective, while also being told that Ginny did not realize that this double vision was unique and not shared by everyone. Looking at this page, the audience cannot see anything other than what Ginny sees, and so understands more than they might have earlier, just how, and why, Ginny sees what she does.

Several pages later, the audience again sees Ginny’s perspective as she cuts a rabbit head out of paper. The rabbit’s mouth is drawn in a small “o” as Ginny attempts to give it two ears, but also cuts a third. Her hands (including two of her left) are visible at the bottom of the page: the left hands hold the duplicated corners of the paper that Ginny is cutting, while her right hand holds the scissors (Lyon, 2010, [pp. 20-21]). The audience is again being shown the world from Ginny’s point of view, and in a different scenario from reading a book, to strengthen the point that this is how Ginny *always* sees whatever she is looking at, which fuels the audience’s empathy. The audience likely appreciates the implied author for sharing Ginny’s actual view of the world, and the narrator for providing further explanation, guessing that the narrative will explain the connection between Ginny’s double vision and her becoming the pirate of the title. Knowing that double vision is not typical, the audience may also wonder whether it will be corrected.

Ginny’s vision check at school signals the middle of the narrative:

> Then came Vision Screening Day. Ginny was a little scared when they

> lined up to go into the gym (Lyon, 2010, [p. 24]).

The narrator explains that Ginny "did fine" while the nurse stands next to her; he holds a black paddle over her left eye while Ginny reads from a large chart filled with lines of letters in front of her ([p. 25]).

In the next opening, when Ginny uses both eyes, she has difficulty. The audience can see Ginny. Her back is to us on the left page, the eye chart in front of her, and once again, images are replicated—the chart, as well as letters that float off the chart and flow onto the right page. (Interestingly, there are a small "O" and a large "E" on the right page that do not have overlapping versions of themselves. This may go unnoticed; there is not an explanation in the text for why that is the case.)

In the following opening, we see the chart and the nurse, both doubled.

> Ginny said all the letters she could say.
>
> She said what she saw: (Lyon, 2010, [p. 28]).

Ginny's shoulders and head take up most of the space on the left page; a purple speech balloon comes from her mouth and crosses over onto the right page. The letters, "T, T, O, O, Z, Z," are in it, again overlapping each other, one set fainter than the others ([pp. 28-29]).

The nurse asks, "'Do you see two of me?'" Lyon, 2010, [p. 29]). When she nods, he asks her, "'Do you know . . . that most people see only one?'" ([p. 30]). Ginny begins to cry. The narrator has already told her audience that Ginny does not realize that not everyone else does has double vision. The audience, therefore, has realized that Ginny's vision is atypical before she does. Ginny knows that her vision causes her difficulty, but she is, until this point, unaware that not everyone has this same experience. This indirectly points out to the audience something made explicit by Jenny Sue in *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008): Ginny accepts her vision "as-is." She does not embrace it the way that Jenny Sue does hers, *but* she is not actively interested in "fixing" it, because it does not occur to her that it should be fixed. This knowledge does not specifically complicate or change the global instability, but now, Ginny herself is aware that she is "different," and is upset about it. While the audience might not revise its initial hypothesis about the narrative's configuration, it might become more invested in finding out what happens—whether Ginny's vision will be corrected—because now Ginny herself is upset, a significant complication in the voyage.

In the next opening, the nurse tells Ms. Cleo that Ginny "has double vision," and tells Ginny that, "'This can be fixed so you'll see only one'" (Lyon, 2010, [p. 33]). Unlike in *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008), Ginny is not shown protesting that her eye does not need to be "fixed," and in the next opening, her mother brings her to the doctor: "When they were finished, Dr. Clare said, 'Good news! I don't think you'll need an operation—just exercises, glasses, and for a while, a patch'" (Lyon, 2010, [p. 35]). These two pages serve as the narrative's resolution. Ginny's atypical eyesight has been noticed, and she has been sent to an eye doctor, who will almost certainly be able to help her, allowing her to see only one of everything, which she knows is the typical/"right" way to see. The doctor has given her a solution that is similar to the one that Becca's doctor gave her (Headley, 2006). "Ginny's mother helped her put [the patch] on. Now there was just *one* of everything, and she didn't have to squint!" (Lyon, 2010, [p. 37];

emphasis in original).

The next opening shows Ginny using her imagination: "So Ginny became a Kindergarten Pirate" (Lyon, 2010, [p. 38]). Ginny is pictured on the left page from the torso up; she is wearing a white shirt with black stripes, a pointed hat made out of newspaper, and her patch. She is holding a brown sword (most likely made out of paper). She appears multiple times on both pages successfully doing things that she had difficulty with before being given her patch: reading, playing on the playground, cutting up a piece of paper, and adding numbers. Ginny's ability to see one of everything and to do successfully many of the things that she could not do before serve as the narrative's arrival. The final page shows Ginny sitting in Reading Circle along with two of her classmates, one of whom had earlier made fun of her. The text notes that she was able to, "take her place in the Circle without knocking over a single chair" ([p. 40]).

As in *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008), the issue of her classmates teasing her is not fully resolved, though the audience may guess that because Ginny does not knock over chairs any longer (or do other things that they consider atypical, and therefore, amusing to some) that the teasing has stopped. The audience also sees a temporary resolution to the global instability introduced at the narrative's beginning: Ginny can see better, yes, but the audience might wonder whether the patch will markedly improve her eyesight. The "exercises" Dr. Clare mentioned are not known to the audience, and she is supposed to go back to see him "next week," a visit that we do not see. We are not left wondering about that, however: Ginny has been seen by the doctor, who would "fix" her eye, and it appears that he has. The first "mistake" that

Ginny made in the narrative was knocking over the chairs in Reading Circle. Now, thanks to the doctor, she no longer does that. There is no "need" for the narrative to continue. The authorial audience, having been especially empathetic toward Ginny after "seeing" what she sees, believes that Dr. Clare's eye patch will help Ginny. Noting that Ginny has come "full circle" both personally and with her classmates—from knocking over the chairs to avoiding them; the classmate who initially teased her is not any longer—the audience will judge that Lyon was successful in his telling.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. In *The Kindergarten Pirate* (Lyon, 2010), Ginny's medical visit with Dr. Clare—functions in the narrative's progression to resolve the narrative's global instability near the narrative's ending. Ginny, like Becca and Jenny Sue before her, also uses her imagination after her visit with Dr. Clare, but the narrative's emphasis is on the resolution: Dr. Clare has been able to help correct her vision. Because of this, after Ginny goes to the doctor, there are only two more openings, and they describe all of the things that she is able to do successfully. The doctor has seen her, and "fixed" her vision, so there is little reason for the narrative to continue. Because Lyon has taken great care in allowing the reader to see what Ginny sees, in some sense, it seems logical that there is an abrupt ending. Ginny has been miserable because of her double vision, and, thanks to the doctor, she no longer has it, which is what the audience wanted to "see" happen.

One of the strengths of *The Pirate of Kindergarten* (Lyon, 2010) , like *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008) is that it attempts to give its audience visual approximations of having double vision or amblyopia and strabismus. In any case, the view that the audiences get is drastically different from the way that illustrations are typically rendered. I find *The Pirate of Kindergarten* is particularly helpful, because the audience sees what Ginny sees over the course of several openings, and that deepens our appreciation for her visit with Dr. Clare. While I am interested to know what happened next, I think Lyon does a fine job setting up Ginny to eventually have improved eyesight while (more importantly) finding certain tasks easier and exercising her imagination

Closing Thoughts

The doctor's visits in these three books share a few similarities: They do not provide a lot of medical information for the audience, and, in the case of *The Patch* (Headley, 2006) and *Kindergarten Pirate* (Lyon, 2010), the audience never sees the main characters work on the exercises that their doctors give them. Similarly, in both of those books, we do not see the follow-up doctor's visit, unlike in *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008). *The Kindergarten Pirate* is at least realistic in the wait-time for eyeglasses: Ginny is given the patch to wear and tries on different frames, and her glasses will be ready in a week. In *The Patch* and *My Travelin' Eye*, the glasses are given to the characters right away. One likely reason is that the authors do not want to spend time describing the reality of wearing glasses. They (understandably) want the audience to think about how wearing a patch and eyeglasses affects the characters—how both are helpful, and also how they make the girls different, and (in two cases) the recipient of teasing.

The three books helpfully push back to differing degrees against medical-model conceptions of disability, which broadly designate“ disability” as a negative personal attribute. Writing about the medical model Siebers (2008) explained:

> Disability has been a medical matter for as long as human beings have sought to escape the stigma of death, disease, and injury. The medical model defines disability as an individual defect lodged in the person, a defect that must be cured or eliminated if the person is to achieve full capacity as a human being. (p. 3)

These three books each, in different ways, try to make the medical aspect of disability secondary, or at least equal in importance to the social aspect. Becca does not worry about not being able to see, she worries about what her classmates will think of her when she arrives wearing a patch and glasses. Ginny is teased for, among other things, bumping into furniture and knocking it over. Jenny Sue feels that her “travelin’ eye” is crucial to her identity, does not need to be fixed, and maintains this belief throughout the entire narrative, silently disagreeing with her teacher, her mother, and her doctor about the need to “fix” it and its being “asleep.”

The three books do not overtly embrace the Overcoming Narrative, but they all end with their protagonist happy and not being teased for being different. The narratives do not explore much further beyond the immediate results of the doctor’s appointments, so all of the narratives engage in some amount of simplification of the experience of disability, which, as Shakespeare (2006) pointed out, “results from the relationship between factors intrinsic to the individual, and extrinsic factors arising from the wider context in which she finds herself” (p. 55). Kostecki-Shaw wants to end her book on an especially positive note because it was written out of her own experience. As I mentioned earlier, *The Pirate of Kindergarten* ends by circling back to the beginning: Ginny used to knock over chairs, but now she does not. She is able to "take her place in the Circle without knocking over a single chair" (Lyon, 2010, [p. 40]). While the ending is "tidy," it also seems to be pointing out that Ginny is no longer doing something foolish and embarrassing. But because it is something that she could not help doing, calling attention to it seems needless and vaguely hints of some (small) overcoming.

I noted at the beginning of this chapter that this particular category of books was among the smallest (13), but worth pointing out because doctors are seen by many as being able to "fix" disability in some way, and that that is the desired outcome of a visit. The narratives of these books allot different amounts of time to the doctor's visit, which allows for many of the authors to (rightly) put more emphasis on the social consequences of disability rather than the medical ones. In a departure, in the next chapter, I am going to examine books whose disabled characters do not immediately rush to the doctor to get diagnoses: I will be discussing three books whose characters already know that they have a disability when the narrative begins.

Chapter 4: I'm Disabled, and I'm OK?

The picturebooks in the previous chapter used interactions with medical professionals to help disabled characters (and others) understand what their particular disabilities were. Those discussions retroactively explained challenges that the characters had been facing, and allowed them to begin to actively develop self-confidence as they incorporated this new knowledge about themselves into their identities. In the picturebooks that I will discuss in this chapter, there are no doctors providing diagnoses. Twenty-four (24) books fit into this classification

The Books

In many of the books, the characters begin their narratives already knowing that they are different from their peers because they have a particular disability. Some of the characters have already accepted this attribute, while others have not. At the start of other narratives, the characters know, or quickly discover that they are "different" because they have difficulty completing tasks that their peers seem to do easily, for example, reading, or sitting still and doing work. In all of these books, their parents do not immediately bring them to the doctor for a diagnosis.

As such, the narrative progressions in these books develop differently from each other and from those in the previous chapter. Any "learning" and "growth" that the characters do does not hinge on getting a doctor's explanation of why they are "different" from their peers or are having difficulties. Rather, they have an experience that causes them to continue to develop, to begin to develop (or potentially to develop) confidence in themselves. This experience may be impacted by their embodiment of and feelings toward their disability, as in two books that I am going to discuss momentarily, George Moran's *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski!* (1995) and Carrie Best's *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* (2015). The characters may have a deeper, more positive understanding of their disability by the end of the narrative. Or, for example, a character with a disability may focus on something they "do well."

Subsequent books about Becca, Jenny Sue, and Ginny and other characters who received diagnoses might have gone on to address the characters continuing to develop the confidence that they displayed at the end of their narratives, and to explore their experiences beyond those immediately impacted by their diagnoses. Learning about one's congenital or acquired condition is necessary, but what happens to someone after and in addition to receiving a diagnosis of disability?

Trudi and Pia (2003). *Trudi and Pia* was written by Ursula Hegi and illustrated by Giselle Potter. Hegi's 2003 picturebook is an adaptation of one of the storylines in her 1994 novel, *Stones from the River*. I want to start my discussion with Hegi's work because it is one in which a character's change or growth is initiated, but not pursued, an unusual way to end a picturebook. The audience is not left with the knowledge that the character has seemingly come to accept her disability and will therefore be "OK."

The book's light-green cover depicts a girl and a woman holding hands, each standing on her left foot, as though they have been photographed mid-skip. They, along with two white hens, are in front of a small dark blue trailer. Readers would logically assume that the two people on the cover are Trudi and Pia, though would not immediately guess who was who. The inside of the front cover and the facing end page depict a scene of people outdoors. Initially, its picture might seem innocuous: Two people are in a rowboat on a small lake; two others are picking apples; in the distance two others run down a hill, while still another rides a horse and is followed by someone else on foot. But, at the far edge of the lake is a waterfall that is seemingly falling out of nowhere from above the visible space of the right page. There does not appear to be a cliff behind it. Toward the top of the left page (the back of the book's cover), a woman sits on a green bird that is flying toward a hill that has a tunnel opening in it. The inside of the tunnel is brown, but flecked with green, red, and white dots. The woman on the bird is the most obvious of the fantastic elements of the illustration, but it is seemingly at odds with the realistic scene on the book's cover.

The next opening, which includes the cover page, reveals that both Trudi and Pia are dwarfs. They are shown facing each other and standing in front of other people whom the audience can only see from the waist down. Looking back at the cover, that the two women are dwarfs is not necessarily obvious: Though they are both short, with one slightly taller than the other, that could be understood as the perspective of the drawing. The girl has blonde hair and is wearing a white blouse, red skirt, white stockings, and a pair of black Mary Janes. The woman, who has brown hair, is wearing a dark blue dress dotted with white stars, a white four-pointed crown, and black boots. In the spread featuring the title page, one of them is stepping out from behind someone dressed in brown slacks (presumably a man, as there are four average-size people in the spread: two are wearing slacks and Oxfords, while the other two are wearing high heels: one in a dress, the other in a skirt).

Readers likely will be surprised if they have not read the front jacket flap: it describes Trudi's short stature (though does not state that she is a dwarf). This opening's illustration is, perhaps, momentarily arresting, as it offers a literal point of view that the reader likely does not share and was not expecting. Even if a reader has read the jacket flap summary, she may still be surprised as she is presented with this visual. The illustration signals to the reader that the narrative will introduce her to these characters and will provide additional moments where she may be surprised by a perspective on the world that is very different from her own.

The first sentence of the narrative confirms Trudi's short stature: "Many nights the dwarf girl, Trudi, fell asleep hoping that her body would stretch itself overnight, that she'd wake up and be the size of other girls her age" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 5]). Trudi (who has blonde hair) lies in bed, looking toward her bedroom window. There is a small stack of 6 books close to the left side of her bed. The audience is told that Trudi is a dwarf and wished to be the same size as her peers. The stack of books highlights one of the issues that Trudi must contend with—having furniture that is not made for her or others like her: It is likely that she uses the stack to climb into and out of her bed. In the next spread, we see Trudi alone, and with others.

On the left page, Trudi is hanging from a doorframe. Just underneath her is a chair with a stack of books on it. She has a blue scarf wrapped around her forehead and another around her head and knotted under her chin. The narrator explains: "Sometimes . . . she'd hang from door frames . . . by her fingers until they were numb, convinced she could feel her arms and legs getting longer." Explaining the scarves, "She would tie her mother's silk scarves around her head—one encircling her forehead, the other knotted beneath her chin—to keep her head from growing bigger" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 6]). On the preceding page, we saw Trudi alone. On this second page, we see her alone again, but have a slightly better sense of the difficulty that she deals with as little person, and her attempts to change that. The narrator also helps us understand that even when she is with others, Trudi feels isolated. On the right page, opposite: "Trudi yearned to know someone shaped like her, someone whose legs would be short, whose arms could not reach the coat hooks in her classroom, someone who would look at her with joy—not with curiosity" ([p. 7]). Trudi is depicted with classmates in a coatroom at school. She stands on two books and reaches her coat toward an empty hook on the wall. The other four children in the room look toward her; one of the students seems to be startled or surprised—his mouth is slightly open, as though he might be gasping in disbelief.

Trudi's dislike of her height, both because of its physical and social repercussions, serves as the narrative's launch. She is stared at by others and has to live in a world constructed by people who have not made it accessible for dwarfs, and who never considered that they should have done so.

In the initiation, then, the audience recognizes a narrator who reports what Trudi is thinking, and what she wishes for. The narrator does not have the same reaction to Trudi that others do. She tells the audience immediately that Trudi is a dwarf, and does not judge Trudi for attempting to grow. That said, the narrator refers to Trudi not as "a dwarf," but as "the dwarf girl," to underscore that Trudi is "alone"; this is how she is known, as "*the* dwarf girl." There are no other dwarfs in Trudi's community. While the audience knows that Trudi will never grow, they may wonder what will happen to her—will she meet another little person? Will she not be treated as a curiosity, and, knowing that Trudi cannot change her height, will she accept it?

Trudi meets another dwarf when she attends the circus, the animal tamer, Pia. The narrator observes: "While people laughed at the clowns and monkeys, they did not laugh at the dwarf woman. They were awed by her skill and courage" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 10]). The spread shows a smiling Pia, her head partway inside the lion's mouth, her hands stretched to hold it open. Everyone in the audience is either smiling, or is making an "O" of astonishment, including the two clowns who are in the ring with her. There is the faintest suggestion of a spotlight on Pia and the lion. The audience is colored in shades of grey, except for Trudi, who stands on the right side of the ring, her hands on the barrier as she peeks over the top of it. Her eyes are also wide, her eyebrows raised in surprise.

Watching Pia,

> Trudi clapped her hands until they stung, wishing that people would notice her with the things she could do—like adding numbers in her head or remembering the birthday of every child in her class—not for being a dwarf. She wondered if Pia, too, had tried to force her body to stretch. But Pia was no taller than she. (Hegi, 2003, [p. 12])

This double-page spread is mostly brownish grey, except for the two peach shafts of light, meant to represent spotlights on Pia, who stands alone on the left page, her right arm raised in a wave toward the audience; and on a clown riding a bicycle, a green bird perched on his shoulder, on the right page. This is the first illustration in which Pia is alone.

Only nine pages into the narrative, the audience has been given access to different perspectives from which to view the characters. On the first page, the readers' eyes are directed to Trudi, who is centered in the middle of the full-page illustration, lying in bed. The blanket is dark red, while the sheet visible underneath Trudi, her pillow, and her teddy bear are either grey or white. She is wearing grey pajamas, the top of which is partially visible above the blanket. She is fair-skinned and has blonde hair. The blanket is painted in such a way as to give a vague sense of her height and the rest of her body beneath it, but here, the text—not the illustration—gives the reader information that Trudi is a dwarf.

On the next page, the audience sees Trudi, hanging from a doorframe, a stack of books on a chair just beneath her, two scarves tied around her head—one looping across her forehead, the other tied around her head and knotted under her chin—as the text describes some of the ways in which Trudi has tried to direct her growth. Though the audience can finally see Trudi, it is not until the opposite page that the audience sees her among average-size children. Whereas on the preceding pages, the members of the authorial and narrative audiences were the only viewers, on this page, the audiences both see the way that others stare at Trudi, and are put into that same observer position—to stare at Trudi in reaction to noticing the disparity between her stature and that of her classmates. Being forced to stare at Trudi may cause some discomfort for the authorial audience because of self-reflection: Perhaps they realize that they might stare, too, were they classmates of Trudi. While it makes sense that the narrator focalizes both the text and the illustrations, the illustrations in which we can see others looking at Trudi are particularly powerful and consequential for the readerly dynamics because they generate sympathy for her.

With the information about Trudi from the preceding pages, that the audiences has been given—from both the text and the illustrations—the audience has developed sympathy for her: She lives in a world that was not built with her in mind, and she is stared at by others. Knowing that she is very different and that the world is inconvenient for her has led Trudi to want to change something about herself that the audience knows she cannot change. The authorial audience may experience discomfort because they don't *want* to stare at Trudi the way that her classmates are.[9]

The next spread shows Trudi inside the circus tent. On the left page are Trudi, the legs of adults, and a child who staring at Trudi. Trudi does not notice the child, and he is not mentioned in the text. This makes the child's staring more obvious to the audience.

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[9] In what I don't think was intended to be further comment on viewing Trudi, in the illustration of her hanging by a doorframe, there is a mirror on the wall. It is painted a pale aqua. Diagonal white streaks are painted across it, giving the appearance of light that is bouncing off its surface. Based on the placement of the mirror, some part of Trudi or the room should be reflected in it, even just part of her at the mirror's edge. However, the mirror is not reflecting anything. I mention it here because it seemed odd to me that in a story about appearance, a mirror would reflect nothing.

Whereas the narrator explained when Trudi was at school that she did not want to be looked at "with curiosity," here, the audience sees what Trudi experiences regularly, even if she is not aware of it at the moment. Trudi is looking across the tent toward Pia, who is centered on the facing page between the heads and shoulders of two large elephants. The text notes that the elephants, "bowed their knees for her" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 9]). The audience follows Trudi's gaze rather than stares at her, because the text explains, "But she would not meet another dwarf until she visited the circus and saw the animal tamer . . ." ([p. 8]). The audience momentarily stops looking at Trudi to also see who this second little person is.

The next spread is the one with Pia putting her head into the lion's mouth. The narrator says that "One single breath connected everyone in the audience" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 10]). Positioned on one side of the ring, the narrative and authorial audiences are invited to join in this collective breath. It might even take a moment for the audience to spot Trudi, opposite, almost near the outer edge of the right page. She is the only one "in color," the rest of the audience is in shades of grey. We are supposed to both look at her, and watch her look at Pia. For a change, she is not being stared at by people around her, but is joining in the stare invited by the spectacle of the circus, specifically, at this moment, of Pia. But while the rest of the audience is watching the spectacle, Trudi's gaze is divided between joining them and recognizing Pia as a fellow dwarf.

In the next spread, the audience is being invited to look at Pia and the clown: both are bathed in spotlights. But this time, Pia is alone, not with an animal. This is also a moment when Trudi tries to further identify with Pia, not only thinking about Pia as being “like her,” but also wondering whether she, too, tried to change her height, and then realizing that, if she made an attempt, it did not work. Though the narrator does not say so, it is possible that Trudi begins to contemplate the fact that she will not be able to change her height, either.

Pia asks for a “volunteer” and, the narrator says, “Many of the children in the audience raised their arms, but Trudi just slid from her seat and stepped forward” (Hegi, 2003, [pp. 13-14]). As a contrast to the gazes of her classmates on the earlier page, on this page, not all the children are staring at her. This signals a shift into the narrative’s middle: Trudi has seen a second little person, and she is unselfconsciously putting herself into a position (literally) that will allow people to stare at her. As the narrative’s voyage, the instability of Trudi’s feelings about her height has changed, slightly. Now, she is thinking of her stature as an asset—it connects her to the lion tamer, in a way that no other spectator’s height does. In this moment, she is not concerned about being looked at.

The narrator describes Pia’s reaction: “Pia looked startled. Her black eyes skipped past Trudi and back to her as if she were seeing herself in a mirror. But then she laughed with delight” (Hegi, 2003, [p. 15]). Both Trudi and Pia have moments of recognition when they first see each other. Pia then begins to tell the audience a fantastical story: “‘It looks like we have a volunteer. From . . . The island of little people, where everyone is our height . . . ” ([p. 15]). Pia sends her green parrot, Othello, to Trudi, and he lands on the girl’s wrist. Pia asks Trudi if she “‘remember[s] our island,’” and invites Trudi to talk about her memories of it:

> “And what do you remember best, my lovely friend?”. . . .
>
> “The waterfall,” [Trudi said].
>
> Pia nodded. “And a splendid waterfall it is. Cool in the summer, warm in the winter.”
>
> From the empty air, she whisked three golden hoops and held them up. They formed a tunnel, and the parrot screeched and flew through them, then landed back on Trudi’s wrist. ([pp.16- 17])

Behind Pia, a faint waterfall is falling. Because the narrator does not mention this, the authorial audience is aware that the implied author has included the out-of-place visual so that the audience can envision the magical world that Trudi and Pia are beginning to create.

The next spread is an illustration that is nearly identical to the one on the front end pages, though Trudi and Pia hold hands and replace the man on the horse and the person following him. Taken together, the images are not static, but show movement. The implied author is attempting to make this place more believable and “real” for her audience, while Trudi and Pia try to make it real for theirs (and because the world is “visible,” they have succeeded for the narrative audience):

> Between them, they wove the story of an island so glorious that everyone in the audience would have followed them there without question, and all along the parrot flew between them like a weaver’s shuttle. (Hegi, 2003, [p. 19])

While it is, of course, fortunate that there were no mishaps during the unrehearsed performance, it may seem odd that it is so perfect: Pia and Trudi have extemporized flawlessly a story of an imagined place. They have done it so well that the audience is entranced, and Pia's parrot easily moves between them. Perhaps the implied author is trying to emphasize here an innate connection that exists between Pia and Trudi because they are both dwarfs.

The following page features a close-up, chest-up illustration of Trudi and Pia; Pia has "plucked a huge paper rose from the air," and has handed it to Trudi and given her a kiss on the cheek. (Hegi, 2003, [p. 20]) This page's illustration, like many before it, plays with perspective. Beginning with the first illustration of Pia (with the kneeling elephants), the illustrations of Pia or of Pia and Trudi play with visual perspective in such a way that does not reinforce their short stature—the clowns are always on the opposite page, so further away. The audience sits. When Trudi stands—climbs onto the top of the ring—she is slightly taller than all of the children around her, who are sitting down.

In this particular illustration, depicting the end of Pia's performance and of her and Trudi's joint storytelling, they are the only two people visible, and because they are drawn in close-up, they fill most of the illustration. They look "big" (not necessarily tall), but looked at directly after the illustration of the island, the audience might momentarily forget that the two are shorter than average-size people. If the actual audience is full of children who are of average height, they may suddenly feel "different," and excluded. Pia is paying attention to Trudi, and giving her a gift and a kiss. Trudi (and not anyone average-sized) is singled out as special and important. That said, because this can only be gleaned from the illustration, rather than something the narrator is describing—Pia ignoring the other children, for example—the implied author and narrator are not trying to actively alienate the audience. Indeed, the authorial audience has just been invited into the magical world inhabited by little people in a way that the audience at the circus has not. The actual and authorial audiences, then, are curious to see what will happen next to Trudi.

After the show, Trudi finds Pia, and here, the audience will recognize the blue trailer from the book's cover: "Behind the merry-go-round and the fortune teller, a blue trailer sat in a patch of clover. Next to it hung a laundry line with lacy underwear and short stockings that must have been Pia's" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 23]). When Pia opens the door for Trudi:

> Pia didn't look surprised to see her.
>
> "There must be others," Trudi blurted.
>
> Pia stepped aside to let her enter.
>
> "I have never met anyone like me." ([p. 25])

Trudi's entrance into Pia's trailer signals the narrative's shift into its ending. The illustrations, more than the text itself, serves as the narrative's closure. When Trudi was in her own home at the beginning of the narrative, no one else was pictured with her. Indeed, Trudi's family is not pictured in in the illustrations at all; this emphasized her loneliness for the audience. She moves from there to the public spaces of school and the circus, and now is once again in a home (or, a temporary one), and she is not alone, but finally with someone who is like her.

Pia tells Trudi "'Oh, but they're everywhere. . . . In my travels, I never have to look for them. And just like you, they want to know about others'" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 26]).

When Trudi asks, “Why can’t we all be in one place?” Pia tells her, “‘We are . . . It’s called earth’” ([p. 26]). Trudi explains to Pia that she’s the only dwarf in her town. The opposite page shows her sitting in a chair that is built to accommodate Pia (and thus Trudi).

The next spread has an element of the fantastic to it, illustrating for the narrative and authorial audiences what Pia is explaining to Trudi: “‘When I get that feeling of being the only one,’ Pia said, ‘I imagine hundreds of people like me . . . all over the world . . . all feeling alone, and I feel linked to them.” (Hegi, 2003, [p. 28]; first ellipsis in original). She tells Trudi the exact number of little people whom she has met. “Dizzy with joy, Trudi could feel them—those one hundred and four—linked to her as if they were here in the trailer” ([p. 29]). The spread shows a line of people walking through the open door of the trailer (the windows and furniture of have disappeared), dressed in different outfits, some of which are immediately recognizable (if stereotypical) indicators of their countries, while others are not. An Indian woman wears a pink saree; a Japanese woman a peach kimono. A German man wears grey lederhosen over a white shirt and has a matching gray hat. An American man wears jeans, cowboy boots, and a cowboy hat.

The narrator continues: “In that instant [Trudi] understood that for Pia, being a dwarf was normal, beautiful even. To Pia, long arms were ugly, long legs unsteady. Tall people looked odd, too far from the ground” (Hegi, 2003, [p. 29]). While I am not clear whether Trudi is projecting, or whether the implied author intended it to be understood by Trudi that Pia has an aversion to average-size bodies, if Trudi “understands” that Pia feels no desire to change her body, this is the first time that she has even considered the possibility of eventually thinking the same way about herself. This is a shift from her thought in the circus tent. She had wondered whether Pia had ever tried to change her height, and, if so, she had obviously failed. At that moment, Trudi may have begun to acknowledge the fact that she could not change her height. Now, she is beginning to understand that remaining her height might not be terrible. Both realizations are necessary to move toward the global instability's resolution.

The next opening is filled with a rendering of the night sky. The sky is a deep periwinkle. Trudi asks Pia if she will return. "'I cannot know these things ahead of time. But if you ever want to ask me questions, send them to the stars. They'll find me'" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 30]). Trudi is standing at the lower left side of the spread, and Pia hovers in the upper right. She holds a white wand topped with a star that is similar to the ones on her dress and in the sky. The two look at each other, and Trudi's questions are written out in black script: "When will I see you again? / Where are you now? / Will I meet other dwarfs? / Will I ever get married? / Will I have children of my own? / Will they be like me?" ([pp. 30-31]). While Trudi is not shown reacting to Pia's suggestion, she is already thinking of questions, though it is not clear that she actually believes she will be able to send them to Pia, while the authorial audience knows that this is not possible. This illustration is helpful because it allows us to see what Trudi is wondering.

The next opening begins with another question that Trudi has:

> "Do you ever wish you could look straight into peoples' faces?". . . .
> Pia giggled. "Just don't look up." (Hegi, 2003, [p. 32]).

Trudi is puzzled, because not looking up means that she will only be able to see what is at her eye-level: "'their bellies, their elbows, their fat bottoms'" ([p. 33]). This again is a moment where the authorial audience may not have considered, from a practical standpoint, what a little person is able to see from their vantage point.

> "Girl . . ." Pia dabbed tears of laughter from her eyes. "Tell me this—what do you do if someone has a very quiet voice?"
>
> Trudi had to think for a moment. "I lean closer."
>
> "Right," Pia said. "If you speak softly, most people will bend down to you. As long as you remember not to look up." ([p. 33]; ellipsis in original)

Trudi and Pia take up most of the space of the left page of the spread, but there are also four images of Trudi and unnamed people in shades of brown. In the lone image of this kind on the left page, Trudi is looking up into the face of a man. In the three on the right page (on which Pia asks her question and offers advice), a woman is shown looking over her shoulder and down at Trudi, who is touching the woman's skirt. Under that, a man and a woman are shown bending down to look at her face. The changes in the images illustrate Trudi's initial confusion over Pia's advice and then her understanding of it as she realizes that by refusing to look up at average-sized people, she can encourage them to bend down to look at her.

As with the earlier image of the imagined little people in the trailer, these people are not actually present, but a visual representation of what Trudi is envisioning as she and Pia have this conversation, and to help the authorial audience picture these interactions as well. In the final opening, Trudi tells Pia, "'I'll try that,'" (Hegi, 2003, [p.

34]). For the first time, she decides to do something to make the world “work” for her, rather than trying to change her body to fit into it. She asks Pia if she can stay with her.

> “Even if I welcomed you,” Pia said, “it wouldn’t change that feeling of being the only one. No one but you can change that. Like this.” Pia wrapped her short arms around herself. Rocking steadily, she smiled. “Some day,” she promised Trudi, “you’ll remember this.” ([p. 35])

The audience does not get to hear Trudi’s reaction.

