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Separate Shelves:
Gender Distinctions and Market Segmentation
in American Children's Publishing, 1860-1960

By

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Doctor of Philosophy

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An abstract of
a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Abstract

Separate Shelves:
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By Jennifer M. Nelson

This dissertation examines the emergence and persistence of a gender distinction in American children's publishing. The focus is on the creation of gender-specific recreational reading intended primarily for boys or girls between 1860 and 1960. *Boys' books* and *girls' books* operated as more than simple classifications for children's recreational reading. These *separate shelves* incorporated prevailing beliefs about boyhood and girlhood and translated them into specific production and consumption practices. Using trade journals, archival documents, and the popular press, this work investigates how producers (e.g., publishers, editors, and writers) and consumers (e.g., librarians, teachers, child-study professionals, moral authorities, and parents) worked to create opportunities for boys and girls to consume specific books.

The first chapter describes the growing recognition of children as a separate reading public within the chaotic period of antebellum publishing. Chapter Two focuses on the emergence of late-nineteenth-century boys' dime novels in the context of growing middle-class anxiety about popular entertainment. Chapter Three recounts the organized efforts to provide children with "quality" middle-class recreational reading as an abundance of inexpensive boys' series and girls' series fiction gained enormous popularity. Chapter 4 explores the effect of accelerated adolescence on children's recreational reading to illustrate how the naturalization of *separate shelves* facilitated the dissemination of widely-accepted conceptions of femininity and masculinity. Chapter 5 investigates consumer education of the mid-twentieth century to better understand how boys and girls became valuable book-buyers. The final chapter assesses the continued relevance of *separate shelves* in the children's book field, as well as the recent intensification in marketing to and through children.

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INTRODUCTION

The Persistence of a Distinction

> (L)iterature for the young may be said to be still in its preliminary stages. Its beginning dates back scarcely more than two generations. Before it is considered in detail, it may be well to note one change which has already become apparent, and that is the disappearance of the distinction between books for boys and those for girls. A few years ago this difference was marked, and books for girls were almost as numerous as those for boys. To-day the latter far outnumber the former, and there is every prospect that the distinction will almost, if not completely, disappear.
>
> "Reading for Boys and Girls"
> Everett T. Tomlinson, *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1900[1]

It would be fair to say that Everett Tomlinson's observations about the state of American children's literature in 1900 came from an informed position. As a prolific and successful author of juvenile books, Tomlinson had witnessed and participated in the creation of a children's book field. Though children's recreational reading was relatively new, *boys' books* and *girls' books* had become well-worn concepts in American publishing, and the categories were widely accepted by the American public. In its time, Tomlinson's perspective resonated with commonly-held beliefs about boys and girls and their reading tastes. The *Chicago Daily Tribune*, for example, took his assertions as an opportunity to declare that the extreme lack of girls' books and the abundance of boys' books represented "an increasing discrimination against the feminine half of our youthful readers."[2]

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[1] Everett T. Tomlinson, "Reading for Boys and Girls," *Atlantic Monthly* 86, no. 517 (November 1900): 698.

[2] "Why Girls Read Boys' Books," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 October 1900, 6. Tomlinson's "Reading for Boys and Girls" also received coverage from such diverse publications as *The Journal of Adolescence: Devoted to the Study of the Educational Problems Centering around the Growth Period from Twelve to Eighteen Years of Age* (1900), *The Nation* (1900), and *The Catholic World: A Monthly Magazine of General Literature and Science* (1902).

At first glance, Tomlinson's predictions about the future of boys' books and girls' books might present an easy explanation for the presence or absence of this gender distinction in children's recreational reading. In his assessment, the disparity in the quantity of boys' and girls' books was rooted in the divergent preferences of each audience. Few boys would read books written for girls, he asserted, but "sisters read their brothers' books almost with the avidity as the boys themselves."[3] Despite the prominence of the gender distinction in children's recreational reading, Tomlinson envisioned that the differences would disappear because, unlike girls of previous generations, the girls of 1900 showed an enthusiastic interest in the same activities their brothers enjoyed (*i.e.*, golf, tennis, cycling, team sports).[4] Tomlinson concluded: "as a natural consequence the literature which appeals to the one class is not without interest to the other."[5]

The idea that boys and girls would read according to their personal interests seems a reasonable statement to make. As girls shared more common ground with boys, their preferences converged, and, consequently, the distinction between boys' and girls' books would be rendered obsolete. But the disappearance of the gender distinction in children's literature that Tomlinson predicted did not occur. Instead, *boys' books* and *girls' books* continue to be concepts of special significance within American publishing, and this distinction represents one of the most durable and pervasive divisions across American children's entertainment. The endurance of gender-specific children's books suggests that there is more to this story.

Reading Like a Girl

This dissertation investigates the evolution of the gender distinction in children's recreational reading. I do so by examining how *boys' books* and *girls' books* emerged and expanded in the American children's book field, focusing especially on the period between 1860 and 1960. I detail the formation of what I term *separate shelves* – gender-specific children's

[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

recreational reading intended primarily for boys *or* girls. More than a routine categorization of content, *separate shelves* represent a broader organization of beliefs about boys and girls, their reading preferences, and their autonomy as consumers.

Many Americans have come to expect a set of gender-specific childhood experiences, behaviors, and activities. In this respect, the gender division in culture reflects a belief that boys and girls have different needs and interests.[6] More significantly, gendered children's culture is commonly perceived as self-sustaining and natural. Following this line of reasoning, the continued success of gender-specific books simply demonstrates that gender-appropriate entertainment satisfies a demand. Moreover, since toys, commercials, magazines, video games, films, and television frequently carry gendered content for gendered audiences, why should children's books be any different?

Given the widespread adoption of gendered children's entertainment, it might be easy to suggest that this pattern began unwittingly. It is equally easy to imagine gendered children's culture as the result of a remarkably harmonious economic relationship between producers and consumers. Yet, the endurance of gender distinctions in children's entertainment suggests something far more complicated and organized than a series of unconscious decisions. The complex practices that contribute to packaging entertainment for a gendered audience indicate that it is not simply a matter of supply and demand.

