THESIS

A IS FOR AUDIENCE:

AN EXAMINATION OF AUDIENCE CONSTRUCTION, FOCALIZATION, AND

POLITICIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S ABC BOOKS

Submitted by

Grant Campbell

Department of Communication Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2015

Master's Committee:

   Advisor: David Scott Diffrient

   Cindy Griffin
   Pamela Coke

ABSTRACT

A IS FOR AUDIENCE:

AN EXAMINATION OF AUDIENCE CONSTRUCTION, FOCALIZATION, AND

POLITICIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S ABC BOOKS

This thesis explores the ways contemporary children's ABC books can politically shape or frame the way audiences interpret and conceptualize content within the books. Using the children's ABC books *A is for Activist* (2013) and *America: A Patriotic Primer* (2002), I examine how children's texts can construct audiences, create a unique site of focalization—known as a focalized dialogue—for those audiences, and utilize phenomenological metaphors to politically shape the focalized dialogues that occur between readers of the books. In doing so, contemporary children's ABC books can wield social and political power that can function to characterize contemporary understandings of cultural artifacts and even children themselves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: C IS FOR CHILDHOOD, CHILDREN'S BOOKS, AND CRITICISM

In 1971, Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, penned *The Lorax*, a children's picture book about a business owner, the Once-ler, who happens upon a beautiful landscape full of fresh air, clean water, and a gratuitous amount of Truffula trees. The businessman saw potential in cutting down the trees to make Thneeds, a crazy sock, shirt, pillow combination that everyone needs. In order to meet the demand for his new product, the Once-ler cuts down all the trees and pollutes the surrounding air and water in the process. When his business closes down, the Once-ler encounters the Lorax, who, despite his many warnings, flees the recently decimated wasteland. There is no hope for this once beautiful landscape. There is hope, however, that some other place can be turned into a thriving natural ecosystem full of healthy trees and free from pollution and poison. The responsibility falls to an unnamed, young child to plant the last remaining seed of a Truffula tree, care for it, and recreate the prosperous biome.

While Dr. Seuss' tale bombards readers with a vernacular seemingly foreign, yet strangely familiar, the overall moral is simple: the environment is important and it is up to the common person to care for it. This message mirrors the general overarching missions of activist organizations such as Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Foundation, and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). *The Lorax*, however, approaches activism in a distinctly different way: activism through a children's book.

It might seem strange to expose children to concepts associated with environmentalism. And it might seem even more far-fetched to reveal to children that *they* are called to social action to make the world a better place—much like the child in *The Lorax*. The social and cultural construct of the "child" is problematic. On one hand, a child could be seen as a small human in

need of only basic survival requirements (i.e. food, water, shelter). On another hand, "the term *child* is a highly potent discursive tool that is invoked to shape, limit, or foreclose arguments about social and material relations between individuals and classes of people."[1] If a child is something akin to a mere house pet, the former version would appear the most accurate. If, however, there is more to a "child" than food, water, shelter, and space, an examination of the latter notion of "child" as a cultural and social entity is necessary.

Children have always had a special place in my world. As a former high school English and speech teacher, I viewed my job as essential to preparing students for the world—a world that needs skilled readers, writers, and speakers to contribute to the democratic and humanistic aspects of society. While many students were willing to learn, I also encountered students who were unengaged in class content and satisfied with reading, writing, and speaking at below average levels. While the role of the high school teacher is an important one, the role of parents in this socialization process is more influential and pervasive. Many parents with whom I visited at parent-teacher conferences often dismissed the role reading plays in the development of a child. My initial feeling was shock. When that subsided, I decided to take a more analytical approach to the nature of children's books. My belief is that children's books could play a large part in contributing to the cultural and social construction of a "child." This project, then, seeks to characterize and identify the relationship between socializing phenomena and children's books.

Identification of the Case Study: *A is for Activist*

One of the last times I was at a local bookstore, I noticed a children's book that, initially, appeared to be out of place: *A is for Activist* (2013). The format of the book, however, mirrors that of a traditional ABC book: a letter of the alphabet on its own page spread with words and images corresponding with that letter in an arrangement around the letter itself. Because the book

is compact with thick pages, it caters itself to the hands of small children. This allows readers—both children and adults—to easily maneuver between all pages of the book.

A curious aspect of *A is for Activist* stems from its proclaimed target audience of "kids ages 0-3+."[2] This is unique in that only part of the book seems to be addressing children in that age range: the illustrations. Bright colors fill the individual letter pages and often change from spread to spread. The illustrations are digitally created to resemble rudimentary paintbrush strokes, much like the illustrative technique utilized in Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1994).

The illustrations of *A is for Activist* primarily contain depictions of children, representations of adults as mentors and caretakers, and images of other activists all in illustrated form. For example, the "Y" page presents four children with varying levels of skin color, ranging from black to tan. The ages of the children also vary, ranging from what looks to be about one year old to a preteen. By including representations of children of different races and ages, *A is for Activist* constructs a contemporary representation of children in an egalitarian and inclusive way. The "E" page contains a silhouette of an adult female with one fist in the air and her other arm around a female child. The child, also with her fist in the air, looks at the adult. This illustration allows for an analysis concerning the relationship between adults and children. Finally, the "R" page contains the illustrated faces of many different historical activists, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and Mahatma Gandhi.

The book, however, presents ideas and concepts (activism, grassroots efforts to create social change, etc.) as well as images (of labor unions, of Zapatistas, etc.) that seem to be out of the realm of what children experience and understand. The amount of words also exceeds the typical amount one would find in a mainstream ABC book. Because the concept of activism may elude children, the book must rely on adult readers to interpret the meaning of activism to

children in a way children can understand. The vocabulary and ideas addressed in the book bring to light problems concerning the intended audience.

For example, the "A" page provides synonyms for the word "activist" that also begin with the letter "A": "advocate," "abolitionist," and "ally." Children (and even adults) might not know the meanings associated with these words. This may be because these words have different meanings for different readers. "Abolitionist," for example, illustrates motivation for activism in a historical context. Slavery and civil rights movements happened in the past and were crucial foundations for activism today. "Advocate" and "ally" are representative of more modern motivations for activism: securing rights for the LGBTQ community, promoting grassroots campaigns, and even supporting the use of renewable energy. Another example is situated on the "Y" page, which reads, "Y is for You. And Youth."[3] Initially, the word "Youth" garners the attention of readers. The youth are the future. But the phrase "Y is for You" presents an interesting conundrum. If the "Y" in the book stands for both "You" and "Youth," the listening child (Youth) *and* (potentially) the adult reader (You) are both explicitly mentioned. The illustrations, language, and vocabulary in *A is for Activist* offer a plethora of fodder poised for analysis.

A is for Activist was published in 2013 by Triangle Square, the children's book division of independent publisher Seven Stories Press. The mission of Seven Stories Press is to publish imaginative works that focus on politics, human rights, and socioeconomic justice.[4] Some book titles by this publisher include *What Makes Baby* (2013), a book focused on teaching kids about conception and birth regardless of family make up, and *The Story of Hurry* (2014), a tale about a donkey who experiences the devastation and suffering of children during war. *A is for Activist* matches the mission of Triangle Square, as the book is described as "An ABC board book written and illustrated for the next generation of progressives: families who want their kids to

grow up in a space that is unapologetic about activism, environmental justice, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and everything else that activists believe in and fight for."[5] These specific types of activism raise some interesting questions regarding the nature of the book. How have these activist movements changed in a transhistorical manner? What differences are there between LGBTQ rights and civil rights? Because of these questions, it is important to take a more critical look at children's books, such as *A is for Activist.* I therefore propose the following guiding research questions:

- What are the intended audiences of children's books?

- How do the narrative, literary, and/or illustrative devices/tactics found in children's books speak to those intended audiences?

- In what ways do children's books communicate the appropriate and/or desired social and cultural constructions of child/childhood?

In the remainder of this chapter, I ground my inquiry in literature surrounding the construction of "childhood," provide a brief history of children's literature, and identify relevant criticism pertaining to the study of children's literature. I conclude the chapter by explaining my analytical methodology and an overview of ensuing chapters.

Literature Review

The Construction of Childhood and the Politicized Child

Why do we view children as "children"? What makes young humans "children"? What is a "child"? While childhood is recognizable to most people in a society, we often confuse childhood with an objective truth. Sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann suggest that socialization is a subjective truth, and that an individual is "not born a member of society."[6] Societies, then, create their own version of "child" through constructs. Hugh Matthews and Melanie Limb, researchers at the Centre of Children and Youth in Northampton, note that there

is not a unified construction of "child or "children," as "children come in all shapes and sizes and may be distinguished along various axes of gender, race, ethnicity, ability, health and age."[7] A social constructivist approach to childhood "emphasizes the diversity of ways that childhood is constituted and experienced in different situations and circumstances."[8] In essence, the notion of childhood is a subjective concept that varies from culture to culture. Attitudes toward children, expectations of children, and pedagogical practices are all socially constructed.[9] However different cultures may conceptualize it, childhood is often characterized by two overarching components: the age of the human and the dependency of the human on both society and adults.[10] Because Berger and Luckmann suggest that socialization is a subjective practice, adults—who represent current members of society—must be responsible for instilling specific values and concepts into children.

Socialization processes for children, however, have not remained stagnant over time. Beginning in antiquity, children were viewed as akin to women in terms of their minority status.[11] Today's construction of "child" was scarcely recognized in antiquity. Aristotle may have hinted at children as a social identity when he characterized ancient youth as "prone to desires and inclined to do whatever they desire."[12] Aristotle continues, however, to describe ancient youth as "most inclined to pursue that relating to sex and they are powerless against this."[13] Clearly, this does not relate to children in a contemporary conceptual construction.

There is also a key difference concerning the youth's biological sex. When children were born to Athenian and Roman families, a clear gendered hierarchy existed. As early twentieth century linguistics scholar Eugene McCartney notes, "the arrival of a boy was so much more welcome than that of a girl…"[14] The preference of males over females paralleled the view of gender in the role of politics during antiquity. The roles of children and the capacity for children to contribute to society were determined by biological sex. Liberal arts and rhetoric scholar

Cheryl Glenn posits, "Athenian women neither attended schools nor participated in the *polis*."[15] Males dominated the role of politician in antiquity. Not just any male, however, could serve in the politics of the city. Glenn further notes, "only aristocratic male citizens, equal in their *homonia* (being of one mind), argued for civic and political *arête,* the essential principle of government—a democratic oligarchy [original emphasis]."[16] In antiquity, both biological sex and class determined what type of socialization a child would receive.

When looking to the characterization of youth in antiquity, both physical and intellectual levels of maturity determined when a child was no longer a child, but instead, a man. Both the intellectual and physical development of the body "awaken[ed] at the age of 14."[17] But even "youth" could still be considered "children." Religious studies scholar Michael Stoeber describes Phaedrus—a child—as "a rather romantic and unassuming youth who is sincere and naïve."[18] This example illustrates how young people who have not intellectually matured could still be considered children and in need of adult care, much like Socrates cared for and socialized Phaedrus.

While many years elapsed in the characterization of children after antiquity, a prominent change arises when considering children in the Middle Ages (fifth to fifteenth centuries AD). Many of the socially accepted gender and patriarchal distinctions of antiquity remained. Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, scholars in Medieval History, postulate that a father would take a primary role "in 'raising up' the newborn if it were a boy, or in ordering the she be taken to the breast if it were a girl."[19] The need to prepare children for contributions to society, however, took a different form from that of antiquity. Children of the Middle Ages entered the workforce relatively early, as "entering the world of work at a young age represented, in some way, security for life."[20] Grooming children for work at an early age "began, first of all, with toys designed for children" and gradually progressed to "playful imitation" of his or her adult

counterparts as a way to prepare for adulthood.[21] Children were even mentioned as having some form of legal agency, as "Even before the age of five," children could function "as a credible witness of commercial transactions."[22] As a result, children matriculated out of childhood at age twelve.[23] The concepts of balancing work and play characterized children in the Middle Ages, as they were constantly "surrounded with affection and [were] carefully educated" mostly by Christianity.[24] Childhood in the Middle Ages, then, became a social construct to view young humans as future members of society that required a balance of work and play to prepare them for the rigors of adulthood.

In sixteenth and seventeenth century France, the Huguenots—Protestant followers of Calvinism—believed it was their duty to God to educate, care for, and socialize children. Jane Couchman, humanities and women's studies scholar, posits Huguenots believed "God's grace and election, which can neither be merited nor rejected, were essential to the survival and the salvation of children. They also believed that parents were responsible for bringing up the children," as seen in Proverbs 22:6.[25] This part of Calvinism placed a moral obligation on parents to educate children in the ways of the church in order to lead children on a path of righteousness. Here too occurs a social difference between boys and girls, albeit less so than in antiquity or the Middle Ages. For boys, the education of a child was seen as both a mix of encouraging personal inclination and talents and allowing boys to learn by imitation of others.[26] Boys were taught to simultaneously observe and express themselves. The socialization of girls was a bit more rigid. While they were trained for their roles of wives and mothers, girls were taught arithmetic and foreign languages in order to be prepared for a presence "on the national and international stage."[27] Children of sixteenth and seventeenth century France, while receiving different types of education, were still constructed as young people who needed guidance and socialization.

The Victorian Era brought with it a different perspective on the concept of childhood. In addition to guidance, children were seen as the embodiment of innocence. Children were often "used as symbols of purity in a world which was becoming increasingly ugly and materialistic."[28] Because of this, children could experience the sweet domesticity of life "under a benign paterfamilias and an indulgent mother."[29] With spoiling, however, also came discipline in the form of social distance from parents and the possibility of boarding school.[30] Nonetheless, children were viewed as sacred and "unsullied by worldly corruption."[31] The protection of children, therefore, was of the utmost importance. Children's furniture, such as "the crib, high chair, swing, and perambulator all served as barriers between the child and the adult world" so children could be isolated and shielded from the evils and perverseness that live there.[32]

Victorian Era governments also played an influential role in the care for and socialization of children. The creation of child protection laws in the UK, such as the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act of 1889, spawned organizations like the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).[33] Organizations like this were often "entwined with a moral commitment to give rights to children in 'every place' and to raise each child to its 'rightful place in the State.'"[34] Not only were children characterized as individuals with specific rights, those rights were legally protected by the government. In turn, the care of children became not only the responsibility of parents and/or guardians, but of the State as well. Another form of protection came with the mass production of toys aimed as socializing children. Because "Victorian toys were profoundly didactic objects, meant to reinforce notions of gender roles, moral values, and a strong sense of nationalistic pride," adults could use toys to protect children from other worldly ideologies that might interfere with their own.[35] Victorian toys reinforced dominant cultural ideals in order to protect children from the perceived invasion of "Other" cultures.

Around this time, however, Sigmund Freud published his work on the sexuality of

children that countered the Victorian conceptualization of children. Freud argued that newborn

children contain "the germs of sexual feelings which continue to develop for some time and then

succumb to a progressive suppression, which is in turn broken" through sexual advances.[36] Freud

characterized children as sexual beings, and, therefore, *not* wholly the Victorian symbols of

purity and innocence. The protection of children brought about psychic dams—loathing, shame,

and morality—that more than likely stemmed from education and socialization practices.[37] These

dams, in turn, did not allow children to develop in a sexual manner.

Some twentieth century practices of the socialization of children sought to negotiate

Freud's findings with many Victorian beliefs. Martha Wolfenstein, a mid-twentieth century

author and contemporary of Margaret Mead, documents the evolution of child rearing in the

early to mid twentieth century. In 1914, the *Infant Care* bulletin characterized children as

"endowed with strong and dangerous impulses," such as thumb sucking or masturbating.[38]

Parents, in turn, needed to be vigilant of their child's behavior in order to stop these forms of

play and pleasure. The 1945 version of the same publication, however, constructed a new

approach: one that characterized children as vessels who need play or fun. Wolfenstein notes,

"[w]here formerly there was felt to be danger that, in seeking fun, one might be carried away into

the depths of wickedness, today there is a recognizable fear that one may not be able to let go

sufficiently, that one may not have enough fun."[39] Children, then, were encouraged to have fun

in their daily lives. Wolfenstein's examination of the shift of child-rearing practices raises some

interesting questions regarding society's understanding of childhood.

Contemporary children, however, are exposed to all sorts of "fun" through media. Many

opinions surround children and their interactions with media. Professor of media studies Máire

Messenger Davies notes the two most common opinions are 1) children can either be besmirched

or harmed by media or 2) children can use media outlets to cognitively thrive and grow.[40] Either way, children are seen as a product of their mediated experiences. Considering these two popular perspectives, Davies offers an alternative explanation for viewing children not as products of the media they consume, but as *people* who need cultural experiences that take children seriously.[41] Children are not necessarily the problem. The lack of media designed for children, to children, and even by children could essentially equate to the next phase of the evolution of childhood. A contemporary time calls for a contemporary way to socialize children.

The advancement of cosmopolitan constructions of children serves such a purpose. While cosmopolitanism focuses on the sense that the world is a larger place and that we all play a part in that place, children are becoming more intertwined into cosmopolitan efforts. Professor of curriculum and instruction Thomas Popkewitz notes, "Cosmopolitanism brings into focus the politics of knowledge in the production of the self and the world, with notions of childhood and family as governing practices."[42] Children learn about the intricacies of the world through childhood and the role a family plays in constructing that childhood. The family, then, can function as the unit that assigns similarities and differences between themselves and others. More importantly, a cosmopolitan approach illustrates "comparative installations that differentiate and divide those who are enlightened and civilized from those who do not have those qualities—the backward, the savage, and the barbarian of the 19th century and the at-risk and delinquent child of the present."[43] Cosmopolitanism's relationship to children can simultaneously accept and reject different cultural and social constructions of childhood.