While the audience’s (and Trudi’s) question at the narrative’s start of whether she would meet another dwarf was answered, the narrative’s larger global instability about Trudi’s feelings about herself has not resolved. The narrative literally ends with an image of Pia and her comments to Trudi about self-acceptance. Trudi’s last words in the text are about wanting to travel with Pia in order to be with someone who accepts her. This underscores that Trudi has not yet begun to accept herself, though there have been hints that she might. She has been exposed to the idea that her dwarfism is “normal,” and perhaps one day she will feel more comfortable with her size. She has told Pia that she would make an effort to interact differently with average-sized people to her own advantage rather than theirs. While the narrative began with the narrator speaking to her audience, in the narrative’s farewell, the implied author uses the narrator only to provide tags minimally describing Pia’s behavior and words to Trudi. The implied author gives Pia the last word, addressing Trudi, and the audience overhears it.

As the narrative’s completion, then, readers may appreciate Pia’s counsel, but be worried that Trudi will not necessarily become comfortable with her height, and also that she may not meet more little people. Readers may therefore judge that Hegi did not give them a satisfying ending and that the narrative as a whole was disappointing, because Trudi may not ever be happy. On the other hand, the work that Hegi has done may be acceptable if readers understand that Pia is being realistic: Trudi needs to decide to accept herself. Being with Pia would not automatically mean that she would. This is an instance in which the implied author choosing to not fully resolve the global instability by the conclusion of the narrative is sensible, as, in this case, a complete resolution would seem too easy and unrealistic.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. *Trudi and Pia* (Hegi, 2003) is, as I had noted, rare because its ending is not "neat." Trudi has not, over the course of a day, suddenly decided that she is "OK" just as she is as a result of seeing and talking with another little person. Hegi-Potter made her book's conclusion realistic, as self-acceptance for anyone does not occur in a single afternoon. Even though the narrative is excerpted from a longer novel, the implied author could have altered the ending to reassure her audience that Trudi was going to accept herself and that her life was going to be easier as a result, and it is refreshing to read a picturebook whose implied author resists this temptation. In doing so, she also avoids making use of a version of the Overcoming Narrative.

At the end of this narrative, Trudi is only beginning to think about the potential for reframing how she thinks about being a dwarf and the ways in which she can change her interactions with average-sized people that are beneficial for her. She has told Pia that she'll "try," but the audience does not see whether she does, or the outcome of that.

Nor does the audience find out whether she becomes comfortable with herself.

I do want to discuss Pia's working at the circus. The circus appears to be just that, and not a "freak show"—the illustrations do not give any suggestion that there are explicit opportunities to look at people with atypical or disabled bodies. Thomson (1995) described the "spectacle" of freak shows and also linked them to circuses:

> The show's conventions of display situated the extraordinary body both spatially and narratively. For example, the elevated freak platform—sometimes, particularly in circuses, it was a pit instead—held the observer's gaze like a magnet, not only foregrounding the body on display, but exposing it in such a way that the physical traits presented as extraordinary dominated the entire person on exhibit. (pp. 60-61)

Another layer of spectacle is added to an animal-taming act when the tamer is not the expected male, but female. A second additional layer is added when that woman is a little person; her small stature is made all the more apparent by working with animals that are among the largest at a circus. It is unlikely that, were Pia an average-sized woman, she would be the circus's animal tamer. She has the position most likely *because* she is a dwarf, or, in any case, her height makes her even more "desirable" for the role than simply being female would. Her height allows her to be very consciously "situated spatially" relative to her audience for dramatic effect.

The narrator says of the audience's reaction to Pia in the ring that "people . . . did not laugh at [her]" (Hegi, 2003, [p. 10]). We have no reason to doubt the veracity of this claim. However, at the moment that this is happening, Pia is still participating in the accepted “narrative” of the spectacle: An animal tamer working with animals is chiefly supposed to, as Pia does, provoke awe.

As the performers are following a carefully choreographed performance, dictated by the broader narrative of the circus, so, too, are the spectators. Pia also literally constructs a narrative, as, with Trudi, she tells the story of the magical island where little people are from—a place that is not accessible to the average-stature members of the audience. The audience never sees how Pia is treated outside of the circus, though knowing how Trudi is treated would suggest that Pia would most likely face the same stares.

Reminding her readers that performers like Pia are very consciously “othered,” Thomson (1995) wrote:

> The freak show consequently created a ‘freak,’ or ‘human curiosity,’ from an ordinary person who had a visible physical disability or an otherwise atypical body by exaggerating the ostensible difference and the perceived distance between the viewer and the showpiece on the platform. The spatial arrangement between audience and freak ritualized the relationship between self and cultural other. (p. 62)

The transformation of Pia from “ordinary person” to “ ‘human curiosity’” by exaggerating difference is subtly hinted at in the illustrations. In those that feature Pia with other average-sized people, or when Trudi is with her classmates, both characters are visually marked as “other” because of their short stature.

By contrast, on the pages in which Pia is either by herself, with animals, or with

Trudi, and on the pages in which Trudi is alone, the lack of average-height people as a point of reference allows the audience the opportunity to not immediately think about Pia and Trudi as “other” because of their height. They only become “othered” when viewed with average-height people and when viewed *by* average-height people. The authorial and actual audiences actively (if unconsciously) participate in this othering process.

As an actual reader, I have the benefit of having some familiarity with Hegi’s novel, and am aware that the narrative of the novel takes place before, during, and after World War II in Germany. While it is not implausible to guess why Pia took a job with a circus, an audience reading the book now might not realize when the picturebook is set—the clothing might suggest that the narrative is set in the past, but not when. And the audience likely would be unaware of the history of freak shows and circuses and the little people who were employed in both. While we only see a brief slice of Pia’s work, and it is positive, and it is meaningful for Trudi to perform and speak with her, the narrative is still reinforcing (however unintentionally) the spectacle of having little people perform for average-sized people. While I think Trudi’s evolution during the narrative is realistic and welcome, Pia’s occupation makes me uncomfortable, despite her apparent skills.

My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay (2015). *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* was written by Cari Best and illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton. This book features a disabled character narrator who tells her story to her audience. I wanted to discuss this book because it is among the most recent of the books that I looked at for my research. Second, its narrative progression differs from that of *Trudi and Pia* as its protagonist moves toward accepting her disability. It also will allow me to discuss and compare a book published twenty years earlier: George Moran's *Imagine Me on a Sit-ski!* (1995). Though both books feature a disabled protagonist narrator and a similar type of "important event"—one that requires some amount of physical coordination and skill—the authors integrate disability in different ways, which in turn, affect the narratives' progressions and how they unfold. I want to discuss Best's work first, and then highlight differences with Moran's.

On the cover of *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* (Best, 2015), four girls wearing matching blue jumpers over white blouses, white knee-high socks and black Mary Janes stand together in front of a school. One of the girls, who stands slightly in front of the others, is holding a red and white cane, tapping it against the ground in front of her. While the three other girls gaze at the fourth, she looks straight out toward the audience, suggesting that she is Zulay, given her slightly privileged position in the group, and the direction of her gaze. The audience may also realize that Zulay is blind, if they recognize that her cane is similar to those used by many blind individuals.

The title is only identifying individuals, and is doing so in relationship to Zulay. It is not providing any additional information about place or event, suggesting that the narrative is going to engage to some degree in portraiture, described by Phelan as "a rhetorical design inviting the authorial audience to apprehend the revelation of character" (2007, p. 23), and will introduce the audience to these characters by focusing on the ordinary, or everyday, rather than only a specific event.

Unlike in *Trudi and Pia* (Hegi, 2003), whose narrator tells us immediately that Trudi is a dwarf, in *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay*, the revelation that Zulay is blind happens gradually, in a manner consistent with a narrative that focuses on the "ordinary." Because the cover shows Zulay with a cane, this could instigate a tension between the members of the audience who recognize what it is, and Zulay, because she does not explicitly address her blindness. (It is expressly noted in the front jacket flap summary.) The audience's experience of the narrative is dictated by whether they understand why Zulay has a cane, and whether they read the paratext. If an adult is reading the narrative, it is possible that she will tell the audience that Zulay is blind.

Rather than existing as a tension, though, I think that the way in which Zulay's blindness is integrated into the narrative is an attempt to "normalize" rather than "problematize" it. A sighted audience can see Zulay's cane on the cover and jacket flap; they can read that she is blind in the jacket summary. We are being prompted to pay attention to both what information we are getting about Zulay, and *how* we are getting it—visually (and possibly aurally). As Zulay (and others) indirectly address her blindness in the narrative, the audience can also pay attention to the ways in which Zulay and her peers and teacher are aware of it—as part of who she is, and how it impacts her everyday experiences. The text (Zulay's narration) is augmented by the book's illustrations, focalized not through Zulay, but an omniscient view that also provides evidence of Zulay's blindness.

Zulay begins: "In class 1-3, there are 22 chairs and 22 desks, 22 pencils and 22 books, 22 hooks and 22 smocks. There are 22 people and 22 names—and one of them is mine. **Zulay**" (Best, 2015, [p. 2]; emphasis in original). The accompanying illustration, to the right of the text, covers the entire right page, and half of the left; Zulay's name is on its own line, in bolder, and slightly larger text. The view is on an angle from beside the teacher's desk, so most of the students' desks are visible; the chairs turned upside down on top of them. Smocks hang in tall cubbies along the back wall of the classroom. The names are on rectangular pieces of paper affixed to the front of each desk, each written in a different color. Zulay's name is in the front row. Unfortunately, because of the placement of the illustration on the page, the "Z" is in the picturebook's gutter, and cannot immediately be seen when looking at the image.

Zulay does not specify that the names are written twice—once in English, and once in braille. The audience only gets the latter piece of information by looking at the illustration and recognizing what the system of dots represents. Zulay did not specifically leave this information out. The audience is being invited to recognize that what may appear to be dots with no discernable function are purposeful and are communicating just as much information as the English letters are. If the audience recognizes that this is braille, they will also realize that having the names in braille on each of the nameplates enables Zulay to know where each of her classmates sits. The audience will also notice, then, that Zulay does not call attention to the braille--it is incumbent on them to notice it, an instance where the audience may become more cognizant of one of the ways that they get information (visually) that they may take for granted.

The following spread repeats an image similar to the one on the cover: four girls in school uniforms are standing outside. A school bus is visible in the background, and part of a building is visible on the edge of the right page. Zulay describes herself and her friends: "Four best friends who help each other, four best friends who help themselves—

Maya, Nancy, Zulay, and Chyng" (Best, 2015, [p. 5]). On the next page, the girls are walking down the hall, their arms linked. On the preceding page, all four girls had their eyes open; the three other girls looked toward Zulay, whose mother is standing behind her, a hand on Zulay's shoulder. In the illustration of the hallway, the girls all have their eyes closed, and their mouths are opening and smiling, suggesting that perhaps they are laughing as they go down the hall. A few pages later when Zulay and Chyng are shown taking their upside-down chairs off their desks at the start of the school day, both are drawn with their eyes closed, or perhaps, looking down as they move their chairs.

The implied author is not trying to draw attention to Zulay's blindness by depicting her eyes a certain way or by having her gaze not be directed at a specific person or object. Zulay mentions sounds in her narration, without specifically calling our attention to the fact that she's hearing them: "sure enough, when the shoe shuffling stops," the girls have reached their classroom (Best, 2015, [p. 7]). Zulay is indirectly sharing with her audience one of the ways that she determines without using sight where she is. Before she sits, she says, "I feel with my knees for where the chair fits . . ." ([p. 9]). This page is also the first time that Zulay references her blindness, albeit indirectly: "Inside my desk there are crumpled papers, pencils, and kisses, and a folded-up cane—a folded-up cane that I push to the back for later" ([p. 9]). The illustration gives the audience an over-the-shoulder view of Zulay holding open her desk. We can see the objects that she has mentioned, including her cane.

As I noted earlier, the book is, in part, an example of portraiture: one reason that readers continue reading is to learn about Zulay, who is likely different from themselves, and, to a lesser extent, about her three friends. However, as she and her friends come down the hall, she has a conversation with Ms. Perkins, "the hall lady," and tells the audience that she has a loose tooth (Best, 2015, [p. 6]). This signals that, while the earlier openings could be read as describing continual, repeated occurrences (Zulay's description of her classroom and of her and her friends' arrival at school), there is a reason that she is choosing to talk about this particular day—what is it? The repeated mention of her cane also suggests that it is going to be important—she's thinking about it, and thus, the audience is thinking about it, too.

In the next opening, the implied author offers what I think can be read as an instability. Underneath a picture of Zulay sitting at her desk is the text: Ms. Seeger says while going over the schedule: "'[Later] Ms. Turner will work with Zulay while the rest of us go to the gym. And after lunch, there will be a big surprise'" (Best, 2015, [p. 11]). The audience might pay attention to the mention of a "surprise," and start wondering what it is. But, then in the next paragraph, Zulay continues:

> I don't like it when I hear my name sticking out there by itself. If no one else has to have Ms. Turner, then why do I? But I don't say the way I feel. I might stick out even more, like a care alarm in the night waking everybody up. ([p. 11])

In the preceding spread, Zulay was pictured alone, looking into her desk, the audience looking over her shoulder. On this page, she is again alone, centered above the text, and surrounded by white space, emphasizing that she is by herself. Her arms are crossed in front of her on her desk; her knees are together, and her feet are turned inward toward each other, as though she is trying to make herself more "compact," so that she does not "stick out there" so much. Her head is tilted to her right, and her mouth, which previously has either been drawn in a closed smile or a big open one, is a thin, straight line, drawn at a slight angle. Her body language and expression communicate frustration.

While her audience might be wondering who Ms. Turner is, and what the surprise might be, Zulay has drawn their focus to herself, getting them to pay attention to the fact that she does not like being singled out. So, while the audience will continue reading to keep learning about Zulay, they will also be curious to find out how Zulay is treated and feels during the rest of the narrative: What is going to happen when she works with Ms. Turner?

I think that these moments are the narrative's global instability, and thus the narrative's launch. There is a sudden shift in Zulay's previously cheerful attitude, and for the first time, she is being singled out in a way that makes her uncomfortable, feelings that are corroborated by the illustration. While curiosity about Zulay might prompt someone to continue reading, I think that Ms. Seeger's comments to Zulay and her reaction are meant to be more engaging—while the audience is likely curious about the surprise, they are equally curious about what Zulay is going to do with Ms. Turner, and are also mindful of Zulay being uncomfortable for being singled out.

As the school day progresses, Zulay is shown interacting with her friends. One of these spreads provides an opportunity to look at agency, and one's ability to disclose information about herself, rather than have someone else do it. In this spread, Zulay is shown using her Brailler on the left page: She tells us that she types: "*One day I'll run* *and the wind will push me, and the sun will shine me* [*sic*]*, and I'll feel like a bird who opens her wings and flies. Only I'll fly with my feet* (Best, 2015, [p. 14]; emphasis in original). In the illustration under the text, Zulay sits at her desk, her upper body turned toward the audience; "Ding! Ding! Ding!" is written in letters of alternating colors: The words move above her head and then turn down next to her, stopping just above the green Brailler on her desk. Different colored dots float in the air by the right side of her face.

Unlike the illustration featuring Zulay's folded-up cane, this time, the audience can see her face. This emphasizes the fact that she is not trying to hide herself or this aspect of her difference. Zulay does not seem to mind that everyone—her classmates and the audience—can see her Brailler. On the next page, she notes that, "Today it's Chyng's turn to type her name on my machine" (Best, 2015, [p. 15]). The audience learns that Zulay has let her friends, or perhaps, all her classmates, take turns using her Brailler: "'The dots feel like goose bumps,' [Chyng] whispers, and I laugh" ([p. 15]). Zulay explains to her, "'That's how I read . . . I see with my fingers'" ([p. 15]). Zulay is explicitly acknowledging one of the aspects of her identity that makes her different from her peers. She responds to Chyng's comment by explaining why the keys are made the way that they are—they enable her to do something. She could have elected to not allow Chyng to use her Brailler, or could have responded to Chyng by agreeing with her, or by getting annoyed, or not at all. In this instance, she is deciding how to address being different, rather than having that decision made for her, as Ms. Seeger did earlier.

The exchange between Zulay and Chyng seems to be an example of the implied author using these characters as synthetic creations to explain what a Brailler is. The girls are best friends. Chyng already should know why Zulay uses a Brailler; Zulay likely would have used it before. As I noted in the last chapter while discussing the beginning of *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2008), this is a moment where the implied author allows the synthetic aspect of her characters to take precedence over the mimetic so that she may give the audience this information via Zulay's narration.

Zulay then tells the audience: "Reading used to be hard before my hands learned the way. So was climbing a tree—and swimming. Because in the beginning, all I did was fall. And sink. And not want to do it like I don't want to do that cane" (Best, 2015, [p. 15]). The implied author likely has Zulay mention this to give the audience some information about how some blind people read. More importantly, she is setting up a parallel between Zulay's Brailler and cane, both visible markers of Zulay's difference, both objects that she has to learn how to use. Zulay reports: "'You'll learn how to use the cane, too,' Ms. Turner told me. But she never said it would be a cinch" ([p. 15]). Here then, the narrative shifts to the middle as the global instability of what Zulay will do with Ms. Turner is complicated further in the narrative's voyage: The audience learns that Zulay does not yet know how to use her cane, and wonders how difficult that process will be.

On this same page, a woman, whom the audience might assume to be Ms. Turner stands behind Zulay and Chyng, smiling. It is confirmed on the next page that this is Ms. Turner, but the audience realizes here that, though they can see her, they do not know who she is, and need Zulay, who knows Ms. Turner has arrived because of the scents of "Juicy Fruit" and "outside," to identify her (Best, 2015, [p. 15]). Thus, the audience has come to rely on Zulay to accurately narrate and give us useful information. Similarly, if the audience has been paying attention to the additional information in the illustrations and has combined it with Zulay's narration and felt that there are no "gaps," The implied author will be judged as creating a narrative that we can easily follow.

With Ms. Turner's arrival, Zulay can no longer leave her cane in her desk. "I imagine how I look with this thing that no one else has" (Best, 2015, [p. 16]). She thinks of the cane not as something that can potentially be useful to her, but as a marker of difference. She's also reminding the audience that we have information about her that she does not. We are continually getting additional information from the illustrations that she is not aware of.

This page features two images of her. In the one closer to the top of the page, she is taking the cane from her desk. In the second, she is sitting in the chair, holding it folded up, looking up and away from it. The first image is also the first time that we see Zulay with her eyes closed while she is by herself. While readers may have seen blind people who have closed their eyes, it is not until the audience sees this particular image that we might associate Zulay's closed eyes specifically with her blindness, as Ms. Turner is having her concentrate on "feeling" her cane.

On the facing page, the implied author uses Ms. Turner to explain how Zulay can use the cane: "'The cane will let you walk down streets . . . One day you'll be an expert at finding out your way outside—the way you are an expert around your classroom" (Best, 2015, [p. 17]). Ms. Turner's explanation to Zulay is an example of what Phelan (2005) calls "redundant telling," which he defined as "a narrator's apparently unmotivated report of information to a narratee that the narratee already possesses" (p. 11). It is applicable to Ms. Turner: She is telling Zulay something that she already knows—Zulay already has the cane.

After practicing, Zulay rebuffs a curious Nancy, who "wants to try it out" (Best, 2015, [p. 20]). Zulay yells at Nancy and puts the cane away. Since she has not yet mastered using her cane, and because she is not happy about needing to use it, she is not eager to let someone else try to use it, whereas she does not seem to mind her classmates using her Brailler.

Ms. Seeger's "surprise" is an announcement that "'In three weeks . . . we will be having Field Day. There will be contests and races and games outside'" (Best, 2015, [p. 23). The next day, Zulay says, "'I would like to run the race in my new pink shoes'" ([p. 25]). Ms. Turner is excited and wants to help her practice. The local instability of Zulay being able to use her cane is further complicated here, again. Will she be able to use her cane well enough to get a sense of the track so that she will be able to participate in a race?

Outside on the track, Ms. Turner tells her, 'Let the cane be your longest finger . . . when you need to know what's coming,'" and Zulay tells us, "I wonder if I can get it right" (Best, 2015, [p. 26]). In the illustration above the text, Ms. Turner and Zulay walk on a track, marked with white lines. Zulay holds her cane in her right hand, a black loop attached to it encircles her wrist. She is on display for the audience: We are watching her attempt to use her cane and we can see what she is doing, while she tries using her cane to guide her, and doubts her abilities.

The next spread jumps forward in time to when Zulay is successful: "A few days later, I surprise myself. I get from my classroom to the track all by myself walking with the cane," (Best, 2015, [p. 28]). This serves as the narrative's closure, letting the audience know that we are is reaching the ending. Ms. Turner tells her, "'It's time to practice that running!'" ([p. 28]). Time moves quickly again, as over the span of two short paragraphs, they go from being uncoordinated together to moving in sync: "Then one day, after so many days, we finally get it right. Ms. Turner and me, our legs and our feet, all know how fast we can go" ([p. 28]).

In her description of running the race, Zulay describes the track with the same repetition that she had used to describe her cane: "Ms. Turner and I stand at the top of the track, so ready to run the race. The smooth round track that I know like my hands. The track that I know like my feet" (Best, 2015, [p. 31]). Zulay holds Ms. Turner's right elbow with her left hand; her cane is folded up in her right. The last page of the narrative shows Zulay crossing through an already-torn red finish ribbon: "So with the wind pushing me and the sun shining me [*sic*], I feel like that bird that went flying" ([p. 32]). Ms. Turner has disappeared from the illustration—on the previous page, she ran next to Zulay, their arms linked, but here, Zulay is alone. The audience is excited for her because she was successful in running the race. We need to infer that her practice walking the track while using it enabled her to develop a cognitive knowledge of the track so that she was eventually able to run without her cane.

That said, while the global instability of Zulay working with Ms. Turner, learning to use her cane, and running a race has been resolved, the discomfort she felt being singled out when Ms. Seeger first mentioned Ms. Turner is not specifically resolved. The audience does not see this singling out happen again during the course of the narrative, but there is no suggestion that Ms. Seeger realizes that she has made Zulay uncomfortable and is going to attempt to not call attention to her that way in the future. The audience judges that Best did a thorough job introducing us to a Zulay; we were occasionally given extra information that Zulay already had. We are satisfied that Zulay mastered using her cane and running a race.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. Best-Brantley-Newton does an admirable job of normalizing Zulay's blindness, which she achieves by having the illustrations and Zulay's narration address it in ways that are often subtle. One issue that nondisabled children might not think about which the implied author includes is spotlighting. Zulay's demeanor instantly changes when Ms. Seeger announces that she will be doing something different from the rest of the class, and the audience assumes it is because Zulay is blind. Carter (2008) addressed a different kind of calling-out: "When a Black student perceives that he is being positioned as racially hypervisible, particularly by a White teacher or White students, this is racial spotlighting" (p. 231). In the case of the students Carter interviewed and observed, she noted: "These students experience physical and psychological discomfort in the classroom as a result of this spotlighting" (p. 232). Similarly, Ms. Seeger is making Zulay "hypervisible." This is underscored by the more subtle acknowledgement of Zulay's blindness by Zulay herself and in the illustrations. Suddenly, Ms. Seeger is drawing attention to Zulay's blindness and to Zulay. It is not imperative to the narrative that Zulay report what Ms. Seeger has said for the purposes of understanding what is happening or what will happen next. Zulay reports it because it distressed her, and the audience “sees” her change immediately from being boisterous to uncomfortable and silent. Because this issue is common for actual children with disabilities (or any other “difference,” whether visible or hidden until a teacher calls attention to it), it might have been worthwhile for the implied author to follow up on this later; I was glad that she raised it. I was also glad that while Zulay was able to use her cane and run the race, she did not win it—winning it is not the point, and at the end, she is proud of her accomplishment—so I appreciate that the implied author did not make use of a trope of a disabled character trying something, and, not only be successful, but be the best, a version of the Overcoming Narrative.

I was a bit disappointed that the implied author had Ms. Perkins comment on Zulay’s acute sense of smell early in the narrative; it subtly perpetuates the myth that people who lack or lose the use of one sense automatically have or gain acuity in another. I am also perplexed by the book’s title, since Zulay’s friends are not featured as prominently, though I am having trouble coming up with a title that similarly addresses the reader[10]. It is also worth noting that Zulay’s narrative is being told through a medium that she cannot access, and something that is perhaps worth bringing up when sharing a book with a sighted audience. I checked to see whether a braille edition has been published, but could not find one. .

Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski! (1995). *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski! was* written by

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[10] The author’s note explains that a real little girl named Zulay inspired the story. Perhaps the author also was trying to include the real Zulay’s real friends.

George Moran and illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott. Its the title is a command to the audience—to imagine someone on something called a "sit-ski." Just under the title, a smiling boy sits in something resembling a kayak: the top is made of fabric and has a zipper up the middle. The boy is holding ski poles. An adult on skis is behind him, holding onto gathered rope that is attached to the "kayak." They are stopped on a snow-covered hill. The audience will assume that the boy is the "me" of the title, and that he is sitting in a sit-ski; there is no need to "imagine" him doing this. That said, the title also suggests an attempt to engage the audience, the implicit "you" being addressed.

On the first page, the boy from the cover sits in his wheelchair above the text; the watercolor illustration ends just above his knees. He holds his wordboard on his lap. Across the top a few visible words are visible: Who/No/How/When/Yes/For/And. The left side contains a number pad; the alphabet is in the middle.

The text below indicates that the boy is talking to his audience:

> Learning to ski meant a lot to me. I knew that millions of people go skiing, but I never thought I could.
>
> My name is Billy. I have to use a wheelchair all the time because I have cerebral palsy and I can't use my legs. I can use my arms a little, though.
>
> Even though I understand everything you say to me, I can't talk to you with my voice. Instead I talk by using my wordboard. (Moran, 1995, [p. 3])

By having Billy address the narratee, and by extension, the narrative, authorial and actual audiences, the implied author is attempting to introduce speaking children to someone who is likely very different from themselves. The audience also knows that Billy learned to ski. The implied author has Billy tell the audience this even *before* Billy introduces himself to ensure that his audience knows this immediately. He wants to negate the assumption that someone who has a physical disability is incapable of skiing.

Thus, this narrative's progression is generated by a tension between Billy, who is withholding information, and his audience, who wants to know how he is able to do something that that many people would likely would assume is impossible for him.[11] Billy's matter-of-fact opening comment is meant to normalize the idea that someone with a physical disability that limits the use of his body can still participate in a sport that the audience knows typically requires people to be mobile. Billy's specific disability is never mentioned again in the text. I think that this is to make it easier for readers to focus on Billy as a representation of many physically disabled children. A repeated, explicit focus on Billy's disability would inhibit his synthetic function to encapsulate multiple potential disabilities at once. Moran-Bernard Westcott, like Best-Brantley-Newton, wants the audience to be aware of his character's specific disability and to accept it as part of who the character is and to not perceive it as a negative attribute.

However, Billy's implied author goes about constructing these effects differently. Moran-Bernard Westcott uses his character narrator to engage the audience in the narrative, first with its title, and then with his occasional direct address beginning on the first page. The implied author then has Billy tell the audience a bit about his experience of cerebral palsy, including the inability to speak. Billy's forthcoming attitude helps

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[11] An audience reading this book in 2017 likely would not think that this was impossible, but still be curious about how Billy did it, while an audience in 1995 likely would have been more surprised.

negate any potential negative reactions to his revelation that he has a disability and what the audience would perceive as some of its limitations.

Whereas there are subtle mentions of Zulay's blindness in the text and illustrations, Billy's new experience of learning to ski provides him with a reason to continually address his disability. The implied author also uses Billy to give his audience more information about disabled people, sometimes with comments that make sense coming from a child. At other times, they seem slightly forced; the first of these comes early in the narrative.

After introducing himself to his audience, Billy explains that when he learned his class was going to go skiing, "I was really excited. But at the same time . . . I was **AFRAID**!" (Moran, 1995, [p. 4]; emphasis in original). This comment further develops Billy's aforementioned uncertainty that he would be able to learn how to ski. The accompanying illustration of Billy's class gives the audience additional information about Billy's peers: Three other children are visible; they are all wheelchair users. Three adults, including one who is holding one of the handles of Billy's wheelchair, and leaning over him are also in the room. In the illustration on the opposite page, Mr. Johnson is pushing Billy's wheelchair up a ramp into a van where Ms. Harris and other students are. Based on the text and the two illustrations, I believe that all of the students are disabled, and this is something that the authorial audience notices in this opening:

> Ms. Harris told me that everyone is a little nervous about skiing for the first time. And Mr. Johnson said we would have instructors who were experts in helping people who are physically challenged learn to ski. I still felt a little

> scared, but I decided to try it. ([p. 5])

Ms. Harris's comment provides a moment of connection for the audience: being afraid to ski is common—she is not speaking specifically of individuals with disabilities. Mr. Johnson then shares information that is likely new for the nondisabled audience: Some ski instructors work specifically with people who have physical disabilities.

The implied author again allows for similar moment of connection on the next page, though this time it is Billy talking about himself:

"It was a long ride up to Snow Valley. I was glad to have my best friend, Sara, sitting next to me. We told jokes and laughed the whole way" (Moran, 1995, [p. 6]). Because Billy is our narrator, he is choosing what to tell the audience about himself and this trip. He does not specifically make any comparisons between himself and Sara and any nondisabled audience members, but the implied author is choosing to have Billy report this conversation for a reason, perhaps to make clear for the authorial audience that Billy, is able to communicate and make jokes and form friendships with individuals who are able to speak and do other things that he cannot, like Sara.

Billy then says:

> Whenever I go someplace new, I worry if it will be wheelchair accessible, which means that people can get in and out of places in their wheelchairs and that there aren't too many stairs. Ms. Harris had told me that the lodge was accessible, and she was right. It had a ramp at the entrance, and wide doors and hallways. There were a few problems, though, such as narrow bathrooms. (Moran, 1995, [p. 6])

The double-page spread shows the lodge on the right page, with a long ramp that starts on the left hand page and then reaches the lodge's porch. No stairs are visible.

As Billy reports throughout the narrative, his narration moves between making comments that are about himself personally (and can be applied to others with disabilities as well) and comments that are informational and more broadly address disability-related issues. These latter comments are ones that highlight his synthetic nature as a character that the implied author is explicitly using to communicate information to his audience. This commentary by Billy is the first of these instances. Although it is possible that a child might define without prompting "wheelchair accessibility" and explain some of the potential issues that might arise if places are not accessible, it is unlikely. Additionally, the combination of the ramp in the illustration and Ms. Harris's assurance that the lodge was accessible, means that it is not necessary for Billy to explain "wheelchair accessible" to his audience.

Later that evening while at dinner, Billy shares: "Ms. Harris cut up my food for me. I can't use a knife and fork, so I have to pick up my food with my hands. It tastes just as good that way, though! It was really fun eating in a restaurant with all my friends" (Moran, 1995, [p. 12]). His explanation of Ms. Harris cutting up his food, while introducing the idea that there may be people with disabilities other than Billy who use their hands rather than utensils to eat, does not highlight his synthetic qualities as much as the previous comments did. He is not defining a term or explaining an idea, but is reporting something that happened at dinner, and why. He adds a humorous aside, which seems, at least in part, the implied author trying to point out in a funny way that, other than using his hands, Billy's experience of eating is likely identical to his friends' and the audience's.

Because Billy's narrative is focused on him learning how to ski despite his misgivings and fear, his narration is entirely focused on revealing that gradually to his audience, with each spread detailing a single smaller event, moving the narration forward. For instance, on the page right after Billy and his friends arrive at the lodge, he tells us, "When I saw the ski mountain, I was **SCARED!**" (Moran, 1995, [p. 8]; emphasis in original). Again, this is a likely point of connection for the audience, who, if they have been skiing before, had a similar reaction the first time. He continues: "When we went inside the Snow Valley Handicapped Skiing Building, I felt a little better. There were lots of other people who were physically challenged getting ready to ski" ([p. 8]). The illustration, which is eye-catching because it is filled with bright, saturated colors, shows several of the children and Mr. Harris in a room that has ski outwear on tables, and different kinds of adapted skis, leaning against the walls. A woman is talking to Mr. Harris and two of the children, while Billy sits, smiling, in the foreground. Billy is closer to the audience, perhaps, because he is our narrator, but he is also therefore in an observer position (literally), taking in more of the room and the activity in it rather than participating in a conversation, and so we might be reminded again of his inability to speak.

In the next spread Billy points out, "The lodge had a lot of different kinds of equipment because there are many different types of disabilities" (Moran, 1995, [p. 11]), another instance in which the implied author is using Billy to state something that the audience likely knows. The narration could have just as easily began with Billy explaining what equipment he and his friends used, which is helpful information that would alert the audience to the "different kinds of equipment" available. Following this is the scene at dinner that I mentioned earlier. The rest of the narrative occurs over the next two days that Billy and his classmates spent at the lodge, as he narrates his experience learning to ski.

He is excited about his first practice, which marks the narrative's voyage, in the way that Zulay working with Ms. Turner did: Billy has prepared to ski, but what will the experience be like?:

> This was it! My heart was racing!
>
> My ski instructors, Jack and Cindi, were really nice. They seemed just as excited as I was. They helped me get into my sit-ski. Next they put some foam padding around me so I wouldn't slide around inside. Then they zipped me in so only my head and arms were showing. . . .
>
> They explained to me how to turn the sit-ski by leaning to the side and pushing into the snow with one of the small ski poles they had given me. Pushing my right pole would make me go right, and pushing my left pole would make me go left. (Moran, 1995, [p. 15]).