Today, boys and girls represent a multibillion dollar market in the United States alone. Given the prevalence of media in children's lives, the origin and reproduction of gendered culture

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[6] The research on gender and children's culture is vast. See for example, Gary Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), Chapter 1; Miriam Formanek-Brunell, *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); Heather Gilmour, "What Girls Want: The Intersections of Leisure and Power in Female Computer Game Play," in *Kids' Media Culture,* ed. Marsha Kinder (Durham: Duke University Press), 263-292; Stephen Kline, *Out of the Garden: Toys and Children's Culture in the Age of TV Marketing* (New York: Verso, 1993), Chapter 8; Susan Linn, *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood* (New York: The New Press, 2004); Sharon Mazzarella and Norma Odom Pecora, ed., *Growing Up Girls: Popular Culture and the Construction of Identity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

merit deeper consideration from new angles.[7] This dissertation builds on the idea that changing ideas about child consumers and children's recreational reading foreground some of the aspirations adults hold for all children, as well as the specific anxieties and expectations applied to distinct subsets of children. The chapters are designed to illustrate the deliberate – but not inevitable – creation of gendered culture. More than this, boys' and girls' books – how they were created and the audiences they reached – present an opening to unravel some of the complexities of social distinctions as they operate in and through the children's market.

Gender Distinctions

Pierre Bourdieu suggests that the permanence of gender orders is deeply connected to a much broader set of social spaces and mechanisms employed by public institutions (*e.g.*, school, church, family, and state). Together, they provide a structure to secure the perpetual construction and reproduction of gender division.[8] Still, we are only beginning to account for the ways gender distinctions are created, projected, reproduced, and practiced through childhood. We know comparatively little about the interrelationship between children's social sites and their roles in the continual creation of childhood and gender distinctions. Likewise, recognition of the ways schools shortchange girls or boys tells us a lot about one site, but this still leaves much of the average American child's time and activities unaccounted for.[9] And, since children have fewer means to record their history, we have even less unfiltered knowledge of boys' and girls'

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[7] On the scale of the children's market, see James McNeal, *The Kids Market: Myths and Realities* (New York: Paramount Market Publishing, 1999).

[8] Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). See especially, Chapter 3.

[9] Data from the American Time Use Survey indicates that today's high school students (15-19 years old) engage in leisure and sports activities an average of 4.0 hours on a standard school day. The survey also indicated that reading, shopping, socializing, homework, and household activities were more popular among girls while games/computer, sports, and exercise were more popular among boys. For details see Mary Dorinda Allard, "How high school students use time: a visual essay," *Monthly Labor Review*, Deparment of Labor Force Statistics, November 2008, 51-61. On gender and schooling, see for example Christianne Corbett, Catherin Hill, and Andresse St. Rose, *Where the Girls are: the facts about gender equity in education* (Washington, D.C.: AAUW, 2008).

interests, their activities and habits, and how they adapt and react to the culture and values they are offered.

Our understandings of gendered adulthood offer some openings for considering boyhood and girlhood. Feminist theorists propose that the oppositional relationships organized through gender divisions work to separate individuals into mutually-exclusive, hierarchical groups. Iris Marion Young, for example, examines socially constructed habits of normative femininity and their implications for expressions and enactments of authority within a male-dominated society.[10] Gender divisions pose a potential source of solidarity, as well as opportunities for resistance and change.[11] There also is general agreement that the clustering of individuals into seemingly-cohesive groups, however artificial or imposed the categories may be, must be understood alongside recognition of the heterogeneity of genders that operate in combination with other powerful constructs (*e.g.*, class advantages, compulsory heterosexuality, white privilege).[12]

Preeminent conceptions of femininity and masculinity tend to reproduce dominant gender relations by advocating limited autonomy for women and by sustaining male authority.[13] Boyhood and girlhood, then, may be understood as a situating of childhood within a complex

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[10] Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and other essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5-6.

[11] See Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Ann Ducille, *Skin Trade* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Paula Giddings, *When and Where I enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in* America (New York: W. Morrow, 1984); Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994); Iris Marion Young, *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[12] See Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of* Empowerment (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992); Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988).

[13] A multiplicity of femininities and masculinities are in circulation at any given time, each competing for authority. The ideals defined through preeminent forms of femininity and masculinity present a set of changing expectations, preferences, and images that define gender-appropriate behavior. See especially, Susan Brownmiller, *Femininity* (New York: Linden Press/ Simon & Schuster, 1984); Karen Callaghan *Ideals of Feminine Beauty: Philosophical, Social, and Cultural* Dimensions (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994); R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996); Leslie Roman, Linda Christian-Smith, and Elizabeth Ann Ellsworth, *Becoming Feminine: The Politics of Popular Culture* (New York: Falmer Press, 1988); Candace West and Don Zimmerman "Doing Gender," *Gender and Society* 1, no.2 (1987): 125-51.

gender system of "social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes" and as "a primary way of signifying relationships of power."[14] Valerie Walkerdine, for example, demonstrates how class is central to femininity by examining practices created by girls as they live with contradictory demands and "operate in the limited terrain of self-production which is open to them."[15]

We know that social distinctions inform children's lives from a very early age. Children exhibit and adopt gender ideals deemed appropriate by adults. As these gender differences are normalized and naturalized, children display and monitor gender identity; boys and girls also recruit one another into gender-appropriate-behavior.[16] These peer groups offer children a sense of autonomy from adults, but they also facilitate the internalization of lessons about femininity and masculinity.[17]

Mapping Childhood

Theories of childhood also offer a valuable point of entry to better understand how boys and girls are defined – together and separately – as an audience and as a market. Philippe Aries' foundational work, *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) suggests that children were not distinguished

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[14] Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no.5 (1986): 1067.

[15] Valerie Walkerdine, *Daddy's Girl: Young Girls and Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 171.

[16] Barrie Thorne, *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School* (New Bruswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993); Spencer Cahill, "Childhood and Public Life: Reaffirming Biographical Divisions," *Social Problems* 37, no.3 (1990): 390-402; Donna Eder, Catherine Colleen Evans, and Stephen Parker, *School Talk: Gender and Adolescent Culture* (New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Margaret Finders, *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997).