Children's Books as Socializing Tools

A common way adults attempt to socialize children is through the use of children's books. Eve Bearne, a children's literature research associate at Cambridge, notes, "when we tell stories to children we want to enthrall and transport them into the world of imagination, but we

also want them to learn about how life should be lived."[44] Contemporary children's books often come in the form of a metanarrative, or "a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience."[45] Metanarratives function as a way to organize and rationalize the morals and lessons prescribed by a children's book through a cultural lens, as metanarratives "serve to initiate children into aspects of social heritage, transmitting many of a culture's central values and assumptions and body of shared allusions and experiences."[46] As John Stephens and Robyn McCallum posit, "children's literature attempts…to cultivate ethical and cultural values which would function as a replacement for or surrogate of older forms of socially inscribed transcendent meaning."[47] Children's books—functioning as metanarratives— posses the ability to not only expose cultural norms to children, but can also explain why those norms *are* the norms for a given culture or society. As a result, children's books serve as an avenue for examining the concept of childhood.

One such children's book that acts as a metanarrative to frame children as cultural subjects is *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* (2003). In this book, Kathleen Krull tells the story of Cesar Chavez, beginning with his life as a small child. Readers are introduced to Chavez's life in Arizona, where "[young] Cesar thought the whole world belonged to his family."[48] When the family was forced to move to California for work, the family experienced "landowners treat[ing] their workers more like farm tools than human beings."[49] This part of the metanarrative challenges the preconceived norms of childhood, as both Cesar and his siblings were forced to work in the fields. It also implies larger cultural qualities at work, like workers' rights and labor laws. Cesar, eventually, uses these brutal working conditions to conduct a "long, peaceful march" aimed at raising awareness of workers' rights. In the end, "students, public officials, religious leaders, and citizens from everywhere offered help." The experience of Chavez through this book explains and orders cultural occurrences for children. Instead of a

child simply asking parents why someone would treat another person in a negative way, metanarratives can function to arrange cultural phenomena in a storytelling way. In turn, the ethical values present in a children's book become inscribed, as children can read the book multiple times.

One distinguishable facet of a metanarrative is that it possesses the ability to be interpreted to embody the "cultural significance perceived or assumed" in a narrative event.[50] Because diverse understandings may stem from different readers, children's narratives functioning as metanarratives contain polysemy. Rhetorical critic Leah Ceccarelli defines polysemy as "the existence of determinate but nonsingular denotational meanings" of a specific text.[51] Texts—narratives included—contain a finite, yet differentiated, number of interpretations that can be uncovered when a reader interprets the text. When reading the word "play," one child may think of swinging on a swing while another child may think of jumping rope. Both interpretations are feasible, yet different. The concept of "time out," however, would not likely be considered "play" and may not be a valid interpretation.

This brief examination of the evolution of childhood has shown that several social and political factors, including children's books as metanarratives, influence how society views and understands the concept of childhood. Because of the many socially constructed aspects surrounding childhood, I believe the construction of childhood will be an essential part to answering my guiding research questions.

Children's Literature

In order to address the nature of contemporary children's books, I will present a brief history of children's books in order to contextualize my study. While this list is not exclusive, it highlights crucial moments in the evolution of literature for children. Children have been listening to and learning from stories since antiquity, where the closest thing representing

children's tales were myths. Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim posits that Plato noted the importance of myth making for children because myths were "intellectual experiences that make for true humanity."[52] While some parents in antiquity only wanted their children exposed to stories of real people, myths served as a way to form the personality of a child because they provided insight into human behavior.[53] A child reader could emulate the hero in a myth, because the mythic hero operated as a guiding force for how to appropriately act in society.[54] These myths were essentially teaching tools. Even a rhetorical education in antiquity consisted of incorporating myths to reveal the amount of influence children could wield over future societies.[55] Myths outlined a set of principles or guidelines for how to become an active and influential citizen.

The first era of what somewhat resembles contemporary children's literature occurred in the seventeenth century, where children's literature fell into one of two categories: "material that was intended specially for children or young people but was not story, and the material that was story but was not meant specially for children," or educational books for children and novels for adults.[56] William Caxon "published *The Book of Courtesye* [sic]" in 1479, which served as the archetype for books used in schools and centered on teaching manners and morals.[57] "The courtesy books had put the emphasis on civilized behavior, but as the Puritan influence grew the stress fell more heavily on religion and morals."[58] The ABC book of the time was the hornbook, a "convenient and relatively indestructible form of presenting the alphabet (followed by a syllabary, invocation to the Trinity, and the Lord's Prayer)" and was used from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.[59] The focus and purpose of these books revolved around the notions that children were souls in need of saving or else they were to be damned; mostly, these books were stories of pious children who, after dying young, were saved through their diligent prayer.[60] In

colonial America, Caxon's work influenced the *New England Primer* (*c.* 1687), which was "a combined ABC [book] and catechism."[61]

Some influential figures surrounding early constructions of children's literature surfaced around this time. Political philosopher John Locke penned *Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), where he outlined his famous principle of *tabula rasa*, or how a child's mind at birth was akin to "a blank page on which lessons were to be impressed."[62] Locke posited there was a dearth of children's books, and that Aesop's *Fables* (*c.* 600 BC) was "the only book almost that [he knew] fit for children."[63] Locke's recognition of this absence ushered in a new era for children's literature: an era focused on designing books specifically for children.

Mass publication of books designed with children in mind started around the 1740s. A pioneer in children's publishing was John Newbery, who published *Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (1744) as a book designed for children to carry around in order to track their good and bad behavior.[64] This book, which "contained pictures, rhymes, and games," answered Locke's call for teaching children by play instead of by punishment.[65] Newbery, who published around thirty children's titles, is the name-bearer for the American Library Association's John Newbery Award, which is bestowed upon "the most distinguished children's book of the year."[66] Political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau was also an influential figure in this era. Unlike Locke and Newbery, Rousseau advocated for children to *not* read children's books, as he was "all for naturalness and simplicity, the language of the heart, the ideal of the Noble Savage."[67] Rousseau countered influential contemporaries of his time by urging children to be adventurous and refrain from moral teachings until the age of fifteen.[68] While conflicting opinions surrounding children's literature existed, progress had been made; the general public and influential voices were addressing the topic of children's literature.

The Victorian Era serves as yet another influential historical moment for children's literature. The gender distinction between men and women—with men focused on work and pleasure and women viewed in the home and submissive—were reflected in books for boys and books for girls. [69] For boys, children's books of the Victorian Era consisted of adventure and a life of action, stemming from *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Sir Walter Scott novels, such as *Ivanhoe* (1819).[70] In America, the Victorian influence on boys' literature spawned *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), which "showed that adventure did not have to be sought at the other side of the world; it was as near as your own backyard."[71] For girls, children's books functioned "to glamorize, to make more acceptable and less narrow, the circumscribed life of the virtuous girl and woman."[72] The main canonical pieces were Elizabeth Wetherell's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868). Even though *Little Women* is an American story, the character Jo March "sets the fictional pattern for American girlhood in the later nineteenth century" through "the more-or-less willing acceptance that lively girls must grow into sweet submissive women."[73] Even in America, Victorian gender roles found their way into children's literature.

One of the most prominent schoolbooks of the Victorian Era was the McGuffey Reader. While not necessarily a children's book akin to the books previously listed, the McGuffey Readers sold more than 122 million copies with "about half [of that total] between 1870 and 1890."[74] Excerpts from the books illustrate rudimentary, yet effective, teaching techniques through repetition and arrangement of words:

a boy I see
boy I see a boy
I see a boy

girl can and the girl
I see a girl.
I see a boy.

I see a boy and a girl.
The boy can see the girl.
I can see the girl and the boy.
I can see the girl.[75]

The McGuffey Readers were "a revolutionary force in elementary school teaching because they humanized [the teaching of reading]."[76] By placing child readers within the text (boy and girl), the McGuffey Readers appeared to be speaking to children about children. In a way, the McGuffey Readers paralleled the humanistic qualities of children presented by the Victorian Era.

A shocking change to American children's literature as a whole came in the 1920s after Freud's idea "that a child *was not* sexually innocent" and thus "no longer an appropriate mirror or an ideal for a society."[77] This revelation, paired with the combination of two world wars during the early to mid twentieth century, allowed children's literature to evolve to meet an audience growing "not directly toward adulthood but toward the new intervening status" of the teenage years.[78] The emergence of the young-adult (YA) novel challenges the relationship between adults and children, as "adults felt less sure that they knew best" and children "were not automatically inclined to listen" to adults.[79] Children's literature of this era—with its new YA persona—is best summed up in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Beverley Cleary's *Fifteen* (1956), and S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* (1967). These books showcase children "not much impressed by their elders or in any hurry to achieve acceptance of adults."[80] As the concept of the "child" became unclear, children's literature was forced to transform as well.

During the boom of YA literature, books designed for younger children—that is, children clearly younger than a YA audience—utilized more pictures and illustrations. The evolution of the children's picture book shifted to a style of storytelling that primarily utilized pictures that formed a whole story; "from its beginning to its end," a picture book creates "character and place, [and] the evocation of atmosphere, as functions of storytelling."[81] In the classroom, the

Curriculum Foundation Series, better known as the "Dick and Jane" books (*c.* 1940), illustrated the shift from an emphasis on word development to an emphasis on sight. These books "largely dismissed phonics in favor of the 'look-say' method of teaching reading: the editors expected students to recognize words and phrases at a single glance" as opposed to the McGuffey approach of phonetically sounding out words.[82] One of the famous lines from these texts is "See Spot Run. Run, Spot, Run!" The images in the textbooks also emphasized the shift in children's literature to a more visual style, as the children in the books "were well dressed and scrubbed, mothers appeared mostly in aprons, and fathers were seen coming and going from work."[83] The emphasis on illustrations in educational texts of the early post-war era served as a catalyst for children's picture books as a whole.

Popular children's books also reflected the shift toward an emphasis on illustrations. One of the most influential children's picture book authors of the post-war era, Maurice Sendak, wrote and illustrated *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) and *In the Night Kitchen* (1970). Through a combination of both text and colorful illustrations, these books revolve around the similar theme of how children can master their feelings, such as "anger, boredom, fear, frustration, [and] jealousy," in order to understand how to control their emotions.[84] Similarly, Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express* (1985) illustrates the nature of picture book storytelling through tone and scene, as the "soft-focus double-page spreads convey an appropriate sense of mystery and dream."[85] The storytelling facets of the children's picture book created a genre of children's literature specifically for children who had not reached the age threshold of YA literature.

Traditional children's picture books utilize conventions of children's narratives to "attempt to position readers" into a predetermined audience construct.[86] The audience is captive and potentially accepts the messages presented in the traditional children's book as normal. This

is not the case with the postmodern picture book. Postmodern children's texts knowingly and purposefully draw attention to traditional narrative conventions in order to challenge the established meaning of traditional narrative customs.[87] Postmodern narratives alter space, time, voice, and characters. Even the structure of the books themselves breaks the rules of traditional children's narratives.[88] Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (1989) retells the common *Thee Little Pigs* story, but from the perspective of the Big Bad Wolf, thus altering the perception and reception of the traditional characters in the traditional tale. Postmodern children's books allow readers to question the subject matter of children's books or even the social rules presented in traditional children's books.

While the above assessment is not extensive, it does provide a context for measuring the evolution of children's books in order to better comprehend the children's books of today. This history can work to uncover the trends and subtleties in children's literature that will aid in answering the aforementioned research questions.

Critical Approaches to Children's Literature

Criticism of children's literature primarily focuses on ascertaining the nature of the child and how to select appropriate children's texts for children. Humanities scholar Jacqueline Rose examines *Peter Pan* (1902) as a case study in order to "trace the fantasy which lies behind the concept of children's fiction."[89] The fantasy perpetuated by children's literature is that children's literature "sets up the child as an outsider to its own process"; the child is often not considered when a book is designed and created for children.[90] For Rose, the main problem is the absence or recognition of children as a viable audience. Stories, such as *Peter Pan*, create a sexual and political mystification surrounding the child.[91] Children, therefore, are characterized as innocent readers through both the language found in children's texts and the construction of childhood.[92] Depicting children as innocent presents problems for the scholarship of children's literature.

19

Peter Hunt, a leading scholar in children's literature, builds on Rose's recognition of this problem concerning the characterization of readers of children's literature. The issue, Hunt acknowledges, is that both child and adult readers are innocent because they "either know nothing of decontextualizing reading or literary value systems or cannot understand the point of them, seeing them as illogical or threatening."[93] Hunt, then, uses "childist" literary criticism and theory to explore "how meaning is made from a text and the problems specific to, or best demonstrated by, children's books."[94] Hunt's form of criticism, however, "attempts to recommend the best sources to which readers [of children's literature] can go."[95] Essentially, Hunt directs readers to what he deems "good" children's books. While his foundational principles are intriguing, Hunt's criticism does not quite explain the critical nature of children's texts themselves.

Roderick McGillis, former president of the Children's Literature Association, furthers Hunt's approach to this criticism by characterizing children's literature as a concept-forming tool. Children's literature is not like adult literature. Adult readers are "happy in [their] ignorance" that imposes itself through traditional adult literature.[96] Children, however, should become "active, self-aware readers" in order to "bring an end to their innocence."[97] One way to accomplish this is by exposing children to books that will help develop their personalities. Children, McGillis argues, "exhibit both conservative and subversive tendencies."[98] The main avenue for further exploring the child, then, is to find good books—books that encourage reading and interpreting—that address these tendencies, for "good books make us better people."[99] While he notes the importance of children's books to the development of the child, McGillis follows Hunt's lead of using criticism to direct children to what both authors deem "good" books.

But what makes a "good" children's book? Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, Director of the Centre for International Research in Childhood: Literature, Culture, Media (CIRCL) at the

University of Reading, posits that criticism of children's literature "does not rest on—or re-introduce at some point, overtly or indirectly—the real child, and a wider real of which it is a part."[100] Lesnik-Oberstein advocates for literary criticism that analyzes children's narratives and how those narratives can be understood in order to "contribute better to thinking through one's own actions and meanings."[101] The goal of children's literary criticism should not be to typify the child; the goal should be to look at narratives written for children and to examine ways those narratives communicate social and cultural norms to children.

An examination of the communicative nature of narrative elements in children's literature, then, becomes crucial. A common way children's narratives communicate is through characters worthy of emulation. Folklorist Vladimir Propp notes that, in contemporary folktales, the figure(s) of emulation take on the role of *dramatis personae*, or the main characters within the tale. The functions of the *dramatis personae* comprise the basic components of the tale: the actions or events the *personae* complete or achieve.[102] The functions "serve as stable, constant elements in a tale" no matter which *personae* fulfill those functions.[103] If a warrior treks across a countryside to save a damsel in distress, or a princess wittingly outsmarts the force trying to cause her harm, the actions of those characters serve as functions. The functions of the *dramatis personae* in contemporary children's tales exemplify discourse or action worthy of emulation.

There is another important facet of the *dramatis personae*. These characters do not merely act for the sake of action; motivations drive *personae* actions. Motivations consist of the "reasons and aims" of the character(s) in the tale that cause those characters to instigate action.[104] Motivations, however, "represent an element less precise and definite than [the characters'] functions."[105] This notion constructs *dramatis personae* as more than just main characters; the *dramatis personae* represent motivated actors. The motivations of the *dramatis personae* in children's books, however, are not always clear. The questions of "Why did the warrior save the

damsel?" or "For what reasons did the princess outwit her oppressors?" concern motivation and may not always be apparent to an audience of children.

In order to uncover the motivations of *dramatis personae* in children's books, readers must identify with the text. Kenneth Burke characterizes identification as "*acting-together*" to uncover "common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, [and] attitudes."[106] Only through identification can the audience(s) of a children's book uncover the text's ideology—the kind of criticism for which Karín Lesnik-Oberstein calls. Maurice Charland constructs the notion of constitutive rhetoric, where a text reveals unifying ideological aspects to a specific community.[107] In turn, members of that community identify with each other in similar ideological ways. Media and cultural studies scholar Lawrence Grossberg characterizes constitutive rhetoric in fan cultures when he notes, "[popular culture texts] construct relatively stable moments of identity."[108] Rhetorical documents, such as children's books, also produce a constitutive rhetoric that creates an ideological community to which readers can identify.

Children's books create constitutive communities via narratives, because "narratives 'make real' coherent subjects" that situate readers who identify with the narrative in a textual position *within* the narrative.[109] The children's narrative "'transforms' the individuals into subjects" through interpellation, or hailing into existence.[110] In essence, narratives have the power to construct an ideology and unite audiences because readers can identify with the motivations of the characters. Narratives work this way because the text makes the identification between the characters and readers "*seem* real [original emphasis]."[111] Constitutive narratives, however, do more than merely create identification among readers; a constitutive narrative also "demands action."[112] As Charland describes, "the subject is constrained to *follow through,* to act so as to maintain the narrative's consistency [original emphasis]."[113] Forming identification between the characters of a narrative and the readers of a narrative "transcends the limitations of

the individual body and will."[114] The narrative calls upon the constitutive group to unite as a group and act as a group.