The implied author uses Billy first to explain to his audience what the preparation to use adaptive ski equipment might be like.

Billy's interaction with his audience is what advances the narrative's progression, along with the way that the tension between what he knows and what he tells the audience and when, unfolds. He is enthusiastic; most of his comments to the audience are punctuated with exclamation points and words are typed in boldface font. Because he is excited, the audience is excited, too.

"I told them I was **READY!**" (Moran, 1995, [p. 17]). Before beginning, "Cindi and Jack went over the instructions again," Billy this time shares a new piece of information, rather than repeat everything: Jack explains he should signal to stop ([p. 19]). Billy describes the experience, "At first I went slow, but then I was going faster and faster! It was so exciting! I started getting scared again. I raised my arms, and Jack stopped me right away." After several trips, Billy "was really getting the hang of it" ([p. 19]). After lunch, he improves even more, and for the first time, he has a mishap: "One time I guess I became overly confident. I let myself get going too fast and wiped out when I tried to turn. It was a little scary, but it didn't hurt a bit, thanks to my helmet and my padding" ([p. 20]). Moran injects more realism into his narrative here, because it is unlikely that anyone who is learning to ski for the first time will not fall. Billy's early attempts should not be all perfect. If any member of the audience has been skiing or tried any sport, they will likely be able to identify with Billy's experience, remembering when they were learning the sport, and the times that they may have fallen or made mistakes that they no longer make, or don't make as frequently.

At the end of the day, Billy feels "**PROUD!**" because, "Jack told me that I was ready to go on the chairlift up to a higher part of the mountain" (Moran, 1995, [p. 23]; emphasis in original). The audience appreciates Billy's exuberance and recognizes that he is doing well. He has confirmation on this from a knowledgeable (and ablebodied)

Jack.

Billy's ride on the chairlift happens the next morning, a signal that the narrative is reaching its ending—Billy has been learning how to ski, has become confident, and is now going to attempt something that is more dangerous and complicated:

> Back at the mountain the next morning, Cindi and Jack kept their promise. . . . [They] lifted me in my sit-ski right up onto the chair. . . . [O]ff we went up the mountain. What a thrill! I felt like a real, honest to goodness skier. Imagine—me riding in a chairlift. (Moran, 1995, [p. 24])

The accompanying illustration opposite the text is of Cindi, Billy, and Jack riding a yellow chairlift up the mountain. This, the narrative's closure, is the experience that makes Billy feel that he is a "real skier," because he knows that ablebodied skiers use chairlifts to get to higher points on a mountain. Once they get off the ski lift: "Jack and Cindi let me enjoy the view for a while. Then they pulled my sit-ski ahead to the 'fall line.' That's where the ground starts to go downwards, and you start to slide" ([p. 24]). This piece of information seems believable coming from an excited child who is filling someone else in on all the minutiae of an adventure, sharing a newly learned fact, as distinct from the earlier information about wheelchair accessibility.

Once Billy began moving, he says, "I felt a little scared again because this slope was steeper and longer. I knew how to turn now, though. And I knew I could trust Jack and Cindi to stop me. So I wasn't too scared" (Moran, 1995, [p. 26]). Billy is acknowledging his own comfort with skiing because he understands how to turn, something he had to learn when he arrived. He also mentions that he trusts his instructors. “I had to make a lot of turns, and I stopped twice. But I made it all the way to the bottom without wiping out” ([p. 27]). With each successive trip, “I let myself go faster and faster. I had never moved so fast in my life. It was pure joy just sliding down the mountain! I felt so free! I never wanted it to end ([p. 29]). Billy has invoked ideas that are similar to Zulay’s comments about running—a combination of speed and freedom.

The narrative’s fifth and final piece of direct dialogue is from Billy. The last night of the trip, his teachers “laughed and said they would love to [stay at the lodge].” Billy makes a joke, which everyone enjoys: “‘**SCHOOL? WHAT’S THAT?**’ I spelled” (Moran, 1995, [p. 30]; emphasis in original). The implied author not only lets the protagonist “have the last words,” as it were, but they are not just a brief comment: They are a joke that makes people laugh.

The final page is Billy reflecting on the trip, one he hopes to repeat soon. He says, “Now I wonder what other sports I might be able to try. I bet scuba diving would be great!” (Moran, 1995, [p, 32]) We see him from the waist-up, sitting in his wheelchair, a thought bubble above his head, in which he is in the water and wearing scuba gear, smiling toward the audience. He comments, “Come to the think of it, Ms. Harris did tell us about a group called ‘Wheels ‘n Waves,’ that teaches scuba diving to people who are physically challenged. Hmmmmm. . .” ([p, 32]; ellipsis in original). Thus, Billy makes it apparent to the audience that his enjoyment of learning how to ski has prompted him to want to explore other sports. He’s also provided the name of a specific organization that facilitates scuba diving for people with physical disabilities. I cannot find whether that actually was an organization that existed at one point, and so is additional information that the implied author wants his audience to have, but in any case, Billy telling his audience about it makes the possibility that he can and will go diving at more concrete for us. The narrative ends with him expressing a wish, and he and we know that it is possible for him to fulfill it.

After finishing the narrative, Billy's audience is going to decide whether they found him engaging and reliable: His enthusiasm and detailed explanation of his trip made his audience want to continue listening to his narration: We wanted to know how he would learn to ski, and because his descriptions of activities were clear, we could follow him; his narration was supplemented by the illustrations which allowed us to see him and see what he and his friends did while on their trip.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. One of the strengths of *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski* (Moran, 1995) is that it attempts to normalize disability and in so doing, slightly inhibit "othering," and side-stepping making use of the Overcoming Narrative. Billy speaks directly to the audience, and there are no nondisabled children in the narrative. The audience is therefore encouraged to engage with Billy through his direct address and because the only nondisabled characters in the narrative are adults. At the same time, Billy is also learning to ski, something that might be familiar to most of the audience, or, if they have not skied, they are undoubtedly familiar with the process of learning how to do something and the trial-and-error that is involved.

Part of what makes Billy engaging is his positive attitude. While it would likely be less enticing to read a book whose protagonist was perpetually grumpy, the implied author's frequent use of exclamation points begins to seem excessive because they are unnecessary. It is obvious from what Billy is communicating that he is happy. Because the implied author has created a character who cannot speak and who has limited mobility—circumstances which might be completely unfamiliar to his audience, and also seem frightening, or, if not, at least unpleasant—the implied author wanted the audience to be reassured from the outset that Billy was happy.

The degree of Billy's perpetual happiness begins to strain credulity, as does his narration itself. Billy's constant reporting and the inclusion of very little direct dialogue works well with Billy's use of his wordboard to communicate. He is not going to use time to recount direct dialogue when it is faster to indirectly report it. But, given that he explains that he uses his wordboard at the start of his narration, the act of him using his wordboard to tell this entire narrative seems that it literally would be exhausting. Maybe the audience is not supposed to think about that. Or, perhaps we *are*, but are supposed to reflect on that ability that we'd not given much thought to—for those of us who are able to speak or write, sharing a narrative usually does not require much physical effort; for Billy to do the same is time-consuming. So, that raises an unanswerable question: Why have a character who was unable to speak narrate a story? One answer is because children and adults who cannot speak still have stories worth telling.

Given when this book was written, though, a few years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, I cannot completely dismiss the idea that the implied author wanted to give Billy an extreme instance of a disability so that the narrative would have more impact on his actual audience. Because we only see Billy on this trip with his peers, Moran does not need to attend to the other practical realities of Billy's life. Just how difficult is it for Billy to communicate with and interact with others outside his peers and teachers? We don't see him at home with his family and do not know what his more typical daily routine is—he does mention that his food is cut up for him. The narrative focuses on a disabled boy who goes skiing, and everything else is extraneous to that. If every implied author attended to the minutiae of a character's backstory there would be no short books, but it feels to me as though the implied author is taking advantage of this logical, yes, loophole to write "disability-lite." He gestures to, but does not have to follow up on, what Billy's typical experiences are. Billy's disability permeates the narrative, but the audience is able to understand it mostly it as it impacts his ability to ski, rather than how it is a part of his identity that influences how he experiences his daily life. I can appreciate the work that the implied author was doing twenty-two years ago, of course, and I imagine that were he going to write about Billy's trip today, the narrative would be slightly different.

Closing Thoughts

Both *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* (Best, 2015) and *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski* (Moran, 1995) include an event that is initially perceived as difficult by Zulay and Billy. In Zulay's case, the race has less importance in the narrative than does Billy learning to ski, though unlike Zulay's audience, his audience never wonders whether he will learn to ski, but rather, what is that experience like? By the end of the narratives, both were more confident and sure of themselves. In Zulay's case, this confidence is, in part, related to an aspect of being blind: Learning to use her cane, which also enabled her to run a race.

By contrast, at the end of *Trudi and Pia* (Hegi, 2003), while Trudi is beginning to consider viewing her stature as not problematic, the audience does not know whether that will happen.

In these three books, all of the characters had important interactions or relationships with others. In the case of Trudi, she had a meaningful conversation with another little person. Billy interacted with his disabled classmates, as well as his nondisabled teachers and the staff at Snow Valley. And, of course, Zulay interacted with her classmates, teacher, and Ms. Turner. In the next chapter, I am going to look at books that address, in different ways, the relationships that exist between disabled and nondisabled characters, focusing on the agency of the nondisabled characters.

Chapter 5: Agency: Relationships Between Characters

While it goes without saying that the books that I discussed in previous chapters all featured interactions between disabled and nondisabled characters, I will spend this chapter looking at books in which the relationship or interaction between disabled and nondisabled characters is central to a narrative, and is impacted in some way by a character's disability. Forty-four (44) books fit this description, the largest category except for those in the portrait narratives that introduce their readers to a disability. I will discuss those in Chapter 7. In almost all of these books, at the end of the narratives, the disabled characters have not fundamentally changed. To be sure, many of the disabled characters have new or strengthened relationships with the nondisabled people in their lives. Some of them have learned skills, some have received something material that they wanted or needed; others avoided injury. It is possible that some of these personal or material gains will eventually lead to changes in their self-confidence and possible growth, but what their audiences see is that at the end of their respective narratives, they are fundamentally the same people they were when the narratives began, though possibly happier.

By contrast, at the end of most of these narratives, the nondisabled characters have undergone some change: perhaps they have gained a new or deeper appreciation for a disabled relative or classmate, or become more thoughtful and accepting of people who are disabled. Maybe they've learned more about a specific disability—whether because they are actually told a character's diagnosis and how the disability presents for that character, or just been told about the ways in which a nondisabled character is not "typical." Maybe they've learned something about themselves such as the need to be more patient, or that it is possible to befriend and "have fun" with someone who has a disability. Often, of course, a nondisabled character has undergone more than one of these changes. While they are not always indicators that a character has experienced some personal growth, they allow for the possibility that this will happen in the future.

These books present a twist on the Overcoming Narrative as nondisabled characters often experience an "overcoming" of their own previous biases or negative beliefs about a particular character, and possibly people with disabilities more generally. This is a more appropriate application of the term to the extent that what is "overcome" is actually "stigma." That responsibility lies with the nondisabled characters. The disabled characters do not need to conceptualize differently either disability or who they are as disabled people for the benefit of the nondisabled characters. This explains why these characters do not, in most cases, fundamentally change. By the end of some of the narratives, neither nondisabled nor disabled characters have fundamentally changed, though as I noted above, there may be hints that that will happen with the nondisabled characters.

The Importance of Agency

In deciding which of the forty-four books I wanted to examine closely, I chose three in which the disabled characters' agency or lack of it has a demonstrable effect on the narratives' progressions. One set of questions that Myers and Bersani (2008/2009) offer in their "Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Ableism" article is: "Who in the story has agency? Are people with disabilities always the recipients of the efforts of others or are they portrayed with value?" (p. 54). These questions are particularly worth paying attention to when the focus of a narrative is on the relationship(s) between disabled and nondisabled characters.

I will organize my discussion of the three books in a manner similar to the discussion of doctor's visits in Chapter 3, here paying particular attention to how characters' agency affects the narrative progression and, in turn, how that agency affects how the nondisabled character(s) change or have started to change by the narrative's ending.. I will also note instances where agency changes, and moves from one character to another. I will also address how certain illustrations in each of the books affect its readerly dynamics.

Three Books

Laurie Lears's *Ian's Walk: A Story about Autism* (1998; illustrated by Karen Ritz), won a Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award given in 2000 (the award's inaugural year), and is narrated by Julie, one of Ian's two sisters. Julie describes the ways in which her bother, Ian, is "different" from other children because he has autism, and also explains her frustrations with him. She is prompted to try to engage with the world in ways that Ian does (which she previously had found odd or frustrating). This engagement enables her to have a newfound understanding of and patience for her brother.

In Myron Uhlberg's *The Printer* (2003; illustrated by Henri Sørensen), an unnamed boy tells his audience about his deaf father, who is a newspaper printer. He explains how his father helped save his colleagues at the plant where they worked when a fire broke out. The narrator's father was one of several deaf men working at the plant who were routinely ignored by their hearing colleagues. Conversely, *Jacob's Eye Patch* (2013; written by Beth Kobliner Shaw and Jacob Shaw, and illustrated by Jules Feiffer) provides an example of what might happen when nondisabled people are eager to talk with a person about their disability who does not want to discuss it. All that the character of Jacob (who is based on one of the coauthors) wants to do one afternoon is go to the science store to get a light-up globe, and he is worried that the store will close before he gets there. Various interested strangers whom Jacob encounters en route ask why he wears an eye patch, and while Jacob does not want to talk with them, his family is more than happy to answer their questions. By the time Jacob gets to the store, the light-up globe he wanted is gone.

Ian's Walk: A Story about Autism (1998). *Ian's Walk: A Story about Autism* was written by Laurie Lears and illustrated by Karen Ritz. The book's cover depicts a boy in the foreground, looking up at something that the audience cannot see. He stands on a sidewalk in front of a girl who appears to be looking both sideways at him but also toward the audience. On the title page, underneath the title is a square illustration, bordered by the white space of the page. We see the boy from the chest up; he is lying sideways on a sidewalk; his left hand pointing to a line of three small pebbles in front of him. Someone (likely the girl) stands over him; we can see her sneaker-clad feet and ankles. Though she is quite close to him, he seems to be unaware of, or not interested in her, focusing intently on the pebbles.

The audience does not learn Julie’s name until the second page of the narrative. However, her sometime-annoyance with her brother is apparent in its first paragraph, crucial to the narrative’s initial exposition: “It’s the perfect day to go to the park and feed the ducks with my big sister Tara” (Lears, 1998, [p. 5]). This is immediately followed by the introduction of the narrative’s global instability: “Except my brother wants to come along, too” ([p. 5]). In the books that I examined in the last chapter, the global instability wasn’t the characters’ disabilities, but their feelings about being disabled. In this book, as in most of the sibling-centric books, the global instability is Julie’s feelings about Ian’s disability. She tries to dissuade him: “‘Aw, Ian, why don’t you stay here?’ . . . Ian doesn’t answer me, though, because he has autism. But he raps his fingers hard against the screen and begins to whine” ([p. 5]). Ian’s attempt to exert his agency and accompany Julie is a complication of the global instability. The title suggests that Ian is going to get his way, despite Julie’s annoyance.

The text on this first page is across the bottom in the page’s white space. An image of Ian fills the top three-quarters of the page. He is looking out toward the audience, his hands raised in front of him. Parts of the image have a very faint, small crisscross of lines overlaying the top of them, invoking the screen door that Ian is leaning against. Though the authorial audience is aware of Julie’s feelings, the only person we can see is Ian, who seems to look right at us. This juxtaposition of illustration and text introduces a slight tension between Julie and the authorial audience: We perhaps understand her frustration while simultaneously feeling bad for Ian who wants to join her.

The next opening, a double-page spread, depicts a kitchen. Julie, Tara, and their mother stand on the right page. Ian is on the left, standing in front of the door, and this time, the audience can see him from behind. By turning the page, the audience has been welcomed into Julie's kitchen, at which point, Julie relents and gets her mother's permission to bring Ian with her and Tara.

The audience may be learning about the existence of autism, or, in any case, it is likely that they may not know that some people who are autistic are nonverbal. The audience understands that (the title aside) part of the reason that we are being introduced to Ian is to learn something about autistic people, and what the experience of someone whose sibling is autistic might be like. Julie has told us that it is a "perfect" day to do something; however, Ian's desire to participate makes that problematic. The first piece of information that Julie gives her audience about her brother is that he does not answer her because he is autistic, thus introducing his being nonverbal as a potential source of conflict between the siblings. The book's title suggests that the narrative is about Ian, but Julie is our narrator. While the implied author will use the text and Julie (and to a lesser extent, Tara) to give us information about Ian and about autism, attending to the illustrations will give us additional information, and will also allow us to "pay attention" to Ian himself.

The next several openings introduce the audience to aspects of Ian's way of being that might seem unusual to an audience that does not identify as autistic. Julie explains, "Ian's brain doesn't work like other people's. Ian sees things differently . . ." (Lears, 1998, [p. 8]; ellipsis in original). She goes on to explain that he "hears things differently," "smells things differently, " and "feels things differently" ([pp. 10, 12, 14]). In each of the openings, Ian does something that annoys Julie. There is a constant tension between the two siblings as Ian does what he wants to do, while Julie wishes he would not. Eventually, Julie's agency outweighs his as she gets him to do what she wants: come with her so that they can finally get to the park. In the first scene:

> When we pass Nan's Diner, Ian steps inside to watch the ceiling fan move in slow circles. He doesn't look at the waitresses hurrying by with all kind of sandwiches and ice cream.
>
> "Let's get a soda!" I say. But Ian keeps his eyes on the fan until I pull him out the door. ([p. 8])

In the accompanying illustration, which depicts the busy diner, Ian stands near the center of the image, looking up; part of a ceiling fan is visible at the top of a page. Julie is holding his left hand, leaning toward the open door. Ian is not paying attention to his sister or to any of the customers or staff.

The audience's eyes are drawn to Ian because of Julie's description: by telling us what he is doing, we immediately seek him out. He is wearing a shirt and shorts that are mostly dark blue; he is the only one in the illustration wearing that color, and two of the other people in the image are members of the wait staff who are wearing uniforms, which consist of a dark green shirt and khaki shorts. Another customer is wearing a green baseball cap that is the same shade at the shirt. The repetition of this same color, and so close to Ian also helps him stand out for the audience, as Julie is simultaneously fretting that he is possibly "standing out" in the diner. There is a woman wearing sunglasses who is looking toward Ian, but I cannot definitively say that she is looking at him, and no one else is the diner is looking at him.

Julie's agitation grows until the third opening where she is explaining that he "smells things differently." After Ian "wrinkles his nose and turns away" at the bouquet of flowers she offers him, as they pass the post office, "[he] puts his nose against the warm, gritty bricks and smells the wall." Julie has been becoming progressively more upset with each of Ian's behaviors: "'Stop that!' I say. 'You look silly!' and I yank him away before anyone notices" (Lears, 1998, [p. 12]). In the previous openings, Ian was depicted engaging in the behavior that Julie described. In this one, however, Julie is in the foreground holding lilacs up to Ian, whose face is scrunched in displeasure. They are standing in front of a variety of flowers, and Mrs. Potter, the woman selling them, is partially visible behind Julie. Behind the flowers though, is a mailbox and part of the post office. The two locations are both placed on the page, but the characters are shown in the former. Effectively, Julie has "yank[ed] him away before" even the audience notices him smelling the bricks. This is the first time that she has admonished Ian about his behavior, and the authorial audience understands that while Julie does not want Ian to look silly, she also does not want to look silly either, by virtue of being with him, and that his behavior is embarrassing her.

In the next opening, Ian lies on the ground at the duck pond, and Julie admonishes, "'Someone might step on you!'" (Lears, 1998, [p. 14]) Tara stands next to Julie; they are behind Ian, who is lying on his side, his face turned toward the audience, though he is looking past us. Tara has been absent from the preceding pages describing the walk. During my rereadings, I forget about her after the scene in the kitchen until this one. The implied author perhaps "wants" her audience to forget about Tara, to the extent that it helps us understand that Julie feels like Ian is likely to draw negative attention to himself and then to her—that everybody who sees Ian will stare at him and at her, too. But, by having Tara reappear at the park, the implied author is reminding us that Julie is not alone with Ian, and that while some people might look at Ian and at her, most people will likely not pay attention to his behavior.

Ian, Julie, and Tara have reached the park, and in the next opening Julie wants to do something specific—get lunch—which Ian is not interested in doing.

> Ian tastes things differently . . .
>
> When we got past the food booths, Ian won't even look at the pizza, hot dogs, or soft pretzels.
>
> But he reaches into my pocket for the bag of leftover cereal.
>
> "Tara and I don't want to eat cereal for lunch," I tell him. "Come with us while we buy some pizza."
>
> But Ian won't budge. He munches the Power Pops one by one.
>
> Sometimes Ian makes me angry! (Lears, 1998, [p. 16]).

The narrative's global instability is made more explicit in this exchange which serves as the voyage. Julie admits her occasional anger at her brother. The audience is being encouraged to sympathize with Julie, having seen her growing frustration over the different things that Ian has done that have slowed down their walk to the pond, and about which Julie has been frustrated, and then finally embarrassed and annoyed by.

They may be able to relate to the familiar circumstance of being angry with a sibling. At the same time, we are being guided by the implied author to understand that Julie's reaction is unwarranted. In the illustration, Ian is holding the bag of cereal, looking down at it, while Julie stands next to him with her hands on her hips, her mouth set in a straight line. There is nothing anger-inducing in Ian's behavior. He is not being mean to her. He is not doing something that could harm himself or someone else. He is eating breakfast cereal, which Julie feels is odd, because it is lunchtime.

Because Ian has not actually done something cruel to her—he has, in fact, been seemingly not paying much attention to her at all—the audience understands that Julie is angry because his autism causes him to "be different," and his behavior is, Julie worries, drawing attention to both of them. The narrative's initiation, then, has played out over several openings. Julie has taken the time to explain why Ian is different to help her audience understand both him and her frustrations with him.

By choosing to have Ian do things that are not cruel and to not interact with Julie and Tara, Lears-Ritz is also encouraging the audience to not be angry with Ian in the way that Julie is. She also wants us to acknowledge that Julie is being harsh, but simultaneously, to understand her frustration This sympathy is absolutely necessary in order for the actual audience to complete the entrance. If they are less understanding of Julie's frustrations, they will be less likely to join the authorial audience. They may even stop reading, because they will not be particularly interested in seeing Julie's frustrations with Ian continue to play out.

Julie then focuses on narrating what happens once the girls decide that they want to eat lunch, rather than on using what Ian is doing as ways to explain how he is different. This signals the shift to the narrative's middle. Tara goes to get pizza, leaving Ian with Julie: "'Sit beside me, Ian,' I say. But Ian flaps his hands and pays no attention" (Lears, 1998, [p. 18). On the opposite page, when Tara returns, Ian has disappeared:

> At last Tara comes back carrying two slices of gooey pizza. "Where's Ian?" she asks.
>
> I look at the spot where Ian was standing . . .but Ian is gone! ([p. 19]; ellipsis in original)

This, the narrative's voyage, is a complication of both Julie's frustration with Ian—she was annoyed and therefore, not paying attention to him, and a complication of the audience's understanding of Ian: His leaving is unexpected and unexplained to us. Like Julie, the audience has no idea where Ian "has gone." He is on the left page, but not on the right one. This complication is a direct result of Ian exercising his agency, not once, but twice: It is the first time that he does what he wants that Julie does not interrupt. And then, he decides to go somewhere on his own, rather than be led around by Julie and Tara.

Julie and Tara frantically search for him; a couple of strangers have suggestions, but Julie knows that those will not appeal to him. She says, "I squeeze my eyes shut and try to think like Ian" (Lears, 1998, [p. 23]). This attempt to find Ian also demonstrates a temporary, at least, shift in Julie's thinking about her brother. Rather than wishing he *would not* do something, she is trying to imagine what he might want to do, how he would decide what to do. While the audience might have been worried about Ian and frustrated with Julie—he was her responsibility—her acknowledgement that she tries to think like him is an important moment in the narrative's interaction. The audience will understand that Julie is trying to be resourceful in the best way that she knows how: she is going to attempt to adopt the mindset of her brother, a mindset that, as we have seen so far, is one that usually confuses and annoys her. As Julie revises her thinking about Ian, it is possible that the authorial audience revises our thinking about Julie. While the audience might have been frustrated with Julie's refusal to understand Ian, and then annoyed that she allowed her anger with him to distract her enough that he managed to slip away, her decision to find him (she hopes) by thinking like him (as much as it's possible to do), will be appreciated by the authorial audience. It is a reversal of her earlier behavior: she is now not annoyed or embarrassed by Ian's behavior, she is invested in figuring out what he would choose to do.

While she is pondering several possibilities, "Suddenly the old bell in the center of the park begins to ring. *Bong, bong, bong!* And then I remember . . . Ian loves the bell best of all" (Lears, 1998, [p. 23]; emphasis and ellipsis in original). The next opening features a double-page spread of Ian in the foreground, lying under a large bell, holding its rope. Julie is in the background, mid-run toward him. When she reaches him, she says, "I hug him tightly even though he doesn't care for hugs" ([p. 25]). The audience has confirmation that despite Julie's frustration with Ian about his behavior, she was still able to imagine what might interest him and use that knowledge to find him, and, of course, that she loves him.

The next opening features, on the left page, a larger version of the image on the title page (albeit reversed). Julie says, "'We'll walk home the way *you* like!'" (Lears, 1998, [p. 28]; emphasis in original). This signals the narrative's ending, and whereas Julie had tried to think like Ian to find him, here she goes further in acknowledging his agency: She does not try to stop him, and is happily accepting of it. When Ian lines up the stones and lies down next to them, Julie says that she "stand[s] in front of him so no one steps on his fingers" ([p. 28]). She does not "care who's watching" when Ian sniffs the bricks of the post office ([p. 29]). In the illustration, she is smiling at him. In the next spread, Julie follows Ian's lead and does what he does: "When Ian paused at the corner and seems to be listening to something I cannot hear, we wait patiently, and I try to listen too." Then, "At Nan's Diner, Ian and I watch the fan until I'm dizzy" ([pp. 30, 31]). Julie has moved from thinking "like" Ian in order to find him to not being bothered by, and, in some cases, engaging in, the behaviors that previously frustrated and embarrassed her.

These activities, an engagement of their earlier walk "in reverse," serve as the narrative's closure. "When we finally get home, I say, 'It was a good walk, Ian.' And for just a flash, Ian looks at me and smiles" (Lears, 1998, [p. 32]). The narrative has come full circle; we started with Ian at the door looking outside and wanting to join Julie and Tara on their walk, to returning home. Julie and Ian stand on the sidewalk in front of their house; Julie holding onto Ian's wrist, and they are both giving each other small smiles.

Though the walk of the narrative's title belongs to Ian, Julie has gone on her own "walk" from being annoyed by her brother to trying to understand and participate in the way that he interacts with the world. Julie's comment to Ian then serves simultaneously as the narrative's arrival and farewell: Julie's decision that the walk—on which Ian was wholly himself, as ever—was "a good" one, offers the possibility that Julie will begin to try to be more patient with her brother. She's not suddenly made a declaration that she'll never get annoyed at him again—that would be unrealistic and frustrating for the audience. However, in recognizing Ian's agency and being accepting of it, she's shown a willingness to try to be more understanding. By stating this to Ian so that the audience can overhear it—she had the conversation before the narrative "ended"—she's sharing her thought with the audience as well, and again, alerting us to her attempts to be more patient. Because the audience has witnessed this change in behavior from Julie, as part of the narrative's completion, we also agree that it has been a "good walk." Consequently, we think that Lears wrote a narrative that was engaging and also helped us learn a bit about autistic people.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. On the first page, Julie explains, "Ian doesn't answer me, though, because he has autism," (Lears, 1999, [p. 5]) seemingly suggesting that all people with autism do not talk. Ian is depicted as being antisocial, and he focuses intently on certain activities—watching the fan at Nan's Diner, lining up the pebbles on the sidewalk at the park, without giving a thought to possibly getting stepped on. Another book, *My Brother Sammy is Special* (2011), written by Becky Edwards, illustrated by David Armitage, originally published in 1999 with the title, *My Brother Sammy*[12], follows a similar trajectory to that of *Ian's Walk* (Lears,

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[12] *My Brother Sammy* won a Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award in 2002.

1998). An unnamed nondisabled sibling of a boy with autism expresses his sadness and frustration toward his brother, Sammy, who is, most of the time, nonverbal and wanting to spend time by himself. Like Julie, the unnamed narrator eventually decides to do things that Sammy likes to do.

I mention this second book with a similar character relationship and series of events because not all autistic children and adults are nonverbal or antisocial. As with Billy in *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski!* (Moran, 1995), it seems to me as though Lears wanted to try to incorporate into their narratives ways of being that the audience would notice as being markedly different from things that "typical" nondisabled children do, and as some of the stereotypical activities that autistic children do. In that case, it is important to make sure that actual children read and hear narratives about autistic (and other disabled) people who are different from each other, too, not just their nondisabled siblings and friends.

I admit that my slight frustration with both Lears' and Edwards' books—I don't recall which I read first—is that they have a very similar trajectory, which suggests to me that perhaps authors need to work harder to present narratives that are different from others, especially when writing about a particular disability. (A version of these events happens in many of the books that fall into this chapter's classification, yes, but, perhaps because both Ian and Sammy are autistic, and their siblings engage in activities that their brothers enjoy, these books stood out to me.)

Julie's newfound understanding at the narrative's end strikes me as being, as I mentioned at the start of the chapter, another version of the Overcoming Narrative, albeit one experienced by the nondisabled sibling. She has become more accepting and open-minded about Ian, perhaps indeed, beginning to let go of the "social stigma of having a disability" and starting to appreciate who he is (Linton, 1998, p. 17). That is, she experienced growth because she has started paying attention to her brother. Ian does not do or say anything that is atypical for him, though Julie notes that, at the end, "for just a flash, Ian looks at me and smiles" (Lears, 1998, [p. 32]). While I appreciate what Lears-Ritz was attempting, it bothers me that Julie's comment about Ian not speaking because he is autistic possibly sets up an erroneous assumption that all autistic children do not speak, and so, too, the assumption that the behaviors that Ian engages in are common among all autistic people.

The Printer (2003). *The Printer* was written by Myron Uhlberg and illustrated by Henri Sørensen). One reason that I wanted to discuss this book is because it affords an opportunity to explore a narrative that features an adult with a disability. This is also the first book I have discussed in which the narrator is a son talking about his father.[13] The young narrator tells his audience on the first page, "My father was a printer" (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 5]). The next opening begins, "My father was deaf. Though he could not hear, he felt through the soles of his shoes the pounding and rumbling of the giant printing presses that daily spat out the newspaper he helped create" ([p. 6]). The narrator's matter-of-fact disclosure of his father's deafness subtly alerts the audience that it is not viewed as problematic, and is serving as useful exposition that highlights his father's agency.

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[13] In his author's note, Uhlberg writes that his father was deaf, and that he, too, was a printer.

The narrator explains how his father was able to communicate with others: "As a boy, my father learned to speak with his hands. As a man, he learned how to turn lead-type letters into words and sentences. My father loved being a printer" (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 6]). This paragraph alerts hearing readers of useful information to perhaps combat any unspoken assumptions that they might have about deaf people: The narrator's father is able to communicate with others; he is able to work; he is happy, or, at least, reasonably so. The next opening introduces the narrative's global instability:

> Sometimes my father felt sad about the way he was treated by his fellow workers who could hear. Because they couldn't talk to him with their hands, they seemed to ignore him. Years went by as my father and the hearing printers worked side by side. They never once exchanged a single thought. ([p. 9]).

For a hearing audience, it may be impossible to imagine being with other people for even a short period of time, never mind "years," and not speaking with them. The audience, too, may feel sad and worry about the narrator's father. This is a limitation on the printer's agency: he is able to communicate with people who understand American Sign Language (ASL), and he works, but he is unable to communicate easily with many of his colleagues.

The narrator goes on to say, though, "But my father did not lack friends. There were other printers at the plant who were deaf. They had also learned to talk with their hands" (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 9). This is reassuring to the audience but also makes them aware of something that they might not have considered—there are communities of deaf people, which is especially crucial when they are outnumbered and excluded by hearing people. The audience may wonder whether the deaf and hearing printers will interact in a meaningful way with each other during the narrative. The illustration on that page shows the printer's father standing next to one of the machines, looking at a colleague who is with him. The narrator's father is holding his left hand close to his face, his index finger extended, while the others are closed in a fist. Because this image accompanies the narrator's comment about his father's deaf colleagues, the audience may assume that he is signing something, and feel momentarily excluded, not knowing what he is signing. This also alerts us to the fact that there may be more signing in the narrative.

Even though a young boy is telling us about his father, what he has said so far sounds plausible. That is, the audience has no reason to doubt him, despite his obvious lack of first-hand knowledge of his father's daily life as a printer. We can easily believe that his father has told him stories about his experiences at work. Trusting the narrator, the actual audience completes its entrance and joins the authorial audience.