[17] Patricia Adler and Peter Adler, *Peer Power: Preadolescent Culture and Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998); William Corsaro and Donna Eder, "Children's Peer Cultures," *Annual Review of Sociology* 16 (1990): 197-220; Gary Alan Fine, *With the Boys: Little League Baseball and Preadolescent Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Valerie Hey, *The Company She Keeps: An Ethnography of Girls' Friendships* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1997); Wesley Shrum, Neil Cheek, Jr., and Saundra MacD Hunter, "Friendship in School: Gender and Racial Homophily," *Sociology of Education* 61, no.4 (1988): 227-239; Lisa Dietrich, *Chicana Adolescents: Bitches, 'Ho's, and Schoolgirls* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998); Bonnie Leadbeater, Bonnie Ross, and Niobe Way, *Urban Girls: Resisting Stereotypes, Creating Identities* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Amira Proweller, *Constructing Female Identities: Meaning Making in an Upper Middle Class Youth Culture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998); Jill McLean Taylor, Carol Gilligan, and Amy Sullivan, *Between Voice and Silence: Women and Girls, Race and Relationship* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

separately from adults until the early modern era. This was due mainly to high mortality rates and the tendency for children to participate actively in most facets of the adult world. Economic factors, particularly the formation of the middle class, necessitated a new recognition of childhood as distinct from adult life.[18]

In the last thirty years of scholarship, childhood has gained new attention as an independent field of study. Although the concept of childhood often gives the impression of being constant and universal, theorists and scholars increasingly demonstrate the ways it is interconnected, restructured, and modified by social context. Childhood is no longer regarded a silent factor on the margins of an adult-centered society, or a determined outcome of specific material conditions. Rather, James and James suggest, "Childhood is imaged as a social space that is continuously located within and shaped by the social structure of a given society but that is also shaped by the actions of successive generations of children who succeed in creating and recreating diversity within this common socially constructed category."[19]

In recent years, social theory also has cast new light on the ways our notions of childhood are tied to social and cultural reproduction.[20] Jackson and Scott, for example, observe that adults construct childhood in an atmosphere of risk anxiety, adopting measures to identify and guard against perceived threats to children (*e.g.*, emotional and physical harm).[21] Protective measures

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[18] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962). There is some debate regarding Ariès' conclusions. For critiques, see Lloyd deMause, *The History of Childhood* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974); Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For further discussion of the influence of Ariès' work, see Hugh Cunningham, "Histories of Childhood," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (1998): 1195-1208.

[19] Allison James and Adrian James, "Childhood: Toward a Theory of Continuity and Change," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 575, no. 1 (2001): 25-37.

[20] See especially, James and James; Allison James, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout, *Theorizing Childhood* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998); Chris Jenks, *Childhood*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005).

[21] Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott, "Risk Anxiety and the Social Construction of Childhood," in *Risk and Sociocultural Theory: New Directions and Perspectives*, ed. Deborah Lupton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 86-107.

for children, and the adult aspirations they convey, may be motivated considerably by class interests, racial exceptions, and gender expectations.[22]

Children and the Commercial Sphere

Sociologist Viviana Zelizer finds that between 1870 and 1930 American children were rendered emotionally "priceless" and economically "worthless" – a process she describes as "sacralization."[23] Zelizer documents that priceless children increasingly "belonged in a domesticated, nonproductive world of lessons, games, and token money."[24] That is, children gradually exited the world of productive labor *and* they were relatively distanced from the commercial sphere.

Recent historical studies of the emergence of the child consumer have shed new light on how boys and girls, though priceless, were in fact engaged participants in the commercial sphere. Historians have demonstrated that during the late-nineteenth century boys and girls were approached with unique advertising and marketing strategies intended to leverage their influence in family purchases, but children were generally viewed as marginal consumers.[25] At the turn of the Twentieth Century, however, the mass market was accompanied by identification and targeting of more narrowly-defined groups of consumers. This process also shifted attention to

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[22] See for example, Nicola Beisel, "Class, Culture, and Campaigns against Vice in Three American Cities, 1872-1892," *American Sociological Review* 55, no. 1 (1990): 44-62; Lois Cuddy and Clair Roche, *Evolution and Eugenics in American Literature and Culture, 1880-1940: Essays on Ideological Conflict and Complicity* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003); Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[23] Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (NY: Basic Books, 1985; Reprint edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 1-12.

[24] *Ibid.*, 11.

[25] Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). See also Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 166-68.

meeting the perceived or newly-created needs associated with various segments of the population.[26]

Daniel Cook asserts that middle-class childhood became a site for articulating the broader moral tensions about children's place in the commercial sphere. He finds that between roughly 1915 and 1940 marketing shifted gradually from a focus on mothers to an adoption of the child's perspective. Lisa Jacobson also convincingly details the competing visions that informed children's socialization into consumer roles in the early-Twentieth Century, as well as the strategies used to influence and regulate children's consumer desires. In particular, she finds that producers and the public centered their attention on white, middle-class boys as a favored consumer.[27]

These studies suggest that, though the definition of the children's market invariably lies in exchanges between adults and children, priceless childhood translated into an emerging child consumer. Boys and girls received more specialized commodities and activities designed specifically to suit their needs, and they were steadily granted the ability to exercise full control over purchases. Producers increasingly capitalized on this rapidly growing segment and, as adults came to accept some limited engagement between children and the marketplace, selling to (and through) boys and girls became routine practice.

Building Separate Shelves

Despite our longstanding expectation of separate boys' and girls' entertainment, we rarely stop to ask when these gender distinctions emerged or how they are sustained. The assertion of a gender distinction in the children's book field raises the question of whether "reading for boys and girls" is less about differences between books and audiences, and more a

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[26] Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, 15-16. See also Joseph Turow, *Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[27] See especially Daniel Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 66-70; Lisa Jacobson, *Raising Consumers: Children and the American Mass Market in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

matter of who asserts specific distinctions in the field and how those divisions are perpetuated. The s*eparate shelves* also represent a site for conveying preeminent forms of masculinity and femininity – and their associated race, class, and power dynamics – to children at an early age.

The American publishing industry offers an opportunity to untangle the value and meaning of boys and girls in the market, as well as a means to contextualize and analyze the propagation of gender distinctions in children's entertainment. This dissertation begins with the premise that *separate shelves* in children's literature did not build themselves, but are the outcome of deliberate actions. In turn, boys' and girls' culture present an articulation of beliefs, while contributing to the collective experience and the ongoing reconstruction of childhood.

If adults made specific choices about boys' and girls' recreational reading, what was the basis for their claims? What utility did a gender division have in the production and consumption of children's books? How, contrary to Everett Tomlinson's prediction in 1900, did the idea of gender-specific books evolve into an enduring element in children's entertainment?

The Interplay of Production and Consumption

Bourdieu suggests that production and consumption are structured according to deeply-held beliefs, assumptions, and practices that tend to support dominant distinctions. Consequently, the aesthetic composition of a given cultural object is most often constituted and evaluated according to standards of quality that are informed deeply by dominant logics and tastes. At every point, there is a compelling, but non-deterministic, push to reproduce established distinctions and lend further legitimacy to the associated hierarchy of positions. This tendency to replicate the prevailing balance in the field makes radical shifts unlikely.[28] However, it is important to recognize that changes do occur.