Children's literature contains such constitutive narratives. Because they construct identification between characters and readers, children's books encourage readers to act as the characters act. Because children can identify with characters in a children's book to potentially obtain the norms of a society or culture, constitutive children's narratives function as a form of metanarrative. The parable is one such form of children's tale that creates identification and promotes action. As storytelling scholar William Kirkwood notes, parables act "primarily to instruct, guide, or influence" those who read the text or hear the text orally.[115] Parables, like most children's tales, contain lessons on how to act in order to identify with society. Children's tales encapsulate the concept of identification of children as members of a society, for children are "made through texts and tales he or she studied, heard, and told back."[116] In the constitutive rhetoric formula, children are encouraged to identify with characters—and, vicariously, society—to subsequently act in accordance with social norms, thus fulfilling the expectations of the constitutive narrative.

Children's literature, however, presents an interesting dilemma. Children rarely experience narratives as individual entities; oftentimes, adults read with children. As a result, adult readers can complement child readers during the constitutive process of reading. Reader response theorist Louise M. Rosenblatt argues that a text and readers of that text form a "live circuit," which "infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his [or her] thoughts and feelings."[117] Her theory contains three contentions. First, humans link symbols (in this case, words and illustrations) to language, which is socially influenced and evolved.[118] Second, teachers of literature "foster fruitful interactions— or, more precisely, transactions—between individual readers and individual literary texts."[119]

Finally, the relationship between readers and symbols is a "constructive, selective process over time in a particular context" that "proceeds in a to-and-fro spiral, in which each is continually being affected by what the other has contributed."[120] The unique constitutive nature of children's texts warrants a unique reader-response approach, as that approach can potentially account for the socializing roles within the text and within the act of reading with others.

Previous criticism has opened a lacuna in the research surrounding children's literature. A charge has been made to examine children's texts not for how those texts relate to children, but how those texts (and the settings in which the text are read) *interact* with children. An examination of the children's book *A is for Activist* could help further research in children's literature by analyzing the narrative functions of a children's text and how those functions contribute to the socialization and politicization of children. My study, then, seeks to add a rhetorically-based heuristic level to the study of children's literature.

Methodology

This thesis will utilize a mixed methodological approach. Because Maurice Charland posits the "ideological 'trick' of [constitutive] rhetoric is that it presents that which is most rhetorical, the existence of a [people], or of a subject, as extrarhetorical," the people influenced by a piece of rhetoric are often viewed as being outside the rhetoric.[121] With children's books, however, readers may be presently inside the narrative and outside the narrative simultaneously. Child readers can read the book but can also be situated outside the rhetoric of the children's book when those child readers discuss the book with adult readers. To uncover the answers to my research questions, I will combine Charland's constitutive rhetoric and Rosenblatt's reader response theory into a multi methodological hybrid in order to delve deep into the ways children's books allow for interaction between text and reader(s). When Rosenblatt's reader response theory is combined with Charland's constitutive rhetoric, both child and adult readers

are hailed into different reading roles; the "teacher" of literature can be viewed as the adult and the "student" as the child. Because children do not have as many meaning-making experiences as adults, children may require the input of an adult guide to foster "meaning-full" transactions throughout the reading of children's texts in order to help children understand the human condition. In turn, children's books allow for a dual readership to be constituted in order to socialize children.

Chapter Overview

This chapter has examined abridged histories of childhood, children's books, and relevant criticism in order to situate this study within the field of Communication Studies. The remainder of this analysis will be conducted in three chapters. Chapter Two will examine *A is for Activist* to explore how contemporary children's ABC books create a site of focalization for adult and child readers. Because some contemporary ABC books may not contain a clear point of focalization, I will explore ways the text and illustrations contained in ABC books can provide readers with a space in which to discuss the cultural and social projections of the book. Chapter Three will examine former Second Lady Lynne Cheney's book *America: A Patriotic Primer* (2002) in order to uncover how the text, images, representations of children, and multiple audiences of children's books with different political agendas can contribute to the socialization of children. I chose this book as a counterbalancing case study because the political orientation in relationship to *A is for Activist* allows me to uncover strategies of political framing at work in children's ABC books. Chapter Four will examine implications derived from the previous two chapters. Mainly, this chapter will seek out the role children's books play (or can play) in characterizing children as politicized members society. The final chapter will also conclude with limitations, overall conclusions, and areas for further research.

CHAPTER II: R IS FOR REARING READERS AND REALIZING RESPONSES

In this chapter, I begin to seek answers to my first two research questions: "What are the intended audiences for children's books?" and "How do the narrative, literary, and/or illustrative devices/tactics found in children's books speak to those intended audiences?" To explore both of these questions, I posit that contemporary ABC books, such as *A is for Activist*, use literary devices that construct and speak to an audience of both child and adult readers, foster a focalized dialogue between those readerships through the act of reading the text together, and, through the creation of that focalized dialogue, allow those readers to respond to the text in a phenomenological way. The result, then, is that some children's texts act as an outline for the socializing discussions adult and child readers co-construct together. Those discussions are, in essence, the active socializing factors of children's books. To further explore the proposed answers to these research questions, I will first outline how a conversation between adult and child readers in a contemporary ABC book functions as a site of focalization. Next, I will examine the ways *A is for Activists* acknowledges both child and adult readers through the use of textual and illustrative phenomenological metaphors. Finally, I will explore how those phenomenological metaphors outlined in the text allow for child and adult readers to begin to respond to the text in a phenomenologically socializing way.

Phenomenology and Focalization

Phenomenology is the study of structures that form experience and consciousness in humans. These structures can range from everyday interactions, to life-changing events, and even to actions that create self-awareness. The act of reading, then, functions as a site of phenomenology. As Wolfgang Iser describes, "The phenomenological theory of art lays full stress on the idea that, in considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the

actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text."[122]

When people read a newspaper, magazine article, journal article, or book, the actual text relays information to the reader. In turn, the reader responds to the text by absorbing the content to shape his or her experiences and/or consciousness. Iser further claims that a literary work has two poles "which we might call the artistic and the esthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the esthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader."[123] Both the text itself and the act of reading and interpreting present "a sort of kaleidoscope of perspectives, preintentions, [and] recollections" with which readers can interact.[124] The phenomenological value of reading can be found through both a text and the ways in which readers respond to that text.

In literary works, readers often respond to a text through a site of focalization. Gérard Genette argues that readers constantly negotiate the mood and voice of a literary work to uncover "the question *who sees?* and the question *who speaks?*"[125] Readers inherently ask these rhetorical questions to themselves to identify with and attach to a focalizing character or characters. A focalizing character embodies and exhibits the mood and voice of a literary work and provides phenomenological cues for readers to absorb or reject into their own consciousness. In Maurice Sendak's *Where The Wild Things Are*, Max—a wild, adventurous, and imaginative boy— functions as the focalizing character. The text tells the story of how, after being sent to his room for being wild around his house, Max mysteriously enters the land of the Wild Things, a group of creatures with seemingly no order. Because he is "wilder" than the Wild Things, Max becomes king of the land. After he has had his fun, however, Max decides to return back home to find supper waiting for him. In response to the text, readers can interpret Max as the focalizing character because the story conveys events through Max's experiences (*who sees* and *who*

speaks). Readers can relate to Max's experiences and can translate those occurrences into their own consciousness.

The site of self-actualization and embodiment *for the reader*, however, is difficult to identify. While the focalizing character functions as a site for phenomenological experiences, Iser postulates that "convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual."[126] Marco Caracciolo, however, conceptualizes that readers embody the experiences of a focalized character through phenomenological metaphors, or "metaphors that are meant to convey the phenomenology of a character's experience."[127] Specifically, Caracciolo propses that the stylistic devices used by an author both in the general narrative and about the focalized character "can guide a recipient's engagement with fictional beings."[128] In essence, readers of a narrative can internalize and respond to a text through the experiences of a focalized character in the text, either through the eyes of that character or the stylistic devices employed by the author when constructing a text surrounding that character. In *Where The Wild Things Are*, Max, who wears his wolf costume, exclaims to his mother "I'LL EAT YOU UP!"[129] In a paralleling use of irony, the next line reads "so he was sent to bed without eating anything."[130] Readers can employ the author's use of a stylistic device (irony) functioning as a phenomenological metaphor to recall a time when they might have been scolded by a parent. In turn, those readers may sympathize with Max. Another reader who may not have had a clash with his or her parents could interpret this phenomenological metaphor as a warning or cautionary tale that conveys the potential consequences of talking back to an adult. This example of irony illustrates how authors create phenomenological metaphors that allow for "almost unmediated access to the conscious experience of focalizing characters" so readers can experience "the storyworld *through* his or her [own] consciousness [original emphasis]."[131] Phenomenological metaphors function to help

identify the site of phenomenological internalization in readers, either through a focalizing character or author-generated literary devices.

Focalization, however, is not always evident in some literary works. Angela Yannicopoulou identifies these types of stories as nonfocalized stories, or narratives that present "a story without points of view for the characters."[132] Yannicopoulou further contends, "The characters remain focal points and are never focalizers. In cases of nonfocalization (or zero-focalization), the narrative presents the story events from a completely unrestricted point of view."[133] In this case, the focalizing point may not necessarily tie to a specific character within the text. To negotiate an absence of a clear focalizing character, Henrik Skov Nielsen notes that focalization, even zero focalization, still addresses "the separation of mood and voice…[and is] connected to a no-narrator thesis."[134] That is, points of focalization "are attributable not to a fact-reporting narrator but rather to a fictional world-creating author."[135] The world the author creates through the text acts as the site of focalization for readers.

Many children's picture books, then, appear as prime exemplars of a nonfocalized story. Children's picture books often rely on the construction of an author-created world that manifests itself through both text and images/illustrations. As Yannicopoulou notes of children's picture books, "narrated words can't completely objectify characters and facts, nor can illustrations reveal them, words and pictures together present the narrated description and the illustrated reality as equally unquestioned and confident."[136] The combination of both illustrations and text works to depict an author-created reality that functions as a site for focalization readers can phenomenologically use. Not all children's picture books are examples of nonfocalized stories. In numerous children's picture books, the text and illustrations can function as stand-alone stories that signal clear points of focalization; *Where The Wild Things Are* is an example. What my analysis tries to uncover is how an author-created world in a nonfocalized children's picture

book can still function as a phenomenologically socializing text *without* an overtly clear site of focalization.

As stated in the previous chapter, ABC books typically present a letter of the alphabet on a page and surround that letter with text and images relating to that letter. Emer O'Sullivan notes, however, that contemporary ABC books have shifted from "a traditional, epistemological model in which language is a way of knowing reality, to a more performative, ontological model in which it is recognized as a vehicle for actively constructing this reality."[137] Because contemporary ABC books often function as a vehicle for readers to construct a reality, ABC books appear to possess phenomenological levels somewhat akin to traditional narratives. In most examples of ABC books, however, a clear narrative plot does not weave itself through the entire book. Each page of the book that corresponds with an individual letter of the alphabet, however, does appear to contain its own individual narrative. As a whole, an ABC book can represent an atypical narrative that parallels "unnatural narratology and allow[s] for unnaturalizing reading strategies."[138] ABC books are atypical because those narratives resemble "a subset of fictional narratives that—unlike many realistic and mimetic narratives—cue the reader to employ interpretational strategies that are different from those [he or] she employs in nonfictionalized, conversational storytelling situations."[139] The author-created world in an ABC book, then, exists as individual narratives combined to create a unified whole. Together, the individual narratives of each letter page function to construct a nonfocalized narrative to which readers can phenomenologically relate.

If an atypical narrative, such as a contemporary ABC book, possesses phenomenological characteristics, the site of focalization needs unearthed. O'Sullivan hints at a potential location for this site when he characterizes books of this form:

> As a site for tradition of information, beliefs, and customs, children's literature overtly or latently reflects dominant social and cultural norms, including self-images and images of others. In this respect it has a key function in establishing selfhood for its target audience of children. A secondary function lies in the maintenance of selfhood for the adults who produce, disseminate, and co-read the texts.[140]

In this claim, O'Sullivan alludes that a nonfocalized child's text can reach two different sets of audiences: child readers and adult readers. Both child and adult readers can use a nonfocalized children's picture book to phenomeologically respond to the text and illustrations of an atypical narrative. Typically, in the case of an ABC book, children and adults conduct the act of reading together. Because of this joint reading, I posit that the site of focalization in the atypical narrative of a contemporary ABC book is not located within the parameters of the text itself. The focalizing point, rather, is located in the *focalized dialogue* that child and adult readers construct while reading the text together. As I outlined earlier in this chapter, Iser characterizes the phenomenology of a literary work as containing both an author-created text and readers' responses to that text. In a contemporary ABC book that can seek to ontologically socialize children and adult readers in an attempt to recognize and challenge their perceived realities, the focalizing dialogue between child and adult readers constitutes a reader's response to the text.

Analyzing Focalized Dialogue

In an effort to suggest that the dialogue between child and adult readers of contemporary ABC books functions as a site of focalization, I will turn to Louise M. Rosenblatt's reader-response theory. Rosenblatt characterizes the basis of reader-response theory as a phenomenon where "The reader seeks to participate in another's vision—to reap knowledge of the world, to fathom the resources of the human spirit, to gain insights that will make his [or her] own life more comprehensible."[141] This phenomenological quest for knowledge proceeds through three tenets. First, humans link symbols to socially constructed language. In this case, both a child and

an adult reader can relate the text and images of an ABC book to socially constructed language. Second, teachers of literature foster interactions between readers and texts. In this setting, the adult in the child/adult reading dyad assumes the role of literature teacher. Third, the relationship between symbols and readers changes over time. Child and adult readers may experience life events that will change their relationships to the symbols originally presented within the ABC book. These three tenets will help suggest that the focalized dialogue between child and adult—through the joint act of reading—functions as the site of focalization in a contemporary ABC book.

As O'Sullivan illustrates, contemporary ABC books overtly serve such a purpose, as children's books function as a form of socialization in order to make children's lives more comprehensible. This conceptualization of the role of reader also alludes to Popkewitz's cosmopolitan construction of childhood, where children are a small piece of the larger functioning world. Because readers read to participate with others (i.e., authors or other readers), "the literary experience has immediacy and emotional persuasiveness" that can reveal insights into reader's own lives.[142] Thus, the focalized dialogue between child and adult readers warrants examination concerning readers' phenomenological quest for knowledge and understanding of the world.

Readers of *A is for Activist*

To illustrate how a focalized dialogue between both child and adult readers functions as a site of focalization in a contemporary ABC book, I will examine the book *A is for Activist* for both the author-constructed phenomenological metaphors (i.e. stylistic devices present in the text and illustrations) and the ways those devices invite the child/adult reading dyad to construct a focalizing dialogue as a response to the literary text. In this way, the author-created world can consist on two levels: the world found within the confines of *A is for Activist* as outlined by the

book's author, and the reader response world of the child/adult reading dyad, where both the child and adult function as co-authors of a focalized dialogue. To uncover how phenomenological metaphors impact both levels of authorship, I will first explore how the text speaks to child readers. Next, I will examine how the text addresses adult readers. Finally, I will conclude the analysis by exploring how the text invites a joint readership of children and adults to create a focalized dialogue. In turn, both adults and children are invited to share their own differing perspectives in order to foster a focalizing dialogue that functions to phenomenologically socialize both sets of readers.

Child Readers

Throughout the pages of children's books, text and images can expose children to far-away places, strange animals, and socially accepted manners, such as the Great Pyramid of Giza, a crocodile, or sharing. Both the text and images in children's books function as phenomenological metaphors that "may render reality" for children.[143] When considering *A is for Activist*, the first page, "A," starts with the title of the book: "A is for Activist."[144] The words on the individual letter pages in this children's picture book, however, possess meanings that children might not understand. To account for potential misunderstandings, the first page provides phenomenological metaphors in the form of synonyms for the word "activist" that also begin with the letter "A": "advocate," "abolitionist," and "ally."[145] The words "advocate" and "ally" are often associated with securing the rights of the LGBTQ community.[146] Those specific types of activists are precise to the types of rights those activists seek. The synonym "abolitionist" is reminiscent of the rights movements for African American slaves before the Civil War. This book might expose children to activism for the first time. In fact, it is designed to do just that. Some critics might question if children would even know what constitutes activism. While a potentially valid critique, children without exposure to activism can still form an initial

understanding of activism as a multifaceted concept: advocate, ally, and abolitionist. The author-created world of *A is for Activist* exposes children to the concept of activism by not only naming "activist," but through synonyms as well.

Accompanying the words on the "A" page are illustrations that might be able to help children begin to understand the nature of the words on the "A" page. The left side of the page layout contains a large red letter "A" surrounded by illustrations of three different children. One child wears a blue dress. Another child wears a hooded sweatshirt with an apple on it. A third child dons a t-shirt and pants. The illustrations of the children also present differences in eye, hair, and skin color and differences in size. These illustrative phenomenological metaphors have the potential to signal the diversity of other children to the child reader. Child readers can undoubtedly see some reflections of themselves in the illustrations of these children, and, also, reflections of what characteristics child readers *may not* possess. These illustrations allow child readers to respond to *A is for Activist* through association with some illustrations and not associating with others. Child readers may also respond to the text by assigning each illustration of a child to one of the synonyms presented in the words on the page: advocate, abolitionist, or ally. Child readers who might not understand the meanings of the synonyms could, through the representations of three different children, understand that the synonyms relate to different forms of activism. Both the textual words and the illustrations on the "A" page can function as phenomenological metaphors that allow child readers to respond to the book.