The next opening introduces a local instability:

> One day, while the giant presses ran, their noises shutting out all other sound, my father spotted a fire flickering in a far corner of the press room.
>
> The fire was spreading quickly, silently. Suddenly the wood floor burst into flames. (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 10)

The entire opening is an illustration of the large room in which the narrator's father is working. A text block and three images overlaying it. On the left page, the audience's eyes are drawn to a line of yellow, orange, and red fire that is cutting across a wooden floor; the flames cast a bit of light on the dark printing press; there is a small slightly round spot of yellow and orange higher up on the printing press, suggesting that perhaps this was the initial spark. It appears that the illustrations are acrylic paint on canvas. (The texture of the canvas is visible on some of the pages.) They are beautifully done; the fire appears almost lifelike.

On the right side of the page, one of the three images is a smaller illustration of the narrator's father from the waist up. He is holding a red bandana or cloth in his hand, and is looking to his left, as though he has perhaps just noticed the fire. The box touches the edge of the page, and is bordered by a thin line that in effect, it seems, "boxes him in," as the fire might do if he does not act quickly. The illustration also signals to the audience that he might have difficulty communicating the danger to his colleagues, particularly his hearing ones. Here, then, the audience can see specifically how the global instability of the lack of communication between the narrator's father and the other deaf printers with the hearing printers has been complicated by the local instability of the fire: While the lack of communication is problematic, it becomes even more so during a potentially deadly situation.

The text is in a box on the bottom of this page, the "O" in "One" is made to look like the metal engraved "O" plate that would be used with the printing press. The narrator wants to emphasize the different kinds of silences that exist. The printing press is so loud that it "shut[s] out all other sound," so the audience can try to imagine what that would be like to hear, while also realizing, of course, that the narrator's father would be unable to hear it. Similarly, whereas hearing people are likely familiar with the sound that fire makes, and it is something that they might hear before seeing (in addition, perhaps, to feeling its heat if the fire is close), the narrator's father apprehends it through sight. Two larger illustrations of the narrator's father are on the right side of the opening; one overlaps the book's gutter. In the largest of the two, the father has turned to his left; more of the image makes use of slightly lighter shades of paint to indicate that he is looking at the fire, which is lighting up that side of the room.

In the next opening, on the right page, we can see more of the room because the fire has begun to spread. The left page features a large illustration of the printer's father again from the waist up in box that has a light green background, and is boarded on three sides. He is holding his hands up, palms turned toward his face, his fingers spread, and his mouth is open as though he is shouting.

The local instability of the fire motivates the printer to exercise his agency by taking action, even though he will be unable to communicate easily with all of his coworkers. The text on the left page reads:

> My father knew he had to tell everyone. He couldn't speak to shout a warning. Even if he could, no one would hear him over the loud roar of the presses.
>
> But he could speak with his hands.
>
> He did not hesitate. He jumped onto an ink drum and waved his arms excitedly until, clear across the room, he caught the attention of a fellow printer who also couldn't hear a sound.
>
> My father's hands shouted through the terrible noise of the printing presses,

> FIRE! FIRE!
>
> TELL EVERYONE TO GET OUT!
>
> TELL THE HEARING ONES! (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 13])

The audience will likely realize that the illustration of the printer shows him signing again, because the image does not match the narrator's description of how his father "waved his arms excitedly," and therefore may again feel slightly excluded, unable to understand what the printer is signing (or in the middle of signing, since the image is static), and reflect on how the printer felt isolated. (The printer is in the process of signing "FIRE.")

The next opening demonstrates the sharing of this message with the hearing printers: "They pointed to the fire, which had now spread to the wall next to the only exit" (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 14]). This further develops the local instability, and in the next two openings, the audience is able to see how the fire has spread.

The following opening marks the transition to the narrative's middle: It depicts everyone standing outside; the daylight a stark contrast to the dark of the plant lit by flames. On the right page, the audience can still see the plant burning while people gather: "They were happy to be alive" (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 20]). In the next opening, with the arrival of firefighters, the narrator also notes that, "The plant had to close for repairs. But not one printer had been hurt" ([p. 23]).

The local instability of the fire has been resolved by the printer's quick thinking and his ability to communicate immediately with his deaf colleagues, so that they, in turn, could warn the men who were hearing. However, the narrative's global instability still exists, and will likely be very much on the audience's mind, because the audience will be both relieved that everyone had gotten out safely, and perhaps reflect that this was due to the actions of the narrator's father and his deaf colleagues, and wonder whether this might be a reason for the hearing printers to attempt to communicate with the deaf ones.

The next opening signals the narrative's ending: The plant reopens, and the narrator tells us, "my father went back to the work he loved. The new presses were switched on and roared to life" (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 24]). The narrator links "life" and his father's return to work again with a loud sound in an attempt to help the audience think more about the consequences of sound: signals that hearing people pay attention to, elude the narrator's father and his deaf colleagues. (If, for example, a printing press broke, an obvious sign to a hearing person would be the lack of noise it would make when it was turned on.) The mentions of sounds throughout the narrative, always reminding a hearing audience of what they are likely to take for granted, makes the description of the end of the first day that the plant is open again stand out:

> When the day's newspaper had been printed, the presses shuddered to a stop. Now there was silence.
>
> In the mist of the stillness, my father's co-workers gathered around him. They presented him with a hat made of the freshly printed newspaper.
>
> And as my father put that hat on his head, all the printers who could hear did something surprising.
>
> They told him THANK YOU with their hands. ([p. 26])

For the first time, the narrator emphasizes the silence of the loud machines: what his father is always aware of, and links it with the creation of the paper, reminding the audience of the important contribution that the deaf printers make.

On the left page, the narrator's father is shown smiling and shaking the hands of one of the other printers, while two more look toward him. On the right page, the narrator's father stands with his back to the audience, and we see the three other men making a gesture with their right hands, each man's hand is in a slightly different position relative to his body, but their hands are flat, palm-up, and the audience understands that these different hand-positions are part of the ASL sign for "thank you," and that the implied author is trying to use the three static images to help readers envision what the sign looks like in motion. This exchange serves as the narrative's arrival, though the global instability is not completely resolved. The audience does not know what happens next—whether the hearing employees learn more sign language. They have at least, signaled that potential by taking the time to all learn—where, we don't know—how to sign "Thank you."

The final opening shows the printer at home; on the left page, he is placing his paper hat on his son's head, and on the right is a full-page illustration in shades of brown and grey of the narrator and his father standing in front of a printing press. The narrator explains, "I imagined I was standing next to my father on a vast printing press floor, turning lead-type letters into words and sentences" (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 28]). Though the narrator is talking about creating a newspaper, in some sense, he and his father have also worked together to tell this narrative, and so it is a fitting farewell. Following an author's note, in which he discusses the inspiration for his narrative, he provides directions to make a newspaper printer's hat, which the printers are seen wearing throughout the narrative, and which the boy is wearing at the end, a gift from the hearing printers to his father.

Though the audience will not find out what will happen with the relationship between the deaf and hearing printers, the audience will appreciate the possibility that the day of the fire signaled that the hearing printers will now make a concerted effort to communicate with their deaf colleagues. The uncertainty is realistic, in the way that the "loose ending" of *Trudi and Pia* (Hegi, 2003) was. The hearing printers do not necessarily have to suddenly start conversing with their deaf colleagues, but they might, having a new appreciation for them, and so the audience will feel satisfied, if curious, with Uhlberg's work. Had the narrative ended without that initial communication, it would have been seen, most likely, as less successful, as the fire was a single (terrifying, yes) incident that occurred once, while the deaf and hearing printers would continue to work together for an indeterminate (but longer) stretch of time; therefore the lack of communication would be problematic.

In this narrative, then, the printer's agency affected his hearing colleagues' potential growth more indirectly than Ian's affected Julie's developing patience in *Ian's Walk* (Lears, 1998). Everyone is alive because of the printer's actions and grateful, certainly, and so they have chosen to communicate directly with the printer in his first language in order to thank him. While the audience of *Ian's Walk* can clearly see that Julie's respect for Ian's autonomy has led her to potentially being more understanding of him in the future, we do not know whether the printer's hearing colleagues are going to make a good-faith attempt at interacting with their deaf colleagues.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. One of the aspects of *The Printer* (Uhlberg, 2003) that I love is that it exposes audiences to information (though briefly) about Deaf communities and that deaf people sought employment as printers. Christiansen (1994) explains that, “Throughout the late nineteenth century and continuing until at least the mid-1970s, printing was one of the most popular occupational goals for young deaf persons” (p. 261).

I also appreciate that, like Julie in Ian’s Walk (Lears, 1998), the Overcoming Narrative is flipped and only slightly hinted at by the actions of the hearing printers at the end of *The Printer* (Uhlberg, 2003). The nondisabled characters are undoubtedly grateful and appreciative of what the printer and his other deaf colleagues have done for them: saved their coworkers from possible injury or death, and so it is fitting that, not only are the men grateful, but that they have learned to sign “thank you,” and the narrative ends with the possibility of them learning more signs in the future. While it would be a positive step, it might not happen, and I think not commenting further is realistic. Uhlberg also demonstrates the importance of people who are hearing making an effort to communicate with those who are deaf, especially if they are in close, constant contact.

In the narrative, deafness is subtly portrayed as beneficial in a room that is filled with the noises of machines and spreading fire:

> My father knew he had to tell everyone. He couldn’t speak to shout a warning. Even if he could, no one would hear him over the loud roar of the presses.

But he could speak with his hands. (Uhlberg, 2003, [p. 13])

Because the room is so loud, the only way to communicate effectively is by signing. Since there is a fire, quick, accurate communication among the workers is imperative, and it is something that the narrator's father (or any of his deaf colleagues) can do. They are able to save each other and the hearing printers who (until after the fire) did not bother to attempt to communicate with them. While the hearing printers can certainly gesture, and likely also could have alerted each other and their deaf colleagues, the tension in the narrative is greater because the character who notices the fire is one who does not communicate in the same way that a majority of the printers do. The deaf printers were also able to communicate in a coordinated and intelligible fashion: They were signing FIRE amongst themselves, whereas all the hearing printers would likely not have used the same gesture to help spread their message.

The audience has an appreciation for the man who was unable to hear and to speak, who helped save all his colleagues, even the ones who had ignored him. It does not matter that it would have been useless for a hearing printer to shout. The audience is aware from the narrative's start that the narrator's father is unable to hear, and then learns, after the fire starts, that he is unable to speak. He is not able to make use of the two senses that hearing people most often use to communicate with one another. The narrative is possibly unlike one that many audience members have read, and provides them exposure to a deaf community, and is a way for Uhlberg to pay tribute to his father. (He does not mention that his father ever saved his colleagues from a fire the way that the narrator's father does.) The narrative is also unlike many of the others in the books that I examined for this dissertation—the disabled character is the narrator's father, and not a child who is the same age. The narrative also takes place during an earlier time, and not in the narrator's (and his audience's) present. *The Printer* is a welcome departure in several ways, and it makes clear for hearing audience members that deaf people are as capable as they are, but I also think that it is worth raising to an actual audience whether, and if so, how, would their reactions to the narrative change if the printer had been hearing and not deaf. I think that Uhlberg might want to point out that being deaf (or otherwise disabled) can be advantageous in certain situations. (I will discuss this issue again in the next chapter in relation to being blind.) What I think bothers me about this message is that, in some of the books that I have read in which this is prevalent, a person's disability is highlighted as being more useful to a nondisabled person than to the disabled person. The disabled person's experience of their disability likely has not changed much, if at all, in this atypical situation (which is logical). When the situation "goes back to normal," will the disability be ignored? This is more magnified in a situation like the one in *The Printer*, in which the unusual circumstance happens to be one of life-and-death. It also stands out to me because the printer's deafness was previously a reason to ignore him (and the other deaf printers). [Comment]

Jacob's Eye Patch (2013). *Jacob's Eye Patch* was written by Beth Kobliner Shaw and Jacob Shaw and illustrated by Jules Feiffer. Its cover is reminiscent of the covers of the books that I examined in Chapter 3. The dust jacket is lime green, and an image of Jacob's head and shoulders fills most of its right side, as though he is popping up from below the cover; his head is tilted to the left, toward the title, and he looks out at us. He is wearing a blue shirt, glasses, and has an orange eye patch over his right eye. The title is handwritten rather than typed, and the closed parts of the letters “a,” “o,” and “b” in “Jacob’s,” and the “P” and “a” in “Patch” are filled in with the same shade of orange, as though they, too, have been “patched.” On the title page, the title appears (again in the same font, and with the orange filled-in letters) above Jacob’s head. He is again looking out at us, and underneath are the authors’ and illustrator’s name in a typed serif font. This title, in a way similar to that of *The Patch* (Headley, 2006), calls attention to an object, rather than just a person—that is, we understand that the narrative is not just going to be about Jacob, but about his eye patch.   We cannot help but notice it, as Jacob is looking right at us, and we are also prompted to wonder why he is wearing it. Centered close to the top of the copyright page, which shares an opening with the first page of the narrative, are Jacob’s glasses; his left eye and the patch visible underneath the lenses. We are being prompted to think continually about his eye patch even by the book’s paratext.

The first page provides exposition to situate the audience. The narrator explains: “Jacob and his mom were on their way to the science store to buy the most amazing thing ever—a light-up globe” (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 3]). Above the text, in a watercolor-and-pen illustration, Jacob and his mom are walking along a sidewalk. They are smiling and holding hands. His excitement is apparent, not only from the description of the globe as the “most amazing thing ever,” or his smile, but because he is standing slightly in front of her, suggesting that he is leading her down the sidewalk.

As with the narrative progression in *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski!* (Moran, 1995), the progression here is initially generated by, a tension of unequal knowledge between teller(s) and audiences: The title draws attention to Jacob's eye patch, and it is visible on the book's cover, under the dust jacket summary, on the title and copyright pages, and in this first illustration, but there has been no mention of it yet in the narrative's text. While we want to find out whether Jacob gets his globe, we also want to find out why he wears an eye patch.

On the next page, Jacob says, "Let's hurry, Mom, before the store closes.'" The narrator tells us, "He had wanted that globe for a long time" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 4]). This introduces a global instability: Jacob is worried that the store is going to close before he gets his globe. The instability is complicated on the facing page: In the illustration, Jacob's mom is leading him and has stepped off the sidewalk and is crossing the street. Jacob is behind her, but he is looking back over his shoulder, rather than in the direction they are walking.

> "Okay, sweetie, but first we need to pick up your brother from school," Jacob's mom said.
>
> "Aw, Mom! I really want to get the globe!" Jacob said. ([p. 5])

The audience understands (and likely can relate to) Jacob's frustration: he wants to go to the store and is worried that he will not get there before it closes. Now, his mother wants to do something else first, delaying him even more. While Jacob had been worried on the previous page, the audience did not yet know for certain that his worry was well-founded: His mother could have said, "We'll go right now," and they could have arrived quickly and well before the store would close for the night. We empathize with Jacob, who has had to accede to his mother's (perfectly reasonable) decision and exercise of parental authority, and so cannot do what he wants right away. In so doing, the authorial audience completes our entrance.

On the next page, the global instability is complicated to Jacob's (and the audience's) chagrin:

> As they were walking, a woman stopped to look at Jacob.
>
> "Excuse me,' she said. 'Why does your boy wear an eye patch?" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 6]).

While understanding Jacob's frustration, the audience is likely also glad that the woman asked—we are curious, too. Perhaps the tension between the audience and the narrator will be resolved. On the opposite page, the narrator says, "Now, Jacob knew his patch made people curious, and most of the time he didn't mind answering their questions. He talked about his patch—" ([p. 7]). Underneath this text are three images of Jacob engaged in different activities, lined up in a row. The two on the end have thin black rectangular borders drawn around them. Underneath each is corresponding text: "at tae kwon do—" "when he was walking his dog, Milo—" "and even once when he milked a cow" ([p. 7]).[14] This last image and text are likely to provoke amusement: We can see the cow's front legs, its belly, and udder. Jacob sits near the udder on a stool, and is

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[14] As a children's literature aside, I couldn't help but wonder whether the "real" Jacob has a dog named Milo, or if the dog is so-named because the illustrator, Jules Feiffer, also illustrated Norton Juster's 1961 children's book, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, whose protagonist is named "Milo." He is accompanied on his adventure by a large dog, Tock; Jacob's dog slightly resembles him.

milking the cow, a large pail under the animal. While we may be glad that Jacob is willing to talk about his patch, we might also find it strange that someone would ask him while he was milking a cow—not likely something that most of us spend time doing, and we might wonder what, exactly, was the occasion on which he was asked?

On the next page, the narrator continues:

> But this time, Jacob did not want to stop to answer the woman. “Sorry! We’re rushing to catch a plane to Argentina!” he said. Jacob’s mom *did* want to answer. “It all started when he was born . . .” She talked and talked all about the patch (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 8]; emphasis and ellipsis in original).

Underneath the text, Jacob looks down at the sidewalk frowning; his mother leans toward the woman smiling at her as the woman steps off the sidewalk to cross the street while pushing a baby in a stroller. Near Jacob’s head is a thought bubble; inside is the word, “Seriously?” and snippets of what his mother explains to the woman. The text in Jacob’s thought bubble and his mother’s running commentary are in the same handwritten font as the title. His mother says, “‘Now he wears his patch five hours a day . . .’ ‘I keep extra patches in my purse, in case he pulls it off . . .’ ‘And then we found this great doctor on East 40th Street. Would you like his number?’ ([p. 8]; ellipses in original).

The global instability is complicated further because Jacob’s mother stops to answer the woman’s questions, which partially resolves the tension because we have some information about why Jacob needs to wear the eye patch. The audience might be grateful for the information, but more than that, we feel bad for Jacob, who, we understand, does not mind talking about his eye patch, but only when he chooses to do so. He has made a joke in an attempt to not be rude even as he wants to end the conversation. We might also feel slightly guilty ourselves, because we, too, want to know why he wears an eye patch. Though we do not see everything that his mother told the woman, as the narrator noted, she decided that she was going to talk about Jacob's eye patch: "she talked and talked," and because she started with, "It all started when he was born . . ." we get the sense that she launched into a detailed story. She did not say, "He has a condition that requires him to wear it," giving a simple explanation that does not reveal details that Jacob might want to keep private, and that are unnecessary for strangers to know. She concludes her explanation by offering to give the woman the doctor's number, underscoring how chatty and forward she is.

On the opposite page is an illustration of Jacob and his mother, who is looking over her shoulder toward the woman and smiling. We are positioned so we are looking down at them, but it is not quite a bird's-eye view: we can see their faces. Jacob is once again leading his mother, holding her hand, walking in front of her, and toward the audience: "'Mom, please, please, we've got to go!' Jacob said. Jacob's mom smiled and said good-bye" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 9]). Unfortunately for Jacob, this is not the only interruption to his mission to get his globe. In the next opening, it is his brother, Adam, who is explaining Jacob's eye patch to a friend. When Jacob tells him, "Adam, we have to go! . . . There's only one globe left at the store,'" Adam replies, "Okay. But Jakey, it's Wednesday—ice cream day!'" ([p. 12]). In the illustration, Jacob is pointing (toward, we assume, the direction of the science store), with both hands, and leaning in that direction, his mouth opened in an "O" of urgency as he looks at his brother. Adam's use of a nickname, 'Jakey,' reminds us that he is not trying to be thoughtless in delaying his little brother. Because "Ice Cream Wednesday" has been named as such, the audience understands that getting ice cream on Wednesdays is part of a regular family routine, so presumably, Jacob likes it. Adam knows this, and so, despite Jacob having a specific wish to go get the globe, feels that stopping for ice cream beforehand is a good idea.

On the opposite page, the narrator says, "Jacob usually loved Ice Cream Wednesdays, but not today" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 13]). A larger drawing of Jacob sits almost in the middle of the page. He is standing, arms raised, his mouth open. He is surrounded by large handwritten "NO!"s. His mother and Adam stand next to each other, and are drawn to be nearly as tall as Jacob. The implied author wants to emphasize just how angry and loud Jacob is by having him and large "NO!"s dominate the page and his mother and brother. We feel Jacob's frustration, even though his mother says, "'Jakey, the ice cream store is on the way . . . And Dad is meeting us for a cone. Don't worry, we'll get the globe'" ([p. 13]). While the audience appreciates that Jacob's mother is aware that Jacob is worried about not getting the globe, we understand that would prefer to skip the ice cream. Given that a woman and Adam's friend have already asked about Jacob's eye patch, we wonder whether Jacob will get more questions at the ice cream parlor.

The next curious person whom Jacob encounters is a man serving ice cream, and it is Jacob's dad who wants to explain his eye patch, this conversation (and the long line) complicating the global instability. (His father's comments do not resolve the tension more, as we only see him say, "'The scientific explanation is very interesting . . .'" (Shaw

& Shaw, 2013, [p. 16]; ellipsis in original). As Jacob and his family leave the ice cream parlor, Jacob's mother says, "'Rebecca just called . . . She's meeting us at the science store. It's just two blocks away'" ([p. 17]). The audience is excited for Jacob, who we hope is now going to get his globe. A line of text across the top of the page confirms that, finally, Jacob has arrived: "Jacob looked at the shelf and saw . . ." ([p. 18]; ellipsis in original). In the middle of the page is an image of Jacob from the waist up. His mouth is open in a large "O" again, and his left eye is open wide. There is no background image; Jacob is in the whitespace between two sentences. Because he dominates the page and there is no other image, our eyes are drawn right to him, reminding us of the existing tension—we still want to know why he wears an eye patch. We are looking at him as he is looking at the shelf. The sentence continues below: ". . . that the light-up globe was gone!" ([p. 18]; ellipsis in original).

On the opposite page, again, there is text at the top and bottom of the page, Jacob is in the whitespace in between them. Behind him, we can see part of his mother's body from her shoulders down, which helps orient us. Jacob is "anchored" by her to the page; his right arm reaches across his body, palm open toward the where the floor would be, and the orange patch just above the line of text on the bottom of the page. His pupils are both drawn to be looking down to his right, where he has thrown the patch. "Jacob was very sad and *very* angry about all the time they had wasted!" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 19]; emphasis in original). Next to him are four thought bubbles, stacked on top of one another. They curve down toward the bottom of the page, mimicking both the arc of the fallen eye patch and its actual shape: "Lady with stroller!" "Pick up Adam!" "Ice

Cream Store!" "Seriously?" ([p. 19]). These help to remind us why Jacob is so upset. It wasn't one single event, but several; he was delayed getting to the store by his parents and brother, and, as a result, by the time he arrived, the globe had already been purchased. We are angry along with Jacob, and also feel sad for him.

On the next page, however, "Then Jacob heard his sister Rebecca's voice. 'Jakey! What took you so long?' Rebecca was holding the light-up globe!" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 20]). In the middle of the page is an illustration, which finally had more detail of the store, albeit in muted khaki and light blue. Our eyes are drawn to Rebecca, who is wearing a red shirt and blue pants. She is holding the globe: the water is dark blue, the landmasses are yellow, and is hanging from a dark green stand. There are faint grey lines surrounding part of its edge, mimicking the lines sometimes drawn around illustrations of light bulbs to show that they are turned on, so they suggest that the globe is lit up. Jacob's parents and Adam are smiling; Jacob's mouth is again open in an "O," and he is holding his hands up to the sides of his head in disbelief. Underneath, "'I had to fight off two screaming kids and a grandma to get this for you!' [Rebecca] said" ([p. 20]). This text and illustration (and Rebecca's joke) resolve the global instability and are the start of the narrative's arrival. We are grateful to her, as is Jacob.

On the next page, Jacob is approached by a little girl, who tells him, "I love your globe . . . Hey, why do you have a Band-Aid on your eye?'" (Shaw and Shaw, 2013, [p. 22]). On the opposite page, we see Jacob from the waist up, holding the globe standing near the outer edge of the page; the little girl is opposite, and a bit lower. She is in profile, has her hand on her face, and her eye is big and round, as though she is both staring at Jacob and concerned. The narrator tells us,

> Now that Jacob had his light-up globe, he was happy to answer a question about his patch.
>
> "It looks like a Band-Aid, but it's an eye patch" he said. ([p. 23]).

The audience recognizes the reference to what the narrator told us earlier about Jacob not minding answering questions about his eye patch when he chose to do so.

On the next page, he tells her, "'When I was born, my left eye didn't see as well as my right eye . . . The doctor told my mom and dad to cover my right eye with a patch for three hours a day. That makes my left eye do all the seeing" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 24]). On the opposite page, we see an illustration of Jacob in the center of the page, holding the globe; it is so large that he is bending backwards slightly in an attempt to hold it. His parents and siblings stand on either side of him, and the little girl stands further away, closer to us, emphasizing that as she is getting this information, so are we.

> "Every day my left eye gets stronger," Jacob said.
>
> "Cool. You look like a pirate!" the little girl said. "Can I touch Hawaii?" ([p. 25])

The audience may remember that Jacob's mother had told the woman with the stroller that he wears his patch for five hours a day, so we understand that he is now wearing it for longer periods of time. This is also the first time that the audience has gotten a complete explanation about Jacob's eye patch, resolving the narrative's tension, completing its arrival. Jacob has chosen to tell the little girl about his eye patch, and the implied author has acknowledged Jacob's agency by allowing *him* to be the one to give a complete explanation—to the little girl, and to the audience, too. The little girl and we have learned something new thanks to Jacob being able to take the time to answer her question. The pirate metaphor used in books discussed in Chapter 3 returns here, but the girl is also, if not more so, interested in Jacob's globe than his eye patch after he tells her why he wears it.

On the next page, the audience and Jacob notice that the girl is wearing braces. Both are pictured waist-up on either side of the globe. The girl is smiling widely so that we are able to see her braces. The narrator tells us, "He was curious, but didn't ask her about them because she was having so much fun playing with the globe" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 26]). Jacob's discretion is emphasized as the audience realizes that he presumably saw her braces when she first addressed him, but didn't mention them.

On the opposite, page, the narrator continues: "Jacob knew that he and the little girl—and almost everyone—have something that makes people curious. He also knew that sometimes you feel like talking about it, and sometimes you don't" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 27]). He is pictured standing in the center of his family. He is drawn out of proportion to them as he had been in the illustration when he yelled about not wanting to get ice cream. He is slightly larger, and in brighter colored clothing to emphasize his presence as the narrative's protagonist, and also to draw attention to what the narrator has just said: that Jacob (and the girl, and anyone else) should be allowed to choose when to talk about their disability or difference. Underneath the picture, the narrator tells us, "When Jacob is older, he won't need to wear a patch anymore, because both of his eyes are strong" ([p. 27]).

In the next opening, we again see pictures of Jacob doing the same three activities he was doing earlier, though his positions in the images are slightly different, suggesting that these are routine activities. The narrator tells us, “Until then, he is happy to answer questions about his patch at any time—” (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 28]), the descriptions underneath. On the opposite page, the narrator cautions, “Just don’t ask when he is in a hurry!” ([p. 29]). Above is a large illustration of Jacob; he is holding a dog leash, which is being pulled by the unseen Milo (who is already “off” the page) toward the page’s edge. Jacob’s legs are painted spread, as though he is running to keep up, and he looks over his shoulder, his mouth open again in surprise. In the small image of him and Milo in the set of three, Milo appears to be bounding forward, as Jacob is behind him, holding onto his leash, his mouth open wide.

The narrator is explicitly addressing the audience, reminding them not to ask Jacob about his eye patch when he is busy (though of course, we already know why he wears it). Still, I think the direct address is used by the narrator to emphasize the message in the preceding opening: that people do not always feel like explaining their disabilities, and so curious people should be thoughtful when deciding whether to ask about them. I think that the final page, which features a picture of the real Jacob, holding his globe, serves as the narrative’s farewell. As we are thinking about the narrative that we have just read, we are reminded that fictional Jacob is based on a real boy, and that he likely has to deal with questions on a regular basis. In the coherence, then, the authorial audience is glad that Jacob (and his real-life counterpart) were able to get his globe. We are satisfied because we understand why Jacob wears an eye patch, and also appreciate that we have seen how unintentionally frustrating curious strangers can be, and perhaps, actual readers resolve to try to be thoughtful when interacting with real people with disabilities.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. This book is, after numerous rereadings over the period of time when I have been reading for and writing this dissertation, one of my favorites, precisely because it addresses, if not explicitly, Jacob's agency and choosing whether and when to talk about his disability, or his eye patch. I appreciate that it is made very clear that Jacob does not mind talking about his eye patch, but, since it is *his* eye patch, he wants to decide when to do that. The book offers a realistic depiction of the experience of being visibly disabled and having curious strangers ask questions without considering whether it is appropriate to do so (or, as the narrative points out) the right time.

The narrative offers humorous interactions to help the audience understand what happens when Jacob is not in control of getting to explain his eye patch, and simultaneously, the audience is able to understand and appreciate why Jacob is angry. I also think it is important that Jacob is as young as he is. (Since he goes with his mother to get his brother from school, my assumption is that he is in prekindergarten.) And yet, the narrative points out that it does not matter how old Jacob is—though this explains why the woman whom Jacob and his mother encounter first addresses her question to Jacob's mother, rather than to him.

Because the narrator uses humor, the implied author is not seeking to shame any audience member who is curious about Jacob's eye patch. Indeed, the number of times that we see it in the paratext primes us to wonder about it. I understand why the narrator ends by telling us that, "Jacob knew that he and the little girl . . . have something that makes people curious. He also knew that sometimes you feel like talking about it, and sometimes you don't" (Shaw & Shaw, 2013, [p. 27]), but I also think it is a bit heavy-handed and unnecessary. We understand very clearly why Jacob does not always want to talk about his eye patch, and when he will choose to do so (when he is not busy). Jacob also decides not to ask the little girl about her braces "because she was having so much fun playing with the globe" ([p. 26). He is curious, but realizes that it is more important in that moment to let her enjoy playing with the globe.

Closing Thoughts

These three books also allowed for a discussion of agency, and the importance of disabled characters exercising it (and what happens when they cannot or do not). Perhaps this is most clear in *Jacob's Eye Patch* (Shaw & Shaw, 2013). Conflict similarly arises between Julie and Ian when Julie tries to get Ian to do (or not do) what she wants, rather than allowing him to just be himself. She gets more upset because he is not behaving as she wants him, too, while Ian himself is seemingly unbothered by her anger. Similarly, in *The Printer* (Uhlberg, 2003), when the narrator's father and then his deaf colleagues figure out how to signal to the hearing printers that there is a fire in the printing plant, they save everyone's lives and also cause the hearing printers to consider the necessity of and importance of making a good-faith attempt to communicate with them in their first language.

As I noted at the beginning of the chapter, the disabled characters in these narratives do not change much, if at all by the ends, while the nondisabled characters are the ones who acquire a new understanding, or who grow, or demonstrate the potential to grow in the future. In the next chapter, I am going to talk about books where there is reciprocity between disabled and nondisabled characters, which leads both parties to change in some way(s).

Chapter 6: The Rarity of Reciprocity

In the last chapter, I looked at three books in which relationships or interactions between disabled and nondisabled characters were central to the narratives, and which led to changes or the possibility of change for the nondisabled characters by the end. In this chapter, I also will look books in which those relationships between characters are central to the narratives, but in addition, there is some amount of reciprocity between a disabled character and a nondisabled one.[15] Only eleven (11) books fit into this classification. It was hard, in a few cases, to decide whether a book belonged here or with the books in the previous chapter, and someone likely could make a valid argument that books in either this chapter or the last should be in the other. In these books, any personal growth or change that characters experience may be less obvious. That said, I wanted to address this small number of books separately because of the general overall lack of concrete reciprocity in books that highlight relationships between disabled and nondisabled characters.

Three Different Kinds of Relationships

After rereading the books and thinking about them collectively and the characters' acts of

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[15] Koc, Koc, & Ozdemir's (2010) article that I mentioned in the Introduction provides an informative discussion of the different types of relationships between "story characters with and without physical and sensory impairments" (p. 150). They also address other similar studies.

reciprocity, I determined that there are three different types of relationships that exist between or among characters*: Relationships of Care, Relationships of Inevitability*, and *Relationships of Place*. A Relationship of Care is a relationship between two characters in which both have some type of positive emotional investment in each other, whether that is, for example, concern, love, or gratitude. (Each character may have a different type of investment in the other.) A Relationship of Inevitability is a relationship that exists between two characters because their connection to each other has been predetermined (for instance, the relationship that exists between a parent and a child or a teacher and a child). A Relationship of Place is a relationship that exists between two characters because they are by coincidence in the same place at the same time.

I noticed that in most of the narratives, the relationship began as one of Inevitability or Place and transformed into a Relationship of Care as a result of, or in tandem with the characters' acts of reciprocity. In others, the relationship was simultaneously a Relationship of Inevitability and a Relationship of Care, while different aspects of each might be more apparent at one time than at another. A few of the narratives involve relationships between friends; these are not "inevitable" in the way that the relationships between parents and children and between teachers and children are, so these relationships are only ever Relationships of Care. By the ends of the narratives, it could be argued that the relationships have deepened because the characters have chosen to do something kind for each other. These ideas are only ones that I have just started considering, so it is possible that looking at more books would yield additional relationship types and would refine these.