Some scholars focusing on media production observe that to manage uncertain conditions, producers rely on conventions that, once institutionalized, are accepted as an objective

[28] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

reality that requires little, if any, explanation.[29] Cultural production is then guided by principles and routines that are often taken for granted.[30] Producers actively shape content development during the production process. They pre-select products at various stages using filtering and gate-keeping mechanisms that permit some cultural products to be realized while others are cast aside.[31]

This tendency to conform to standard routines and rules at the production level strengthened the likelihood that, once established, a particular form of boys' book or girls' book would be replicated. In part, the institutionalization of practices that support (or ignore) gender distinctions accounts for the limited range of children's entertainment available. It also begins to account for why alternatives to commercial children's culture remain relatively marginalized, and major deviations from standard gender distinctions are rare.

On the whole, these approaches conceive of cultural production as a process in which workers enact a set of coordinated contributions toward an agreed upon goal – or, in the case of more competitive markets, toward a goal supported by powerful actors within the field.[32] Producers rely on constructions of their audience to make decisions and arrange content according to established expectations. Institutions are often understood to play a, if not *the*,

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[29] Lynne Zucker, "The Role of Institutionalization in Cultural Persistence," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, ed. Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 83.

[30] R.L. Jepperson, "Institutions, Institutional Effects, and Institutionalism," in *Ibid*., 143-63; John Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," *American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 2 (1977): 340-63.

[31] William Bielby and Denise Bielby, "'All Hits Are Flukes': Institutionalized Decision-Making and the Rhetoric of Network Prime-Time Program Development," *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no.5 (1994): 1287-1313; Steven Clayman and Ann Reisner, "Gatekeeping in Action: Editorial Conferences and Assessments of Newsworthiness," *American Sociological Review* 63, no.2 (1998): 178-99; Lewis Coser et al., *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1983); Walter Powell, *Getting into Print: The Decision-Making Process in Scholarly Publishing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Barbara Rosenblum, "Style and Social Process," *American Sociological Review* 43 (1978); Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

[32] Becker's notion of *art worlds* depicts a cooperating network in which workers assume common fundamental principles. Similar ideas are put forward to address the common culture of individuals in groups. For example, Fine's concept of *idioculture* details common experiences shared by group members that, in turn, form a system for understanding and constructing a social reality. Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 35; Gary Alan Fine, "Small Groups and Culture Creation: The Idioculture of Little League Baseball Teams," *American Sociological Review* 44, no. 5 (1979): 734.

central role in driving cultural production. They provide an important reminder that cultural products are the sum of a series of decisions and coordinated activities that tend to be entrenched and assumed. They also identify the internal and external pressures that transform the children's book field, and the role of public information in defining a common understanding of the children's market.[33] Paul DiMaggio's concept of institutional entrepreneurship is instructive, as it recognizes human agency within the more rigid structures of the production process. This allows for a clearer understanding of the influence individual actors (*e.g.*, editors, writers, publishers, librarians, and teachers) can have within the children's book field.

Cultural production contributes significantly to the conservative appearance of children's culture. However, the success of cultural commodities in the marketplace is dependent on subjective assessments of quality and value among various consumers.[34] In the case of the children's market, books are complicated by the fact that production decisions are in the hands of adults and are based upon some degree of assumption about children's preferences. Likewise, establishing the artistic appeal of a children's book becomes a complex process as the final consumer (*i.e.*, the child) may or may not be the buyer.

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai turns our attention to the "*total* trajectory from production, through exchange/distribution, to consumption," with an emphasis on commodities as

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[33] Howard Aldrich and C. Marlene Fiol, "Fools Rush In? The Institutional Context of Industry Creation," *Academy of Management Review* 19, no. 4 (1994): 645-70; N. Anand and Richard Peterson, "When Market Formation Constitutes Fields: Sensemaking of Markets in the Commercial Music Industry," *Organizational Science* 11, no. 3 (2000): 270-84; Paul DiMaggio, "Constructing an Organizational Field as Professional Project: U.S. Art Museums, 1920-1940," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, 267-92.; Royston Greenwood and C.R. Hinings, "Understanding Radical Organizational Change: Bringing Together the Old and the New Instutionalism," *Academy of Management Review* 21, no. 4 (1996): 1022-54; Royston Greenwood, Roy Suddaby, and C.R. Hinings, "Theorizing Change: The Role of Professional Associations in the Transformation of Institutional Fields," *Academy of Management Review* 45, no. 1 (2002): 58-80; Huseyin Leblebici et al., "Institutional Change and the Transformation of Interorganizational Fields: An Organziational History of the U.S. Radio Broadcasting Industry," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1991): 333-64.

[34] Paul Hirsch, "Processing Fads and Fashions: An Organzation-Set Analysis of Cultural Industry Systems," *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 4 (1972): 103-27.

functioning along different registers rather than a "special class of thing."[35] He also notes that when standards of taste and access to commodities are extremely regulated, the conditions of consumption can dictate the value, meaning, and circulation of a commodity.[36] As this dissertation will show, this interplay between production and consumption is essential to understanding the dynamics of the children's book field.

Gender Distinctions in the Children's Book Field

Changing notions about gender and American childhood provided an important context and set of guiding principles for the rise of separate shelves in the children's book field. Over the course of the Nineteenth Century, many American adults viewed childhood as a crucial mechanism for advancing new values; childhood also represented an essential affirmation of the accomplishments and the promise of the nation. At the same time, with the rise of popular fiction, American readers were offered an abundance of entertaining publications.

As publishers experimented with amusing periodicals intended specifically for children over the course of the Nineteenth Century, an apprehensive middle class began to question whether fiction undermined the crucial lessons and virtues affixed to childhood (*e.g.*, morality, obedience, progress). Of particular concern was the threat of "light reading" – fiction of no lasting value or literary merit designed purely for the indulgence of the reader. Clergy and physicians asserted that women and children fell victim to the "novel-reading disease"; this affliction degraded their literary tastes, destroyed their physical health, and threatened the future of American morals and manners.

In the 1860s, boys (and girls) were recognized as avid readers of dime novels intended for adult audiences. By 1874 producers of this cheap fiction were creating new publications intended specifically for boys. Boys' dime novels merit attention because they were created to

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[35] Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
[36] *Ibid.*

satisfy boys as readers *and* they were designed to appeal to boys as consumers. The fate of boys' dime novels hinged heavily on boys' ability to buy for themselves, often in the face of strong objections from adults. Boys' dime novels also introduce a new site for the negotiation of class concerns. With boys actively buying and reading a literature associated with the working class, supporters and defenders of the middle-class grew increasingly anxious about their sons' reading tastes.