In addition to the synonyms for activist and illustrations of children found on the "A" page, the "X" page also contains textual and illustrative phenomenological metaphors that can allow for responses from child readers. The words on the "X" page begin with "X is for Malcolm. As in Malcolm X."[147] These words function as textual phenomenological metaphors concerning the historical figure of Malcolm X through repetition of his name. The right side of

the page depicts an illustration of Malcolm X from a side profile angle. In correlation with the general types of activists listed on the "A" page, the "X" page of *A is for Activist* lists and illustrates a specific activist. Not only can children begin to further conceptualize activists, children can link the word "activist" to a specific representation symbol—the illustration of Malcolm X. Much like mommy may be a "doctor" or daddy might be a "teacher," Malcolm X is an "activist." For child readers, this page situates Malcolm X as a specific activist—the one who is illustrated on the page. The words on the page continue with "Remember Parks. Remember King. Remember Malcolm. And let freedom ring!"[148] Children may not know Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., or Malcolm X. The initial exposure to these activists, however, can function as textual phenomenological metaphors of those activists by utilizing allusion as a literary device. In turn, the text tells a constructed story of the world of activism to child readers, who can then respond to the book through the textual and illustrative phenomenological metaphors. Child readers can read the illustration in conjunction with the words on the page to form a more holistic picture of the Malcolm X symbol.

The "K" page features yet another way the words and illustrations of *A is for Activist* attempt to speak to child readers. On this page, the words of the book say, "Kings are fine for storytime. Knights are fun to play. But when we make decisions, we will choose the people's way!"[149] The words "Kings" and "Knights" are allusions that refer to historical representations of figures that used to rule over people. Simultaneously, these allusions also refer to literary figures that often occur in many children's tales and myths. These words can provide a way for child readers to respond to the book by drawing parallels between history and/or other potential children's books. In this way, child readers can compare and contrast previous encounters with kings and knights with the reference to kings and knights in this book. If child readers have not encountered the references of kings and knights previously, this page could function as an initial

exposure. Child readers can gain further insight into the representations of kings and knights through the accompanying images on the "K" page. The central illustration consists of two children in rudimentary costumes of both a king (or queen in this case) and a knight. The queen figure, coded as a young female child, wears a blue crown atop her head and holds a brown sword in her hand. Behind her is the knight figure, coded as a young male child, who wears a blue knight's helmet (complete with faceguard) and holds a matching blue sword and shield. What is interesting about this representation is that the illustrations of the two children, sans the costumes, situate the children into a contemporary time. The girl has pigtails in her hair, and the boy wears glasses, an athletic jersey, and athletic shorts and shoes. The illustrations on the "K" page appear to reference a concept with which most children are already familiar: play. Placing costumes on oneself is a clear indicator of play, and the words on the page complement this notion: "Knights are fun to play." These representations signal to child readers that the two illustrated children "play" kings and knights. Not only do these illustrative phenomenological metaphors reference kings and knights, they show children at play as well. With the words and illustrations combined, child readers are invited to respond to this page by equating kings and knights as subjects of play. The contemporary representations of the children, however, parallels the last two lines of the words on the page: "But when we make decisions, we will choose the people's way!" This contrast allows for child readers to interpret that kings and knights are representations situated in the past; the contemporary representations of the children are situated in the present. Child readers can respond to these words and images to understand how, in a contemporary time, concepts like democracy are represented as the people's way. The "A", "X", and "K" pages present examples of how *A is for Activist* uses both textual and illustrative phenomenological metaphors to allow for child readers to respond to the book itself.

Adult Readers

While children may appear to be the primary audience of *A is for Activist*, children's

books can acknowledge ancillary audiences as well. Michael Leff and Ebony Utley elaborate on

eavesdropping audiences, or audiences "who are listening even though they are not

addressed."[150] These audiences, while not explicitly spoken to, are just as worthy of attention as

the primary audience. For children's texts, the eavesdropping audience is often the parent(s) or

guardian(s) of the child(ren). The design of many children's texts implies someone reading the

text to children, especially when it comes to contemporary ABC books. When adults read a

children's text with children, the text "appears in quite a different light" than it does to the

children.[151] Adult readers can respond to a children's book in different ways and interpret

different meanings from the phenomenological metaphors in a children's text. An adult reader's

relationship to a text hinges upon an implied power structure present in the text: namely, the

society in which the text was created.[152] *A is for Activist* constructs an eavesdropping audience of

adults through the text because the text acknowledges adult readers' experience with and

inclusion in mainstream society. Because adults are often more experienced readers, they have

the capacity to read words and images separately. I will, therefore, first explore the textual

phenomenological metaphors found in the words of *A is for Activist* and how those words

address adult readers. Then, I will explore how illustrative phenomenological metaphors function

to cause a response from adult readers. While both words and illustrations can (and do) function

together, a deeper analysis will result from separating the two types of phenomenological

metaphors.

A is for Activist contains words that characterize activists or activist movements to reveal

more contemporary causes of activism to adult readers. The "L" page of the book reveals the

notion of LGBTQ rights and calls for readers to "Liberate your notions of Limited emotions.

37

Celebrate with pride, our Links of devotion."[153] These words specifically address adult readers. The word "Liberate" is a command, insinuating that action is necessary in contemporary time. The words also imply that a dominant power structure exists that disenfranchises members of the LGBTQ community. Society's ideological construction of emotions is "limited" and needs expansion to include members of this community. Child readers might not comprehend why people who identify as non-heterosexual would be subject to "Limited emotions." Adult audiences, on the other hand, are likely to be familiar with the struggles for LGBTQ equality in society. The boundaries set by this textual phenomenological metaphor allow for adults to reference contemporary societal occurrences, such as the 2014 United States Supreme Court ruling regarding same-sex marriages. Adults can read this textual phenomenological metaphor in conjunction with real world experiences as a call to action to change the ways mainstream society defines "devotion" and "emotions."

Another representation of activism that references adult readers calls for activists to advocate for renewable energy. The "S" page reads, "S is for Sun, Sol, Solar! Super Star! Stellar Power! Fuels all life, not just flowers. Energized homes, cars, and Showers."[154] The words on the "S" page attempt to give rationale for why contemporary activists need to advocate for solar power. The sun has "Stellar power" that can be used to energize "all life." Since humans are living beings, the "all life" category also includes humans. The references to homes, cars, and showers relate to everyday items most people in society utilize. The text reveals the importance of the sun to adult audiences, as the sun gives power and life to everyday items humans use. Children may not think about energy, the costs of heating a house, or even concepts like a monthly energy bill. The phenomenological metaphors of the sun and solar power appear to speak to adults who use and pay for domesticized necessities. The text assumes adult readers will be familiar with the concept of a home, car, or shower—all items most of us view as part of our

everyday lives. The text invites adults to consider the motivations of activists who fight for renewable energy, especially since those activists will not have to give up the luxuries of a home, car, or shower as part of their activism. In this way, the text speaks to an eavesdropping audience of adults and urges readers to consider their own forms of energy consumption as a response to the text.

A final way the words of *A is for Activist* speak to adult readers is through placing focus directly on "you" as the future of activism. The "Y" page reads, "Y is for You. And Youth."[155] Initially, the word "Youth" could garner the attention of readers. The youth are the future. But the phrase "Y is for You" presents an interesting conundrum. If the "Y" in the book stands for both "You" and "Youth," the listening child (Youth) *and* the adult reader (You) are both explicitly mentioned. This is one part of the book that directly addresses the eavesdropping audience of adult readers. As "Y" comes as the second to last page of the book, the page appears to charge adult readers to ensure the spread of activism to the child reader and/or listener. The page continues, "Your planet. Your rights. Your future. Your truth."[156] This series of phrases makes one wonder to what audience the book is actually referring. The call to action could concern what is at stake for the future of activism. Activist's physical actions could include participating in protests, contacting elected officials, or even taking personal efforts to conserve water. Nevertheless, activists are activists because protecting the planet, rights, the future, and the truth intrinsically motivates them. This page directly addresses the eavesdropping audience by listing motivations of activists, something only adult readers might be able to decipher. The words of *A is for Activist* can function as phenomenological metaphors to which an eavesdropping audience of adult readers can respond.

The book also contains a few illustrative phenomenological metaphors of adults and children together. These representations explicitly depict adults as caretakers and mentors of

children. The "E" page contains a silhouette of an adult female with one fist in the air and her other arm around a female child. The child, also with her fist in the air, is looking at the adult. This page depicts mentorship enacted. Because the child is looking at the adult activist, one interpretation is that the child is seeking approval for her fist-raising. This illustrative phenomenological metaphor could lead adult readers to the realization that he or she may need to take a more active role in mentoring his or her child in the ways of activism. The "N" page contains another representation of an adult actively mentoring a child. This page depicts a protest scene. On this page an adult male holds a child on his shoulders. Both the adult male and the child have one fist clinched and raised in the air. In the child's other hand is a sign that reads "NO WAR" while the adult male wears a badge that reads "NO DRONES."[157] This representation literally illustrates the support a (potential) child activist receives from an adult activist, both in a physical and ideological manner. Both phenomenological metaphors—the "E" and "N" page examples—construct an illustrated depiction of adults and children together. Phenomenologically, these illustrations allow for different responses between adult and child readers.

Reading a Text Together

After examining how the phenomenological metaphors in *A is for Activist* allow for both child and adult readers to respond to the text in independent ways, I will now look at the ways the text allows for the child/adult dyad to create a focalizing dialogue to which both child and adult become authors, or co-creators. The focalizing dialogue becomes a joint reading response to the text. That response, in turn, phenomenologically socializes children to the norms and experiences needed to function in a society. Stacey Raj and Vaishali Raval note that parents "play a particularly influential role in socializing children and they accomplish this through encouraging behaviors and attitudes that are needed to function adaptively in their

community."[158] In this way, both the adult and child co-create the meanings of symbols. This co-creation is somewhat exhibited in a non-reading example surrounding a child jumping on the bed. If a child jumps on the bed and a parent tells the child to stop jumping in a stern voice, the child learns the meaning of the symbol through co-creation, or what Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and L. David Ritchie identify as interactivity.[159] Where before, the child did not understand the meaning of jumping on the bed, after the reprimand, the child *experiences* an interpretation of the symbol. Interactivity as symbolic interpretation, in this scenario, creates a child's experience with jumping on the bed.

Similar symbolic interpretation procedures are true for reading as well. A key difference, as Rosenblatt posits, is that literature requires a teacher to help foster a student's interaction with a text. The literature teacher (in this case, the adult reader) can help the student (the child reader) explore the text *in order to respond to the text*. Because an eavesdropping audience of adults has the ability to relate the phenomenological metaphors found within a children's text to society, adult readers are uniquely situated in the norms and rules of society's collective ideology and can help children phenomenologically respond to the text. In the non-literature example, the adult simply gave the child a clear interpretation of a symbol, or, in other words, a version of "the text." In phenomenology regarding literature, both the text *and* the reader's response are important. When a child reader and an adult reader interact with a text to co-construct meaning (focalizing dialogue), the readers respond to the text and can adapt their co-construction to their lives in a phenomenological way. *A is for Activist* is an excellent text to examine the co-construction of meaning between different types of readers because the text strongly acknowledges multiple audiences and allows for responses to contain multiple perspectives. My analysis will, again, look at textual and illustrative phenomenological metaphors separately.

Some of the textual phenomenological metaphors presented through the words and phrases in *A is for Activist* invite readers to co-construct phenomenological meaning concerning historical times in order to reflect upon the past experiences and undertakings of activists. Returning to the "X" page, the text reads, "X is for Malcolm. As in Malcolm X. History's lessons can be complex. Remember Parks. Remember King. Remember Malcolm. And let freedom ring."[160] The repetitive call to remember these figures ensures they remain popular constructions of historical activists. The histories of these activists, then, influence adult readers' interpretations of activism in the past. Adult readers can interpret the actions of these prominent figures to pass on the history of activism to child readers. While the text does not state what Parks, King, or Malcolm did within the words on the "X" page, the words allow adult and child readers to discuss those important figures. The conversation between the adult and child reader, then, is the site of focalization. The words on the page act as a springboard into the focalized dialogue concerning these three activists. Adult readers can ask probing questions to child readers, such as "What did you learn about Martin Luther King, Jr. in school this year?" Children can then respond to this question to co-construct a reader response to the symbol of Martin Luther King, Jr. Child readers are invited to offer their own interpretation of what they know about Martin Luther King, Jr., and this interpretation may differ from an adult reader's interpretation. Adult and child readers, then, can create a focalizing dialogue that allows multiple perspectives to surface, resulting in a focalized site that allows for a phenomenological reader response. On a social level, adult and child readers can use the co-constructed reader response surrounding Martin Luther King, Jr. to discuss socially acceptable or unacceptable behavior. The process can then repeat with the other activists listed in the words of the "X" page. The phenomenological metaphors on this page allow for the co-construction of symbolic meaning, as adult and child readers can both participate in the formation of that meaning.

Other pages in *A is for Activist* allow for similar focalizing dialogues. The "F" page highlights feminists, and the "U" page features workers' unions. Each of these pages frames activism through a collective group. Plural nouns and pronouns reveal the accomplishments achieved by groups of activists. The "F" page reads, "F is for Feminist. For Fairness in *our* pay. For Freedom to Flourish and choose *our* own way [emphasis added]."[161] This page represents activism—specifically feminism—as a collectivist movement. The "U" page contains links to unions ensuring "Weekends" and "Workers Rights."[162] Because concepts like feminism and workers unions are complex, the co-constructive atmosphere *A is for Activist* invites allows adult readers to discuss the general principles of "working together" and "community" with child readers. From the words on the "U" and "F" pages, adult readers could ask prompting questions to child readers that extend beyond the page and into the beginning of a focalized dialogue, such as "When do you and your friends work together?" or "What kinds of people live in our community?" A child reader is again invited to respond by sharing his or her own experiences. The child might mention a school project as a time when he or she works with others, or a child reader could identify how the garbage worker takes out the garbage for the community. In the case of the "U" and "F" pages, both the adult and child readers' contributions to a focalizing dialogue creates a co-constructed response concerning the collectivist principles of "working together" and "community." By providing representations of both individuals ("X" page) and groups ("U" and "F" pages) as activists, *A is for Activist* allows adult and child readers to co-construct the many social concepts surrounding activism. In turn, these focalized dialogues help create phenomenological reader responses to a literary work.

Adult and child readers can also create a focalized dialogue concerning the illustrative phenomenological metaphors contained in *A is for Activist*. When returning to the "K" page, adults and child readers can use the illustrated representations of the two children playing as a

queen and a knight to allow for focalizing dialogue concerning contemporary representations of children. The illustration of the male child depicts a child that wears glasses. If a child reader also has glasses, adult readers can point out the illustration of a child wearing glasses. Adult readers might say, "Look! He wears glasses, just like you." In turn, the child is invited to respond to the adult reader's response to the illustration. Together, the responses form a focalized dialogue concerning the topic of glasses. Whereas the child might have thought he or she was the only one in the world with glasses, this pictorial representation illustrates that he or she is *not* the only one. A focalized dialogue surrounding glasses, then, allows multiple experiences with glasses to affect the co-constructed response from both types of readers. Socially, this co-constructed interpretation could reveal to readers the prevalence of glasses in a society. The "K" page also allows for child and adult readers to co-construct a focalized dialogue concerning play, as the child representations are illustrated as playing. A child might exclaim, "Look Mommy! They are playing, just like me and my friends." This potential response might invite adult readers to affirm that that child reader does play or how the adult reader used to play when he or she was a child. The illustrations on the "K" page allow for a focalized dialogue concerning play. As a result, both child and adult readers respond to the text by co-constructing the meaning of play.

Many of the illustrated representations of children in *A is for Activist* depict children from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The "Y" page includes four representations of children, ranging in age from an infant to a preteen. Their eye, skin, and hair colors all differ as well as their facial features. There is even diversity in biological sex and gender representations. Some of those representations are obvious, as seen in the female preteen and younger male child; some are not so recognizable characteristics of this nature, as seen in the infant. These different illustrated representations of children invite focalized dialogue between child and adult readers on many levels of identity: one of the most influential factors to discuss in a cosmopolitan world.

Child and adult readers alike can bring up differences in the appearance of the child representations. In turn, the co-created reader responses to the depictions of the children can phenomenologically develop perceptions of race, gender, ethnicity, and culture. A child reader can contribute to the dialogue from his or her perspective, such as mentioning a classmate, neighbor, or friend who has a contrasting identity to the child's own identity. Adult readers can provide social responses to this focalized dialogue, such as sharing how different cultures come from different parts of the world. The powerful influence of the focalized dialogue that stems from the multifaceted illustrations of different children reveals that the site of focalization in the contemporary ABC book *A is for Activist* is not necessarily within the boundaries of the text itself; rather, the focalized dialogue between child and adult readers that is promoted and prompted by the text and illustrations allows for a phenomenological response from readers.