Three Books

In this chapter, I will examine three books that exhibit combinations of the three different relationships mentioned above and how those acts fit into the narrative progressions of each. At the conclusion of the chapter, I will address possible reasons that so few of these books exist.

Kathe Zemach's *Ms. McCaw Learns to Draw* (2008), which features a Relationship of Inevitability which is simultaneously a Relationship of Care as the title tells us, is about a teacher who learns how to draw. Dudley Ellington, a student in her class, who has unspecified learning difficulties, appreciates that Ms. McCaw takes the time to help him with his work. One afternoon, he repays her kindness when she believes that she cannot draw a face on the classroom whiteboard. In Sunny Seki's *Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll: The Adventures of a Blind Girl Who Saves her Village* (2012), two characters move from a Relationship of Place to a Relationship of Care. Yuko-chan, a blind orphan who stays at the Daruma Temple in Takasaki, a village in Japan, discovers a way to, save her village following the eruption of nearby Mount Asama. She also meets and befriends Kenta, a young man who also lives in the village; Kenta helps Yuko-chan with her project. Yin's *Dear Santa, Please Come to the 19th Floor* (2002; illustrated by Chris Soentpiet) is about a friendship between Willy and Carlos, who are always in a Relationship of Care. Willy writes to Santa Claus, asking him to come to Carlos's apartment on Christmas Eve, because he believes it will cheer up his best friend.

Ms. McCaw Learns to Draw (2008). *Ms. McCaw Learns to Draw* was written and illustrated by Kaethe Zemach. The narrative begins with the narrator introducing the audience to a student, Dudley Ellington, by explaining: "Dudley Ellington had trouble in school. He wasn't very good at paying attention and it took him a long time to learn new things" (Zemach, 2008, [p. 5]). The text is centered in the middle of the right page; on the left, Dudley and several of his classmates are sitting at their desks. All of the students except for Dudley are looking down at their work, while Dudley is looking at a girl to his right, seemingly paying attention not to her work but to the fact that she is filling her paper, while his is blank, except for his name. On the left page, above the text, we see Dudley leaning on his desk, looking worriedly at his empty paper. Underneath the text, we see his entire desk. He is sitting sideways on his chair, and has draped his left leg over the top of it. He is drawing a rocket on his paper.

The next opening introduces his teacher, Ms. McCaw, who was, the narrator tells us, "the best teacher Dudley ever had" (Zemach, 2008, [p. 6]). She stands next to him, with a smile on her face, as Dudley is holding a paper airplane (made from his sheet of paper), and a few of the other students sit at their desks looking at her to see her reaction. Dudley is now smiling. On the opposite page, there are three different images of Dudley and Ms. McCaw. The narrator explains, "When Dudley didn't understand something, Ms. McCaw would explain it over and over, until it made sense" ([p. 7]). In two of the images, she is helping him at his desk. In the third, he is smiling and showing her his paper, and she is smiling back. In the next opening, the narrator continues, "And if anyone made fun of Dudley, Ms. McCaw would ask them to stop" ([p. 8]). She is sitting on a chair in between Dudley's desk and the desks of two of his classmates. The girls at the desks appear to be smiling and looking at each other; another boy stands behind them and looks at Ms. McCaw, whose mouth is open and who is raising her hand slightly as though she is in the middle of talking to them about being kind to Dudley. Dudley sits at his desk, a slight frown on his face. The focalization of the illustrations by the narrator allows us to see their interactions and notice moments like the above: we can see how Ms. McCaw treats Dudley with kindness.

The narrator in *The Patch* (Headley, 2006), which I discussed in Chapter 3, does not judge Becca's boisterous behavior upon her arrival at the doctor's office or seem annoyed by her playfulness. In this narrative's initiation, we are similarly introduced to a narrator who does not judge Dudley for his difficulties at school—both paying attention and needing extra time and help to learn new concepts. Nor does she judge him for getting distracted while working. The audience is simultaneously aware of this lack of judgment, and maybe, too, of the fact that Zemach has created a perhaps unusually sympathetic narrator and teacher as well: Ms. McCaw is patient, and does not get angry over Dudley's behavior; the only time the audience sees her get upset is when she is addressing other students who are less kind to Dudley.

Zemach does not suggest that Dudley's difficulties are the narrative's global instability: Ms. McCaw is shown helping him. The narrator says of the teacher, "She was so smart, the children in room 10 thought their teacher knew *everything* . . ." (2008, [p. 9]; emphasis and ellipsis in original). The next opening features an illustration of nearly the entire classroom; the students are sitting at their desks looking toward Ms. McCaw who is standing at the whiteboard in the front of the room on the right page. The audience is positioned on the side of the room, looking over toward the students and Ms.

McCaw, whose back is turned to them as she writes. The narrator's thought continues, " . . . until one day, they watched her trying to draw a person's face on the board" ([p. 11]; ellipsis in original).

In the next opening, there are again three illustrations, this time of Ms. McCaw at the board: "She tried and tried, and tried some more, but finally she gave up, saying, 'I just can't do it! I don't know how!'" (Zemach, 2008, [p. 12]). This is the narrative's launch. The audience knows that this is the global instability (in part because of the title). This narrative is a departure from the others that I have looked at, as the focus is on an adult character who is unable to do something. On the opposite page, she is standing, frowning, her right hand on her forehead: "'No matter how hard I try,' she said sadly, 'I cannot figure out how to draw a face from the side'" ([p. 13]). The audience might find this interesting and worth paying attention to—the instance of a teacher who does not know how to do something, eager to make its entrance and join the narrative audience to find out what happens next.

In the next opening, Dudley "called out, 'Don't worry, Ms. McCaw! I'll show you how!'" (Zemach, 2008, [p. 14]) Dudley and several of his classmates are shown at their desks on the left page; Dudley is standing, leaning forward over his desk with his hand raised, and the other students are looking at him, a shift from the earlier illustrations in which they either weren't paying attention to him, or he was looking at them. He is also, for the first time, actively engaged: This is the first time in the narrative that he has spoken. The right page has text near the top: "As the rest of the class watched in surprise, Dudley Ellington and Ms. McCaw changed places" ([p. 15]). Underneath the text, Ms. McCaw is standing next to Dudley's desk; he stands in front of it; they both are looking at each other.

Over the course of the next two openings, Dudley shows Ms. McCaw and his classmates and the audience how to draw a face in profile. After a series of illustrations in which the narrator explains the steps in Dudley's drawing, the next opening features Ms. McCaw raising her hand, as the students around her look at her. "'I still don't understand . . . Could you do it again, please?'" (Zemach, 2008, [p. 20]). Dudley draws a face on the opening's left page, again in a series of smaller illustrations. The global instability is developing further in the narrative's voyage: Ms. McCaw needs more examples, so Dudley begins drawing eight different faces over the next two openings, which the narrator describes: "He drew someone with a big forehead and a little nose, and someone with a little forehead and a big nose. He drew someone whose eyes were shut, and someone else whose mouth was open" ([pp. 22-23]). The following opening again depicts the entire classroom, and the illustration is nearly identical to the earlier one with Ms. McCaw at the board, except now, Dudley is standing there, and the board is covered. The narrative's interaction then is especially "interactive," as Zemach has provided Dudley's drawings for the audience to see. We, too, can attempt to copy them and learn from him as Ms. McCaw is doing. The audience will likewise appreciate the tutorial and the different faces that Dudley has drawn that they can try, and will continue to be interested to see whether Dudley's additional help was useful to Ms. McCaw.

Dudley then asks Ms. McCaw to attempt to draw another face, telling her, "'Go on, draw a forehead. Any sort of forehead. You can do it, Ms. McCaw'" (Zemach, 2008, [p. 28]). The focus shifts from Dudley demonstrating back to him addressing Ms. McCaw again, moving toward the narrative's ending. On the opposite page, there are two illustrations, toward the top and bottom of the page. The students crowd around Ms. McCaw, in the top one, watching as she begins her drawing. The image is a role-reversal of what the audience saw earlier when she was helping Dudley, and, too, is probably a reversal of what they are used to seeing themselves in school. "When Ms. McCaw hesitated, a few kids giggled, but Dudley Ellington asked them to stop" ([p. 29]). Dudley is also requesting the same respect for her from his classmates that she requested for him. In the bottom image, which serves as the narrative's arrival, she is holding up the paper with a finished face on it, while the students smile and some raise their arms in triumph. Ms. McCaw has, as the title promised, learned to draw.

In the next opening, the narrator says, "Now the teacher in room 10 was smarter than ever! She canceled the math test that she'd been planning for the afternoon, handed out paper and pens, and announced that the rest of the day would be 'Dedicated to Drawing!'" (Zemach, 2008, [p. 30]). We see the whole room again, except this time, everyone is either working on a drawing or showing a drawing to someone. Some students are working together at a single desk, while others are standing. Ms. McCaw is standing on a small stepladder in front of the still-covered whiteboard; she is holding two of her own drawings, one in each hand. The repeated use of the double-page spread of the entire classroom allows the audience to pay attention to the changes in activity: how the students sat quietly and attentively when Ms. McCaw was teaching; how they did the same when Dudley was up at the whiteboard, while also smiling; and now, talking and sharing with each other.

The final page depicts Ms. McCaw and Dudley smiling at each other as they shake hands under a single line of text, “Thanks to Dudley Ellington!” (Zemach, 2008, [p. 32]). In her left hand, Ms. McCaw holds a drawing of the profile of someone with slightly curly hair on top of her head and glasses, reminiscent of Ms. McCaw herself. A speech bubble next to the face, echoing the text says, “THANK YOU!” The audience is happy for her and perhaps, if they have tried to copy any of Dudley’s drawings, thankful to him, too. In the farewell then, Zemach wants to underscore the importance of Dudley helping Ms. McCaw, and so uses the speech bubble—the only one in the entire narrative—so that the teacher can speak directly to Dudley “for herself.” This compliments the narrator’s enthusiastic statement in the text.

The audience will be happy for Dudley, whose mood has changed over the course of the narrative: no longer frustrated, he has been given the opportunity to share his talent with his class and his teacher, who was happy to be a student for a short time, and then decided to alter her lesson plans so that the class could continue to enjoy the drawing that Dudley had shown them all how to do. Any other ending—for example, simply moving from Ms. McCaw learning to draw to the math test—would have seemed anticlimactic. Ms. McCaw is grateful for the opportunity to learn from one of her students and is more interested in giving him more time (the rest of the day) to continue to draw and interact with his classmates in a way that gives him confidence, and also allows everyone to try to draw and enjoy the unscheduled change of plans. The audience will be pleased with Zemach’s chosen direction, perhaps hoping that their own teachers might do something similar one day (especially if they are being read this book at school).

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. It has been established before the action of the day on which Ms. McCaw learns to draw, that she is "so smart, the children in room 10 thought their teacher knew everything . . ." (Zemach, 2008, [p. 9]; emphasis and ellipsis in original). If Ms. McCaw did, in fact, "know everything," Dudley would have had nothing to teach her. It also begins to set up a parallel between her and Dudley, who has difficulty in school. The audience has learned that she helps Dudley when he has difficulty understanding a concept that she is teaching.

This is crucial for the reciprocity between the characters and gives it more weight, and it influences the narrative progression: the launch is her inability to draw; Dudley offers to show her. In the voyage, she needs more examples, and he gives them. Finally, in the arrival, she is able to draw a face. If Ms. McCaw were not kind and patient with Dudley, he would likely not want to show her how to draw. Her patience with Dudley also makes their relationship simultaneously one of Inevitability and of Care: He is her student; she is his teacher. In the storyworld, he has been assigned to her class; he needs to go to school, and she needs to have students to teach. It is immediately evident to the audience that she likes Dudley—even before the narrator tells us how she helped him. When he has made the paper airplane, and she is standing at his desk, she does not seem annoyed, but amused. He, in turn, respects her and feels gratitude for her help, as demonstrated in the final of the image cluster in which she is helping him: He is smiling at her, proudly showing her his paper, and she is smiling back. Her gratitude toward him is made explicit on the final page, both by way of the narrator and the speech balloon in the illustration.

The paratext of the book does not specifically make a claim that its protagonist Dudley Ellington has a diagnosed learning disability. The audience is told (and shown) that he has difficulty in school, and that he has a kind and patient teacher, Ms. McCaw, who takes the time to help Dudley understand whatever concepts he is having difficulty mastering. I found the book when I did a search of the *Horn Book Guide Online*'s reviews for picturebooks using a subject search. The guide lists “Disabilities, Learning” as one of the book’s subjects (The Horn Book Inc., 2017). This is an instance in which external reviewers decided to categorize the book using this label among others and points to an issue worth considering when selecting books that purport to be about a particular topic: An author might not intend for a book to be thought of as a particular “issue-oriented” book, in this case, one about learning disabilities, though other people may read it as such. It is not far-fetched to believe that Dudley has a learning disability, though Zemach was less interested in diagnosing Dudley than in creating a character who had “difficulty” in one area, and proficiency in another that he could share and use to help someone else.

In this case, Zemach turned the traditional teacher-student teacher relationship on its head (for a day). Dudley specifically offers help to the person whom he and his classmates (as well as the audience) believe to be the most capable and intelligent person in the room. That she has difficulty drawing does not negate this, of course, but it allows her students to see that she does not, in fact, know everything, and is willing and eager to learn something new. The implied author's focus on this particular reciprocal relationship between Ms. McCaw and Dudley, rather than on the amount of difficulty that Dudley has with his (potential) learning disability helps her avoid the appearance that Dudley's superior drawing skills are meant to provide an explicit counterbalance to such a disability in order to make the book more appealing and uplifting, incorporating aspects of the Overcoming Narrative.

Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll (2012). *Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll: The Adventures of a Blind Japanese Girl Who Saved Her Village* was written and illustrated by Sunny Seki. With its detailed subtitle, the book leaves the reader in no doubt as to what will happen by the end of the narrative, and so the audience wonders *how* this will happen, and why Yuko-chan needed to save her village in the first place. The cover is red, and most of it features a large illustration that is also bordered in a black box—the line is not completely neat and perfectly straight. The title is in a white box with a black border. It overlays the top part of the larger image; the title itself is stylized and looks handwritten. Underneath this box, the largest figure in the image is a girl whom the reader will guess is Yuko-chan. She is wearing clothing that resembles a karategi and a vest that is blue and pink and patterned with cherry blossoms. In her right hand, she holds a bamboo stick; since she has it pointed down toward the ground, and her eyes are closed, the audience may assume that the stick is to help her navigate. A dog sits to her left, looking up at her. In her left hand, she is holding a small object that has what appears to be a face painted on it; an eye, nose, and mouth are visible. There are patches on it, as though it has been made with pieces of paper or other material so seams are visible. Readers will guess that this is the "Daruma Doll." Some children are peaking out from behind a column that is to the right of Yuko-chan and the dog. One has a hand over his mouth, and his eyes are closed as though he is laughing at her. An elderly man stands further behind Yuko-chan. He looks at her and holds one end of a jump rope, while a child jumps in the air above it.

This is the first bilingual English-Japanese picturebook that I have read, and the only one included in my corpus for this project. In most of the openings, the English text is above the Japanese text. If the illustrations are large, or there is more than one on a page, the English text is on the left page and the Japanese text is on the right.[16] All of the book's pages, including the end pages, look like rice paper. On the end pages, there are other Daruma dolls lined up, including one in a wheelchair, and one that takes up nearly the entire right page. A hand is in the process of painting the doll's left pupil while the right eye is "empty."

The title page features a small illustration; three people are pausing in their work to look to the distance where a volcano is erupting. Smoke is rising from it, and there is a large cloud of smoke that appears to be nearly over the three people's heads, indicating that the smoke is traveling toward them. This image might not initially make sense, but is clarified in the first opening, in which we see Yuko-chan again. The volcano is in the distance, and it is still smoking, but less. The narrator's opening paragraph provides the narrative's global instability and launch: "In Japan, there is an active volcano called

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[16] I also want to note here that some of the pages are numbered while others are not, so I have included numbers in brackets when quoting from one of the unnumbered pages.

Mount Asama. Two hundred years ago it erupted in flames. It then shot out ashes that covered the surrounding villages and damaged all the crops" (Seki, 2012, p. 3). The audience might not have paid attention to the illustration on the title page, but now realizes that it depicts Mount Asama's eruption. Yuko-chan stands on a riverbank holding a toy boat, the dog sits nearby. Behind Yuko-chan is a temple. The elderly man is in front of the temple, raking the sand of a zen garden, looking toward Yuko-chan. The audience knows that the volcano eruption is the reason that Yuko-chan "saves her village," and will be curious to see how she did it, and what part the Daruma doll plays in that solution.

The narrator tells us that Yuko-chan was an orphan who "stayed at the Daruma Temple," and that her name means "Warm Water Girl, because she had such a warm, gentle personality" (Seki, 2012, p. 3). The audience is being predisposed to like Yuko-chan; in the next opening, we are told that "the head monk, Osho-san, met with village representatives to talk about ways to recover from the disaster. Yuko-chan overheard their worried voices and tried to calm them by serving them green tea" (p. 4). We know, too, who the elderly man is. Though Yuko-chan is not part of their gathering, and is not asked to do anything, she chooses to try and be helpful. The audience learns that she has taken it upon herself to memorize the scriptures: "The men could not think of a solution, so they began to read from their scriptures. Suddenly, a gust of wind blew out the candles, plunging the room into darkness" Yuko-chan, who does not notice that it is dark,

> continued reciting the prayers, without skipping a word. 'Why did you all stop?'
>
> "We can't read in the dark!" they answered.

> "Wow! You're handicapped aren't you?" she joked. (p. 5)

In some picturebooks featuring blind characters that are part of the corpus of books that I discussed in the last chapter, the character uses their blindness to help themselves and to help nondisabled others.[17] Here, Yuko-chan is not using her blindness to help anyone else or herself, but is teasingly pointing out the limitations that sight itself can have. She has memorized the scriptures because she cannot see them; she cannot rely on her sight to read them, unlike the men, who have not bothered to memorize them, or not to the extent that she has, because doing so did not occur to them.

Yuko-chan spends her time listening to Osho-san teach boys at the temple's school. "Yuko-chan did not attend the school, but she always listened carefully to the lessons. She was eager to learn everything she could about Daruma-san" (Seki, 2012, p. 6). Osho-san is pointing at a large painting of Daruma-san from the shoulders up that is near the right wall of the temple; it appears to be in a large standing frame. The illustration is drawn so that it positions us nearly in a corner so that we can see more of the interior of the temple: Osho-san near the painting, several students at desks, and Yuko-chan just outside.

We can see Daruma-san's head and make out part of the robe that he is wearing. There is Japanese text written vertically on either side of his head. Boys with almost-entirely shaved heads save a few tufts of hair, sit at two rows of desks facing Osho-san. Yuko-chan sits just outside the open doorway of the temple, scrubbing the floor, her face

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[17] Sarah, in *Sarah's Sleepover* (Rodriguez, 2000) like Yuko-chan, does not realize when the lights have gone out, and helps her cousins safely get downstairs to the telephone to call her parents.

turned toward Osho-san.

In what is perhaps meant to be a subtle contrast between the students' and Yuko-chan's investment in what Osho-san is telling them, a boy in the back row has thrown a crumpled piece of paper at the boy in front of him. Similar to a comic book illustration of movement and impact, there is an arc of white with a black line running down its middle showing the paper's trajectory toward the boy's head, which it has hit, and then bounced off. Though Yuko-chan does not have to pay attention, we understand from both the illustration and what the narrator has told us that she wants to listen to Osho-san. We judge the narrator as being competent and thoughtful because he has taken the time to tell us more about Yuko-chan than is apparent from simply viewing the illustrations.

On the opposite page, when Osho-san leaves for a short time, the students take advantage of his absence and "play with the musical instruments" (Seki, 2012, p. 7). We see in this illustration the left side of the temple (our right). On the wall, there is another painting of Daruma-san, but this time, he is looking at the students, his mouth in a small "o," as though he is slightly surprised or disturbed, though this expression is noticed only by the audience. The boys are interrupted. "'Everyone stop! You are not in harmony!'" (p. 7). Yuko-chan is walking past the open door of the temple, carrying a bucket of water, which, presumably, she has gone to fill so that she again can wash the wooden floor just outside the temple.

In the next opening, the narrator confirms what the audience might have already guessed: Yuko-chan told the students to stop playing. There is a small image of her toward the top of the left page standing in front of a large drum sitting on its side; only part of the drum is visible. Yuko-chan is holding two drumsticks and lines of motion indicate both her movement of the sticks and the sound that the drum has made: "It was Yuko-chan, who then began beating the *taiko* in perfect rhythm (Seki, 2012, p 8; emphasis in original). In the larger picture that takes up most of the opening, the students sit in a semicircle looking toward her and playing their instruments. We also see Osho-san peeking around the open door: "Osho-san returned, and was very impressed. 'Wow!' he said to himself. 'This sounds like a concert! Yuko-chan has talent. But I do not want any unruly behavior in this sacred place'" (p. 8). We can see part of the painting of Daruma-san; he is now smiling, alerting the audience that he is "enjoying" the music they are playing, so would disagree with Osho-san.

Osho-san reminds the children (and the audience) of the problem facing the village: "'If we want to survive the loss of our crops, our village needs to find other ways to get the money. In this difficult time, we must remember the teaching of our founder, Daruma-san'" (Seki, 2012, p. 10). Osho-san tells the children who he was:

> "He was a monk who preached all the way from India to China, meditating on Buddha's teachings for nine years! And though his arms and legs became numb, he still continued to spread his message:
>
> 'If you fall seven times, you must pick yourself up eight times! You need strong faith, and the belief that you can accomplish your goals!'"
>
> These words inspired Yoko-chan (p. 10).

The image of Daruma-san is now looking out at the children with a serious expression, underscoring for the audience the seriousness of what Osho-san is explaining to the children.

Osho-san's talk to the boys is important because he has reminded them and the audience about the problem facing the village, and has shared Daruma-san's message. It is unlikely that the authorial audience will be familiar with the monk, whom the author describes as "the Father of Zen Buddhism" on a page of "Cultural Notes" after the narrative ends that gives useful context to what the audience has just read (Seki, 2012, [p. 33]). At this point in the narrative, the narrator has told us that this message is meaningful to Yuko-chan, and so we will keep it in mind, curious to see whether it will recur in some form later. This lesson also sets up the transition to the narrative's middle. We have learned about Yuko-chan, what kind of person she is, and what her daily life is like.

In the next opening, some time has passed, though we do not know how much:

> One night, Yuko-chan was startled awake by a suspicious sound. Shiba, her guide dog heard it too.
>
> "Shiba! I think someone is tipping over the donation box. Osho-san said that's what people do when they want to steal money" (Seki, 2012, [p. 12])

In the picture under the English text on the page, we see Yuko-chan leaning up from the mat that she has been sleeping on, her face turned toward the window. There is indeed a man crouched outside, tipping the donation box toward himself. Shiba, is curled up next to Yuko-chan, his left eye open, and his left ear cocked toward the window. Underneath this illustration, there is a smaller picture next to the Japanese text. Yuko-chan is putting a finger to her lips, as Shiba has started to bark.

A local instability has been introduced, a problem that Yuko-chan can investigate. At the top of the right page, Yuko-chan stands, holding the leash of a barking, lunging Shiba, who wants to get to the man, who is sitting on the ground next to the donation box, its coins dumped on the ground. He has his mouth open in alarm.

> In the moonlight a young man stood frozen—with a handful of coins.
>
> "Please don't let your dog attack me!" . . . "My father is sick and I need to buy him some medicine."
>
> Yuko-chan felt sorry for him. "Okay. But you had better leave before Osho-san gets here!" (Seki, 2012, [p. 13]).

Though Yuko-chan has noted that the man is taking the money, the narrator does not describe the man as a "thief," and tells us that Yuko-chan "[feels] sorry for him." In an act of kindness, she lets him leave, and Osho-san, who arrives a short time later, does not know who the man was, telling her, "'I wish our temple could do more to help those people'" ([p. 13]). Because neither Yuko-chan nor Osho-san is judging the man, and the narrator is not using damning language, either, the audience feels sorry for him, and is grateful for Yuko-chan's kindness. Part of the narrative's interaction is a continuing trust of the narrator's telling.

> On the next page, however, while Yuko-chan and Osho-san are visiting villagers to collect extra food for people in need:
>
> At one of the houses she recognized a familiar voice talking with Osho-san—It was the thief!" (Seki, 2012, [p. 14])

The man tells Osho-san, "'My father was sick, but I was able to buy some good medicine, and now he is feeling better!'" ([p. 14]). The narrator tells us, "Yuko-chan was relieved that this young man, named Kenta, had used the money from the temple honestly. She didn't tell Osho-san that Kenta had stolen it" ([p. 14]). The audience, like Yuko-chan, is glad that Kenta was not lying when he told Yuko-chan why he was taking the money. It is also perhaps "necessary" that Kenta did not use the money for some other more destructive purpose, because that would have then moved the narrative toward another complication that would need to be resolved in addition to the global instability. It also would have caused tension between Osho-san and Yuko-chan. The audience, too, might have become less fond of Yuko-chan if it turned out that she had aided someone who lied to her and used the money for another, more selfish purpose.

Yuko-chan accompanying Osho-san and hearing Kenta's story is a way to let the audience know that Kenta was honest when he told Yuko-chan why he was taking the money. It also sets up the narrative's next local instability: "Osho-san was away, and it was up to Yuko-chan and Shiba to deliver the food alone" (Seki, 2012, p. 16). Because it began to snow, "Yuko-chan became disoriented by the weather. She accidentally took a wrong path—one that led into the mountains!" (p. 16). In their confusion, she and Shiba "tumbled over a cliff!" (p. 17). A local instability of getting lost is complicated by their fall. The audience worries for Yuko-chan and Shiba, and wonders whether they will be seriously injured, and whether or how they will be found. The large full-page illustration accompanying this text gives the audience additional information. We see Yuko-chan and Shiba falling off the cliff. There is a small round image that overlaps the top left corner of the larger illustration and the page's rice-paper background: It is a close-up of

Yuko-chan's legs and feet, and we can see that her right sandal has gotten caught under a tree root or a fallen branch, and she is falling forward.

In the next opening, there are a series of three stacked images, outlined in lines that meet at harsh, jagged angles, unlike the earlier illustrations, which are bordered by rectangles or circles. The shapes mimic the harsh conditions in which Yuko-chan and Shiba find themselves. In the top image, which is on the left page, Yuko-chan and Shiba are shown landing; Yuko-chan lands on her backpack, and has scratches on her right cheek, and, as we know from the previous page, her right foot is bare. Shiba lands next to her, his eyes closed and his tongue hanging out of his mouth. In the second, Yuko-chan is trying to locate her tea gourd; her right arm and hand are painted twice, and curving lines across them demonstrate the fact that she is moving them, searching, trying to find the gourd with her outstretched hand.

This is the third time in the narrative that Yuko-chan's blindness is called attention to—the first was in the narrator's description of her; the second during her comments to Osho-san and the village leaders when the candles blew out. For the first time, we witness an event in which Yuko-chan's blindness is problematic for her. The local instability of her getting lost and fallen again is complicated slightly. As the audience, we can see that her gourd is just beyond the reach of her fingers. In the final image, which starts under the previous two and goes all the way across the spread, part of Yuko-chan's hand is shown reaching in from the left; we see part of her hand again almost touching the fingers of her actual hand, and she is reaching toward the tea gourd, which has slipped out of her grasp. To help the audience track the gourd's movement away from her, a wide white line outlined in black that resembles a garden hose arcs away from the tea gourd and curls back on itself; underneath it, the tea gourd is also upside down. The line curls back up and the tea gourd is standing upright next to it. Multiple sets of curved lines radiate out from it to show its movement, while spiked black lines hover above the top and right side. Yuko-chan explains to Shiba this strange occurrence: "'Every time I drop the gourd, it rolls upside down … and then . . . koro-koro-rin! . . . It comes back up again!'" (Seki, 2012, p. 19; ellipses in original).

In the next opening, on the left page, there are two illustrations. In the top one, Yuko-chan is tossing the gourd, Shiba sitting next to her, watching. We again have the visual aid of the gourd's movement as it rolls over three times and lands upright. In the larger illustration underneath, Yuko-chan holds up the gourd and smiles at it, Shiba looks up at it.

The narrator tells us that,

> Yuko-chan was so fascinated that she forgot they were lost. "Look! The frozen tea in the bottom keeps the gourd upright! Even though it falls, it gets up again—just like Daruma-san's teaching! And the shape is just like his: no arms and no legs!"
>
> Then she had a bright idea. "What if we made these at the temple, and called them 'Daruma Dolls'? Could we sell them and save our village?" (Seki, 2012, p. 21)

The audience is excited about this possibility, too. While the instability of Yuko-chan getting lost in the snow is not resolved by Yuko-chan's brilliant idea, something positive has come from her misadventure.

This local instability is finally resolved in the next opening, when Kenta, who was the last person that Yuko-chan and Shiba visited, finds them. In the page's illustration, he stands near the edge of the cliff, holding a lantern out, and Yuko-chan and Shiba are sitting in the hollow of a tree below. It is never made clear how exactly Kenta knew to go look for them, an instance of the implied author clearly shaping the narrative for his own ends, but the audience overlooks that because we are happy that Yuko-chan has been found. This event completes an act of reciprocity: Kenta literally "saves" Yuko-chan and Shiba as Yuko-chan had "saved" him by not telling Osho-san that it was he who took the money, which enabled him to get medicine and help his father get well. This event also resolves the local instability of Yuko-Chan getting lost and falling over the cliff.

When they return to Kenta's house, Yuko-chan tells him and his father her idea for the Daruma dolls; "'You should use bamboo,' Kenta's father suggested. Kenta showered her how to weave the stems together'" (Seki, 2012, p. 23). The accompanying illustration depicts this, which allows the audience to also learn along with Yuko-chan. Kenta also apologizes to her for taking the money.

> Yuko-chan interrupted. "We can't dwell on what's been done in the past, Kenta. We have to think about how we can make our future better!" Kenta's eyes brightened. "I will be happy to help your project by donating bamboo to the temple!" (p. 23)

The audience might see this as the resolution of the local instability of Kenta stealing the money; he has apologized, albeit to Yuko-chan, and he has offered assistance with her project, which will, they hope, help the entire village.

Yuko-chan "[tested] many ideas" to create the dolls: "She finally decided to place a rock in the bottom, add a paper covering, and then paint the entire doll" (Seki, 2012, p. 24). In the illustration, she is standing at a table, covering the bamboo frame with paper. Her face is turned up and is bathed light coming through the nearby window. We can see that it is night and still snowing. Yuko-chan began trying to make the doll as soon as she got back to the temple. Shiba is next to her, with his front paws and head on the table, watching her. This scene echoes the earlier one in the temple, when Yuko-chan kept reciting prayers in the dark; the audience is reminded that she is capable of doing something else that they likely are not.

On the page opposite, it is day again, and Yuko chan is walking toward Osho-san with the Daruma doll. In the illustration, other children are playing, though some appear to have stopped to look at Yuko-chan. One group of four girls is playing a game in which it seems that one person, who is blind-folded, attempts to find the others. (I assume that these children are girls—though I admit, it took a couple of readings to realize it—because they do not have shaved heads.) I do not know whether, like the earlier scene in the temple, this is supposed to be some subtle comparison of the behavior of Yuko-chan and other children. Here, Yuko-chan, who is blind, carries something and walks with purpose toward Osho-san. She has spent time doing something that she hopes will be useful. At the same time, six girls are playing, one of whom has made herself "temporarily blind" for the purposes of a game.

The next opening is the first that features an illustration that covers the entire spread. A smaller illustration in a large circle with a black border in the top left corner of the left page shows Yuko-chan holding up the doll to Osho-san; her bamboo walking stick pokes out of the frame. This is another example of an inset illustration providing information that the text does not. (The round black frame of the illustration is reminiscent of the eyes of the Daruma doll.) In the larger illustration, Yuko-chan stands behind Osho-san, her hands clasped in prayer while next to her, Osho-san tosses the doll which rolls upside down twice and lands right-side up, while the children watch.

Even before reading the text, then, the audience knows that the doll is a success. Reaching Osho-san, "Yuko-chan proclaimed, 'I believe that Daruma-san will save our village!'" She continues, "'[The doll] honors Daruma-san's words: If you fall down seven times, you should get up eight times! I hope we can sell these to save our village'" (Seki, 2012, [p. 27]). While the children are disbelieving, Osho-san "released the doll on the ground. It rolled over and over . . . and then it stood upright!" ([p. 27; ellipsis in original])

That success marks the transition to the ending; Osho-san is thrilled:

> "This is wonderful! We will sell these at the Spring Festival!". . . Then he noticed that Yuko-chan had left the doll's eyes blank. "We will honor this by suggesting that people darken the left pupil when they make a wish, and the right pupil when the wish comes true. We are going to be busy!" Yuko-chan was overjoyed" (Seki, 2012, p. 28).

Her creation is going to be sold at the festival and will hopefully earn enough money to help the village begin to recover from the volcano's devastation. The opposite page depicts some of the villagers making their own Daruma dolls.