Between 1860 and 1960, the division of audiences and the commoditization of literature worked hand in hand. As publishers catered to the interests of more narrowly-defined audiences, they forged stronger bonds between specific literary forms and their intended reading publics.[37] As children's recreational reading expanded after the Civil War, girls remained susceptible to the "novel-reading disease" that plagued women for generations, but boys emerged as the real problem readers. Publishers recognized boys as avid readers of cheap fiction and they produced hundreds of dime novels and story papers intended specifically for boys. "Cheap fiction" was perceived as a severe threat to the values of an emerging priceless childhood, and it deeply unsettled an American middle class that favored children's literature that served a social purpose.

Through new and pre-existing organizations, moral authorities (*e.g.*, reformers, librarians, and teachers) mobilized to protect children from "pernicious literature." They also advocated for more "quality" reading intended to cultivate good (*i.e.*, middle class) literary taste in boys *and* girls. As a result, these influential patrons formed alliances with publishers who, in turn, actively used children's publications as a means to appease adult demands and induce greater spending, while also attempting to satisfy the interests of children.

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[37] Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism; a History of Newspapers in the United States through 250 Years, 1690-1940* (New York: Macmillan, 1941); Mott, *Golden Multitudes; the Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1947); Janice Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); John Tebbel, "Main Trends in Twentieth-Century Book Clubs" in *American Literary Publishing Houses, 1900-1980*, ed. Peter Dzwonkoski, (Detroit: Gale Research Co.,1972); Tebbel, *Between Covers: The Rise and Transformation of Book Publishing in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

This early entrance of the boy consumer asserted the gender distinction in the children's book field, and it ascribed different values to boys and girls as audiences. The growing recognition of the girl consumer in the early 1900s continued the pattern of gender-specific recreational reading. As American publishers and the public positioned recreation as central to boyhood and girlhood, they also accelerated the affirmation of boys' and girls' autonomy as consumers and, in turn, further distanced adult authority.

As Everett Tomlinson observed, by 1900, boys and girls showed an increasing alignment of interests and a leveling of their ability to satisfy their interests, at least among middle- and upper-class children. Though childhood underwent significant changes in the Twentieth Century, the disappearance of a gender distinction in the children's book field was not the only, or even the most likely, result of those changes. Building upon the legacy of dime novels, gender-specific series books emerged in the children's book field.

As boys' and girls' series accomplished a strong record of success in the market, the gender distinction gained substantial investment from publishers. Established series producers re-wrote and adapted successful boys' books in the early decades of the Twentieth Century to provide a highly similar, but still quite separate, set of books intended specifically for girls. The success of separate boys' series and girls' series, despite the objections of many adults, affirmed the market's access to both boys and girls as direct consumers and it raised middle-class anxieties about a further erosion of parental authority. By the 1930s, the production and consumption of gender-specific books was regarded as natural and unchangeable.

Following World War II, gender-specific recreational reading was produced by publishers of all stripes. With the transition to "the consumer's republic" following World War II, I find that the intense commercialization perpetuated a gender division in the children's book field.[38] Though child readers exercised their influence as book-buyers – particularly as modern

[38] Historian Lizabeth Cohen documented how "an economy, culture, and politics built around the promises of mass consumption" emerged in the United States during the post-World War II era. In this "consumer's

adolescence carried an expressed freedom to choose recreational activities for oneself – the expectation of gender-exclusive audiences remained firmly entrenched. The separate shelves appeared inevitable.

Emergence and Persistence

The creation of separate shelves in the children's book field is, in part, simply another example of market segmentation and audience definition within American consumer culture. But the division between boys' books and girls' books is not just a matter of categories and content. Nor is it simply a question of replicating and applying existing practices from the adult market to the children's market. Rather, *separate shelves* are part of a broader classification of culture, an arrangement of audiences, and a collection of actors that provided and channeled books to specific sets of readers.

For publishers, editors, and authors, *separate shelves* create a set of intended audiences, consumers, and organizing principles for the market. Creating a gender-specific book offered a useful shorthand to guide production processes, make decisions about content, and define audiences. Likewise, for marketing and advertising professionals promoting a book as a boys' book or a girls' book allowed them to package new material in keeping with an established, familiar pattern.

But *separate shelves* were not created and sustained by producers alone. The interplay between production and consumption strongly affected audience definition, consumer demand, and the classification of products in the children's book field. The gender distinction operated as a valuable organizing principle for the critical reception of children's recreational reading. As teachers, librarians, parents, and other concerned adults made choices about children's reading options, boys' books and girls' books contributed to the broader dynamics in the field as a gender designation signaled a specific audience and, often, an associated set of expectations for the work.

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republic," Americans favored spending and pleasure over earlier values of restraint. Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 7.

Parents and child-oriented professionals had the means and the imperative to intervene in children's reading. Alongside the standard array of critics, publishers also had to negotiate the demands of child experts and reconcile themselves to parental intervention in children's choices and purchases. And, although Everett Tomlinson's idea that the appearance (and disappearance) of the gender distinction is driven by the changing interests of girls and boys overstates the influence of children's preferences, it does draw attention to the ways adults succeed (or fail) to recognize children's individual tastes and their autonomy.

With the widespread association of gender and genre in the adult market, the formation of *separate shelves* in children's books was not a new idea; it extended an existing pattern into the children's market. The basic assumption was that if men enjoyed adventure, westerns, and hard-boiled detective fiction, their sons would, too. Likewise, women's interest in melodrama, soap operas, and sentimentality applied to girls as well. Producers of popular fiction drew upon the models of adult consumption. Thus, the *separate shelves* for boys and girls initially mirrored the division of popular books in the adult market.

But gender distinctions in children's books are more than just a matter of creating entertainment for little women and little men. The categorization of children's books also derived, in part, from adults' assumptions and attempts to impose different reading interests upon children. For several generations, the production of recreational children's books was guided largely by speculation about children's interests. Publishers and retailers had limited access to boys and girls, and they believed child readers to be either hard-to-guess or easily satisfied. If content was deemed of universal interest, the book became a children's book or a boys' book commonly read by girls. If the content was believed gender-specific, the book was classified according to its intended audience. Adults dictated the model for identifying and classifying children's reading preferences. However, their efforts to obstruct children's access to "bad books" and to force changes in their reading choices and habits had mixed results.