As I have shown, while contemporary ABC books may not have an explicit site of focalization when compared to other children's books or narratives, the focalized dialogue those texts foster between child and adult readers allow for the readers to co-construct a response to the text that functions in a phenomenologically socializing way. Contemporary ABC books contain phenomenological metaphors that address both types of readers in different ways and allow those readers to create a reader response that impacts the way those readers see the world. In this way, children's texts possess the ability to socialize readers through their responses to the literary devices presented within the boundaries of the text.

There are some limitations to this specific analysis. Namely, these claims are not necessarily transferrable to all types of children's texts. Other children's books may contain an explicit focalizing character, or what Propp would label as a *dramatis personae*. In the absence of a clear focalizing point, however, a conversation between both child and adult readers could serve as a socializing component of a children's text.

It is also worth noting that adult readers are seemingly more poised to relate the phenomenological metaphors presented in a contemporary ABC book to aspects in society. Adult readers, because they are more deeply ensconced in societal structures than their child reader counterparts, often take the lead in the phenomenological processes associated with making sense of literature. As such, adult readers can reflect the inherent power structure of a society, where adults are the "members" and children are "members-in-training." As a result, this power structure could carry over into the focalized dialogue and could allow adult readers to insist that their responses to the text or more correct than a child reader's response. This could be especially problematic if an adult reader resists or negates some of the messages presented by the text and passes those biased perspectives to a child reader.

Another limitation to note is the literal limitation of the book's pages. The individual letter pages are physically constrained by a set amount of space. There are more facets to the concepts of knights, kings, and play than the "K" page can present to readers. Also, the "A" page is a two-page spread, which means it has twice the space of some of the other letters. This could imply that the messages on the "A" page are more important than the messages on the single-page spreads. The focalized dialogue that the pages instigate, however, can possibly overcome these limitations.

CHAPTER III: P IS FOR POLITICIZED PUBLISHERS AND PREPUBESCENTS

Unlike most narrative forms, ABC books are unique in that they present readers with an atypical narrative structure yet can also contain sites of focalization to which readers can relate. As Chapter Two showed, contemporary ABC books can create distinct readerships because those books contain phenomenological metaphors that allow readers to create a focalized dialogue in order to respond to a text. While I alluded to socialization in Chapter Two, I want to explore the concept further in Chapter Three. In this chapter, I seek answers to my third research question: "In what ways do children's books communicate the appropriate and/or desired social and cultural constructions of child/childhood?" Because children's books contain a site of focalization that acts to phenomenologically socialize readers, children's text can communicate politicized constructions of childhood that can inform readerships about how to act in a specific society in order for readers can become part of that society.

To further my analysis into the ways children's books contribute to the communicative and socializing process, I will now consider some of the different types of focalized dialogues that can arise as a result of the specific literary devices used within a contemporary ABC book. While child and adult readers actively construct a focalized dialogue, the phenomenological metaphors of the text may contain inherent politicized messages that can shape the orientation of readers. It is important to note that all cultural artifacts, children's books included, are political. Storylines, illustrations, and characters are constructions of authors and publishers who all possess politicized standpoints. As such, the potential for indicative interpretations attuned to the underlying political meanings of a given text is always present. My goal with this chapter is to uncover how the text and illustrations in contemporary ABC books can impact the focalized dialogue that child and adult readers construct when responding to a text.

In order to uncover the ways the phenomenological metaphors of contemporary ABC books politicize readers, I will compare the pages of *A is for Activist* with another contemporary ABC book: *America: A Patriotic Primer* (2002). My exploration of the text and illustrations of this book will allow me to further solidify my claim that the point of focalization in an atypical narrative, like a contemporary ABC book, can be found in a focalized dialogue that occurs as a result of child and adult readers responding to the text together. Comparing and contrasting the two texts, however, may uncover the ways phenomenological metaphors contained in individual ABC books allow for readers to create that focalized dialogue within the bounds a specific political orientation.

Analyzing *America*

The children's ABC book *America: A Patriotic Primer* is designed with the intention to teach children "about the United States, about its geography and its people and its history."[163] The book's author is Lynne Cheney, former Second Lady of the United States (2001-2009). Published in 2002 by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, the children's book division of CBS-owned Simon & Schuster, *America* is described as "a book that teaches history by celebrating the diversity, tenacity, and faith of the American people."[164] Like traditional ABC books, each page contains a letter or letters in alphabetical order with concepts that correspond to the individual letters. The book measures eleven inches by eleven inches, which is significantly larger than *A is for Activist*. The amount of words on the pages and the quantity of illustrations also eclipse the *A is for Activist* counterparts. Intricate designs and borders frame nearly every page and nuanced illustrations seem to fill nearly every inch of the page layouts. There is also a multitude of different people represented within the pages. The letters of the alphabet are also prominently recognizable and identifiable, as borders surround every letter to separate the letter from the rest of the text and illustrations on the pages.

America serves an appropriate counter text for many reasons. First, the book is clearly

coded as a conservative political text. References to patriotism and American values are

prevalent throughout the pages of the book. Historically, these tropes often align with a more

conservative political mindset. *A is for Activist*, on the other hand, can be coded as a progressive

text because it addresses concepts such as activism, environmental justice, and LGBTQ rights

that are social issues often associated with a liberal political ideology. Because these two texts

present different political ideologies, comparing similar concepts found in both texts can provide

insight as to how those concepts can be framed in distinctive ways. Second, the amount of

illustrations on the pages of *America* has the capacity to create chaos in the reading and

interpreting process. Unlike the succinct and less chaotic pages of *A is for Activist*, *America* can

address the topics present in the book on many more critical levels. A contrast in quantity and

presentation of content could signal the political structures of the book. Finally, both texts are

contemporary ABC books designed to be read by both children and adults. Like *A is for Activist,*

the phenomenological metaphors in *America* allow for child and adult readers to individually

interpret the words and illustrations in order to respond to the text through focalized dialogues.

With these factors in mind, I will analyze the textual and illustrative phenomenological

metaphors *America* employs. This analysis will focus on how the book depicts four major

themes: specific individuals, collective groups, the concept of equality, and the "Y is for *You*"

page. Because similar themes are also found in *A is for Activist*, I will make comparisons

between the two texts throughout the analysis section.

Representations of Individuals

One of the reasons Lynne Cheney wrote *America: A Patriotic Primer* was to "teach

children about Washington's character, Jefferson's intellect, and Madison's wide-ranging

knowledge."[165] A general theme that situates itself within the pages of the text includes

references to specific historical figures that have had an impact on the shaping of America. As previewed in *America*'s introduction, the "W" page stands for George Washington, the "J" page for Thomas Jefferson, and the "M" page for James Madison. The "K" page also stands for a specific individual from United States history: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Because King is a specific historical figure that can easily fall within the realm of both political ideologies presented by the texts, I will use the "K" page as a specific case study.

The "K" page reads, "K is for *King*. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fought for justice with prayers, peaceful marches, and some of the most powerful words our nation has ever heard."[166] In similar ways to the pages of *A is for Activist*, the text of the "K" page allows for child and adult readers to create a focalized dialogue surrounding King. The "K" page in *America* relates King to prayers, peaceful marches, and powerful words. These attributed signifiers of King, however, are not normal prayers, marches, and words; these signifiers are tools that can be used in a fight—a fight for justice. The text allows for child and adult readers to discuss previous life experiences concerning prayers and peaceful marches and how those experiences may relate to the work of King. Children may recall a prayer from Sunday school or adults may remember a march in which they participated. Because these assigned signifiers are attributed to King, the focalized dialogue between child and adult readers can validate the rhetorical power of prayers and/or peaceful marches as acceptable tools in fights for justice. Whatever experiences child and adult readers may bring to a focalized dialogue concerning King, experiences with prayers and peaceful marches can contribute to the overall construction of King as outlined on the "K" page.

The text also mentions that King used powerful words as a tool to achieve justice. Under the main text lies an excerpt from King's "I Have A Dream" speech: "*I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character*."[167] Placing lines from King's most famous speech directly

under the main text of the page presents child and adult readers with an example of what the author deems "powerful words." Any of King's words could have followed the main text. But the author specifically chose words that relate to both children and adults. As a result, adult and child readers can create a focalized dialogue that discusses instances where they used words to support neighbors, friends, or family members. This passage from King's speech, however, also appears to construct an eavesdropping audience of adult readers. Inherent in this line of text is an adult speaker (King) who is concerned about the well being of his children. Because this line functions as an example of "powerful words," adult readers can interpret these words as King advocating care for his children. Powerful words, as insinuated by the main text and example from King's speech, situate adult readers into the role of literature teacher that can help children as literature students read the text. Essentially, adults are called to mentor their children by helping their children read and respond to a text that also happens to be about an adult advocating for the well being of his children.

The main text on the "K" page is not the only site for phenomenological metaphors. The main illustration depicts Martin Luther King, Jr. reciting his "I Have A Dream" speech to a crowded Washington Mall. The illustration shows King situated in close proximity to the reader with microphones in front of him, while the spectators are situated in the distance surrounding the Washington Memorial and reflection pool. This illustration functions as a phenomenological metaphor readers can use to experience King's historic speech. Adult readers may have been at King's speech or have seen video footage of the speech. Adult readers can then compare their previous experiences with the speech to the illustration of the speech event in *America*. Synthesizing previous experiences with and exposure to King's speech allows adult readers to contribute to a focalized dialogue, where they can validate the accuracy of the illustration on the "K" page for child readers. Child readers may have seen pictures of the Washington Mall or may

have even visited the Mall itself. Illustrated signifiers of the Mall, such as the Washington Monument and reflection pool, make that location recognizable. The illustrated representation of the Washington Mall in the "K" page, however, may be repurposed in the eyes of a child reader as a place of gathering. Together, both child and adult readers can combine personal life experiences to form a conceptualization of King's speech. The illustration also depicts spectators holding illegible signs and banners. A spectator near King, however, holds an American flag that can be recognized by the white stars on a blue background that don the upper left corner of the USA flag. This signifier of patriotism can function to characterize the spectators as people who are vested in King's message as it relates to the United States.

Both the text and illustrations on the "K" page construct a politicized characterization of Martin Luther King, Jr. The text outlines King's tools in the fight for justice (prayers, peaceful marches, and powerful words), whereas the illustrations document King *using* those tools. The illustrated representation of King depicts the speaker with an open mouth, as if he is speaking into the microphones to the people gathered along the Washington Mall. Surrounding this illustration is the textual excerpt from King's "I Have A Dream" speech that references King's children. The placement of the words in relationship to the illustration—most poignantly, the proximity to King's open mouth—implies King speaking those exact words to his audience. This illustration presents dialogue frozen in a specific moment in time. While King's speech contains many powerful words, the author chose to encapsulate the moment where King, as a parent, demonstrates his vision for a world where his children are judged by their character and not their skin. At first glance, this line of dialogue merely functions as an example of what the author classifies as powerful words. A closer reading, however, might suggest that this line from King's speech reveals to adult readers that powerful words can also be words that advocate for the well being of children. In this way, the "K" page of *America* allows readers to create a negotiated

decoding of the text. Stuart Hall maintained that a negotiated decoding "acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules—it operates with exceptions to the rule."[168] Adult readers can respond to the text by negotiating the dominant reading (King as non-violent activist) with a more personal reading (King as parent). Reading the text this way acknowledges an eavesdropping audience of adult readers that can negotiate the meaning of the text, conceptualize a perspective around that text, and share that perspective with child readers in a focalized dialogue about King and his powerful words. As a result, the text and illustrations can help readers form a more complete author-created representation of King.

Readers, however, may not just accept this representation of King at face value. The illustrations and text appear to describe King in a non-threatening manner. When the "K" page of *America* is compared to the "X" page of *A is for Activist*, different rhetorical strategies become apparent. The "K" page contains many textual and illustrative devices that work to specifically characterize King. The "X" page, which depicts and discusses Malcolm X and King, contains significantly fewer devices. The vagueness of the "X" page in *A is for Activist*, then, allows for readers to construct Malcolm X and King in many different ways. King, through the text and illustrations on the "K" page, can only be depicted as a peaceful, non-threatening historical figure. Conversely, the text on the "X" page directly challenges the ways that books like *America* represent historical figures: "X is for Malcolm. As in Malcolm X. History's lessons can be complex."[169] These words can prompt readers to challenge the constructed histories of prominent historical figures in books like *America*. The "X" page then calls for readers to "Remember King." The lack of descriptive words on the "X" page means that all of King's writings, speeches, and history have the ability to be included in focalized dialogues between adult and child readers. The words on the "K" page of *America* do not allow readers to create a

53

characterization of King that includes King's call that "one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws" as an act of non-violent civil disobedience.[170] The "X" page of *A is for Activist*, however, does allow for the discussion of King and his stance on civil disobedience to take place in a focalized dialogue between child and adult readers.

The positioning of King with Malcolm X on the "X" page also allows readers to compare the rhetoric of the two figures. As John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Condit note, the "counter-positioning of King and Malcolm X was necessitated by their rhetorical position on the broader canvas of history" and "that they contributed 'equally' to the revised concept of <equality> [sic] which emerged from the 1960s."[171] By including references to King and Malcolm X on the "X" page, *A is for Activist* allows readers to create a conceptualization of King in relationship to Malcolm X. This comparison can help child and adult readers form a more intricate understanding of Martin Luther King, Jr., as opposed to the truncated version of King on the "K" page of *America*. While both ABC books include representations of Martin Luther King, Jr. within the pages of the text, the books politically frame King in different ways. Comparing the two ABC books reveals that the phenomenological metaphors in the pages of a text can include and exclude responses to the text, which indicates the texts politicizing individual historical figures.

Representations of Groups

The pages of *America* also politically position collective groups of historical figures. One of these groups is found on the "H" page: Heroes. The layout of the "H" page also contains the letter "I," where "H is for *Heroes* and I for *Ideals*."[172] The collective group Heroes is inextricably linked to Ideals, as the text continues, "Heroes remind us of our nation's ideals and how important it is to live up to them."[173] The link between these two terms posits that heroes, no matter who those heroes are, exemplify the ideals of America. The remaining text continues on

the next page above the main illustration and states, "Some heroes we admire from afar. Others are part of our lives every day."[174] The text surrounding heroes constructs those heroes as people who exemplify American ideals, people who are admired on a large scale, and people who readers may encounter on a daily basis. Heroes, then, can exist on multiple levels. The text on this page, however, seeks to limit the ways readers can define and identify heroes. The text situates readers into an American identity, as "Heroes remind us of *our* nation's ideals…[emphasis added]." As a result, only a figure that exhibits American ideals—someone who is like *us* (the readers)—can be considered a hero. Child and adult readers can bring these stipulations into a focalized dialogue. If an adult reader asks a child to name a hero, a child might list off a fictionalized character, such as Superman, Wonder Woman, or Captain America. Because these characters are classified as super heroes, the initial recognition between the fictionalized characters of popular culture and the term *Heroes* on the "H" page could be understandable. Adult readers may counter the child's examples because of cues found within the text itself, especially the part of the text that implies heroes are people readers can encounter in their everyday lives. Child and adult readers can respond to this text together by listing some people in their lives that match the descriptions outlined by the text on the "H" and "I" page. Adults might point out to child readers that police officers or members of the military could be considered heroes. Using the jointly constructed heroes as examples, readers can also construct a focalized dialogue about the ideals of America that are exhibited by those heroes, such as honesty, self-sacrifice, and hard work. Together, adult and child readers can respond to the text through a focalized dialogue concerning the nature of heroes and the ideals they uphold. As outlined by the text on the "H" and "I" page, however, heroes are politically framed as Americans who uphold American ideals.

To complement the political framing of the text, the illustrations on the "H" and "I" page provide a visual representation for where heroes can be found and what heroes look like. The main illustration presents readers with a miniature model of America as represented by a generic small town. Situated into a hillside, this town contains several generalized outposts and landscape features, such as mountains, lakes, a school, a military base, a hospital, and police and fire stations. The town is politically constructed as representative of an American town, as six of the buildings in the town prominently fly the American flag outside the front entrances. Because of the vast quantity of building representations in this illustration, readers are likely to recognize some aspect that reflects their own lives. If child and adult readers live on a farm, the barn, silo, and windmill on the "outskirts" of the town become a familiar signifier of those readers' positions in mini America. If readers live in an urban setting, the sports arena or movie theatre could prove significant. Because this illustrative phenomenological metaphor can position readers within the illustration of mini America, the politicized heroes of America can be more recognizable.

Once readers situate themselves within mini America, supplementary illustrations can provide more specific insight into what those heroes look like and the duties they perform. Surrounding the landscape of the town are illustrations that depict different, yet generalized, types of people. For example, "TEACHERS" are labeled in one of the supplemental illustrations. This illustration shows a teacher at the front of the classroom, pointing to a math problem on a whiteboard, and a student in the class raising a hand. A line is drawn from the edge of this specific illustration to the school building situated in the landscape of mini America. This illustration depicts the classroom teacher in a mentor role. "DOCTORS AND NURSES" are also identified in a supplemental illustration. The doctor and nurse stand at the bedside of a patient, who is a young child. The doctor takes the pulse of the child while the nurse writes down the

information on a clipboard. This illustration implies that doctors and nurses are people who monitor the health of others. Another supplementary illustration labels "FIREFIGHTERS" as a part of mini America. This depiction illustrates firefighters shooting water out of a hose onto the flames emanating from a burning building. The firefighters work together to stop the blaze. All of these supplemental illustrations provide examples for what heroes look like and the duties they perform.