In the next opening, a large illustration covers the bottom two-thirds of the spread: A long table covered with a pink tablecloth is filled with Daruma dolls. Yuko-chan and Kenta are standing on a raised platform across from the table, where she is playing the taiko, and Kenta is playing the flute. Kenta's father and Shiba sit on the far side of the table watching the festivities. Yuko-chan's efforts and those of the villagers were a success: The narrator tells us, "From that day forward, the village was saved. Even today the Daruma dolls of Takasaki are the most famous in all of Japan" (Seki, 2012, [p.30]). The combination of the visual evidence of how busy the festival is, and the narrator's comment about its success is the narrative's arrival. The global instability of the narrative has been resolved.

This arrival is followed on the last page, by the narrative's farewell. The narrator tells us, "Some time later Yuko-chan left the village to study under a famous *taiko* teacher. Kenta, whose father was now healthy, escorted her" (Seki, 2012, p. 32; emphasis in original). Underneath the English text is an illustration of Yuko-chan, Shiba, and Kenta leaving the village. They are facing the volcano. Kenta points out to Yuko-chan that the smoke coming from the volcano, is "'the shape of a Daruma doll!' She smiled and said, 'Just think, if the volcano had not erupted, there would never have been Daruma dolls. What started as a disaster has turned into a golden opportunity for everyone!'" (p. 32). Not only has the global instability of the village being threatened been resolved, but the audience also finds out what happens to some of the characters. We get to see that Yuko-chan, who earlier had played the taiko well, and was stopped from continuing to do so by Osho-san, is going to study it.

Though she is still an orphan, she has acquired friends who are like family in Kenta and his father, and the audience is also happy to hear that Kenta's father is well. The narrative could have ended on the previous page: the global instability was resolved, and everyone was happy. We appreciate, however, knowing what happened "after" to these characters, and so in the narrative's coherence, we reflect on this narrative that is probably unlike one we have ever heard, and are appreciative of Seki's sharing it with us, and of letting us know what happened to these characters—something that was not necessary. Additionally, the "Cultural Notes" page is useful and lets us know that there is a Daruma Doll Festival held every year in Japan, so if we were ever so inclined, we could actually visit the temple and get a Daruma doll of our own.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. In the first part of my evaluation, I want to discuss the character relationships and acts of reciprocity and how they affect the narrative progression. Then I will discuss issues relating to Yuko-chan's disability. There are both long- and short-term acts of reciprocity in the narrative. The first, which underpins the entire narrative is the Relationship of Care between Yuko-chan and Osho-san. Their relationship is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative, but given that she stays at the Daruma temple, it must be with the knowledge and support of Osho-san. She helps out, as we see when she brings Osho-san and the village leaders tea, by cleaning, and then she also accompanies Osho-san on his visits with the villagers to collect food, and then delivers it by herself the day that she ends up getting lost. It is unfortunate that Osho-san does not tell Yuko-chan that he enjoys her playing of the taiko early in the narrative as a gesture of kindness. I suspect that he does not want to admit that a child, and a girl at that, has some amount of musical talent.

The relationship that I am more interested in is the one between Yuko-chan and Kenta. It adds an interesting dynamic to the narrative that Seki could have easily forgone. It introduces and resolves local instabilities that are interesting and advance the narrative progression. Yuko-chan takes pity on Kenta the night that he steals from the collection box at the temple, and does not tell Osho-san. She does not reveal Kenta's identity shortly after, when she recognizes his voice when she and Osho-san are visiting the villagers. At the narrative's start, then, the relationship between Yuko-chan and Kenta is one of place. Though the two presumably have lived in the village for some amount of time, they do not meet until the night that Yuko-chan and Shiba find Kenta taking the money.

Yuko-chan extends kindness to Kenta for which he is then grateful, as he makes explicitly clear when he brings her and Shiba to his home, and shows her the same kindness in turn both by deciding to go looking for her, and then by offering to help her make the Daruma dolls, both of which we appreciate. They both play music together at the festival, and, later, at the end of the narrative, Kenta escorts Yuko-chan to see the taiko teacher. Their relationship of place, therefore, begins to shift when Yuko-chan keeps Kenta's secret twice on occasions when she could have revealed his identity to Osho-san. When Kenta rescues her, the transition to a Relationship of Care is complete.

As compared to *Ms. McCaw Learns to Draw* (Zemach, 2008), the way that reciprocity happens is a bit more complex, because Yuko-chan and Kenta do not know each other when the narrative begins, so they are not yet literally together in the same space, unlike Ms. McCaw and Dudley. The implied author first needs to give us enough information to understand where we are, who Yuko-chan is, why we should care about her, what the narrative's global instability is, and a bit about what Yuko-chan is thinking about—how Daruma-san's message resonates with her. Once he has clearly defined Yuko-chan, her daily life and interactions with Osho-san and the students, he can, quite literally, have Kenta walk into Yuko-chan's space (or just outside it), and the two can have an interaction that continues to define Yuko-chan, and introduces us to Kenta. That task is inherently tricky because Kenta is creating another instability by stealing the money: potential trouble for Yuko-chan, and is doing something that many in the audience would be morally opposed to, no matter what his reasons are for doing it. And, now, the implied author has created a character that he likely will want to redeem by the end of the narrative.

Having Kenta decide to search for Yuko-chan demonstrates his kindness (and resolves the local instability of her and Shiba getting lost): He somehow knew that she was out by herself, and so perhaps decided to make sure that she was safe because it had started to snow. Finding her and bringing her to his home and feeding her are actions that will make the audience like him more than they already might since finding out that he actually did use the money as he'd told Yuko-chan he would. Kenta searching for and finding Yuko-chan and Shiba also brings the two characters together—again by way of another random circumstance. Because Kenta wants to help her with her plan to make Daruma dolls, the implied author can keep them in the same space for a little while longer while also solving the local instability of Kenta stealing the money and working toward the solution of the global instability.

The narrative has a disabled person who is both rescued (by Kenta) and who rescues (her village). I am not sure what is gained by having Yuko-chan be blind, though if she were not blind, she likely would not have gotten lost, fallen off a cliff, dropped her tea gourd, and come up with the idea for the Daruma doll, and so would not have saved her village. That said, it would have been easy for her to end up in a situation where, even sighted, she could have dropped her tea gourd. Even sighted people can get lost during snowstorms. She could have discovered Kenta robbing the donation box and not told Osho-san. She could have spoken with Kenta later and he could have offered to help her with her plans.

I do not know whether she is "blind" just to heighten the audience's investment in "her adventures." I stopped thinking about her blindness, and I do not know whether that was the result of multiple rereadings, or if it is because her blindness is perhaps only made "apparent" when the implied author wants to make a point about her abilities: She has managed to memorize scriptures, which Osho-san and the village leaders have not bothered to do, and she teases them about this. She plays the taiko very well, and she is able to work in the dark. I do not want to suggest that the book is not worth reading. It is different from many of the books that I have read (with or without disabled characters). It is a bit disappointing because I am not entirely sure that Yuko-chan's blindness was not meant to create more suspense in the narrative than it needs—especially because it is not made clear in the "Cultural Notes" or jacket copy that the narrative is based on the actual story of how Daruma dolls were created.

Not having characters or the narrator routinely mention Yuko-chan's blindness is an attempt to normalize it, and so tempers an appearance of the Overcoming Narrative: No one in the narrative calls attention to the fact that "the blind girl saved us!" (The subtitle, "The Adventures of a Blind Japanese Girl Who Saves Her Village" is unnecessary, I think, and "blind" seems to serve as an attempt to engage actual readers in the bookstore, though that may not have been Seki's choice.)

Dear Santa, Please Come to the 19th Floor (2002). *Dear Santa, Please Come to the 19th Floor* was written by Yin and illustrated by Chris Soentpiet, 2002. The book's cover is dark red; the title is centered and in a handwritten font that looks childlike; some of the letters are on slight angles and are not perfectly straight or round. Underneath is a circular illustration with a thin gold border. Santa Claus is sitting in front of a computer, his face lit by the glow of the monitor. The author's and illustrator's names are underneath that image, and are typed in capital letters. On the title page, in an illustration that fills nearly the entire space, he stands with his back to us, looking up at a tall apartment building. The title is above his head. Some of the apartment windows are lit, and a few have wreaths or red or green Christmas lights strung outside them. We are positioned so that we are both looking up at Santa and at the apartment building, and assume that he is going to visit the apartment on the 19th floor (or, at least, hope that he will).

Our unnamed narrator—whom we eventually learn is named Willy—introduces us to his best friend, Carlos, on the first page:

> In a few days, Christmas will arrive. I zigzag around the park with my best friend, Carlos, in his wheelchair . . .
>
> Since the accident, Carlos isn't the same. My mama said his spinal cord was damaged. When Carlos found out he might never walk again, he got angry. One time, he threw his favorite basketball out the window. That basketball was a gift his poppa gave him before he moved away. (Yin, 2002, [p. 2])

The accompanying illustration, which nearly fills both pages and is done in rich watercolors, shows people standing outside a row of apartment buildings, which look like the one on the cover. It is nighttime and snow is falling. Closest to us are two boys; one is in a wheelchair. He is looking down toward the ground at a point that we cannot see, with a frown on his face. Another boy is holding the wheelchair's handles and is cocking his head, looking toward the boy in the wheelchair. We know that he is the narrator, and that Carlos is using the wheelchair. (We also know, then, that the title page is a picture of what *will* happen, because we have just been told that it is not yet Christmas, but we have seen Santa standing outside the apartment building.)

The narrative's launch is immediate: "Carlos isn't the same" since a serious accident. The narrative's global instability is Carlos's anger about his injury and needing to use a wheelchair. The audience feels sad for Carlos and wonders whether he (and we) will find out by the end of the narrative whether he will be able to walk again. If Carlos is *not* going to be able to walk again (or if that will not be addressed again in the narrative), will his feelings about it change?

When the narrator joins Carlos, his mother, and his sister, Rachel, for dinner that night, we learn that Carlos's apartment is on the 19th floor.

> "Hey, Christmas is near. What would you like Santa to bring?" Mrs. G. asks.
>
> "Santa never comes here to this neighborhood," I reply.
>
> Rachel, Carlos' sister says, "We don't even have a fireplace or chimney."
>
> "He would never come anyway. Santa wouldn't want to see me in a wheelchair," Carlos says sadly. (Yin, 2002, [p. 11])

This further develops the instability of Carlos's feelings about his disability. He seems to also be upset about the way he appears to others sitting in his wheelchair, much the same way that Zulay had been worried about what she looked like using her cane (Best, 2015).

Rachel mentions that it would be difficult for Santa to get to their apartments without keys. She suggests, "'We could write him a letter with instructions on how to get in'" (Yin, 2002, [p. 12]). Carlos does not think that is a good idea. "'That's silly,' Carlos said. But I look at Rachel and I have an idea" ([p. 12]). The narrator goes into the computer room, while "Carlos is frustrated that he has to do therapy exercises" ([p. 12]). Rachel joins the narrator: 'Try santaclaus@northpole.com,' she whispers. I start to type'" ([p. 12]). I think there is an unintentional tension here, because the narrator never tells Rachel his idea; she seems to intuit it based on their conversation. I do not think that Yin intended the gap in logic to exist, because it would serve no purpose. The email (in a typewritten font) reads:

> Dear Santa,
>
> Please come to the 19th floor. When you arrive at my building, ring the

> intercom #11A. I can buzz you through the locked doors. Then I can take you up to Carlos' apartment. My pal Carlos is in a wheelchair now and could use a good surprise.
>
> Your buddy, Willy.
>
> P.S. Carlos' sister said to leave your reindeer on the street with the other parked cars or else you'll get a ticket.
>
> With the mouse, I click on the SEND button. I hope Santa comes. That will make Carlos's Christmas. ([p. 12])

A local instability is introduced here—Rachel and the narrator, whom we now know is named Willy, want Santa to come, but do not know whether he will; they do not even know whether Willy's email will reach him. Simultaneously, a tension is introduced between Willy and the audience because *we* know that Santa will get Willy's email, and that he will come.

The audience also understands that Willy wants Santa to come cheer up Carlos. In the accompanying illustration, which takes up three-quarters of the opening and is to the right of the text, Willy sits near the computer while Rachel stands behind him. Out the window next to them, we can see other buildings. To their left, we can see into the open doorway of Carlos's bedroom. His mother stands near his dresser and looks over at him. Carlos sits in his wheelchair almost directly across from us and in front of his bed. He props up his head with his right elbow, which is resting on the arm of his wheelchair. (He does not yet appear to be doing his exercises.)

The combination of learning Willy's name and also learning that he wants to do something to cheer up his friend, even if Carlos thinks it is pointless, helps the audience complete our entrance. It is also likely that Carlos's comment that leaving a letter with directions is "silly" is to cover up his own sadness at the prospect of (he believes) Santa not wanting to come and see him. We are sympathetic toward Carlos and appreciative toward Willy (and Rachel) who want to cheer him up. Because we have seen the cover and title page, and have seen Santa Claus outside the apartment building, we know that he is coming to visit, and so we understand that Willy is a trustworthy narrator—he is not trying to hurt Carlos with a prank or to lie to us about the possibility of Santa visiting. (The narrative audience believes in this possibility while the authorial audience tacitly knows that it is not possible.) We also keep reading in anticipation of Santa's visit and the reactions of the characters.

The illustration in the next opening confirms Santa's arrival and resolves that local instability. The audience is behind Willy, who is looking out a window, his hands against the glass. It is snowing again, and looking down, we can see a sleigh with eight reindeer "parked" neatly between two cars in front of the building across the street. A man who appears to be Santa Claus is walking toward the building. The text accompanying the illustration does not immediately align with the illustration: Willy tells us, "Before the accident, Carlos and I would stare out the windows of the 19th floor at the stars and dream together. He'd say, 'I'm going to be a basketball player—I'm already good at defense'" (Yin, 2002, [p. 14]). We are especially sad for Carlos, because we remember that he had a favorite basketball that he threw away. We understand just how much he wanted to play, especially since he was talking about playing in the future.

Willy comments, “We don’t dream like we used to,” and also muses, “Our entire neighborhood is scary and rough. Why would Santa want to come here!’” ([p. 14]). A few paragraphs later, it is Christmas Eve, and Willy gets an answer:

> I see someone in a red suit walking toward my building.
>
> *It’s him!* ([p. 14]).

In another picturebook where Santa Claus’s visit is not made explicit on the cover or on the title page, it would be important to not have an illustration “give away” the surprise first. Because we already know that he is coming, the surprise is not spoiled for us, but perhaps, at the same time, our anticipation is heightened, because though we can see Willy looking out the window, the beginning text is not about Santa’s arrival.

The next opening is a full-page illustration of a close-up of Santa standing in front of his sleigh and reindeer as he is headed across the street toward Willy and Carlos’s building. The combination of the previous illustration, this one, and the following, in which Willy has opened the lobby door and Santa is smiling at him, are the narrative’s voyage, moving Santa literally closer to Willy and, eventually, to Carlos. In this illustration, we are positioned behind Willy, who is looking up at Santa, the reindeer and sleigh visible through the lobby windows. Willy’s wish has come true, though it remains to be seen whether Carlos will be cheered up.

Willy prepares to go let Santa in:

> I head to the elevators on our floor. I wait and wait but neither elevator comes. So I skip down the steps as fast as lightning. . . .
>
> I open the door for him. “Santa, is that you?”

> "HO . . . HO . . . HO," he cheers. "Special stop for the nineteenth floor!"
>
> "I'm Willy."
>
> "Just who I want. I think your intercom is broken," Santa says. (Yin, 2002, p. 18; second and third ellipses in original)

We, like Willy, are excited that Santa is finally here, and hope that Carlos will be excited, too.

Santa's visit up to Carlos is unexpectedly complicated in the next opening. When the elevator does not come for a long time—and the audience may expect this, remembering that the elevators did not come a few minutes earlier when Willy tried to take one—Willy decides that he and Santa will have to take the stairs.

Santa decides to take off his hat. They encounter a man whom Willy describes as, "Buddy the Wino," and who, he tells Santa, "'doesn't have a job . . . Can't show up for work on time'" (Yin, 2002, [p. 22]). Santa gives Buddy his watch. A couple of floors later, Santa begins to get tired, and he ends up discarding various items of clothing: his boots (he has a pair of sneakers in his sack), his coat, his belt, and his gloves. They meet the building custodian, Manny, to whom Santa gives a radio, and Mrs. Perez, to whom he gives a hairdryer and then a box of catnip for her cat. He and Willy replace a burned-out light bulb on the fifteenth floor.

Santa's delay in getting to Carlos's apartment initially is amusing for the audience; we enjoy seeing him interact one-on-one with Willy, Buddy, Manny, and Mrs. Perez (and her cat). It is not often that we have the opportunity to see someone "famous" in an intimate space. It is also amusing to watch Santa discard parts of his iconic red suit.

Willy reports:

> Now Santa is practically crawling on his knees up to the sixteenth floor, then the seventeenth.
>
> On the eighteenth floor, Santa is worn out and collapses. "I can't go any further," he wheezes. (Yin, 2002, p. [28]).

Now, we worry that he will not make it up to Carlos' apartment, another local instability.

Another tenant, Jose, approaches; Willy tells us that he is "wearing Santa's hat, gloves, boots, and suit!"[18] Jose decides to help the exhausted Santa: "'I'll finish the job for you, Santa!'" (Yin, 2002, [p. 31]). This slightly resolves the local instability of Santa's inability to climb more stairs—someone dressed as Santa will get to Carlos's apartment, though not Santa himself, which is dissatisfying to the audience.

> Carlos hears Willy coming and opens the door:
>
> "It's Santa," I holler. "He's really here on the nineteenth floor!"
>
> "Ho . . . ho . . . ho?" Jose belts out a weak cheer. "Merry Christmas!"
>
> "Santa Claus, phooey. That's Jose," Carlos snaps in disappointment. "I knew Santa would never come." (Yin, 2002, [p. 32]; ellipses in original)

The half-page illustration shows Carlos wearing a yellow pajama top, sitting in his wheelchair, and tiredly rubbing his left eye, his right eye not yet fully open, as he looks out the open door. The full-page illustration opposite shows him again, facing the audience, his arms crossed, a frown on his face as he looks toward his lap. Behind him,

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[18] I initially thought that his name was spelled wrong, expecting the more familiar, "José." A friend informs me that "Jose" is a nickname.

Willy and Jose stand together. Willy raises both his arms, has kicked his left leg in the air, and his mouth is open as though he has just shouted something. Jose is raising his left arm, kicked his left leg, and smiles toward Carlos. We understand why Willy and Jose are smiling—they want to cheer up Carlos, and they have just seen Santa Claus and know that he is in the building. We understand why Willy is frustrated; he believes that his friends have woken him up in the middle of the night to play a joke on him.

Willy continues:

> Suddenly, from behind me, a strong voice calls out.
>
> "HO . . . HO . . . HO . . . MERRY CHRISTMAS!" (Yin, 2002, [p. 32]; ellipses in original)

The next opening is another that features a single illustration across both pages. Santa stands smiling between Willy and Jose in the doorway, his arms around them. A yellow light fills the doorway behind him. Carlos, whom the audience sees in profile, has turned his wheelchair around. His mouth is open in an "O" of excitement, his hands clasped together. The illustration, confirmation that the greeting on the previous page was from Santa himself, signals the ending, resolving the local instability over his potentially not getting to the apartment. We are relieved that Santa has made it to Carlos's apartment, and happy to see Carlos happy and surprised.

In the next opening, on the left is a full-page illustration in which Santa is handing Carlos a present, while Jose and Willy look on. On the right, the text is accompanied by a half-page illustration of Santa looking at a letter.

Willy tells us that Carlos has received a basketball, which he is not excited about:

> Carlos' face falls flat. "In case you haven't noticed, Santa, I'm in a wheelchair," he mocks.
>
> "So?" Santa says. "And I bet you're still good at defense."
>
> There is a silence in the room, but for the first time, Carlos doesn't say no. (Yin, 2002, [p. 37]).

The audience realizes that Santa has somehow gotten the information that we got previously from Willy about Carlos wanting to play defense. We also realize that Carlos appears to be carefully considering Santa's challenge.

The next surprise is for Willy and for the audience. Santa says,

> "I got two e-mails . . . One from Willy. And one—from Carlos." . . .
>
> Dear Santa,
>
> Ever since my accident, my best buddy Willy isn't the same. It makes me sad. We live in a rough neighborhood—79 Columbus Street—and you may not want to come. But if you do, it will really cheer Willy up.
>
> From, Carlos (Yin, 2002, [p. 37])

Santa's recitation of the email completes the act of reciprocity between the two boys. Because Willy is our narrator, we know nothing about how or when Carlos decided to e-mail Santa. Perhaps Rachel told him what she and Willy did. Maybe he overheard them at the computer. While both boys are happy at the end of the narrative—Santa has come to visit after all, and brought them gifts (Willy got a telescope), and Carlos is thinking about playing basketball again--the audience is not supposed to believe that Carlos is suddenly happy about his accident or needing to use a wheelchair. Willy says that "hope" is "the real gift [Santa had] given both Carlos and me" ([p. 38]). There is here, as there has been in other books that I have examined over the last few chapters, the possibility that Carlos will eventually have a different perspective on his disability, but right now, he is happy because he is with his best friend, and because he got a visit from Santa Claus. Carlos's silence is, I think, the farewell. The global instability is not completely resolved, but Carlos has not reacted in anger to Santa's comment.

In the next opening, Carlos, Willy, and Jose wave at Santa from the doorway; Santa stands further down the hallway, which is filled with the same yellow light that was behind him when he came into the apartment (we can see that it is not from the ceiling lights), and has his right arm raised in good-bye, the unexplained light perhaps a visual marker of Santa's fantastic qualities. The final page features a round illustration slightly smaller than the one on the cover of Santa; the boys are sitting near the windows in Carlos's apartment; Carlos holds his basketball on his lap, and Willy is standing next to him, looking through his telescope, which is on a tripod. The audience is happy, then, that Santa did come—as we knew he would—that he eventually made it to Carlos's apartment, and that the boys are both happy with their gifts..

We appreciate that Yin-Soentpiet found a way to complicate (and amuse) us with Santa's trek up to the 19th floor: By making Santa's climb eventful, Yin-Soentpiet kept us interested. Because Carlos does not say that he is happy about being in his wheelchair, or he has not been given news that he will be able to walk again, we also feel that Yin-Soentpiet's narrative, while incorporating the fantastic, was also realistic; the ending is believable, and we are left with a picture (literally) of two best friends, who have both done something incredibly kind for each other.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. Carlos and Willy have been friends since before the start of the narrative, and thus always have been in a Relationship of Care. I think it is fair to say that their appreciation for each other has likely deepened because of what the other did for him. Willy and Carlos both decided to write to Santa Claus, in hopes that a visit from him would cheer up the other. Willy's email introduced a local instability for the characters and heightened our anticipation of Santa's visit, because we understood why Santa was looking at his computer on the cover, and standing outside the apartment building on the title page.

Keeping Carlos's email a secret from the audience was a calculated way to surprise us—we already knew that Santa would come, so the narrative's biggest surprise was for the boys (and other tenants) not us. Withholding Carlos's email until the end gave us a "gift," too. That said, it also feels "easy." While reading *Ms. McCaw Learns to Draw* (Zemach, 2008), and *Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll* (Seki, 2012, we see for ourselves and understand why the characters want to help each other. Of course, it "makes sense" that Carlos would want to do something kind for Willy. But, because he has said that he does not think Santa would want to see him, and that attempting to give him directions on how to get into the building would be "silly," there is no accounting in the narrative for what causes him to change his mind and then decide to email Santa, too, even if he did overhear Rachel and Willy.

Attending to synthetic aspects of character, Carlos's disability is the reason that Santa visits: Willy is inspired to ask him to cheer up Carlos, who is (understandably) upset about his acquired disability. There are many reasons that one could be sad, that would, in turn, inspire a best friend to email Santa Claus, changing the narrative very little. So, while Carlos's disability is "necessary" to the narrative's structure and progression, as I read, it occurred to me, and I was troubled that the disability aspect of the construction of Carlos's character could easily be something else that would provide an equally valid reason in the narrative to have Willy's character contact Santa.

That said, Carlos's sadness and anger over having to use a wheelchair are realistic, as is his worry about what others will think of him, raising as other books have, stigma and the social aspects of disability and his concern for Willy's sadness about his accident. This is also one of the few narratives I've read where there is a mention, at least, of a character going to do "therapy exercises." Carlos delaying doing them is also very realistic. Becca and Ginny are both told by their doctors that they will need to do eye-strengthening exercises, but the audience never sees the girls doing them (Headley, 2006; Lyon, 2012). It also would have been very easy for the implied author to create a "Christmas miracle" narrative in which Carlos suddenly is able to walk again, or learns that he will, but he wisely stays away from that, and the less-than-perfect ending is realistic.

The implied author also depicts a racially diverse working class neighborhood, which is different from many of the narratives I have discussed or read for this dissertation. I question the description of "Buddy the Wino," though: I have no doubt that Willy has heard other adults call Buddy this. When writing to Santa, both boys use "buddy": Willy to describe himself, and Carlos to describe Willy. So, Buddy's nickname likely contributes to him being thought of in kinder terms than not—and Willy's comments about him to Santa prompt Santa to give Buddy his watch. That said, in both illustrations that feature him, a bottle neck is peeking out of the top of a brown paper bag, and the first time we see him, he "stumbles his way toward the elevator. Jose covers his nose from Buddy's breath" (Yin, 2002, [p. 6]). There is an attempt to communicate visually to the audience that Buddy is an alcoholic, supplemented by Willy's descriptions of him, but the most explicit textual mention is the pejorative "Wino," which reinforces the stigma of alcoholism, and may be the descriptor most likely to stay with the actual audience.

Closing Thoughts

Some of the narratives in this chapter have local instabilities in addition to their global instabilities. Often, an act of reciprocity will help resolve a local instability or part of the global instability: a character or characters will have a problem, and one or more characters will help resolve it. The frequent use of multiple characters needing assistance allows for an implied author to create relationships in which both disabled and nondisabled characters are able to help each other. This is a change from many narratives in which any help that is offered is only from one person to another. While I cannot be certain about why so few of these narratives exist (from my point of view), it may be because implied authors want to focus on one character having the ability to help another. It can also be tricky to set up acts of reciprocity. Zemach (2008) is successful because she has set up a parallel between Ms. McCaw and Dudley both in the narrator's descriptions and the illustrations, and so it is easy for the two characters to help each other. Seki (2012) has created a narrative with multiple instabilities that bring Yuko-Chan and Kenta together under the umbrella of telling a story about how Takasaki recovers after the eruption of Mount Asama. In both cases, having characters work together lends itself to including acts of reciprocity in the narrative. Yin-Soentpiet's also works, but it required fewer narrative elements to set up: Carlos's email is read by Santa as a surprise to Willy and the audience. Because Willy is the narrator, the audience does not know what other characters, including Carlos, are doing when they are not with him.

In the next and final chapter, I am going to move back to a focus on disabled characters and examine examples of portraiture, which I mentioned earlier. Nondisabled characters will feature to differing degrees in these narratives as well, but their relationships will always be in service of creating a portrait of a disabled character for the audience.

Chapter 7: Portraiture

I have spent the previous chapters examining, in the broadest sense, narratives that often explored, in different ways, relationships between disabled and nondisabled characters. In this last chapter, I am going to address the largest number of books, eighty-seven (87). These books introduce their audiences to disabled characters, and to differing degrees, the characters' disability or disabilities. An entire project could be devoted to these books alone. They are closest to what Phelan classified as portraiture. I mentioned this in Chapter 4: "a rhetorical design inviting the authorial audience to apprehend the revelation of character" (2007, p. 23). Contrasted with narrative: "If narrativity can be reduced to somebody telling that something happened . . . portraiture can be reduced to somebody telling that someone is" (2007, p. 153). Audiences of children's books typically expect the former in the books that they read: They are introduced to a character or characters; something happens to those characters, and audiences continue reading because they want to find out what will happen next. In many of these books, narrativity is less prevalent, and no longer the primary means by which narrators communicate with their audiences. Audiences continue reading not necessarily to find out what will happen next to a character, but in order to learn more about the character and her disability.

Four Books

I am going to start by looking at two books with little narrativity that introduce their audiences to a single character, the first through the use of a non-character narrator (*Susan Laughs*, Willis, 1999/2011), the second through disabled character narrator, *I Am an Aspie Girl: A Book for Young Girls with Autism Spectrum Conditions* (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015). I will then examine a book that blends narrativity and portraiture and features a disabled character narrator (*A Birthday for Ben*, Gaynor, 2009). Then, I will move to a book that has more narrativity, but is still intended to create a portrait and features a nondisabled character narrator (*Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry*, Moore, 2003). While the above combinations are not exhaustive, I wanted to discuss books that made use of different amounts of narrativity and types of narrators..

Susan Laughs (1999/2011). *Susan Laughs* was written by Jean Wills and illustrated by Tony Ross. Many of the books in this chapter introduce their audiences to a single character. Willis-Ross's narrator describes Susan in 32 phrases that are accompanied by illustrations. Most are statements about what she does: "Susan waves, Susan grins" (Willis, 1999/2011, [pp. 20, 21]). A few describe states of being: "Susan's weak, Susan's strong" ([p. 23]). Phelan (2007) noted that, in contrast to the narrative progression in most of the books that I have examined in earlier chapters, "Progressions in portrait narratives often depend upon the introduction of a global tension that must be resolved before completeness can be achieved. Instabilities may be introduced but they are more commonly local . . ." (p. 179). The narrator of *Susan Laughs*, who has more information about Susan than we do at the narrative's start, divulges the information in such a way that we keep reading to learn more about Susan, and to get a clearer understanding of who she is. We also continue reading because we may have immediately sensed a connection with Susan from the book's title (everyone laughs!) and therefore wants to find out what else Susan does that we do, too.

On the cover of the paperback edition that I own (which is slightly different from the hardcover edition), Susan is sitting on the end of a seesaw that is up in the air, angled toward the right side of the cover. (On the back cover, her father is visible sitting on the end that is currently on the ground.) A black-and-white cat is hanging off the seesaw, its eyes round as it looks toward Susan, whose eyes are closed. She is smiling. Some of her red hair is gathered in a short ponytail toward the top of her head, and she wears a pink shirt, blue jeans, and white and green sneakers. The title is written above the seesaw in multicolored, handwritten font.

The opening before the title page features two images of Susan that look like they could be portraits; they are square images at the center of the white pages, and are color-pencil drawings of Susan. They are identical except for her facial expressions. In the one on the left, Susan looks pensive; her eyebrows and mouth are straight lines. In the image on the right, she is smiling, and her eyebrows are curved (or raised). The next opening is the copyright page and the title page, which features a similar drawing, except Susan has red spots on her cheeks, her smile is bigger, and she's holding her left hand to it, as though she is suppressing a laugh.

There are three openings in the text that feature four drawings and phrases—two per page—that describe a sequence: Susan scares her grandmother with a jack-in-the-box and gets yelled at by her father; she hides and scares one of her cats, who scratches her face; she gets a math problem incorrect and is sad (a friend puts his arm around her shoulders in an effort to comfort her). She then cheers herself up by folding her paper into a boat. These are also the only pages that introduce instabilities (in so far as there is discord between Susan and others) but only two are resolved; the other is forgotten.

All of the book's illustrations are bordered into squares by the white space of the page; the short descriptive text underneath mimics the way that paintings are displayed in museums. In numerous illustrations, there are portraits on the walls of Susan's house; the people in them are reacting to Susan's behavior, a technique used in other books, including *Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll* (Seki, 2012), which I addressed in the last chapter. On the page where "Susan sings," and her brother hits a pot with wooden spoons and a friend plays the recorder, the person in the portrait behind them puts her fingers in her ears (Willis, 1999/2011, [p. 7]). The authorial audience, which, if about Susan's age, is likely attracted by the bright colored pencil in the drawings, may also notice the activities in these portraits.

In the last opening the audience sees that Susan is sitting in a wheelchair. The "animated portraits" could have been a subtle suggestion to pay attention, because despite the rhyming text describing activities familiar to most, if not all of the audience, a surprise was coming Susan's disability is "hidden" from the reader until the last two pages, marking a departure from many of these books. Until this final opening, this narrative appears to be told by a heterodiegetic narrator, through whom the text is focalized. Susan is the only character named, and the narrator reports on her state of being, which is usually made clear in the illustrations by what Susan is doing.

If the narrator were instead a character narrator who was a friend of Susan, or, if the narrator were Susan herself, the audience likely would have learned more about Susan, including that she had a disability. Until these final pages, there had been no indication that Susan needed to use a wheelchair. It "stands in" for an unnamed disability that is physical. (Susan might have other invisible disabilities as well.) The text on the left page is: "That is Susan through and through—just like me, just like you" (Willis, 1999/2011, [p. 30]). The narrator is actually an "I" (albeit a disembodied "I"), an adult who has been listing information about Susan that is probably relatable to most of her audience, and she has been addressing that audience, though this is not made explicit until she directly addresses her audience, the narratee, on the last page. The narrator has been sharing this information in order to make the final pronouncement that Susan is more like the narrator and the audience, despite being disabled. There is no mention of Susan's "difference" anywhere in the text. It is only in the final illustration, and even as we look at that image, we pay more attention to the message in the text, that Susan is "like" us, the nondisabled readers.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. Before discussing my reaction to the revelation of Susan's disability, I want to address the rhyming text. It is fun to read because it has a singsong quality, and in the illustrations of Susan, the bright colors and her expressions and what she is often doing further reflect the playfulness that Willis-Ross is trying to bring out. That said, the fact that the text rhymes locks the implied author into making certain word choices. Because it can be hard to illustrate intangible personality traits, this leads to some odd images.