My research affirms Zelizer's assertion that the sentimental and economic value of American children took on a new dimension. It details the growing alignment of idealized childhood with the values of the middle class (e.g., conspicuous consumption, the ideology of "home and family," and the associated constructions of gender). As the transmission of cultural capital was supported by public agencies, marketing strategies, and school curricula, a hierarchy ingrained in the construction of childhood became largely taken-for-granted.[39] The growing separation of children from adults also coincided with new preparation for the marketplace. As with other forms of education, training boys and girls to consume presented an opportunity to maintain social reproduction and a secure middle class, in this case by harnessing boys' and girls' saving, earning, and spending decisions.

At the same time, the relative value of children also took on growing significance in the children's book field over the course of the Twentieth Century. Producers sought to maximize their engagement with children who could afford entertainment. While the purchasing potential of children is obviously connected to family income, the middle class child was valued over the wealthy as their numbers grew and their influence on family spending expanded. As market segmentation and narrow audience definitions proliferated through the Twentieth Century, the children's book field also adopted sharper divisions according to age, interests, and peer groupings. The children's book market fractured quickly into narrower segments based on perceived tastes and interests. With parents effectively displaced as brokers of their children's entertainment, the market approached and engaged children generationally (and, to an extent, in opposition to adults). With privileged children increasingly empowered to consume, disadvantaged children were largely disenfranchised from the market.

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[39] Bourdieu conceptualized *cultural capital* to account for the intergenerational transmission of skills, attitudes, behaviors, and formal and informal knowledge. The concept evolved over several of his works, and it has been used widely across several disciplines. I am drawing on the concept to consider the inscription, accumulation, and articulation of distinctions in the ongoing construction of American childhood. For an analysis and extension of the concept, see Michèle Lamont and Annette Lareau, "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments," *Sociological Theory* 6 (1988): 153-68.

Pursuing a Distinction

The empirical core of this dissertation consists of trade publications, professional journals, and reviews produced by individuals who sought to create and define the children's book field. I examine public discourse because it offered a space for adults to articulate, negotiate, and challenge their views about boys and girls as readers and consumers. Constructions of childhood provided a pulse that enabled society and media producers alike to gauge and manipulate the current standing of the child consumer. In turn, individuals could draw upon publicly acknowledged positions regarding childhood as informative references and as points of comparison. In the context of the children's book field, beliefs about gender and childhood strengthened the public's recognition of boys and girls as readers and book-buyers. The resulting principles and conventions offered a set of expectations for children's books, and they shaped the practices producers and other adults employed to create and distribute children's books.

My approach is based on the idea that everyday assumptions and choices matter, for adults and for children. It also strikes a balance between identifying periods in boys' and girls' books, and recognizing the patterns that emerge and the legacies they leave. I take for granted that gender and childhood are socially constructed in ways that prove significant. I take children's recreational reading as a site where views of gender and childhood inform cultural production and consumption practices. I have tried to present this dissertation with an interdisciplinary audience in mind.

I use literary histories of children's literature, book reviews, editorials, and parenting guides on children's reading to give clarity to public views of boyhood and girlhood, as well as reception of children's books.[40] I consulted library and education journals, professional

[40] See especially, Harold Darling, *From Mother Goose to Dr. Seuss: Children's Book Covers, 1860-1960* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999); Peter Hunt and Dennis Butts, *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Sybille A. Jagusch, *Stepping Away from Tradition: Children's Books of the Twenties and Thirties* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1988); Cornelia Meigs, *A Critical History of Children's Literature; a Survey of Children's Books in English. Prepared in Four Parts*, Rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

associations, and child-oriented organizations to gauge how professionals viewed and responded to children's books during each period. On children's book reviewing, I collected archival material from the *Horn Book* Collection held by Simmons College. For added insight into children's librarianship, I consulted the records of the New England Round Table of Children's Librarians held by Boston Public Library.

To account for the emergence and development of gender distinctions in the children's book field, I collected articles on children's publishing and bookselling detailing the perspectives and work of publishers, editors, book manufacturers, authors, and illustrators. Robin Gottlieb's *Publishing Children's Books in America, 1919-1976: An Annotated Bibliography* identifies many relevant articles from *Publishers' Weekly* and other sources.[41] I analyzed all Children's Book Week issues and Spring Children's Book issues from *Publishers' Weekly*. I also relied on corporate histories, newspaper articles, biographies, interviews, and speeches by industry leaders to situate the children's book field within the publishing industry. Handbooks and trade journals indicate how advertisers and marketers viewed children's books. These featured commentary on recent trends, summaries of upcoming titles by all the major children's book publishers, as well as book advertising from publishers intended to spur demand from booksellers and distributors.

To gain a sense of how marketers positioned children's books, I collected print ads from major newspapers and magazines. For each period, I also gathered accounts for special book-related activities (*e.g.*, Children's Book Week events, book fairs, etc.) to provide an overall view of children's bookselling and to understand how children's books were promoted differently over time.

Each chapter of this dissertation isolates childhood to articulate the complex constructions of boyhood and girlhood in a given period. I survey relevant scholarship on children's evolving role in the commercial sphere, as well as patterns in consumer education, as

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[41] Robin Gottlieb, *Publishing Children's Books in America, 1919-1976: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Children's Book Council, 1978).

evidence of the "appropriate" roles defined for boy and girl consumers. I also detail strategies employed by a variety of producers to define children's engagement with the commercial sphere as they recognized uniquely-valued child consumers, each with distinct interests and consumer potential. The purpose is to identify childhood as a consequential idea that has undergone powerful changes in its purpose and meaning.

This strategy initially imposes an artificial isolation to the concept of childhood. It homogenizes a broad range of discourse on children and parenting, and it condenses complex aspects of social life to allow for a better sense of how boyhood and girlhood have been understood by adults. While many aspects of childhood are designed to be shared, universal experiences, my interest is in acknowledging when and how distinctions emerge, while guarding against an overstatement of their purpose or influence.

Each chapter then examines how gender distinctions are employed in the children's book field. I set these seemingly-static constructions of childhood in motion through a reconstructed setting of literary institutions, public discourse, and popular boys' and girls' publications. Mapping the beliefs articulated in the children's book field allows for a picture of gender distinctions and some explanation of outcomes (*i.e.*, how gendered culture is produced and consumed) and illustrates how prevailing beliefs inform motivations, actions, and outcomes in the children's book field. My interest is to give a sense of how these views are disseminated, adopted, and transformed in the marketplace.

Each chapter identifies common elements in gendered books that, in turn, can be categorized into periods. Each also describes broader changes in children's recreation and contextualizes the children's book field in relation to another form of children's media. Taken together, they detail the emergence and reproduction of gender distinctions in the children's book field, as well as the spread of gender-specific content. [42]

[42] See Appendix A for additional details on my data collection and analysis.