Absent from these illustrations is a list of ideals that can be linked to the specific types of heroes. This absence allows child and adult readers to construct a focalized dialogue about ideals as inferred from the illustrated versions of heroes and how those heroes act. When readers encounter the illustration of the teacher acting as mentor, the child and adult can frame the teacher as a hero. The adult reader may ask "Why is a teacher a hero?" The child could respond that a teacher helps others, as evidenced by the mentor role depicted in the illustration. The adult and child readers can then talk about how "people who help others" are examples of heroes, including people within the readers' community. The illustration of doctors and nurses could reveal that heroes care for others when they are sick, which would situate "care for others" as an ideal that heroes uphold. In a similar way, firefighters "work together" to achieve the common good for the community: another heroic ideal. In a parallel way, the act of children and adults reading together can also resemble "helping others," "caring for others," and "working together" through active mentorship. As Andy Roberts notes, primary components of mentoring include a teaching-learning process and reflexive practice.[175] Adult readers can attempt to help child readers understand the ideals and actions of a hero while simultaneously exhibiting those ideals through the interpersonal interaction between the two readerships. Creating a focalized dialogue through mentorship allows for teaching and learning through interactive practice. While the illustrative phenomenological metaphors of the "H" and "I" page present readers with

representations of heroes and the actions of those heroes, it is up to the child and adult readers to create—and sometimes demonstrate—the ideals upheld by those heroes.

The combination of the text and illustrations on the "H" and "I" page allows readers to construct a dialogue about collective groups of people. In this case, heroes are the subjects of that dialogue. The phenomenological metaphors on this page, however, only allow for a limited amount of interpretations that readers can discuss within the focalized dialogue. As I concluded earlier, the text prescribes that people who can be considered heroes should exhibit American ideals. The illustrations also situate heroes within the confines of mini America, thus making those heroes akin to everyday people who identify as American. The page even provides some examples of what kinds of people are heroes: pioneers, firefighters, U.S. military, police, teachers, elected leaders, doctors and nurses, and astronauts.[176] The result is that the text and illustrations on this page possess the capacity to limit the scope of the focalized dialogue between child and adult readers. When revisiting an earlier scenario, an adult reader could ask a child reader, "Can you name a hero?" The child reader may respond by naming a fictionalized character, such as Superman. The political guidelines laid out on the "H" and "I" page, however, do not necessarily include fictionalized super heroes within the parameters of the text. As such, the dialogue concerning heroes frames the interpretation of a hero within the context of the page and may exclude examples of heroes that do not fall within that context.

Representations of collective groups are not only limited to the pages of *America*. In *A is for Activist*, the "F" page reads, "F is for Feminist. For Fairness in our pay. For Freedom to Flourish and choose our own way."[177] The words of the page clearly identify feminists as a collective of individuals, much like the "H" and "I" page of *America* identifies heroes as a collective group. The "F" page also lists fairness and freedom as signifiers of feminists in a parallel way to how the "H" and "I" page of *America* equates heroes and ideals. The words of

both books relate collective groups to more overarching value-tied concepts. The illustrations of in both books also function in similar ways. The "F" page in *A is for Activist* contains representations that depict examples of feminists: Rosie the Riveter, Sojourner Truth, and a female protester that holds up a sign. These illustrated examples function in similar ways to the depictions of police, firefighters, and teachers that are on the "H" and "I" page of *America*. Because the author of *A is for Activist* chose representations of strong-willed women as examples of a feminist, these politicized depictions are also problematic, as they limit the perceptions of feminists that can be included within a focalized dialogue created by adult and child readers. For example, many men identify with or self-identify as feminists. Yet, the politicized presentation of feminists on the "F" page does not signify that men can be included in the collective group known as feminists. While readers can challenge these politically constructed collective groups, the phenomenological metaphors in both *A is for Activist* and *America* function to limit the interpretations of readers when responding to a text through a focalized dialogue. As I have shown, the representations of individuals and collective groups in both *America* and *A is for Activist* allow for child and adult readers to construct a focalized dialogue concerning those individuals or groups. The focalized dialogues, however, can be constrained by the politicized representations on the pages of the books. While resistive readings may be possible, evidence for those resistive readings and interpretations are not found within the parameters of the pages.

Representations of Equality

In addition to representations of individuals and collective groups, the pages of the two contemporary ABC books also attempt to present politicized understandings of values. For this section, I will address how *America* and *A is for Activist* present the concept of equality. Because of its nature as a value, the term "equality" as a standalone word is rather vague. An adult reader cannot merely point out "an equality" to a child, as an adult could do with "a tiger" or "a

grandparent." Values, unlike tangible objects, are abstract concepts that inherently reflect what society deems important. Because values are abstract concepts, a common way children's picture books attempt to characterize the values of society is to show actions of people performing those values or to draw parallels between tangible objects and how those objects represent values. This situates a discussion of values within the scope of phenomenological metaphors, as the text and illustrations in children's books can function to help describe a value. Therefore, I will consult the pages of *America* and *A is for Activist* to examine how those contemporary ABC books politically present the abstract concept of equality and what potential focalized dialogues can arise from those conceptualizations.

The text of the "E" page of *America* reads, "E is for *Equality*. The Declaration of Independence established the principle that all are created equal and have God-given rights to live, to be free, and to pursue happiness."[178] This text immediately presents readers with a tangible object that exhibits the characteristics of equality: the Declaration of Independence. The text continues to describe what the Declaration does and how it relates to equality: establishing that all people are equal and possess rights. From this first line of text, adult and child readers can discuss how people have access to specific rights, regardless of his or her status in the world. This framing of the Declaration, however, is political. Most Americans know that the original wording of the Declaration reads, "all men are created equal." Adult readers might notice this difference and contribute their previous knowledge to the focalized dialogue. The text on the page, however, does not acknowledge the original wording of the Declaration. Instead, the "E" page presents a cosmopolitan and egalitarian interpretation of equality within the first few stanzas of the Declaration of Independence. The text on the "E" page continues, "Over the years, more and more of us have been able to enjoy these rights equally."[179] Almost as if expecting a conflicting reader response, the author includes this line as an acknowledgement that, over time,

equality as presented in the Declaration of Independence has evolved. When read together, these

two sentences seem to contest with each other. If all are created equal, then why did it take time

for more and more people to obtain access to rights? The focalized dialogue between adult and

child readers can address potential answers to questions like this. Adults can contribute previous

historical understandings of equality and how the concept has shifted over time. The text frames

the Declaration of Independence as a document that guarantees equal rights for all, yet reveals

that all have not always had equal rights. As a result, the political framing of the text on the "E"

page may only allow adult and child readers to construct equality as a term that means that

everyone should be (and *is*) treated fairly in America.

The illustrations on the "E" page, in conjunction with the text, can help readers

characterize equality in more tangible ways. The main illustration on the "E" page depicts over

twenty children standing underneath a flagpole (with the American flag flying) with their hands

over their hearts. An elementary school is situated in the background, and adults, presumably

teachers, are scattered throughout the crowd of children. The children have different skin colors,

genders, and one child is depicted sitting in a wheelchair. The children wear backpacks and hold

books. The illustration also crosses the spine of *America* into the "F" page, as the main

illustration functions to bridge the two letters together. Because this main illustration depicts a

group of students outside an elementary school, adult and child readers can respond to the

illustration through a common experience: attending school. On a connotative note, the "E" page

could also represent "Education," even though *America* textually links "E" to "Equality." School

functions as a common way to socialize children and expose children to other members of

society. As such, the depiction of the school setting on the "E" page is a phenomenological

metaphor that can allow for the discussion of equality between adult and child readers. The

contemporary representation of school may allow child readers to contribute to the dialogue by

sharing instances of equality (or inequality) they have witnessed in school or with their friends. Adult readers could help children elaborate on their experiences with school in order to construct equality in terms that child readers can comprehend, such as asking child readers about the importance of being nice, or treating others with respect. Readers can create meaning surrounding the term "equality" by synthesizing the text and illustrations on the "E" page. Readers can connect the "more and more of us" presented in the text with the different depictions of children in the illustration.

Upon first glance of the "E" page, connections like these seem apparent. The text and illustrations, however, may limit the scope in which equality can be discussed. Adult readers may have gone to elementary school under completely different circumstances than what is presented on the "E" page. While adults can contribute their own experiences to a focalized dialogue, the page does not seem to recognize non-contemporary characterizations of school. As evidenced by the "E" page, experiences with school are important to understanding equality. Limiting the experiences of adults politically alters the ability for the representation of school to resemble equality. Also, ironically, the text and illustrations also do not seem to address the rampant inequality in major school districts today. All of the students look happy, clean, well kempt, and excited to be at school. In reality, not all students come to school this way. As a former teacher, I remember numerous times where students came to my class sleep deprived, hungry, and dressed in the same clothes they had worn for the three previous days. Also, with recent budget cuts to school districts, many low-income districts are forced to lay off teachers, increase class sizes, and cut classroom materials that are essential to learning. Given the situation in which many contemporary schools find themselves, *America*'s use of a school as an example of equality not only seems to fail to adequately characterize the concept of equality, but also more detrimentally, seems to present adult and child readers with the notion that equality has

been achieved within the school setting. While formal segregation does not characterize today's education landscape, educational policy scholar Joel Spring identifies that cultural hegemony accounts for many inequalities. Spring specifically documents standardized testing as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, where he documents that, because teachers are forced to teach to these tests, "teachers are [also] forced to teach the culture embedded in the test items."[180] Cultural inequalities in test questions, test prompts, and writing samples place students who relate to or identify with cultures different from dominant United States culture at a disadvantage. While the "E" page of *America* does allow adult and child readers to conceptualize the concept of equality, this page presents an extremely limited—or maybe, unequal— representation of equality.

The "E" page of *A is for Activist* frames equality through a different, more encompassing political lens. This page begins, "Equal rights black, brown or white."[181] This page immediately links the concept of equality to rights. While the "E" page of *America* does so vicariously through the Declaration of Independence, *America* also labels rights as something "God-given." *A is for Activist* does not label rights with any qualifier; it merely states, "Equal rights." The absence of a qualifier allows adult and child readers to discuss the nature of rights in relationship to equality from any number of perspectives. While this vague description of equality might seem to some readers an indicator of true equality, problems can also exist with the text remaining too vague. Many interpretations of a text may fail to clarify the concept of equality for readers, especially child readers. While the "E" page of *A is for Activist* contains a seemingly ambiguous presentation of equality, the remaining text on the "E" page connects equal rights to specific examples of where readers can look to find equality. The first link is to the colors black, brown, and white. Inherently, these colors reference different people based on the color of their skin. An illustration on the "E" page is a silhouette of a female adult and female child holding

63

hands and raising fists together. The text and illustrations can help readers connect the ideas of equal rights and humans. As a result, equal rights may initially connect to the levels of equality associated with people of different races, ethnicities, and cultures. The illustration could also mirror the readers of the book: adults *and* children. Not only does the illustration depict adults and children, but also the text lists colors that correspond to different types of people. While the listed colors and illustrations of child and adult are limited, the text and illustrations allow for readers to situate themselves within the pages of *A is for Activist*. Readers, then, can begin to relate the concept of equality to their own lives.

The text continues to expand the scope of equality as it concerns rights: "Clean and healthy is a right. Every place we live and play Environmental justice is the way!"[182] The words "clean" and "healthy" can carry several interpretations: clean water, a clean domicile, affordable heath care, or even access to healthy sustenance. No matter how adult and child readers interpret these words, the "E" page allows readers to construct an understanding of equality as it relates to clean and healthy services, products, or ideas. The text concludes with a reference to places of play and home from an environmental perspective. As outlined by these words, equality could relate to equal opportunities for housing, outdoor space, and an environment that is equally protected. The illustrations also function to frame equality in this way, as the silhouette figures stand atop a green, grassy hill and overlook a cityscape. Adult and child readers can begin to conceptualize the concept of equality through the specific examples presented by both the text and images: places of play, home, and the environment. Politically, the words of the "E" page in *A is for Activist* provide readers with cues concerning where to look for examples of equality. While not all places can function to document equality, *A is for Activist* allows readers to create an understanding of equality that is not as rigid as the words and illustrations found in *America*.

Y is for You

   A final way to examine the political framing of *America* and *A is for Activist* is to compare and contrast the "Y" pages of the two books, as both books claim "Y is for You." The text on the "Y" page in *America* reads, "You is for *You* and all you will be…"[183] By utilizing the word "you" twice in the first part of the text, *America* explicitly addresses the child reader and the future of that child reader. Because "Y is for *You* and all you will be," adult and child readers can contribute to a dialogue about the child's future. An adult might ask a child what he or she wants to be when that child matures. Child readers can then respond with their answer. In this way, adult readers can use the text to function as literature teacher in a dialogue with child readers assuming the role as literature student. The political nature of the "Y" page in *America* reveals itself when considering the entire line of text: "Y is for *You* and all you will be in this greatest of countries, the land of the free."[184] These words situate readers within the boundaries of America and the access to a future of one's own choosing that a nation like America can provide. Politically, these words can be read as linking America to greatness because it is a country that allows its people to be free to choose whatever they want to be. Through allowing children to choose whatever they want to be, the "Y" page also subtly hints that, through choosing a future, children can achieve that "American Dream" through their choices. Not only are children free to choose their futures, but that freedom and promise of success is what makes America great. Adult and child readers may or may not notice that the text of the "Y" page constructs this association. If the adult and child readers construct a focalized dialogue based purely off the text of this page, however, that dialogue would have to be situated within the privileged perception attached to living in a country with seemingly no boundaries that impede upon the aspirations of its citizens. The political framing of the "Y" page does not address racial,

socioeconomic, or other inequalities that, in reality, obstruct people from achieving their goals and aspirations.

The illustrations on *America*'s "Y" page can also help contribute to the focalized dialogue, as the page resembles a collage of photographs. The individual photographs are meant to resemble Polaroid pictures. Each Polaroid captures an illustrated image of a child or children situated in current time and performing actions that children might perform. One photograph depicts two children painting, where one child uses rudimentary brush strokes and the other child uses his or her fingers. Another photograph shows a boy flying a remote-controlled plane. Yet another photograph captures two children constructing a town out of Legos. While many other photographs appear on the "Y" page, child and adult readers are allowed to recognize the actions captured in the photographs as reflections of what the child reader may do in his or her own life. Underneath each photograph, however, are words that situate children in the future. The photograph of the two children painting is paired with the caption "Future Art Critic." The boy flying the plane is labeled as "Test Pilot of Tomorrow," whereas the Lego builders are identified as "Urban Planners of Tomorrow's Cities." The representations of children on this page are simultaneously situated in both actual time and in the future. These photographs allow adult and child readers to discuss what the children want to be when they mature while also considering the activities child readers may enjoy while they are children.

There are also some political constraints evident within the illustrations on the "Y" page. For the most part, the illustrations of children in their "future roles" reinforce traditional stereotypes and gender roles. The photograph labeled "Movie Star to be" depicts a young white boy in a karate uniform. The photograph of a young girl wearing a leotard in a dance studio is labeled "future choreographer." And another photograph depicts a young boy with brown skin as a "future software designer." These illustrations present readers with examples of future careers

that follow historically entrenched gender and race roles. The one noticeable outlier is the photograph of a young girl holding a sign that reads, "Student Council, Vote 4 Me!" The label on the photograph says, "Presidential Candidate 2048." While the author's inclusion of this illustration could be viewed as an attempt to break traditional gender and race roles, the illustration itself is non-threatening, as the young girl is a "candidate" and not labeled as "president." Also, the year 2048 indicates that the potential presidential candidacy of this young girl is in the relatively distant future. While adult and child readers may or may not notice some of these indicators, the political messages found in the text and illustrations of the "Y" page in *America* seem to further reify American supremacy and traditional gender and race roles.

In comparison, the "Y" page of *A is for Activist* presents fewer constraints upon the content of the dialogue between adult and child readers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the text begins, "Y is for You. And Youth. Your planet. Your rights. Your future. Your truth."[185] One possible interpretation of these words is that the text explicitly mentions both child an adult readers. In turn, both child and adult readers can consider their future roles in society as it pertains to the planet, rights, and the truth. One way readers can respond to the text is by listing the lifestyle changes they could make to ensure the future of rights, truth, and the planet. Adults might discuss with children about ways to conserve water or how to volunteer. Child readers could suggest that the reading dyad should plant a tree. While the "Y" page of *A is for Activist* politically frames the future of You in terms of the planet, rights, and truth, this frame allows for the focalized dialogue between readers to encounter fewer interpretive constraints. The illustrations also symbolize fewer constraints found within the focalized dialogue. The representations of children differ in ages, skin color, facial features, and gender. Unlike the "Y" page in *America,* gender and cultural background are not indicative of a specific future. When

coupled with the text, the illustrations present adult and child readers with a greater amount of possibilities for what the future holds for You.