I mentioned the few instances where there are sequences of actions. In one, Susan hides behind curtains to scare one of her cats, and then get scratched. In another, she gets a math problem incorrect and is upset and then folds the paper into a boat and smiles. Though the images are cute, their phrases are not always apt: Susan hiding to scare the cat is described as, “Susan’s shy” (Willis, 1999/2001, [p. 16]). Susan crying after her teacher marks her paper with a red “X” is described as “Susan’s weak.” Right next to it, the description of her pride at making her paper boat is “Susan’s strong” ([23]). In the former instance, it is clear that Susan is not “shy” in this image. She’s being sneaky and playing a trick on her unsuspecting pet (though she does not seem cruel). Describing her as “weak” because she is crying over getting her math problem wrong (2+1+2+4 does not equal 19) is excessive. I cannot explain for sure, of course, why the implied author would decide to describe Susan as “shy” in the first instance. The entire sequence reads: “Susan’s shy,” (we see her feet poking out from under the curtain as the cat walks by) “Susan’s loud,” (we see her open the curtain to yell and scare the cat, who jumps) “Susan’s angry,” (she has scratches on her face, closes one eye, and balls her fists) “Susan’s proud” (she has Band-Aid “X”s across her cheeks, is smiling with her eyes closed, her arms crossed in front of her chest) ([pp. 16-17]). The phrase on the previous page was “Susan hides” ([p. 15]), so there is a continuation of the “long-i” sound. The rhyme in this set is “loud/proud,” so “shy” was not necessary, but perhaps using a word like “sneaky” or something similar would bring with it a negative connotation and the implied author did not want the audience to judge Susan too harshly and so used another word to describe a reason that children hide.

In the second sequence, Susan actually does add the math problem correctly at first: "Susan's right." She has written a "9" down, but then adds the "1" in front of it: "Susan's wrong" (Willis, 1999/2011 [p. 22]). The text on both pages is, "Susan's right, Susan's wrong, Susan's weak, Susan's strong" ([pp. 22-23]). "Wrong" and "strong" rhyme, of course, so my guess is that the implied author chose "weak" because it is the opposite of "strong" as "right" is the opposite of "wrong." The rhythm of the text is interrupted if one is confused and trying to figure out how the phrases and images "go together."

In the case of a book such as *Susan Laughs* (Willis, 1999/2011), the rationale of having a non-character narrator tell the audience about Susan makes sense when we get to the final opening and the tension is resolved. The narrator kept from the audience until the last page that Susan had a disability. Had Susan told us about herself, she might have mentioned this. Instead, that revelation catches the audience off-guard. We have learned about all of the things that Susan does, which are ordinary. The surprise that Susan has a disability is potentially meant to cause the audience to have a self-aware moment when we acknowledge that we *should not* be surprised because Susan is "like" us. That impact might have been lessened if the audience knew at the outset that Susan had a disability and then watched her do different activities and learned about her different ways of being.

At the same time, though, because the text is short, and rhyming, the implied author does not feel the need to mention which physical disability Susan has. This unintentionally strips away a piece of her identity, because, even if her disability is not specified, she has one (otherwise, she would not need a wheelchair). Instead, a wheelchair is used as the recognizable symbol of disability. The idea of a pan-disability makes Susan more distant (because pan-disabilities don't exist). The implied author has made Susan as "generic" as possible—after all, she's just like everyone else.

Choosing one disability that might require the use of a wheelchair would mean that a child with a different disability might find herself disappointed that she is not like Susan in this very specific way. Susan's non-specified disability therefore could be meant to speak to the number of disabled children who use wheelchairs for a variety of reasons, certainly a positive choice, and likely the one that the implied author intended. I have not touched upon the thematic aspects of character in previous chapters; I think these aspects are more explicit when looking at portraiture. To me, Susan's unnamed disability is an example of this, to the extent that she is meant to be representative of children with physical disabilities, and which disability she has is unimportant. At the same time, I think that unnamed disability also unintentionally reinforces for a nondisabled audience the assumption that everyone in a wheelchair is alike in many ways, when disabilities manifest in different ways with different consequences. The combination of the "surprise" with the variation on the Overcoming Narrative—Susan has apparently already "overcome" her disability because she's "just like everyone else"—makes the implied author's choice seem gimmicky, to an extent, rather than clever, to me, even after numerous readings, because actual disabled people do not routinely attempt to "surprise" nondisabled people with the revelation of their disabilities; that draws more attention to the disability instead of working to normalize it.

Thomson (2002) discussed four "visual rhetorics of disability. . . . the wondrous, the sentimental, the exotic, and the realistic. (p. 58). “[The wondrous] capitalizes on physical differences in order to elicit amazement and admiration” (p. 59). “The sentimental produces the sympathetic victim or helpless sufferer needing protection or succor and invoking pity, inspiration, and frequent contributions” (p. 63). The combination of the two has “produc[ed] the convention of the courageous overcomer, contemporary America's favorite figure of disability” (p. 61). The implied author wisely wants her audience to interrogate our potential feelings of pity for Susan after seeing her in a wheelchair, when we likely did not feel pity for her previously.

A friend asked me what I thought would be a better version of this book. She said that as a nondisabled parent of a disabled daughter, she understood the attempt to introduce the mostly nondisabled audience to children with disabilities and to focus on why they were similar to nondisabled children. If Susan did not have a disability, a nondisabled reader might get to the end and say, “So what?” The reason that the narrator is withholding this specific piece of information is to keep her audience reading, so there needs to be some “payoff” at the end of the text.

My friend pointed out that, unfortunately, the wheelchair is now ubiquitous shorthand for “disabled.” If we cannot get away from that, I think that Susan’s wheelchair could easily have been included in the illustrations and could have gone unmentioned. This happens in two other books that I place in this chapter, Michael Forman’s *Seal Surfer* (1997) and Rukhsana Khan’s *King for a Day* (2014; illustrated by Christiane Krömer). The tension would still exist: The audience would still continue reading in order to learn more about Susan, whom they would realize was different from them in some way (she uses a wheelchair). But the illustrations and the text would still work together to help them recognize that Susan is similar to them, too. The final opening would be unnecessary (and so would need to be changed): Susan's disability would not need to be sprung as a "surprise," and child readers, who are more intelligent than adults typically give them credit for, would also realize that Susan was "like them" more than she was different, which is Willis-Ross's intended message.

I Am an Aspie Girl (2015). *I Am an Aspie Girl: A Book for Young Girls with Autism Spectrum Conditions* was written by Danuta Bulhak-Paterson and illustrated by Teresa Furguson. Like *Susan Laughs* (Willis, 1999/2011), this is a book that similarly lacks narrativity but provides more information than a quick sentence or two. It is the first book I have looked whose authorial audience is explicitly envisioned to be an audience of people with a particular disability. Lizzie begins by introducing herself to her audience: "I love to draw. . . . My favourite subjects at school are art and reading. I like my teacher at school and I have a nice group of friends" (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, p. 1). In the accompanying full-page illustration, Lizzie sits on a green couch; she is looking off past the right edge of the page, at something that the audience cannot see. She is resting part of her left foot on the back of a white dog lying on the floor, suggesting that she is petting it, and her right hand is resting on the back of a brown cat curled up next to her. Her parents stand behind the couch facing each other, though the placement of their eyes also seem to suggest (perhaps erroneously) that they are looking past each other, rather than at each other directly.

In the next opening, on the left page Lizzie is facing the audience, smiling, and two girls stand close to her and are looking at her. The three girls are visible from the torso up and are wearing long-sleeved purple shirts or sweaters over white shirts. Lizzie has raised her right hand; her thumb up and her index finger pointing toward her friends. She explains:

> In many ways I am just like my friends. We all like to laugh, play, and help each other. But there are also ways that I am different.
>
> You see, I have Asperger's Syndrome. Asperger's Syndrome is now called Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD. People with Asperger's Syndrome have some real strengths. They are often smart, honest, kind and caring, and creative. They often have a special talent. This may be in art, science, music, reading, or computers. (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, p. 2).

Lizzie moves from discussing the ways in which she is "just like [her] friends," to ways in which she is different from her friends. On the right page, she continues:

> But I am also more special because I am a *girl* with Asperger's Syndrome.
>
> In fact, I like to say that I am an 'Aspie girl.' Girls with Asperger's Syndrome are often quite different from boys with Asperger's Syndrome. Keep reading and I will tell you why!" (p. 3; emphasis in original).

Like the unnamed narrator of *Susan Laughs* does in the final opening, Lizzie directly addresses a narratee , (Willis, 1999/2011),. The implied author uses Lizzie's the direct address to this "you" as a way to encourage the audience to engage with Lizzie. On this page, the illustration of Lizzie is identical to the one on the left page, though larger. Another student, presumably a boy—based on Lizzie's mention of gender—stands next to her. This is also the first book I have read in which a character states that gender influences her experience of disability. Her audience will continue to read, both because we want to learn more about Lizzie's experience of having autism, and also because of the tension that Lizzie has introduced: what is a girl's experience of Autism Spectrum Disorder [ASD]?

In the next opening, Lizzie begins to describe the ways in which Aspie girls are different:

> Aspie girls often have a special talent at being able to blend in with others and look just like the other girls.
>
> It's like being an actress, I guess, where school is the stage. (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, p. 4).

In this illustration, as in many of the others, Lizzie and her classmates are wearing their school uniforms to both draw attention to the ways that, on the surface, they appear to be alike, while Lizzie's discussion of ASD reminds her audience of the ways in which she is different.

By depicting Lizzie in her school uniform, the audience also pays more attention to the illustrations when she is wearing other clothes—when she is telling the audience about herself: "But [being able to blend in with others] is hard work and it makes us tired! When I come home I really just need some time to myself" (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, p. 5). Lizzie lies on her bed; her dog, Milo, sits on the floor looking at her. She is wearing her pink shirt and blue jeans again, almost suggesting that they serve as another kind of uniform, perhaps that when she is wearing clothes that she chooses, she feels most herself.

Each page on which Lizzie explains a different aspect of ASD includes a related question for her audience. Underneath the bed in slightly larger, purple text, is Lizzie's query, "Do you get really tired after being at school all day?" (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, p. 5). Lizzie is asking her narratee whether this is a relatable circumstance. In many of the subsequent openings, Lizzie uses the word "our" when talking about her experience, and by extension, that of other Aspie girls: "Our interests might be really similar to other girls' interests, like reading, art, technology, animals, or music, but we like to spend a lot more time on them" (p. 6). Initially, I thought that Lizzie's narratee was an Aspie girl as well, likely influenced by my interpretation of the book's subtitle, "A Book for Aspie Girls," and my initial reading of Lizzie's "our" as therefore being inclusive.

While discussing the book with a friend he pointed out that Lizzie herself never says anything that makes it clear that her narratee is an Aspie girl. The narratee is being invited to identify with Lizzie, e.g., "Do you have an enjoyable interest that takes up a lot of your time?" (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, p. 6). Lizzie does not know the narratee, so this lack of specificity with her open-ended questions makes sense. The implied author's imagining of an authorial audience that is entirely Aspie girls emphasizes the potential for the narratee to answer "yes."

And, indeed, the questions that Lizzie asks are ones that anyone can answer. Actual readers who are Aspie girls can therefore see someone who is like herself in the narrative and easily join the authorial audience. Actual readers who are not Aspie girls might not be able to join the authorial audience, but would still be able to learn a bit about Lizzie's experience of ASD, and might discover ways in which they can relate to Lizzie, and so, too, to actual readers who are Aspie girls.

By the end of the narrative, the tension of how Aspie girls are different is resolved, but not explicitly: Because Lizzie's intended audience is girls who have ASD, the implied author's hope is that they will see direct connections between themselves and Lizzie—they are aware of these traits in themselves and now see them in Lizzie, too. I say that the tension is not "explicitly" resolved because Lizzie has not specifically said anything about other people with ASD and made comparisons between them and herself. Anyone who is not a girl with an ASD might logically wonder about others with autism who are not girls, and so would need to do further research (or perhaps find another book). After the end of the narrative, there is information that parents can use to discuss with their daughters who have autism spectrum conditions the traits that Lizzie mentions.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. This may be the only book I have read for this project that is, in part, explicitly directed at an audience of children who likewise have that same disability (and, in this case, gender, too). It is a book that celebrates choosing to label oneself.[19] As Lizzie proudly claims "Aspie" for herself, she raises an issue that I do not believe any of the other books raise specifically, that of "passing." Earlier, I referenced part Lizzie's comment that:

> Aspie girls often have a special talent at being able to blend in with others

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[19] The title of Lynda Farrington Wilson's 2012 book, *A-U-T-I-S-T-I-C? How Silly Is That! I Don't Need Any Labels at All*, addresses the audience directly and proclaims the label "autistic" a "silly" one, and so explores the opposite perspective.

> and look just like the other girls.
>
> It's like being an actress, I guess, where school is the stage.
>
> But this is hard work and it makes us tired! When I come home I really just need some time to myself. (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, pp. 4-5)

"Being able to blend in," and consciously choosing to "[be] an actress," is related to the concept of "passing."

Siebers (2008) wrote:

> To pass or not to pass—that is often the question. . . . Irving Goffman defines passing as a strategy for managing the stigma of "spoiled identities"—those identities discredited by law, opinion, or social convention. When in the minority and powerless, Jews pass as Christians, blacks pass as whites, and gay, lesbian, and transgendered people pass as heterosexuals [*sic*]. Similarly, people with disabilities find ingenious ways to conceal their impairments and to pass as ablebodied. (p. 97)

Siebers's work is useful here because he described more concisely than Goffman did this definition of passing, provided what are likely familiar examples of the practice, and added people with disabilities to that list. All of these people, at one time or another may feel Davis's "imperative . . . to conform" (2002, p. 101). Goffman (1963/1986) wrote: "Because of the great rewards in being considered normal, almost all persons who are in a position to pass will do so on some occasion by intent" (p. 74). Siebers (2008) brings this incentive to bear on his discussion: "Passing preserves social hierarchies because it assumes that individuals want to rise above their present social station and that the station to which they aspire belongs to a dominant social group. It stamps the dominant social position as simultaneously normative and desirable" (p. 101). Here, Lizzie is acknowledging that she and other Aspie girls do this, and that it is tiring. She then asks the narratee, "Do you get really tired after being at school all day?" (Bulhak-Paterson, 2015, p. 5), which I think gives permission to the Aspie girls of the authorial audience to admit that they, too, attempt to "blend in" with their classmates, and that this sublimation of an important part of their identities is exhausting.

A Birthday for Ben (2009). *A Birthday for Ben* was written by Kate Gaynor and illustrated by Karen Quirke. Some of the books in this chapter reveal their characters through a combination of portraiture and recounting an experience that the main character has, so that the audience learns information about a character and their disability, and has an opportunity to witness a small period of time in a character's life. In Gaynor-Quirke's narrative*,* Ben introduces himself to his narratee, as the implied author uses the cheerful greeting to make her authorial audience curious about and eager to listen to Ben. He also immediately draws our attention to his "difference": "Hi! My name is Ben and last week was my 7th birthday. When you meet me for the first time you might notice I'm wearing something on my ear (Gaynor, 2009; [p. 4]). The first spread depicts a playground; Ben is visible from the waist-up, and is "standing" close to the page, in profile, while other children are playing behind him. He is pointing to his right ear, which we notice is fitted with a small blue and white object. On the opposite page, he goes on: "Before you ask, it's not for listening to music or for talking on the phone. It's to help me with my hearing!" ([p. 5]). Ben draws our attention to his ear, and anticipates what we will ask, "What is it?" tells us, introducing a tension: He has information about his hearing aid and his ability to hear, and we continue to read because we want to learn more about his experience of living with a hearing aid (and what that has to do, if anything, with his birthday).

In the next opening, he points out that, "Some people can find everyday things difficult to do. My friend Sam finds it hard to see, so he wears glasses to help him see more clearly. I'm deaf, which means I don't hear very well, so I wear a hearing aid to help me hear" (Gaynor, 2009, [p. 6]). While discussing aspects of his deafness that make him different from members of the authorial audience, for example, that, "the way I speak might sound a little different to my friends" ([p. 7]), and that he and some of his friends "sometimes use a special language called sign language" ([p. 9]), Ben also wants to remind his hearing audience of ways in which they are "similar" to him. His comment about Sam, who wears glasses, is a reminder to the audience that maybe there is something "different" about them, too, even if they are not deaf. Ben points out, "Even people who don't wear hearing aids use their hands to make themselves understood" ([p. 10]). In the illustration above, which is supported with additional text, two women wave to each other from across a street, and a police officer stands on a tiny island in the middle of the intersection, using his hands to direct traffic. This illustration will allow Ben's audience to find a point of connection to him, something that they may have felt was impossible only a few pages ago.

On the right page, though, Ben says, "Sometimes I feel a little bit different to my friends in school. Not because I find it hard to hear but because I don't really like birthday parties! When the time comes to play party games I feel left out. For a lot of the games you need to hear the music to be able to join in" (Gaynor, 2009, [p. 11]). Underneath is an illustration of three children in a room decorated with balloons and a "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" banner. Ben is sitting in a chair, frowning. His comments above challenge his audience's (likely) assumptions. We may have assumed that he "feels different to [his] friends" because he is deaf, and Ben immediately states that that is not the case, which also serves to normalize his deafness. That may surprise his audience, and even more so, perhaps, by his statement that he does not enjoy birthday parties. But, with his explanation, the audience is prompted to consider something that they likely have not before.

In the next opening, on the left page, there is a picture of Ben and another boy; the boy has his eyes closed, and his mouth open as though he is laughing, and he is pointing at Ben. Ben is not looking at the boy or at us, but is positioned so that he is looking across the room at something that we cannot see. He is frowning, and a tear is running out of his right eye.

> "Ben, you can't play because you won't be able to hear the music," my friend Jim told me at his birthday party.
>
> So I just sat by myself until the games were over and it was time to go home (Gaynor, 2009, [p. 12]).

This conversation provides additional context for the illustration on the previous page; while the audience assumed Ben was frowning because he could not participate in the games, we now know that while that was part of the reason for his being upset, his friend had prejudged what Ben would be able to do, and used that as the basis to exclude him from playing games with everyone else, introducing a local instability.

In the earlier opening that featured a character pointing, it was Ben, and he was pointing to his hearing aid in order to get the audience to look at it; he wanted to discuss it and his deafness right away. Now, Jim is pointing, and he is pointing toward Ben's head. While he may not specifically be pointing toward Ben's ear, he is singling Ben out because of his hearing, drawing attention to Ben's deafness as problematic. The audience, feeling sympathy for Ben, understanding that his deafness is *not* problematic, feels sad for him and annoyed with Jim. We understand that Ben's dislike of birthday parties was because of, or was exacerbated by, Jim's comment, and we keep reading to find out what happens next: Does Jim apologize? Because Ben is telling us about something that happened in the past, he has that information, and we are curious about whether he will share it.

A shift has occurred here in the text: Ben began by calling attention to his hearing aid, explaining his deafness, briefly mentioning his friends who are also deaf and use sign language, and then pointed out that people who are not deaf use their hands to communicate, too. He wanted the audience to think about ways that we could relate to him. Immediately after this, he then mentioned a difference that might be surprising to his audience (not liking birthday parties), and so we are surprised, and keep reading to find out whether he will say more about that, or tell us something else about his experience of being deaf. In the next opening, we read Jim's comment. While the implied author is still creating a portrait of Ben, rather than having Ben tell us more information about his deafness, Ben has begun to share a story related to that, and so we continue reading both because we want to learn more about Ben and to find out what happened after Jim excluded Ben during his birthday party.

When Ben's mother broaches the subject of having a birthday party, he tells her that he does not want one. He reminds his sister on the morning of his birthday, "'Humph . . . I hate birthdays.' . . ." (Gaynor, 2009, [p. 15]; first ellipses in original), reiterating this point for his audience, and that an experience that they find enjoyable is one that he loathes.

A local instability is introduced in the next opening:

> Later that day, I went for a drive with my Dad to the shops. When we arrived home Dad opened the front door very slowly and told me to go ahead inside.
>
> "Surprise, Happy Birthday, Ben!" everyone shouted. (Gaynor, 2009, [pp. 16-17).

In the accompanying illustration, Ben and his dad stand in the driveway next to the open door of their house. Inside, we can see a few children wearing crowns; bunches of balloons are gathered and float toward the ceiling. We can see part of a banner, "Birthday Ben" that has been strung across the room. Because Ben's back is to us, we cannot see the expression on his face, but feel a bit sad for him, and worried, too. He had explicitly told his mother that he did not want to have a surprise party, and we know how upset he was at Jim's party, so we are not sure how he is going to react.

On the next page, Ben whispers into his mother's ear. "'Oh no,' I whispered to

Mum. ‘What party games will we play? I don’t want my friends who are deaf to feel left out’” (Gaynor, 2011, [p. 18]). She reassures him, “‘Don’t worry Ben’ . . . there are lots of games you can play where everyone can join in and have fun’” ([p. 19]). The audience, is, like Ben, curious about what those games will be, and we continue reading. In the next opening, we see Ben and his friends playing; in the text, Ben describes how the games have been altered slightly so that he and his deaf friends are able to play, too. When playing musical chairs, Ben says, “As well as playing the music, Mum used red stop and green go cards to let everyone know when to stop and find a chair and when to start again” ([p. 21]). In the picture, Ben’s mother is holding up a red square card, and nearly everyone is sitting down, save a little boy who is running to the last empty seat, and a little girl, who is frowning, and has her hands on her hips, because she has been unable to get to an empty chair.

The local instability has been resolved, because Ben’s mother was right: she found games that everyone was able to play. The audience does not know who is hearing, and who is deaf. I did flip back and look at earlier illustrations to see if it would be possible to figure out who everyone at the party was. It was easy to recognize that some of the children were wearing the same outfits, so while it was not immediately apparent in the illustrations—the implied author’s aim—everyone is playing together, and it does not matter who was deaf and who was hearing—going back can confirm that deaf and hearing children were at the party. (Unsurprisingly, Jim was among them.)

In the final opening, everyone is playing hide-and-seek: “This time, no one felt left out, and we all joined in and had lots of fun together (Gaynor, 2009, [p. 22]). On the left page, Ben comments that his friends “said it was the best birthday party they had ever been to! Now I just can’t wait for my next birthday, and I’d like to invite you to come along, too!” ([p. 23]). After discovering that birthday parties can be enjoyable, Ben is looking forward to his next one. In the interest of not excluding anyone—understanding how that feels—he has extended an invitation to his narratee, and while the authorial audience knows that we cannot go to his birthday party, at the end of the narrative we are happy that Ben is happy, and appreciative that he his told his narratee about himself so that we were able to learn about him, too.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. Because Ben is introducing himself to his audience and assuming that they do not know any other deaf people, he attempts to make points of connection to a hearing authorial audience. He points out that hearing people “use their hands to make themselves understood” (Gaynor, 2009, [p. 10]). I understand why the implied author does this, but I think that it is unnecessary, given that we see Ben socializing with his peers, experiences that we can relate to, and the gestures that hearing people make are not part of an entire language communicated through using one’s hands and body. On a related point, the implied author refers to sign language as a “special language” ([p. 9]). This serves as an attempt to make sign languages unnecessarily interesting because they are “different” from the languages that most of us use. Sign languages are not any more “special” than spoken ones.

I do like that the implied author chose to have Ben discuss an aversion to birthday parties, a feeling that the authorial audience most likely would not share. It presents us with an opportunity to, after learning a bit about Ben's experience of being deaf, see him in a situation that for him, is upsetting so that we can consider issues that we have not considered before: How can you be inclusive when planning games or activities for people who are hearing and deaf, or, indeed, who have any number of disabilities or differing abilities?

Ben's discussion of his aversion to birthday parties also introduces bullying, or Jim's comment does. When the audience sees Ben get upset, we feel sad for him, and also perhaps, reflect on whether we have ever prejudged someone (and then perhaps been unkind about it). I am glad that Jim does not appear to be at Ben's party—that is, he was mean, and we do not see him apologize, something that Gaynor could have had happen before the party but outside of the audience's view. If I were to share this book, I would likely do so alongside other books featuring deaf characters, to expose an audience to a variety of experiences of deafness.

Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry (2003). *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry* was written by Bebe Moore Campbell and illustrated by E. B. Lewis. I also include in this chapter books in which the narratives serve to introduce us to characters, and to "slices of life" with which we may be unfamiliar. A character's disability may be mentioned explicitly and often. It may be most obvious in the illustrations (in the case of a physical disability). But its presence often serves in large part to help the audience understand that being disabled is a facet of a person's identity. These characters don't "just happen to be disabled." They *are* disabled.

Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry uses narrative in order to paint a portrait of a disability. It is one of the few books I have read that addresses mental illness. The paratext indicates that Annie's mother has bipolar disorder. The first time that I read the book, it stood out as one of the few narratives in which a character's disability itself is an instability, rather than characters' reactions to it. After I read it a second time, I realized that while the ways in which Annie's mother's illness manifests are instabilities within the narrative, the implied author wants the audience to understand that her anger is a routine occurrence—indicated by the title's "Sometimes," and so what we, the audience are supposed to pay attention to is what happens when Annie's mom gets angry—both to her and to Annie. This allows the implied author to create a portrait of disability, specifically mental illness, that is realistic to the extent that the illness is not "resolved" in any way by the narrative's end.

The book's cover is a dark reddish-brown; the title is in a handwritten font that is white and outlined in black. In the center is an oval illustration. A girl, holding a teddy bear in one arm, is holding the receiver of a phone in her other hand. She is standing in front of a piece of furniture on which we can see a photograph of a woman. The girl's mouth is set in a straight line, and she is looking down toward the right side of the cover at something we cannot see. On the half title page, a rectangle of bright yellow with hints of orange is bordered by the whitespace of the page. The title is written in the same font as on the cover, but it is the reddish-brown of the cover, rather than white and black. The girl on the cover is on the title page, brushing her hair.

The first line of text alerts the audience that the narrator is a character narrator; as she describes what happens in the morning, we find out that her name is Annie:

> When I wake up, Mommy is making pancakes. She flips them high in the air and sings, “Who wants hot, golden circles?”
>
> “I do! I do!” I say.
>
> Mommy raises the shade in the kitchen. “A great big yellow ball rolled in to see you, Annie.” My mommy speaks very fast. (Campbell, 2003, [p. 6])

This first opening’s illustration takes up three-quarters of the spread. Annie sits at a kitchen island, her back to the audience; her mom stands on the other side of the island, in front of griddles, a spatula in one hand. The kitchen, especially the window directly across from the audience and Annie, is bright with sun that also covers Annie’s mother’s face. She’s smiling, though not looking directly at Annie.

In the next opening, a full-page illustration of Annie and her mother fills the right page. Annie is standing looking down at the purple dress she is wearing, and her mother sits next to her, smiling. Annie says that her mother proclaims her, “‘Beautastic!’” and: “She gives me a kiss and a big smile. I hope that she is still smiling when I come home. Sometimes my mommy doesn’t smile at all” (Campbell, 2003, [p. 8]). Because nobody literally smiles all the time, Annie sharing this piece of information about her mother signals that it is significant when her mother stops smiling, especially since she mentions that she “hopes” her mother will be smiling later that afternoon. The audience will connect this to the book’s title, knowing that at some point, Annie’s mother will “get angry” during the course of the narrative.

This beginning exposition is important because the audience is getting a sense of who Annie is as a narrator, and how and what she is telling us: It is unusual to have a narrative in which a child character narrator spends time discussing the behavior of an adult. Will Annie be able to do this accurately? Or are there pieces of information that Annie will miss because she is a child that the audience will need to get from the implied author? Annie has given her audience insight into what her mother is like when she is not angry: she happily makes pancakes for breakfast and helps Annie get dressed and is complimentary about Annie's appearance. It is necessary for the audience to see that Annie and her mother have a loving relationship with each other so that we can understand how drastic the change will be when Annie's mother eventually gets angry. If the audience has read the paratext or is familiar with bipolar disorder, they may feel that Annie's mother's behavior is indicative of the illness, even though it is not stated.. The audience worries about Annie, and perhaps her mother, too, and in addition to wondering when Annie's mother might get angry, we wonder what will happen to Annie.

Annie describes her walk to school with two friends, sisters Carmen and Jasmine, and that, at school, she draws a picture. "'Excellent job, Annie,' Mr. Perez says. 'Tell the class what you drew'" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 13]). Annie's illustration sits to the right of her description: "'This is my mommy and me,' I say. 'We have pancakes inside us and sunshine all around us'" ([p. 13]). In the drawing, a stick-figure Annie sits at the kitchen island, looking toward us, smiling. There are four stick figure suns at angle over the table; the top one is colored in orange, the rest are just outlines drawn in grey pencil. A stick figure of Annie's mother, also faces us, smiling.

The next opening begins, "When I walk home, the sun is hiding" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 14]). If the audience has been paying attention to the ways in which the image of the sun has been mentioned previously by both Annie and her mother, at home, and at school, we may recognize this as a signal that Annie's afternoon might not go well. This is also an instance where the synthetic aspects of Annie's character are more apparent than the mimetic. The implied author is using Annie as a character to convey this information. Annie herself is only aware of reporting on the weather, while the audience makes these other connections.

On the walk home, Annie notes that Jasmine teases Carmen about losing three of her braids; Annie says that, "When Carmen stops to look behind her, Jasmine laughs so hard, she almost chokes" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 14]). I mention this because, if one thinks about the image of the sun going behind the clouds, so that it is grey and colder out, it is also obvious that Annie is enjoying being with her friends; the audience recognizes that as Annie is telling us about her day, and, much like the audience, enjoys playing with her friends.

When Annie's mother comes to the door to let her in, Annie and the audience realize how much her mother's demeanor has changed since that morning, and a local instability is introduced: "**'STOP ALL THAT SCREAMING,'** Mommy says when she opens the door. **'GET IN THIS HOUSE NOW!'** Her morning smile disappears like the sun" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 18]; emphasis in original). The text is on the left page of this opening; on the right, Annie's mother stands in the front doorway, looking down at Annie, who stands with her back to the audience. Annie's mother's mouth is open; she is in the middle of speaking, and her eyes are fixed intently on her daughter. Her hair is not neatly combed, as it was in the illustration of her and Annie when she complimented

Annie's dress earlier. Her shirt collar is no longer sitting completely open and flat, suggesting that whatever she has experienced that has made her angry has also affected her appearance, and as we can see, her smile, indeed her cheerful disposition has "disappeared."

Annie's mother continues yelling, including at their neighbor, Mr. Simms, who has greeted her and asked Annie about her day. After yelling at him, "'**ANNIE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO SPEAK TO YOU!'**" he replies, "'Judy, I didn't mean to upset you,' and she responds with continued yelling: "**'YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS! YOU'RE ALWAYS SPYING ON ME!'**" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 18]; emphasis in original). Annie attempts to get her mother's attention:

> "Mommy! Mommy! Please stop yelling," I say.
>
> But I know that she can't stop. She needs a time-out chair. I don't look at Mr. Simms or Jasmine or Carmen.
>
> I hurry inside. ([p. 18])

Annie is confirmed as being a reliable, observant narrator, as she had earlier pointed out that sometimes her mother "never smiled." The audience understands now why that was important to report. The audience also learns that Annie's mother is not "just" angry. Annie has told us that "she can't stop" yelling. Annie has also compared her mother's anger to that of a child; at school, one of Annie's friends had been sent to the time-out chair, and now, Annie is telling us that her mother is unable to control her behavior—something the audience would think that all adults could do—and that she needs to be treated as a child who is misbehaving would need to be. Annie's mother has also accused

Mr. Simms of spying on her, a slight complication of the local instability of her yelling. It is something for which the audience has seen no justification, and so may conclude that the unfounded claim is somehow related to why she is angry.

In the next opening, on the left page is an illustration of Annie. She is crouched on the floor next to a dresser, and is in shadow, and we recognize it from the cover. She has a telephone on the floor in front of her, and is holding the receiver. She calls her grandmother.

> "Mommy is yelling again."
>
> I begin to cry. "I wish Trash Can Boy would eat her up and bring her back when she is nice again. Why does she get so angry? She was nice this morning. I didn't do anything bad." (Campbell, 2003, [p. 21])

The audience will remember that "Trash Can Boy" is a drawing that her friend Kevin drew at school. Like Annie, they may also be confused about why her mother is angry. The audience has "been" with Annie all day, and similarly, did not "see" her do anything that would warrant getting yelled at by her mother.