Important reference points for this research include studies by Stephen Kline, Miriam Formanek-Brunell, and Gary Cross. I also draw upon the recent scholarship on series fiction for insights into the history and content of girls' and boys' books. Though I do present details about some children's stories, this dissertation demonstrates the longstanding relevance of gender distinctions in the children's book field. This dissertation is not a literary analysis. Nor is it an examination of the influence of recreational reading or gendered culture on individual boys and girls. Rather, the chapters demonstrate how authoritative constructions of childhood evoke age classifications and cluster children into discrete groups.

Chapter One briefly examines the foundations of separate shelves: the growing separation of children from adults in the early- and mid-nineteenth century and the rise of recreational reading. I also detail the objections posed against fiction and "light reading," as moral authorities grew anxious about the perceived threats of more entertaining, stimulating, and secular literature.

Chapter Two details the transformation of American childhood under middle-class influence and the evolving social divisions between children in the late-Nineteenth Century. It gives special emphasis to the ways boy readers were recognized as a new market opportunity for the adaptation and recycling of dime novels. This chapter also demonstrates how the creation of gender-specific reading applied adult assumptions about boys' and girls' interests and accessibility (*e.g.,* gender and genre, audience definition, literary tastes).

Chapter Three focuses on the growing idealization of a middle-class childhood based upon gender and class divisions during the early decades of the Twentieth Century. It tracks the transition from boy's dime novels to a burgeoning market for boys' and girls' series fiction. It also illustrates the continued utility of separate shelves for the influential actors (*i.e.,* publishers, librarians, and other "institutional entrepreneurs") who relied upon and propagated these distinctions as they operated within the children's literary market.

Chapter Four examines the changing beliefs about American childhood as it became more implicitly middle class and peer oriented between 1930 and the 1960s. I then detail the

persistence of gender distinctions through new career, romance, and nonfiction series. The chapter demonstrates how separate shelves may be perpetuated because they had become a naturalized, taken-for-granted, and reliable concept for children's publishers and for the American public.

Chapter Five revisits the period between 1930 and the 1960s to detail how American children became increasingly autonomous consumers in the commercial sphere. Specifically, the chapter details how the children's book field re-conceptualized boys and girls as uniquely valuable customers.

CHAPTER ONE

Mental Intoxication:
Women, Children, and the Threat of Light Reading

> We can think of no more rational way of arresting the evil, than for parents to awake to the consciousness of the sad havoc, made with the time and intellects of their children and cease purchasing or subscribing for the light literature which floods the country; and in place thereof put into the hands of children books and periodicals of known merit, a supply of which is within the reach of almost every one.
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> "Degradation of Labor. Novel Reading."
> Josephine C. Bateham, *Ohio Cultivator*, 1848[1]

In 1848, editor of the Housewife's Department of the *Ohio Cultivator*, Josephine C. Bateham, claimed that many American women did not value work because their access to occupations was limited and they viewed labor as undignified. Bateman further suggested that this generation's distaste for work coincided with abundance of "novels and love tales" which diverted women's aspirations to marriage. Bateham asserted that the promises of reform for women, the abolition of slavery, and a restoration of cheerful labor all would go unmet without "the cultivation of head and heart, deemed essential to success."[2] A fundamental change in perspective was needed. To that end, the *Ohio Cultivator* took up the dual mission of combating light reading while also advocating for higher reading tastes. As the quotation above indicates they focused particular attention on alerting parents to the crucial value of improving their children's reading habits.

Though fiction might appear an unusual subject for an agricultural publication, the issue of recreational reading received surprisingly broad attention from the American public in the early and mid-Nineteenth Century. Historian Isabelle Lehuu argues that a "circus atmosphere" emerged in the Nineteenth Century as "eccentric publishing experiments provoked altogether

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[1] Josephine C. Bateman, "Degradation of Labor. Novel Reading.," *Ohio Cultivator; A Semi-Monthly Journal of Agriculture and Horticulture*, 15 May 1848, 79.
[2] *Ibid.*

great pleasure as well as great anxiety when antebellum America witnessed a massive desecration of a tradition of printed words with the onslaught of the marketplace."[3] Lehuu suggests that in this context reading represented an especially important, but unsettled, site for asserting social values. She also finds that the assertion of gender distinctions became more prominent within the larger American reading public as readers oriented around specific publications and as American publishers created "separate spheres" of print culture.[4]

Taking a cue from Lehuu's work, this chapter examines changing beliefs about childhood and the expansion of children's recreational reading during the early- and mid-Nineteenth Century. As many adults began to believe that children needed more educational, practical, and devotional reading of their own, publishers began to offer new kinds of publications intended exclusively for young readers. Specialized periodicals, such as *The Juvenile Port-folio and Literary Miscellany* (1812-1816), sought to amuse boys and girls through "elegance of expression, chastity of thought, and value of information."[5] These publications also stressed a deep commitment to patriotism and "rational cheerfulness" (*e.g.,* behavior in keeping with the manners, morals, and filial piety expected of a young American). By the mid 1800s, however, the dominance of publications for "liberal and ingenious youth, of both sexes" began to give way to a growing abundance of new reading choices, including highly-sensational, popular fiction.[6]

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[3] Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 7.

[4] *Ibid.* 28-30. Lehuu notes that this development of separate reading publics with distinct reading tastes affected both readers and publishers.

[5] *The Juvenile Port-folio and Literary Miscellany*, 17 October 1812, 1. Quoted in R. Gordon Kelly, ed. *Children's Periodicals of the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 263-4. *The Juvenile Port-Folio and Literary Miscellany* was published and edited by Thomas G. Condie, the 14-year-old son of a successful Philadelphia bookbinder. In 1816, the periodical was converted to *The Parlour Companion* for the "domestic" audience. For details, see Kelly, *Children's Periodicals of the United States*, 262-67.

[6] *Ibid.*, 264.