It is also worthy to note that, because they come near the end of the two books, the "Y" pages can also function as a prominent site for readers to take away the key messages of the books. Of all the pages in the two books, the "Y" pages contain some of the most blatant indicators that reflect the political orientation of not only the authors and publishers, but of the anticipated audiences as well. While in *America* the "S" page depicts women's suffrage and the "T" page illustrates tolerance, the "Y" page labels America as the greatest country on Earth while reifying traditional gender and cultural stereotypes. The "Y" page of *A is for Activist* also illustrates the political goals of the book. While the "S" page advocates for solar power and the "G" page promotes grassroots politics, the "Y" page presents readers with ways they can be activists by ensuring the future of the planet, rights, and the truth. The "Y" pages, then, function as a charge for readers to remember the purpose of the messages within the book and to act on those messages.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, all children's books are political because they are cultural artifacts. It becomes important, then, to rhetorically analyze such artifacts for the ways in which they present politicized messages. This chapter sought to examine the ways contemporary ABC books present political phenomenological metaphors that have the capacity to influence how adult and child readers contribute to focalizing dialogues. Through examining the ways *America: A Patriotic Primer* constructs and presents specific historical individuals, collective groups, the concept of equality, and the "Y is for *You*" page, and comparing those themes with similar themes in *A is for Activist*, I have illustrated some of the political devices that can allow and dissuade readers from constructing certain focalized dialogues.

Rosenblatt's reader response theory is especially helpful to this analysis because it not only provides the basis for an adult-child reading dyad, but it situates the adult as teacher of literature and the child as student of literature. What this chapter has shown is that political messages in children's books have the capacity to influence and construct *both* types of readers. Typically, the literature teacher possesses the content knowledge and passes it along to the student. The focalized dialogue, however, can be influenced by the political nature of the text, which can also influence the ways both child and adult readers perceive the world.

Another political factor to consider is the structure of an ABC book. The actual order of the ABCs presented in these two books is political and reinforces the dominant way in which readers learn the ABCs. Learning the ABCs can resemble a relatively scripted literary "journey," where "A" represents the starting point on a path toward the "Z" ending. The linear progression of the ABCs itself is political, and reinforcement can potentially indoctrinate readers into forming "right" and "wrong" conceptualizations of ways to learn the alphabet. As such, the political limits found in *A is for Activist* and *America* may also present child and adult readers with teleological limits that can frame the purpose and/or phenomenology of the alphabet and/or language in specific ways.

It is also worth noting the two books' different publishers. *America*'s publisher is Simon & Schuster, a publishing house that boasts over two thousand published titles per year. Because it is owned by the large media conglomerate CBS, Simon & Schuster presumably has more resources at its disposal, such as staff, advertising outlets, and investment capital. Seven Stories Press, the publisher of *A is for Activist*, is not as large as Simon & Schuster. As an independent press, Seven Stories may not have the vast advertising outlets or budget of Simon & Schuster. The difference in presses may also indicate different types of audiences for which the books were designed. Based on press size, *America* seems designed for and marketed toward a large

mass audience. *A is for Activist* appears to be designed for a targeted niche audience. In fact, my local library system houses five copies of *America* and does not contain a copy of *A is for Activist*; I had to order *A is for Activist* from Amazon. Further research into the publishing and marketing intricacies of children's books would work to increase the academic discussion surrounding the political construction of children's books.

While all cultural artifacts are political, contemporary ABC books can possess the capacity to construct textual and illustrative devices that politically frame content. As a result, readers can use the devices found within the confines of the children's books to create a dialogic response to the text than can be used to introduce or reinforce societal norms for children.

CHAPTER IV: C IS FOR CONCLUDING CONCEPTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Children's books are cultural artifacts with which many people have experience. Because of the prevalence of children's book in many peoples' lives, children's books constitute a unique, yet influential, site of communication. This thesis examined two traditional ABC books, *A is for Activist* and *America: A Patriotic Primer*, as a preliminary foray into the communicative nature of children's books. In this chapter, I review my research questions and findings, relate those findings to the field of Communication Studies and other mainstream outlets, discuss the limitations of my analysis, and propose areas for research that further explore the relationship between children's books and socialization.

Revisiting the Research Questions

This thesis has explored some of the ways in which traditional ABC books can function to socialize children through the reading process. Many traditional ABC books are books that both adults and children can read together. Because a main goal of this thesis was to attempt to pinpoint socialization strategies that occur within a joint reading of a children's text, I used a mixed methodological approach that combined Rosenblatt's reader response theory with Charland's concept of constitutive rhetoric. When these two methods were combined and applied to an examination of traditional ABC books, I found that adult and child readers are "hailed" into the roles of "literature teacher" and "literature student." As such, the joint act of reading a text together implied that learning—or socialization—was present between the two readerships, and a response to a text could be constructed by both readerships. Entering into this study, I posed three guiding research questions. The first question revolved around uncovering the ways children's books create audiences. The second question sought to uncover how the narrative, literary, and/or illustrative devices and tactics spoke to those audiences. The third question

synthesized the answers of the first two questions to examine the ways children's books communicate the appropriate and/or desired social and cultural constructions of the subject matter contained within the text. I answered these three questions through the analysis chapters.

In Chapter 2, I addressed the first two research questions, and I discovered that traditional ABC books create both child and adult audiences. Using my mixed methodology, the analysis of *A is for Activist* identified these different readerships as "teachers" and "students" of literature. I also uncovered that the text and illustrations contained within children's books can function as phenomenological metaphors that can relate to child and adult audiences in different ways. Through reading and interpreting the phenomenological metaphors in *A is for Activist*, adult and child readers can discuss their understandings of the subject matter through a co-created response. Because traditional ABC books may be examples of atypical narratives that do not contain a clear point of focalization, the conversation between adult and child readers as "teachers" and "students" can serve as a focalizing point known as a focalized dialogue. This focalized dialogue is the product of two readerships individually responding to the phenomenological metaphors in a text, sharing those responses with each other, and creating a joint reader response to a text.

In Chapter 3, I expanded upon the concept of a focalized dialogue to answer my third research question. In this chapter, I found that the political nature of children's books can influence the communication of appropriate and/or desired social and cultural constructions of the subject matter contained within the books. For my case studies, I chose *A is for Activist* and *America: A Patriotic Primer* as two children's texts with seemingly different political orientations. An analysis of the phenomenological metaphors contained within these texts revealed that politicized communication tactics in a children's book have the ability to shape the focalized dialogue created between adult and child readers. This allowed me to document one

way that children's books can communicate appropriate and/or desired social and cultural constructions: through political framing that can influence the joint reader response that adult and child readers co-create.

While this study is primarily based in literary artifacts, the implications for the field of Communication Studies are vast. First, this study contributes to a larger understanding to how literature texts can contribute to constitutive rhetoric. As stated in the introduction of this thesis, the "ideological 'trick' of [constitutive] rhetoric is that it presents that which is most rhetorical, the existence of a [people], or of a subject, as extrarhetorical."[186] Adult and child readers of a text do not knowingly begin the act of reading by assuming the roles of "teacher" and "student." Rather, the constitutive nature of children's books situates those readers into those roles. This is because the phenomenological metaphors in the text allow for different interpretations of the words and illustrations within the text. The result is that different readers can assume different readership roles *because* the children's books invite those readers to share their different interpretations in a conversation about the text. Because adult readers are "hailed" into existence as mentors, adults become "teachers" of literature. Children, then, are the "students" who can learn from the "teacher." Child and adult readers, however, do not lose their identities of both "child" and "adult." The readers are simultaneously both outside and within the text. This counteracts the notion that readers are simply reading the text; those readerships also actively construct the rhetoric around and about the rhetorical text. Combining reader response theory with constitutive rhetoric allowed me to uncover a different way constitutive texts encourage recipients of those texts to contribute to the evolving rhetorical development of the text itself.

Second, this study can also contribute to the understanding of epistemological rhetoric and narrative theory. Rhetorical devices, such as the text and illustrations contained within a children's book, can act as a genesis for knowledge in order to help readers relate to or

experience the world. In many cases, the contents of a children's book may initially expose child readers to those specific concepts for the first time. Child readers, then, can use the rhetorical devices in a children's book to begin to form real-world experiences with those concepts. This initial exposure may even relate to narrative theory, wherein children (as human, storytelling communicators) can build a stockpile of stories they can use to communicate.

Children's literature is a rather underdeveloped area of Communication Studies. Because children's literature can be situated between many subfields in communication—media studies, narrative theory, rhetoric and public address, family communication, and interpersonal communication—the goal of this project was to start conversations about how children's books communicate and to explore some potential implications to the communicative practices children's books foster.

One final note I would like to make concerning the research questions revolves around the political orientation of this project. While many thesis projects present overt political arguments that advocate and illustrate the specific causes and effects of political artifacts, this project sought to take a different approach. My analysis *attempts* to approach the case studies from a more objective standpoint, as my goal was to simply address one of the many ways children's books can communicate. I recognize that no project can ever be devoid of subjectivity. In a parallel way to the children's books I analyzed, this thesis is a cultural production that is political because of inherent academic power structures, my political and privileged position as a student, and even my background experiences as a teacher. This project, however, endeavored to minimize overt political statements and actively sought to limit the proposal of a value critique; there is no mention of the "goodness" or "badness" of either *A is for Activist* or *America: A Patriotic Primer*. I believe it is instrumental to our society to attempt to approach texts in a neutral manner, as the political interpretations of readers should rely on ideologies that present

themselves before and after reading a text. In this way, my analysis can potentially bridge

political divides and unite disparate audiences in an effort to expose readers to the potentially

positive and/or detrimental political orientations present within a text. An analytic approach that

attempts to steer clear of value judgment was one of the only ways to accomplish this task.

Mainstream Applications of Study

In addition to listing some of the ways this project can enhance and expand the field of

Communication Studies, I also want to explore some potential applications of this study in more

mainstream realms. First, this study can potentially inform children's book publishers. As

evidenced by the case studies in this thesis, children's books often represent different political

ideologies. I would even venture to guess that if one were to sample several children's books and

arrange those books by political orientation, a spectrum might form that would mirror a socially

accepted political spectrum. Books with wildly progressive and liberal ideologies would populate

on the left of the spectrum while books with staunchly conservative ideologies would accumulate

on the right. In between the two extremes would be a larger quantity of different books with

varying political ideologies. While this is an assumption, it could be used to raise questions about

political trends and how the production of children's books operates to reflect those trends.

Given this proposal, children's book publishers could use this study to recognize how

authors and illustrators employ phenomenological devices in their books. Because this study

explored the ways that phenomenological metaphors in children's books frame the discussion

between adult and child readers, publishers could use the conclusions of this thesis to analyze the

rhetorical constructions present in the products those publishing houses create. Some children's

books may promote identification with certain audiences who adhere to certain political

ideologies. As a result, those audiences might be more willing to purchase a book that reflects

their own ideology. While designing a product for specific (or niche) audiences could be the goal

of a children's book publisher, the company might be better suited to explore ways to expand the potential audience for a product. Children's book publishers could use this study as a way to urge authors and illustrators to incorporate more encompassing and less restrictive phenomenological metaphors in the texts they create. In this way, children's books could retain an individual literary identity while possessing devices that could be relatable to more potential audience members.

On a social level, the production of strongly politicized children's books could further solidify the toxic partisanship that plagues the United States. Books like *A is for Activist* present and characterize critical and necessary social concepts, such as feminism, the future, and justice. The ways those concepts are related to audience members, however, are off-putting to some readers who encounter the text. The reviews of *A is for Activist* on Amazon.com are mostly positive, as around seventy-five percent of reviewers appreciate the book's focus on activism. The unfavorable responses, however, signal the ways the book may polarize potential audience members. One negative reviewer commented, "If you want your child to grow up accepting the socialist ideology, this is the book for you. This is just another brainwashing tool to further the progressive/socialist movement in our country."[187] The reviews for *America: A Patriotic Primer* are similar, with about seventy percent of reviewers contributing positive feedback and some unfavorable responses claiming that the book relies "on blind patriotism and unquestioning loyalty."[188] While not all audience members will appreciate or accept all cultural productions, comments like these signal a strong political divide between potential audience members. My study could be used to show children's book publishers that, while activism is an important social concept, the construction and presentation of activism through a children's book could be redefined and less polarizing. Children's books might be better served—both ideologically and

economically—by dissolving some of the boundaries present within texts that can function to segregate readerships.

In addition to potential contributions to children's book publishers, my study could also contribute to the goals of youth activists. The missions of youth activist groups range from achieving social justice, to empowerment, to promoting positive ways of expressing one's beliefs and attributes. Youth activist organizations, such as Seattle Young People's Project and Mobalize.org, promote civic and social engagement that offers solutions to the contemporary issues and challenges young people encounter.[189] The concept of youth activism may appear foreign to some. Young people, however, can represent a newer conceptualization of activism.

Like the potential information that can be presented to children's book publishers, my study can enlighten youth activist groups on how to cater messages to a larger audience. Instead of potentially politicizing and ostracizing other young people, youth activist groups could create materials that speak to undecided or unaware young people in order to engage those young people about social issues that surround America's youth. These materials could frame content in ways that allow for multiple interpretations of oppression or social injustices. The phenomenological metaphors contained in materials like these should be recognizable to young people who come from many different backgrounds, social situations, and cultures.

This study might also function to legitimate the claim that young people can be activists. Children's books, like *A is for Activist,* present child readers with depictions of children as activists. One way to read these types of children's books is to recognize the "hailing" of child readers into the role of activist. These texts could work to characterize children as activists because children's books often contain fewer words and description than traditional novels, which, in turn, can reflect fewer boundaries or obstructions to interpretations of the text. In this way, children's books could function to ascribe agency to child readers by characterizing child

activists in a way that differ from popular constructions of childhood. Agency may be placed in the hands of the child. This concept inherently challenges the idea of a child as an "empty vessel" that needs to be filled with knowledge. If children's books often contain depictions of how to act in society, books like *A is for Activist* authenticate the activist role for young people by ascribing agency to those young people.

Limitations

There are many limitations to this analysis, with the primary constraints being time and space. As a thesis project, university and departmental deadlines limit the amount of insight I could feasibly generate regarding socialization through children's books. Also, the constraints of chapters and the overall project only allowed me to analyze specific facets of the children's book world. While these limitations are not exclusive to my project, they are worth mentioning. On the analytical level, the main limitations of this project are the number of case studies included in the analysis, the selection of texts that originate from aspects of cultures represented within the United States, and the potential influences that adult readers can wield over child readers.

The two case studies in this analysis are not necessarily representative of traditional ABC books as a whole. There are many traditional ABC books both in and out of print that warrant examination and could have been included within this study. These two texts, however, can still provide critical insight as to how traditional ABC books can function to socialize readers because of the different political ideologies coded for within the texts. The vast array of traditional ABC books signifies that many politicized views and approaches to the alphabet exist. Limiting my case studies, however, allowed this study to uncover some of the phenomenological metaphors contained in the text on a relatively close level.

I chose these two texts based on my initial reaction after I had perused the pages of the books. Right away, I gathered that *A is for Activist* could be considered a "liberal" book and

America could be considered a "conservative" book. The reason I decided upon these two books was because I had an inclination that most readers would latch on to one book over the other. In fact, when I showed *A is to Activist* to a conservative friend, she commented, "This is absolute brainwashing." From this conversation, I wanted to know why some people categorized some children's books as "bad" and others as "good." Before I could address this question, I wanted to determine if the communicative strategies contained in different traditional ABC books with different political ideologies could be compared or contrasted. This guiding prompt consumed my analysis, and, to uncover the basics of the communication strategies utilized by traditional ABC books, I limited my case studies to two books that contained ostensibly contrasting political ideologies. Through researching communication strategies, however, I was not able to address how the political ideologies of readers allowed for readers to identify or reject children's books based on the political ideologies of the books themselves. Also, these two case studies would not be sufficient to warrant any claims I could make surrounding this issue.

My second analytical limitation is that I selected texts that reflected different cultures situated within the United States. While concepts like activism and patriotism are not limited to the United States, the representations of those concepts in the two texts only allow readers to construct those concepts from a perspective of someone within the United States. A primary indicator of this limitation is that both texts are written in American English and primarily contain words and illustrations to which only American readers could relate. For example, the cityscape on the "E" page of *A is for Activist* is a silhouette of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the "V" page in *America* only includes illustrations of United States soldiers fighting in wars, and both texts highlight prominent figures in American history, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. A casual reading might reveal some acknowledgement of other cultures. For example, the "Z" page of *A is for Activist* is for Zapatistas, and the joint "T" and "U" page of *America* contains a border

that highlights different holidays and cultural celebrations from around the world. These examples, however, function as a teaching mechanism for American readers in order to reveal the highlights of other cultures. These non-American phenomenological metaphors can function as an act of "othering" different cultures. While socialization in and of itself directly relates to the culture or society that produces the socializing artifact, it would be interesting to explore how language books in other cultures attempt to socialize readers situated within those specific societies.

A final limitation of this study is the transitory allocation of time exploring the potential influence adult readers can wield over the reading process. When I presented the idea of a focalizing dialogue found within children's books, there is an assumption that adult readers will have more outside knowledge concerning the topics children's books present. In other words, this assumption relies on parents having an increased exposure to figures like Martin Luther King, Jr. or concepts like equality and ideals. On a more thematic scale concerning these two books, how do adults interpret the nature of activism or patriotism? While Nagara presents readers with his own definition of activism in *A is for Activist*, *America* could also be read as a way to equate activism with patriotism. Adults could interpret that being a patriot and exhibiting an unquestionable love for one's country is itself a form of activism. Adults could also view activism as a form of humanitarianism. The ability for adults to "cross interpret" these concepts signals that adults may have more agency within the reading process.