Annie's grandmother agrees:

> "No, sweetie, you didn't do anything wrong . . . My precious Annie, you know that your mother has problems, and she hasn't gotten the help she needs. Sometimes it's hard for grown-ups to ask for help. I hope that one day she will. But your mother loves you even when she's yelling. It's OK for you to be angry. I know you love her, too." (Campbell, 2003, [p. 21])

Annie's grandmother is providing comfort to Annie and the audience, and the implied author is using her to communicate information related to Annie's mother's illness to her audience as Annie's grandmother reminds of her of it, too. This is further confirmation that Annie's mother has an illness, and a reminder that Annie has not done something to deserve her mother's ire. It is also a reminder to Annie and the audience that Annie's mother still loves her, meant to reassure Annie, and also the audience, whose concern for Annie has grown.

Annie's grandmother also validates Annie's feelings, telling her that she is allowed to be upset. Annie's grandmother continues to reassure her:

> "I know it's hard, sweetie . . . You're doing a good job. I'm glad that you remember what to do when your mommy gets upset."
>
> "I called you."
>
> "Right. And if you feel scared?"
>
> "I can go to Mr. and Mrs. Simms's house until you come to get me. But I don't feel scared since I'm talking to you. I can get my secret snack without bothering Mommy." (Campbell, 2003, [p. 21-22])

The audience learns, then, that Annie has a plan in place for when her mother gets angry, and that she'll also be able to eat and will not go hungry until the next day or whenever her mother is feeling better. That she has a plan and a "secret snack," means that she is prepared, and that this is something that happens often enough that she needs to be.

Her grandmother asks,

> "And what else can you do, Annie?' Something very important."
>
> "I can think happy thoughts," I say. (2003, [p. 22])

Annie's grandmother's reminders to Annie about what she is supposed to do when her mother gets angry, and Annie's ready responses highlight the implied author's desire to focus her narrative on a depiction of a child experiencing part of the ways that her mother's mental illness manifests.

The conversation between Annie and her grandmother has continued across two openings. In the second illustration, the audience has moved closer to Annie and the dresser. She's now standing up in front of it, a stuffed animal under her right arm. On the dresser is a photograph that was visible in the previous illustration, but now the audience can see it clearer, and it is of an older woman, most likely her grandmother, so if Annie wants, as she talks with her grandmother, she can also look at her photograph. There is also a lamp on the dresser that had been casting its light that hadn't quite reached all of Annie. Now, she is illuminated.

> After I say good-bye, I hear Mommy going into her room. I sit on the sofa and snuggle with my bear, B. B. King. I'm Grandma's precious Annie. Mr. Perez says I do excellent work. Tomorrow Carmen and I will have fun in school. (Campbell, 2003, [p. 25])

The conversation with her grandmother serves as the narrative's voyage: As a planned part of her response to her mother's anger, Annie calls her grandmother, who comforts her.

The audience is reassured that Annie's mother goes into her room; we know that she likely is not going to yell at Annie anymore. And, she shares with us her "good thoughts," and then tells us what she did for the rest of the evening: "I eat my secret snack and read a book about a silly cat. I take my bath, brush my teeth and go to bed" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 25]). The audience might be glad that Annie seems to be less upset than she'd been while she was on the phone, though we also notice that those are activities that are part of a nighttime ritual that children usually do, at least in part, with another adult. So, the audience understands more concretely that Annie has to actually take care of herself when her mother is angry.

The next opening begins with another comment from Annie about the weather: "In the morning, it is raining. I have to be a big girl again'" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 26]). Annie gets herself ready for school. She does not mention her mother helping her, and we do not see her in either of the opening's illustrations. Yesterday afternoon, the sun was out, then went behind the clouds, and then this morning, it began to rain. Annie's mother was happy yesterday morning, grew angry yesterday afternoon, and is, perhaps, still angry this morning—we don't know yet—but in any event, she is not able to help Annie. Annie does not mention that she has checked on her mother, so she is deciding to leave her alone. Annie's having to repeat her daily routine, though without her mother, signals the narrative's closure.

She again walks with Carmen and Jasmine to school: "'Hey, Curly. There's a knot in your hair,' Jasmine says when I come out. She brushes my hair softly, the way Mommy does when she's not upset'" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 28]). Including this makes the audience simultaneously feel sad for Annie that her mother wasn't able to help her this morning, but also glad that she has caring and observant friends. Annie's comment also reminds the audience that, as her grandmother had told her, her mother still loves her.

She and Carmen laugh at a joke that she plays on Jasmine, and Carmen tells her, "'Our mom said it's okay for you to come to our house after school'" and then, Annie reports, "She gives me a hug" (Campbell, 2003, [p. 28]). This lets the audience know that Carmen and Jasmine do know that Annie's mom is ill. They do not ask her about how her mother is doing, but have asked their mother if Annie can come over after school. In the event that Annie's mother is still angry, going to Carmen and Jasmine's house will give her more time to be with her friends, who are comforting, and it is possible that she will eat dinner with Carmen and Jasmine's family, and so will not have to eat another secret snack alone. The exchange with the girls also provides the actual audience with potentially useful information: The girls don't ask Annie how her mother is or discuss what happened yesterday afternoon; most likely they want to wait to see if Annie says anything. They are being discreet and also are focused on being present and on comforting Annie.

In the next opening, Annie stands under her open umbrella, smiling, her mouth open and her head tipped up toward the sky:

> I laugh and laugh and catch raindrops in my mouth.
>
> I have cereal in my tummy, not pancakes. But I'm still full. Sometimes my mommy has dark clouds inside her. I can't stop the rain from falling, but I can find the sunshine in my mind. (Campbell, 2003, [p. 31])

The audience does not know whether Annie's mother will not be angry when Annie gets home. But, we are also aware that Annie has a support network of her grandmother, neighbors and good friends, so that she is taken care of when her mother is unable to take care of her. And, she also has the coping strategy her grandmother mentioned, to “think happy thoughts.”

The final page includes a large rectangular illustration, bordered by the white of the page, and, I think, serves as the narrative’s arrival. Annie’s mother is sitting in the chair she was in earlier, and is brushing Annie’s hair. Annie is wearing a different outfit than she was on the previous page, so presumably this is some day in the future. As with *Trudi and Pia* (Hegi, 2003), the arrival does not resolve the narrative’s global instability. Because we can see Annie and her mother together, and there is no comment from Annie, while it seems that the previous page was Annie’s last interaction with her audience, this then seems to be the implied author’s with her audience, as it is meant to reassure us. Annie’s mother is still ill, of course, but we can see that the particular episode of anger that we witnessed has ended.

One Possible Disability Studies-Influenced Reading. I wanted to include books about mental illness in this project because there is a great deal of stigma attached to them, and people often are uncomfortable speaking about them. I did find it odd that Annie’s mother’s bipolar disorder was never specifically named in the text; it seems like something her grandmother could have easily mentioned while she was comforting Annie and reminding her that her mother’s illness was not her fault. Leaving the disorder unmentioned seems to unintentionally reinforce the stigma of living with bipolar disorder or knowing someone who does.

I also found it very strange that her grandmother did not come to get her or suggest that she go to Carmen and Jasmine’s house. Annie comments about having to take care of herself. While I know that it is realistic that children with mentally ill parents do often have to look after themselves, I find it odd that, given that Annie has a plan to call her grandmother when her mother gets angry that her grandmother does not suggest that she go to her neighbor's. Annie is shown to be capable, but she is still a child, and if there are adults nearby whom she could stay with (and who know that her mother is ill), it seems to make sense that she should do that. Of course, the implied author might be attempting to address the stigma of mental illness—Annie staying home means that others will not focus on the fact that Annie's mother is angry.

I do appreciate that, as I had noted earlier, Carmen and Jasmine do not ask about her mother the next day. Instead, they focus on Annie, and are kind toward her while also respecting that she might not want to discuss her mother with them. It is also important that the implied author makes clear (through Annie's grandmother especially) that Annie's mother is ill, and not a bad person. While it might sound trite, I recently have noticed a rise in the casual way that people use pejorative labels relating to mental illness—whether they are speaking about those who live with those conditions or to other people—which only reinforces the stigma of mental illness.

Closing Thoughts

As I had mentioned, eighty-seven (87) books are categorized in this chapter. They all offer a portrait of a person or people who live with a disability or multiple disabilities. In some instances, the disabilities are foregrounded more than the characters themselves. The books use varying amounts of narrativity to achieve their ends.

Writing about "disability history," Linton (1997) notes:

> The most fundamental problem, though, is that disabled people's voices are almost completely absent from this picture, and so the understanding of disabled people's place in these situations is filtered through the experience of people who have never been in that place. (p. 37)

I am not mentioning this as a way to suggest that all picturebooks that are portraits of disabled characters or disabilities should always be narrated by those characters themselves, but, returning to Phelan's comment that, "portraiture can be reduced to somebody telling that someone is" (2007, p. 153), questions that I would ask of each of these books are, who is the "somebody telling," and why? I wanted to examine books that made use of noncharacter narrators and character narrators who were and who were not disabled. Annie in *Sometimes My Mommy Gets* Angry (Moore, 2003) is an exception, because, as I had said, I wanted to look at a book that addressed mental illness, and it provides another example to stand alongside *The Printer* (Uhlberg, 1998) as another book narrated by a child about a parent.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

On Tuesday, January 17, 2017, stories covering the confirmation hearing of Betsy DeVos, now the Secretary of the United States Department of Education, began to circulate on news websites and social media. Exchanges between Secretary DeVos and Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia and Senator Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) made numerous headlines. An article appearing that afternoon on the *Washington Post*'s website proclaimed, "Betsy DeVos apparently 'confused' about federal law protecting students with disabilities." I read the transcript of the exchanges. The *Post* reported: "Kaine asked her if she believes that all schools that receive federal funding — whether public, public charter or private — should be required to meet the requirements of IDEA" (Strauss, 2017). There was a tense back-and-forth between the two as DeVos avoided giving Kaine an explicit answer:

> Kaine persisted: "I think all schools that receive federal funding — public, public charter, private — should be required to meet the conditions" of IDEA. He asked if she agreed.
>
> DeVos said: "I think that is certainly worth discussion."
>
> Kaine interrupted her saying, "So you cannot yet agree with me."

Later in the article, the *Post* reported on Senator Hassan's questioning of DeVos:

> Near the end of the hearing, Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) returned to the issue, telling DeVos that IDEA is a federal civil rights law and noting that federal law must be followed. She asked DeVos if she stood by her statement that it was up to the states to follow it, and DeVos responded, “Federal law must be followed where federal dollars are in play.”
>
> Hassan asked, “So were you unaware when I just asked you bout the IDEA that it was a federal law?”
>
> DeVos responded, “I may have confused it.” (Strauss, 2017)

I was astounded that the likely to-become Secretary of Education seemingly did not have an understanding of IDEA.

I had first read some of the text of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, precursor to IDEA, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, in a sign language systems course during the first year of my doctoral program. I began referencing them in papers, mentioning them in presentations, sometimes coupled with a statistic I shared in the Introduction, that people with disabilities are the largest minority in the United States.

At some point growing up, I became aware, in the most basic sense, that IDEA and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 were meant to protect “people like me,” but I did not spend much time thinking about the laws because it never occurred to me that they someday might be in danger of being weakened, especially not by those who were tasked with upholding them. In recent months, I have seen a growing number of articles about the legal protections afforded people with disabilities being in peril. I have felt on many days that I have not been able to do this work “fast enough” to address, in some small way, the rise tin ableism and ignorance about people with disabilities that I have noticed, particularly on social media.

In another course that I took during the first year of my doctoral program I read the thoughts from Gary Saul Morson that I mentioned in Chapter 2:

> For Bakhtin, fictional people are not (as some would say) simply words on a page or conventional constructs. They are *possible* people—otherwise, who would be interested in them?—and what we learn to do with possible people we may carry over to actual ones. (p. 353; emphasis in original)

I encountered this before I had decided what direction my dissertation would take, but I made a note to not forget Morson's comments, because I thought that eventually they might be useful.

The following year, immersed in disability studies scholarship, when I read Phelan’s comments that: “the [rhetorical] approach [to narrative] assumes that texts are designed by authors in order to affect readers in particular ways; that those designs are conveyed through the words, techniques, structures, forms, and dialogic relations of texts as well as the genres and conventions readers use to understand them,” I realized that I had figured out what work I wanted to do (Phelan, 2007, p. 4).

Findings: Bringing Disability Studies and Narrative Theory Together

By examining these 178 books using concepts in rhetorical narrative theory, I became more aware of the choices that authors had made in shaping their narratives in order to affect their readers in specific ways. Applying a disability studies lens enabled me to more clearly see where and understand why my own reactions were different from the ones that authors wanted me to have. Using narrative theory and disability studies in conversation with each other therefore allowed me to engage more fruitfully with the narratives than would have been possible using only either field's ideas independently, because together, they highlighted issues that have not been fully explored in most current research.

In paying attention to both the expected readerly dynamics in the narrative progressions and the places where mine deviated from them, I became aware of the need for readers to be cognizant of our expectations for these narratives, aware of how they have been shaped and so how we are responding to them, and also the ways in which the lived realities of lived disability may be more complex. For example, we want disabled characters to be happy and mostly problem-free at the ends of their respective books. Many authors make choices that enable this desire to be fulfilled. While these choices may provide a satisfying ending for readers at one level, they also often oversimplify or otherwise misrepresent the real-world experiences of disability they invoke. My hope is that my own readings can serve as models for more productive and nuanced conversations about these books and to encourage further inquiry.

The point in bringing the two perspectives together was not to proclaim finally that certain texts are awful and should not be read. (No scholar would or should claim that authority.) Nor was it to have one trump the other. Indeed, Phelan argues that rhetorical reading is not complete until the analyst supplements the effort to understand a narrative's communication on its own terms with an effort to assess those terms in light of their possible effects on actual readers. To express this idea another way, the point of bringing the two perspectives together was to help those not familiar with disability studies' concerns about the representation and treatment of people with disabilities to be more aware of the designs of these books, and to understand what the authors have done well, and what they have done that is problematic. That, in turn, will allow them to make more informed evaluations of these books. When sharing the books with children, adults can (if they choose) lead more knowledgeable discussions about disability. And perhaps the grip of the Overcoming Narrative will be loosened slightly.

In my Introduction, I shared a brief overview of my project, and of the research that has been done on picturebooks featuring disabled characters, addressing where gaps exist—namely in thinking about the conscious ways in which implied authors have shaped their narratives to affect their readers, and, to a noticeable extent, the lack of discussion of the illustrations as part of that shaping.

In Chapter 2, I outlined relevant concepts in both disability studies and rhetorical narrative theory to situate the work that I would be doing. I discussed the narrative progressions of two picturebooks about Helen Keller in order to draw comparisons between the two implied authors' aims, and then shared one possible disability studies reading of each to address elements of the narratives that were noteworthy, and points that would need more interrogation. I also used the books to discuss aspects of the Overcoming Narrative.

In Chapters 3 through 7, I discussed the narrative progressions of some of the books in my corpus (178 books). After reading all of the books multiple times, I finally sorted the books into categories that were, in all except one case, determined by a particular relationship between different characters. In Chapter 3, I examined three books whose protagonists go to the doctor and are diagnosed with conditions requiring that they wear eye patches, paying specific attention to how the doctors' appointments affected the narratives' progressions, as they were slightly different from each other. All three of the protagonists were spurred to use their imaginations as a result of wearing the eye patches, and examining the narrative progressions in light of disability studies revealed an attention to both medical and social aspects of disability.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the narrative progressions of three books whose characters know at the outset that they are disabled or "different" in some way from their typical peers, and how, during the course of the narrative, because of an experience, the protagonists continue, begin, or show the potential to begin to develop confidence. One of the three books, *Trudi and Pia* (Hegi, 2003) is notable because at the end of the narrative, the protagonist, Trudi, has shown the possibility of beginning to consider her dwarfism in more positive terms, but the audience does not know whether that will happen. While many of the books that I read for this dissertation feature characters who, at the narratives' ends, are happy and comfortable with themselves, Hegi's narrative resists this resolution. Thinking about the narrative progressions while keeping in mind disability studies ideas highlighted ways in which the different narratives resist aspects of the Overcoming Narrative.

In Chapter 5, I discussed books in which a relationship or interaction between a disabled and a nondisabled character leads to the change or potential change (in the way of growth, learning, or acceptance) of the nondisabled character. I focused my discussion on agency, and similar to my aims in Chapter 3, I examined the ways that the agency of disabled and nondisabled characters affected the narrative progressions. A disability studies-influenced narrative progression revealed aspects in which authors helpfully made use of concepts central to disability studies, and aspects that warrant further discussion.

In Chapter 6, I examined the smallest number of books (11). In these narratives, there is some amount of reciprocity between a disabled character and a nondisabled one. I determined that there are three different types of relationships that exist between or among characters: Relationships of Care, Relationships of Inevitability, and Relationships of Place. In most cases, over the course of the narrative, a relationship changes from one type to another because of the acts of reciprocity. These acts are often related to instabilities in the narrative progressions. As was the case in Chapter 5, a disability studies reading alerts a reader to parts of the narratives that should be lauded, while others should be interrogated further.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I discussed narratives that are examples of portraiture. I chose narratives that allowed for the exploration of different kind of narrators, including two that were disabled character narrators telling their audiences about themselves, a disembodied "I" narrator, and a nondisabled character who talks to her audience over the course of two days, allowing us to see a "slice of life." I also chose narratives that had varying amounts of narrativity, and thus, whose progressions were (in some cases) generated not by the introduction, complication, and resolution of global and local instabilities, but by tensions between the narrators and their audience. The narrative progressions in this chapter produced the most varied collection of disability studies readings.

Considering the books in my corpus and the way that implied authors made use of the interaction of the verbal and visual in constructing narrative progressions, in general, I think that implied authors were most successful when they used the two elements together to enhance each other, rather than simply using the visuals to illustrate little more than what the text was communicating. Certainly, illustrations are always going to communicate information that is not necessarily in the text: what color is a character's shirt, for example? What kind of expression does a character have on her face? But, in these books, many implied authors took advantage of the visual aspect of their narratives to communicate information that it would be impossible to communicate clearly using only words without long, detailed descriptions. In some cases, this work was in advancing the narrative progressions (e.g. by complicating or resolving an instability). Sometimes the interaction between the two media gave audiences additional information that the characters did not necessarily have, which did not always affect tensions or instabilities, but affected the readerly dynamics by contributing to an audience's ability to empathize with a character and so become more invested in the character and in what she was experiencing.

In two of the books that I discussed in Chapter 3, for example, *My Travelin' Eye* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2006), and *The Pirate of Kindergarten* (Lyon, 2010), the implied authors used multiple illustrations to allow their audiences to get an approximate glimpse (literally) of how Jenny-Sue and Ginny were seeing their surroundings at different points. This also does happen once in *The Patch* when Becca's audience can see the fuzzy letters that she sees in the doctor's office (Headley, 2006).

In *Yuko-chan and the Daruma Doll* (Seki, 2012), during the opening when Yuko-chan and Shiba fall off the cliff after getting lost, it is a small illustration that is a close-up of Yuko-chan's legs and feet that allows the audience to see how she tripped by getting her sandal caught under a tree root or fallen branch, while also complicating the local instability of getting lost during the snowstorm. It also perhaps reminds a sighted audience of how much information we are able to take in visually, and that much of it is consequential. The same is true in *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* (Best, 2015). In *Trudi and Pia* (Hegi, 2003), the illustration of the story that Pia and Trudi are telling the audience during Pia's performance allows us to see the magical island where the little people are from, and in later illustrations, we can see Trudi imagining what it would be like to interact with average-sized people by not looking up, as Pia instructs her.

Limitations of the Study

As I noted in my Introduction, the lack of a systematic application of subject headings to these books means that some will be found when searching for the general term, "disability" for example, while other titles will only be returned when a reader looks for a specific disability. I have no doubt that someone else would find picturebooks that I did not.

Because my focus in this work was on disabled characters, I did not attend to other aspects of the characters' identities that intersect with their disabilities, for example, gender, ethnicity, race, as well as other categories of experience. As I noted in Chapter 2, I also excluded books that featured animal characters and fantastic elements, particularly where the fantastic had a direct impact on a character's disability. Additionally, though illnesses can be disabling, in order to narrow my potential corpus, I excluded books whose characters lived with illness or disease. The one exception to this, as I mentioned, is mental illness.

Potential Directions for Future Research

Thinking about some of the limitations that I mentioned above, future research could take into account those additional identities (and others), as well as include picturebooks whose characters are living with an illness or a disease. Another choice I made because it was both practical and would keep the corpus manageable, was to look at books published in a 20-year period (1995-2015); many of these are still in print. I think that it would be worthwhile, in the vein of some of the studies that I mentioned in my Introduction, to complete a survey of older books. Those findings could also be compared to the work that I have done here. It would be interesting to determine in what ways narrative progressions have changed and remained the same. Similarly, research could be done with books published even more recently.

Though I focused on narrative progression in my dissertation, there are other aspects of rhetorical narrative theory that I could similarly combine with disability studies to examine different aspects of the narratives. I am always very interested in who the narrator of a picturebook with a disabled character is, and paying more attention to the narrators would allow for a closer examination of the different effects of having a noncharacter narrator, or a character narrator who is disabled or one who is not. While I discussed the narrators of these books in my dissertation, focusing on them and the ways that they function in the narratives, and what information they choose to share and how and when might yield patterns worth noting. Similarly, paying closer attention to the characterization of narrators, or disabled characters or nondisabled characters would be useful: What happens when a disabled character is a supporting character rather than a protagonist, as is the case in many of the books that I discussed in Chapter 5? How does the disability (or other elements of identity that intersect with disability) affect the characterization? As I mentioned when I discussed *Dear Santa, Please Come to the 19th Floor* (Yin, 2002), Carlos's disability is responsible for Santa's visit, so absolutely necessary to the narrative, and yet, I feel that it easily could be replaced with some other element that could prompt Santa to visit. Examining the function of a disability as part of characterization in other books might have interesting results.

I also began noticing the different paratexts of the book—usually the jacket summary and the summary on the copyright page (or on the back cover)—and started thinking about what information they "gave away" or withheld and how that affected my reading of the books. Because I found all of these books by looking specifically for disability-related titles, I always expected a disability to be present somewhere in the narrative, so it became interesting to discover where and how it was revealed. In many cases, there is information in a cover illustration that is not immediately mentioned in the narratives. Again, the books that I discussed in Chapter 3 are good examples of this, as is *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* (Best, 2015) and *Jacob's Eye Patch* (Shaw &

Shaw, 2013). I also started to pay attention to the summaries in the library catalog, and think about how they framed my expectations for a particular book—or, I'd look at them after I read a book to see what they had emphasized or left out. They, along with the jacket summaries, often framed the narratives in enthusiastically uplifting tones while some of the narratives were more subdued in their execution. I often would find myself more frustrated by the publishers' summaries than by anything in the narratives themselves.

Finally, my research did not examine the ways in which educators utilize these picturebooks in classrooms. Future research might therefore include expanding this work by incorporating it into a Disability Studies in Education course for pre-service teachers or integrating it into Disability Awareness curricula.

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Appendix A: Books Examined in Chapter 3

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Anglada, T. (2009). *Brandon and the bipolar bear: A story for children with bipolar disorder* (J. Taylor, & T. Ferguson, Illus.). Victoria, Canada: Trafford.

Carlson, N. (2013). *This morning Sam went to Mars: A book about paying attention*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

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Wagner, A. P. (2013). *Up and down the worry hill: A children's book about Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and its treatment* (3rd ed.) (P. A. Jutton, Illus.). Apex, NC: Lighthouse Press.

Appendix B: Books Examined in Chapter 4

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Best, C. (2015). *My three best friends and me, Zulay* (V. Brantley-Newton, Illus.). New York, NY: Margaret Ferguson Books.

Brownridge, W. R. (1995). *The Moccasin Goalie*. Victoria, Canada: Orca Book Publishers.

Carlson, N. (1996). *Sit still!* New York, NY: Viking.

Carlson, N., & Isaak, A. (2014). *Armond Goes to a Party: A book about Asperger's and Friendship* (N. Carlson, Illus.). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Delaunois, A. (2011). *The little yellow bottle* (B. Creary, Trans.; C. Delezenne, Illus.). Toronto, Canada.: Second Story Press.

Esham, B. (2008). *Mrs. Gorski, I think I have the wiggle fidgets* (M. Gordon, & C. Gordon, Illus.). The adventures of everyday geniuses. Ocean City, MD.: Mainstream Connections.

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Fudge, B. (2008). *Enrique speaks with his hands* (T. Edmonson, Illus.). Chicago, IL: Hilton Publishing.

Gaynor, K. (2009). *Tom's special talent: A story about dyslexia* (E.Byrne, Illus.). Special stories. Dublin, Ireland: Special Stories.

Gehret, J. (2009). *Houdini's gift* (M. LaDuca, Illus.). Fairport, NY: Verbal Images Press.

Harshman, M. (1995). *The storm* (M. Mohr, Illus.). New York, NY: Cobblehill Books.

Hegi, U. (2003). *Trudi & Pia* (G. Potter, Illus.). New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Herrera, J. F. (2004). *Featherless = Desplumado* (E. Cuevas, Jr., Illus.). San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.

Hodge, D. (2007). *Lily and the mixed-up letters* (F. Brassard, Illus.). Toronto, Canada: Tundra Books.

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Lears, L. (1999). *Waiting for Mr. Goose* (K. Ritz, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Lears, L. (2000). *Ben has something to say: A story about stuttering* (K. Ritz, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Lears, L. (2005). *Nathan's wish: A story about cerebral palsy* (S. Schuett, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Moran, G. (1995). *Imagine me on a sit-ski!* (N. Bernard Westcott, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Peters, A. F., & Peters, P. (2015). *The color thief: A family's story of depression* (K. Littlewood, Illus.). Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman.

Polacco, P. (1998). *Thank you, Mr. Falker*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Polacco, P. (2010). *Junkyard Wonders*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Polacco, P. (2012). *The art of Miss Chew*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Seeger, P., & Jacobs, P. D. (2006). *The deaf musicians* (R. G. Christie, Illus.). New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Appendix C: Books Examined in Chapter 5

Brimner, L. D. (2002). *The Sidewalk Patrol* (C. Tripp, Illus.). New York: Children's Press.

Coe, J. L. (2009). *The friendship puzzle: Helping kids learn about accepting and including kids with autism* (S. L. Brassel, Illus.). Potomac, MD: Larstan.

DeMonia, L. (2014). *Leah's voice* (M. Turchan, Illus.). Houston, TX: Halo Publishing International.

Domney, A. (2011). *Splish, splat!* (A. Crawford, Illus.). Toronto, Canada: Second Story Press.

Dungy, T., & Dungy, L. (2011). *You can be a friend* (R. Mazellan, Illus.). New York, NY: Little Simon Inspirations.

Edwards, B. (1999). *My brother Sammy* (D. Armitage, Illus.). Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press.

Ely, L. (2004). *Looking after Louis* (P. Dunbar, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Emmons, C. (2002). *Sammy wakes his dad* (S. Venit Anger, Illus.). New York: Star Bright Books.

Esham, B. (2008). *If you're so smart, how come you can't spell Mississippi?* (M. Gordon, & C. Gordon, Illus.). The adventures of everyday geniuses. Ocean City, MD.: Mainstream Connections.

Fraustino, L. R. (2001). *The hickory chair* (B. Andrews, Illus.). New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine Books.

Gellman, E. (2012). *Jeremy's dreidel* (M. Mola, Illus.). Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben Press.

Gifaldi, D. (2001). *Ben, king of the river* (L. Johnson, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Glenn, S. (2004). *Keeping up with Roo* (D. Andreasen, Illus.). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Hamilton, D. (1995). *Sad days, glad days: A story about depression*. (G. Owens, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Hanson, R. (1997). *The face at the window* (L. Saport, Illus.). New York, NY: Clarion Books.

Jessup Altman, A. (2008). *Waiting for Benjamin: A story about autism* (S. Keeter, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Lears, L. (1998). *Ian's walk: A story about autism* (K. Ritz, Illus.). Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman.

Lears, L. (2002). *Becky the brave: A story about epilepsy* (G. Piazza, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Lehman-Wilzig, T., & Katzman, N. (2011). *Nathan blows out the Hanukkah candles* (J. Tugeau, Illus.). Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben Publishing.

Lewis, B. (2007). *In Jesse's shoes: Appreciating kids with special needs* (L. Nikiel, Illus.). Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers.

Luchsinger, D. F. (2007). *Playing by the rules: A story about autism* (J. Olson, Illus.). Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Messner, A. W. (1996). *Captain Tommy* (K. H. Belliveau, Illus.). Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Mitchell, L. (1999). *Different just like me*. Watertown, MA: Tailwinds.

Munsch, R. (2003). *Zoom!* (M. Martchenko, Illus.). New York, NY: Cartwheel Books.

Petrillo, G. (2009). *Keep your ear on the ball* (L. Lyon, Illus.). Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House.

Pulver, R. (1999). *Way to go, Alex!* (E. Wolf, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman.

Reichert, P. (2012). *The lemonade ripple: A sweet story of kindness and charity*. New York, NY: Sky Pony Press.

Rheingrover, J. S. (1996). *Veronica's first year* (K. Life, Illus.). Morton Grove, IL.: Albert Whitman.

Ripley, M. (2003). *Private and confidential: A story about braille* (C. Backhouse, Illus.). New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Robertson, B. (1999). *Marguerite makes a book* (K. Hewitt, Illus.). Getty Trust Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum. Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum.

Rodriguez, B. (2000). *Sarah's sleepover* (M. Graham, Illus.). New York, NY: Viking.

Schnee, S. (2015). *The prince who was just himself* (E. Albertz, Trans.; H. Sistig, Illus.). A Prince Noah Book. Walden, NY: Plough Publishing House.

Shally, C. (2009). *The bully blockers: Standing up for classmates with autism* (D. Harrington, Illus.). Centerton, AR.: Awaken Specialty Press.

Shaw, B. K., & Shaw, J. (2013). *Jacob's eye patch* (J. Feiffer, Illus.). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Sheils, C. M., & Pane, F. R. (2013). *Owen has burgers and drum: Helping to understand and befriend kids with Asperger's syndrome* (A. DuFalla, Illus.). Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press.

Shriver, M. (2001). *What's wrong with Timmy?* (S. Speidel, Illus.). Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Strom, M. D. (1999). *Rainbow Joe and me*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

Stryer, A. S. (2007). *Kami and the* Yaks (B. Dodson, Illus.). Palo Alto, CA: Bay Otter Press.

Suen, A. (2007). *Helping Sophia* (J. Ebbeler, Illus.) Main Street School. Edina, MN: Magic Wagon.

Thompson, M. (1996). *Andy and his yellow frisbee*. Bethesda, MD.: Woodbine House.

Tildes, P. L. (2006). *The Garden Wall*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge. (Original work published 2005).

Uhlberg, M. (2003). *The printer* (H. Sørensen, Illus.). Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.

Uhlberg, M. (2005). *Dad, Jackie, and me* (C. Bootman, Illus.). Atlanta, GA.: Peachtree.

Wanous, S. (1995). *Sara's secret* (S. O. Haas, Illus.). Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

Appendix D: Books Examined in Chapter 6

Coates, J. (1999). *Rainbows in the dark* (A. Priestley, Illus.). Toronto, Canada: Second Story Press.

Day, M. (2002). *Edward the "Crazy Man."* Buffalo, NY: Annick Press.

Dorros, A. (2005). *Julio's magic* (A. Grifalconi, Illus.). New York, NY: HarperCollins Children's Books.

Goldin, B. D. (2010). *Cakes and miracles: A Purim tale* (J. Zollars, Illus.). Tarrytown, NY: Martin Cavendish Children. (Work originally published in 1991).

Kluth, P., & Schwarz, P. (2010). *Pedro's whale* (J. Canha, Illus.). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co.

Lee, J. M. (2002). *Bitter dumplings*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Van Nutt, J. (1998). *A Cobtown Christmas: From the diaries of Lucky Hart* (R. Van Nutt, Illus.). New York, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.

Rosner, J. (2014). *The mitten string* (K. Swarner, Illus.). New York, NY: Random House Children's Books.

Seki, S. (2012). *Yuko-chan and the Daruma doll: The adventures of a blind Japanese girl who saves her village*. Tokyo, Japan: Tuttle.

Yin. (2002). *Dear Santa, please come to the 19th floor* (C. Soentpiet, Illus.). New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Zemach, K. (2008). *Ms. McCaw learns to draw*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine Books.

Appendix E: Books Examined in Chapter 7

Akbarpour, A. (2010). *Good night, Commander* (S. Eskandani, & H. Mixter, Trans.; M. Zahedi, Illus.). Toronto, Canada: Groundwood Books.

Anderson, M. E. (2000). *Taking cerebral palsy to school* (T. Dineen, Illus.). Special kids in school. [Plainview, NY]: JayJo Books.

Bishop, B. (2002). *My friend with Autism* (C. Bishop, Illus.). Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Bryant, J. E. (2004). *Taking speech disorders to school* (T. Dineen, Illus.). Special kids in school. [Plainview, NY]: JayJo Books.

Bulhak-Paterson, D. (2015). *I am an Aspie girl: A book for young girls with autism spectrum conditions* (T. Ferguson, Illus.). London, United Kingdom: Jessica Kingsley.

Campbell, B. M. (2003). *Sometimes my mommy gets angry* (E. B. Lewis, Illus.). New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

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