Also, while both children and adults can contribute to the focalized dialogue, there is another inherent assumption that adult readers as literature "teachers" will have to "know more" about the figures or concepts mentioned in the books than child readers. In a way, this is inequality and could reflect a power structure where children are reliant upon adults for information. As a result, adult readers, who are more familiar with and representative of the

norms of society, could hold more command in the framing of that society for child readers. If adults can be viewed as power holders in the adult/child reading dyad, then that power dynamic could influence the interpretation of the phenomenological metaphors present within the pages of the books. On a larger scale, the way adults read to or with children could also reflect how adults in society conceptualize "children" or "childhood."

Areas for Further Research

This analysis primarily explored *A is for Activist* and *America: A Patriotic Primer* as examples of traditional ABC books for the ways in which those books can frame and/or create dialogues that can socialize children. From this analysis, many other avenues for further research surface. Because the two ABC books can be interpreted as representative of different political ideologies—with *A is for Activist* aligning with more liberal/progressive beliefs and *America* with more conservative beliefs—further research could attempt to uncover a relationship between the political ideology of books and the structure of the books. A project like this could address a larger spectrum of traditional ABC books in an attempt to uncover generalized strategies employed by ABC books, regardless of political affiliation. While all cultural artifacts are indeed political, there may be some consistencies (or stark differences) between the types of phenomenological metaphors used in and the structural formulas employed by traditional ABC books.

Future research could also seek to analyze the socialization strategies of postmodern ABC books. While traditional ABC books often follow a socially accepted and constructed alphabetical order, postmodern ABC books may jumble the twenty-six letters of the alphabet into a random order. A structure such as this might change the ways children are socialized to learn the alphabet. If so, it would also be interesting to see how postmodern books of this nature effect learning in school or other highly-structured methods of education. Also, as portrayed in *Chicka*

Chicka Boom Boom (1989), the letters in a postmodern ABC book may "perform" for readers, thus bringing language to life. Conceptualizing language as not just "letters on a page," but as a form of communication that is alive and malleable, could change readers' understanding of the role of language within a society. An examination of postmodern literary effects on the formation and understanding of language may reveal different socialization strategies at work in children's books. A study like this would also provide additional insight into the role of adult and child readers. In a postmodern ABC book, what are the roles of literature "teacher" and literature "student?" How do these audiences respond to a postmodern text in different ways? An analysis of postmodern ABC books could further explain how children's books can function to socialize readers.

A final avenue for future research would be to include qualitative data that could provide further insight into how adults and children read books together. A study like this could compile data through a series of observations of adults and children reading traditional ABC books together and the types of focalized dialogues those different readerships create. Extending this analysis through observations of adult/child reading dyads could also reveal factors that this analysis did not consider, such as comparing the themes in a book to other socially constructed norms, relating the text to other societies, or even if the amount of time spent reading has an impact on the potential socialization of children.

Final Thoughts

As a former high school English teacher, the act of reading and interpreting has always intrigued me. While my primary exposure to children's books has been constrained to YA texts, I wanted to use my Master's thesis to explore books for younger readers and uncover how children and adults read together. My parents always read to me when I was a child. But now, as an adult, I realize that my parents often added their own contributions to our joint reading

experiences. While I often long to return to my childhood style of reading for fun, or to go on an adventure, or simply to escape reality, I wonder how much of the fun, adventures, or escapes were partially constructed by my parents or grandparents who read with me.

ENDNOTES

[1] Nicholas Sammond, *Babes in Tomorrowland: Walt Disney and the Making of the American Child, 1930-1960* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 3.

[2] "A is for Activist," aisforactivist.com, accessed February 20, 2014, http://www.aisforactivist.com/.

[3] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist* (New York: Triangle Square Press, 2013), "Y" page.

[4] "About Us," sevenstories.com, accessed March 3, 2014, http://www.sevenstories.com/about/.

[5] "About," aisforactivist.com, accessed February 20, 2014, http://www.aisforactivist.com/about/.

[6] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 129.

[7] Hugh Matthews and Melanie Limb, "Defining *An* Agenda for the Geography of Children: Review and Prospect," *Progress in Human Geography* 23, no. 1, (1999), 65.

[8] Martin Woodhead and Heather Montgomery, *Understanding Childhood: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. Martin Woodhead and Heather Montgomery (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 24.

[9] Martin Woodhead and Heather Montgomery, *Understanding Childhood: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 26.

[10] Máire Messenger Davies, *Children, Media and Culture* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), 7.

[11] Ada Cohen, "Introduction: Childhood between Past and Present," *Hesperia Supplements* 41, (2007), 2.

[12] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 149.

[13] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 149.

[14] Eugene S. McCartney, "Sex Determination and Sex Control in Antiquity," *The American Journal of Philology* 43, no. 1 (1922): 63.

[15] Cheryl Glenn, "sex, lies, and manuscript: Refiguring Aspasia in the History of Rhetoric," *College Composition and Communication* 45, no. 2 (1994): 182.

[16] Cheryl Glenn, "sex, lies, and manuscript: Refiguring Aspasia in the History of Rhetoric," 185.

[17] Emiel Eyben, *Restless Youth in Ancient Rome*, trans. Patrick Daly (London: Routledge, 1993), 12.

[18] Michael Stoeber, "Phaedrus of the 'Phaedrus': The Impassioned Soul," Philosophy & Rhetoric 25, no. 3 (1992): 273.

[19] Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. by Jody Gladding (Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 7.

[20] Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries*, 75.

[21] Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries*, 75.

[22] Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries*, 76.

[23] Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries*, 77.

[24] Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries*, 138.

[25] Jane Couchman, "'Our little darlings': Huguenot Children and Child-rearing in the Letters of Louise de Coligny," in *Gender and Early Constructions of Childhood*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 105; Couchman then cites Proverbs 22:6, which reads "Train up the child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

[26] Jane Couchman, "'Our little darlings': Huguenot Children and Child-rearing in the Letters of Louise de Coligny," 108.

[27] Jane Couchman, "'Our little darlings': Huguenot Children and Child-rearing in the Letters of Louise de Coligny," 107.

[28] Roger Neustadter, "'Grow Up!' The Devaluation and Stigmatization of Childhood as a Threat to Progress in Contemporary Social Thought," *Sociological Focus* 26, no. 4 (1993): 302.

[29] Thomas E. Jordan, "An Index of the Quality of Life for Victorian Children and Youth, the Vicy Index," *Social Indicators Research* 27, no. 3 (1992): 258.

³⁰ Thomas E. Jordan, "An Index of the Quality of Life for Victorian Children and Youth, 258.

³¹ Karin Calvert, "Children of the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood," in *The Children's Culture Reader*, ed. Henry Jenkins (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 79.

³² Karin Calvert, "Children of the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood," 70.

³³ David Beckingham, "Scale and the Moral Geographies of Victorian and Edwardian Child Protection," *Journal of Historical Geography* 42, (2013): 140.

³⁴ David Beckingham, "Scale and the Moral Geographies of Victorian and Edwardian Child Protection," 151.

³⁵ Christopher P. Barton and Kyle Somerville, "Play Things: Children's Racialized Mechanical Banks and Toys, 1880-1930," *International Journal of Historical Archeology* 16, (2012): 50.

³⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory*, trans. A. A. Brill (New York: The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1910), http://www.bartleby.com/278/2.html.

³⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory*.

³⁸ Martha Wolfenstein, "Fun Morality: An Analysis of Recent American Child-Training Literature," in *The Children's Culture Reader*, ed. Henry Jenkins (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 200.

³⁹ Martha Wolfenstein, "Fun Morality: An Analysis of Recent American Child-Training Literature," 204.

⁴⁰ Máire Messenger Davies, *Children, Media and Culture*, 3.

⁴¹ Máire Messenger Davies, *Children, Media and Culture*, 4.

⁴² Thomas S. Popkewitz, *Cosmopolitanism and the Age of School Reform: Science, Education, and Making Society by Making the Child* (New York: Routledge, 2008), xvi.

⁴³ Thomas S. Popkewitz, *Cosmopolitanism and the Age of School Reform*, 4.

⁴⁴ Eve Bearne, "Myth, Legend, Culture, and Morality," in *Where Texts and Children Meet,* eds. Eve Bearne and Victor Watson (London: Routledge, 2000), 183.

⁴⁵ John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 6.

[46] John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture*, 3.

[47] John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture*, 15.

[48] Kathleen Krull, *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc, 2003), 1.

[49] Kathleen Krull, *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*, 15.

[50] John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture*, 173.

[51] Leah Ceccarelli, "Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 4 (1998): 399.

[52] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 35.

[53] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 35.

[54] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 41.

[55] Mark Joyal, Iain McDougall and J.C. Yardley, *Greek and Roman Education: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2009), 89.

[56] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children: An Outline of English-Language Children's Literature*, 6th ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996), 4.

[57] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 4.

[58] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 5-6.

[59] Gillian Avery, "The Beginnings of Children's Reading to *c.* 1700," in *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, ed. Peter Hunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3.

[60] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 6.

[61] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 7.

[62] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 12.

[63] Gillian Avery, "The Beginnings of Children's Reading to *c.* 1700," 13.

[64] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 15.

[65] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 15-16.

[66] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 19.

[67] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 24.

[68] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 24.

[69] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 39.

[70] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 39.

[71] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 47.

[72] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 52.

[73] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 57.

[74] John Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States, Volume II: The Expansion of an Industry 1865-1919* (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1975), 600.

[75] William Homes McGuffey, *The New McGuffey First Reader* (Champaign, IL: Project Gutenberg, n.d.), accessed December 30, 2014, https://ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,url,cpid&custid=s4640792&db=nlebk&AN=2009639&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_2.

[76] John Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, 600.

[77] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 85.

[78] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 159.

[79] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 273.

[80] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 273.

[81] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 314.

[82] Richard L. Venezky and Carl F. Kastle, "From McGuffey to Dick and Jane: Reading Textbooks," in *Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880-1940*, ed. Carl F. Kastle and Janice A. Radway (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 428.

[83] Richard L. Venezky and Carl F. Kastle, "From McGuffey to Dick and Jane: Reading Textbooks," 428.

[84] Selma G. Lanes, *The Art of Maurice Sendak* (New York: Abrams, 1980), 7.

[85] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, 327.

[86] Cherie Allan, *Playing with Picturebooks*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 30.

[87] Cherie Allan, *Playing with Picturebooks*, 31-32.

[88] Cherie Allan, *Playing with Picturebooks*, 35.

[89] Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (London: Macmillan Press, LTD., 1984), 1.

[90] Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, 2.

[91] Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, 11.

[92] Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, 138.

[93] Peter Hunt, *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 2.

[94] Peter Hunt, *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*, 15.

[95] Peter Hunt, *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*, 15.

[96] Roderick McGillis, *The Nimble Reader: Literary Theory and Children's Literature* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 24.

[97] Roderick McGillis, *The Nimble Reader: Literary Theory and Children's Literature*, 24.

[98] Roderick McGillis, *The Nimble Reader: Literary Theory and Children's Literature*, 22.

[99] Roderick McGillis, *The Nimble Reader: Literary Theory and Children's Literature*, 19.

[100] Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, "Introduction. Children's Literature: New Approaches," in *Children's Literature*, ed. Karín Lesnik-Oberstein (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 19.

[101] Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, "Introduction. Children's Literature: New Approaches," 20.

[102] V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott, 2nd ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1968), 21.

[103] V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 21.

[104] V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 75.

[105] V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 75.

[106] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 21.

[107] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 73, no. 2 (1987): 133
.

[108] Lawrence Grossberg, "Is There a Fan in the House?: The Affective Sensibility of Fandom," in *The Adorning Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1992), 59.

[109] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," 138.

[110] Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 174.

[111] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," 139.

[112] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," 137.

[113] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," 141.

[114] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," 139.

[115] William G. Kirkwood, "Storytelling and Self-Confrontation: Parables as Communication Strategies," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 60.

[116] Seth Lerer, *Children's Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1.

[117] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1995), 24.

[118] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 25.

[119] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 26.

[120] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 26.

[121] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," 137.

[122] Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 50.

[123] Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," 50.

[124] Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," 54.

[125] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 186.

[126] Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," 50.

[127] Marco Caracciolo, "Phenomenological Metaphors in Readers' Engagement with Characters: The Case Study of Ian McEwan's *Saturday*," *Language and Literature* 22, no. 1 (2013), 61.

[128] Marco Caracciolo, "Phenomenological Metaphors in Readers' Engagement with Characters: The Case Study of Ian McEwan's *Saturday*," 74.

[129] Maurice Sendak, *Where The Wild Things Are* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1963), 5.

[130] Maurice Sendak, *Where The Wild Things Are*, 5.

[131] Marco Caracciolo, "Phenomenological Metaphors in Readers' Engagement with Characters: The Case Study of Ian McEwan's *Saturday*," 61.

[132] Angela Yannicopoulou, "Focalization in Children's Picture Books: Who Sees in Words and Pictures?" in *Telling Children's Stories: Narrative Theory and Children's Literature*, ed. Mike Cadden (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 67.

[133] Angela Yannicopoulou, "Focalization in Children's Picture Books: Who Sees in Words and Pictures?" 67.

[134] Henrik Skov Nielsen, "Naturalizing and Unaturalizing Reading Strategies: Focalization Revisited," in *The Poetics of Unnatural Narrative*, ed. Jan Alber, Henrik Sokv Nielsen and Brian Richardson (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2013), 68.

[135] Henrik Skov Nielsen, "Naturalizing and Unaturalizing Reading Strategies: Focalization Revisited," 68.

[136] Angela Yannicopoulou, "Focalization in Children's Picture Books: Who Sees in Words and Pictures?" 67.

[137] Emer O'Sullivan, "S is for Spaniard: The Representation of Foreign Nations in ABCs and Picturebooks," *European Journal of English Studies* 13, no. 3 (2009), 346.

[138] Henrik Skov Nielsen, "Naturalizing and Unaturalizing Reading Strategies: Focalization Revisited," 67.

[139] Henrik Skov Nielsen, "Naturalizing and Unaturalizing Reading Strategies: Focalization Revisited," 72.

[140] Emer O'Sullivan, "S is for Spaniard: The Representation of Foreign Nations in ABCs and Picturebooks," *European Journal of English Studies* 13, no. 3 (2009), 334.

[141] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 7.

[142] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 7.

[143] Werner Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 329.

[144] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "A" page.

[145] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "A" page.

[146] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "A" page.

[147] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "X" page.

[148] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "X" page.

[149] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "K" page.

[150] Michael Leff and Ebony A. Utley, "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 47.

[151] Michael Leff and Ebony A. Utley, "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail," 49.

[152] Michael Leff and Ebony A. Utley, "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail," 47.

[153] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "L" page.

[154] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "S" page.

[155] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "Y" page.

[156] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "Y" page.

[157] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "N" page.

[158] Stacey P. Raj and Vaishali V. Raval, "Parenting and Family Socialization Within a Cultural Context," *Journal of Communications Research* 5, no. 2 (2013), 166.

[159] Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and L. David Ritchie, "Communication Theory and the Family," in *Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods: A Contextual Approach*, ed. Pauline Boss (New York: Plenum Press, 1993), 572.

[160] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "X" page.

[161] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "F" page.

[162] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "U" page.

[163] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer* (New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002), introduction page.

[164] "America," *SimonAndSchuster.com*, accessed February 1, 2015, http://books.simonandschuster.com/America/Lynne-Cheney/9780689851926.

[165] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, introduction page.

[166] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "K" page.

[167] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "K" page.

[168] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Media Studies: A Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Sue Thornham, Caroline Bassett, and Paul Marris (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 37.

[169] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "X" page.

[170] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," *African Studies Center – University of Pennsylvania*, ed. Ali B. Ali-Dinar, accessed 13 Feb. 2015, http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

[171] John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Condit, "Reconstructing <Equality>: Culturetypal and Counter-Cultural Rhetorics in the Martyred Black Vision," *Communication Monographs* 57, no. 1 (1990): 19.

[172] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "H" and "I" page.

[173] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "H" and "I" page.

[174] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "H" and "I" page.

[175] Andy Roberts, "Mentoring Revisited: A Phenomenological Reading of the Literature," *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 8, no. 2 (2000): 154.

[176] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "H" and "I" page.

[177] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "F" page.

[178] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "E" page.

[179] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "E" page.

[180] Joel Spring, *Deculturaization and the Struggle for Equality: A Brief History of the Education of Dominated Cultures in the United States*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), 123.

[181] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "E" page.

[182] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "E" page.

[183] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "Y" page.

[184] Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer*, "Y" page.

[185] Innosanto Nagara, *A is for Activist*, "Y" page.

[186] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," 137.

[187] William N. Miller, February 7, 2013, comment on A is for Activist (Board book), "Child brainwashing," *Amazon.com*, accessed March 9, 2015, http://www.amazon.com/review/R1Q5P2HE9F8K01/ref=cm_cr_rdp_perm?ie=UTF8&ASIN=0988344890.

[188] Fountain Pen Diva, July 10, 2002, comment on America: A Patriotic Primer, "B is for Blind Patriotism," *Amazon.com*, accessed April 21, 2015, http://www.amazon.com/America-Patriotic-Primer-Lynne-Cheney/product-reviews/0689851928/ref=cm_cr_dp_qt_hist_one?ie=UTF8&filterBy=addOneStar&showViewpoints=0.

[189] "Our Mission," *Mobilize.org*, last modified 2014, http://www.mobilize.org/#!mi/czby.