American Childhood and the Making of the Child Reader

This section traces important developments in the conception of American childhood during the early to mid 1800s. Scholars find that early-nineteenth-century childhood was defined largely according to moral and political convictions. As Anne Scott MacLeod observes, Americans took the responsibility of child-rearing very seriously because children represented the future of the Republic. Parents and educators expressed deep anxiety that any independence afforded to the rising generation, though essential to democracy, might easily undermine social order because children lacked self control. They addressed this concern with a mix of punishment and rationality (*e.g.*, an emphasis on reason and obedience) intended to regulate the child's unruly nature.[7]

It is important to note that this evolving form of childhood also was rooted primarily in the white, urban, Northern, "middling class" family.[8] During the early to mid 1800s, family-based economies were shifting to large-scale enterprises, and apprenticeships were gradually giving way to industrialized labor. Faced with a growing commercial economy, geographic mobility, and rapid urbanization, the rising middle class focused new attention on the knowledge and values needed to secure the survival and success of the nation. As the centrality of family life diminished, age-related activities became more evident and necessary in many aspects of American social life and the beginnings of a complex system of age stratification emerged.[9] In

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[7] Anne Scott MacLeod, *A Moral Tale: Children's Fiction and American Culture, 1820-1860* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 32-37. See also, Jacqueline S. Reinier, *From Virtue to Character: American Childhood, 1775-1850* (New York: Prentice Hall International, 1996).

[8] On the emergence of the middle class, see Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976); Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Karen Haltunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). On the heterogeneity of the middle class, see Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[9] Howard Chudacoff, *How Old Are You?: Age Consciousness in American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), Chapter 1.

this context, an American model of childhood focused on orderly and self-conscious parenting began to emerge.

At the same time, a sharper division of work and leisure across classes also developed as workplaces became more efficiency-driven and routine. By 1850, temperance campaigns successfully prohibited drinking during working hours, rendering leisure and labor completely separate.[10] Leisure had long been a marker of indulgence and privileged position among the upper classes. For many members of the middle class, however, leisure and idleness generated lingering anxiety despite the fact that they could afford to enjoy themselves. The middle-class ambition to achieve wealthy gentility contradicted their deeply-held work ethic. To reconcile this, they compromised by merging piety with refined domesticity to create middle-class manners and taste.[11]

In this context, the idealization of childhood figured prominently in the ongoing affirmation of middle-class domesticity, with children representing the purity of the private sphere.[12] A sentimental view of children also appeared increasingly in the press and in an abundance of advice literature.[13] Though parents and children might reject the values and practices advocated under this form of childhood, it was widely-disseminated by mid-century.[14] Institutions, such as the growing Sunday School system, also offered a means for middle-class American women to impart complementary values (*e.g.*, self-control, obedience) to poor and

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[10] Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998 [1977]), Chapter 2.

[11] Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), vi, vii, xviii.

[12] See Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*, 86-90.

[13] By the 1830s, American and British advice books were readily available and printed in multiple editions. For examples, see John Abbott, *The Mother at Home; or, The Principles of Maternal Duty* (London: J. Mason, 1834); Lydia Maria Child, *The Mother's Book* (Boston: Carter and Handee, 1831); Catherine Maria Sedgewick, *Home* (Boston: James Monroe, 1827). On the role of advice literature in this transformation, see especially Reinier, *From Virtue to Character*.

[14] To be sure, other views of childhood competed with this particular version, and children's experience varied widely. See for example, Lester Alston, "Children as Chattel," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 208-31; Tamara Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: the Relationship between Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Marilyn Irvin Holt, *Children of the Western Plains: The Nineteenth Century Experience* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003).

working children. Likewise, the expansion of public and private education provided similar opportunities to disseminate and advance new beliefs about childhood, particularly as the argument for girls' education gained support and more children were expected to attend school. Though the concept of childhood remained varied, especially as the working class realized that their children would have to contribute to household incomes, the middle class conception was both taking root and gaining legitimacy.[15]

Inside and outside the home, changing beliefs about American childhood operated in concert with changes in parental roles. Most notably, the early decades of the Nineteenth Century marked a more pervasive separation of fathers from family life as the demands of the workplace drew men out of the home. A deep conflict emerged between providing financial support and tending to the immediate needs of children. Though conservative voices continued to raise a father's discipline as paramount, it was clear by the 1840s that the distribution of parenting rights, duties, and authority were under substantial revision.[16] As historian Michael Kimmel observes, "If a man's home was his castle, by the mid-1800s he was becoming an absentee landlord."[17]

As middle-class mothers assumed greater responsibility for child-rearing, the established belief in child-obedience, though still relevant, was giving way to a more nurturing approach. A falling birthrate also permitted adults to invest more resources in fewer children.[18] Though not compulsory, the expansion of "common schools" drastically expanded the elementary education and literacy rates, as practical and productive labor was replaced gradually by an emphasis on

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[15] See especially, Anne Boylan, *Sunday School: the Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 2005); David Nasaw *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Public Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press and The Russell Sage Foundation, 1990).

[16] See for example, Herman Humphrey, *Domestic Education* (Amherst, 1840).

[17] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 58.

[18] Early-nineteenth-century parents had seven to ten children. In 1850, the average dropped to five. By 1900, the typical American mother had three children. Joseph Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 115.

making middle-class boys and girls into knowledgeable and moral citizens.[19] Under the growing influence of Romanticism, child-rearing advice also increasingly infused parenting with greater emotional attachment to children. Parental control was to be achieved first through love and affection, then with rational discussion, and finally through authority and physical discipline.[20]

Throughout this period, gender distinctions in modern childhood drew directly upon adult models of masculinity and femininity. Middle-class American girlhood imitated the self-sacrifice, dedication, and domesticity expected of women. Girlhood was largely a time of preparation for adulthood, but it also represented a period of relative freedom from its full responsibilities. By contrast, "boy culture" developed to cultivate the competitiveness and self-reliance boys would need in adult life, as manhood was identified increasingly with individual achievement, a competitive market, and the accumulation of wealth. Girlhood and boyhood also served as an arena to raise competing gender ideals. A more carefree, spirited girlhood, meant daughters were accomplished and active; this disrupted any sweeping assumptions about female submissiveness and passivity. Likewise, the aggressiveness and emotional detachment required by masculinity appears unevenly in the construction of middle-class boyhood; adults still tended to favor a stricter code of morality in their sons.[21]

Though the expectations and aspirations affixed to boyhood and girlhood were defined largely in opposition to one another, evidence also suggests some opportunities for shared

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[19] On the complexity of public education during this period, see Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

[20] Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Degler's work relies on and supports "separate spheres" as an organizing concept. This framework has been the subject of extensive scrutiny. See for example, Mary Ryan, *Empire of the Mother: American Writing about Domesticity, 1830-1860* (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 1985), 1-18.

[21] On girlhood as pre-womanhood, see Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Frances Cogan, *All American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Miriam Formanek-Brunell, *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). On "boy culture", see Kimmel, Chapters 1 & 2; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), Chapter 2.

experiences during this period. It is likely that educational materials were shared among siblings regardless of gender. Many middle-class children also still had responsibilities within the home for housework and chores. Although these tasks were commonly divided by gender, training children in skills they needed in adult life had to be reconciled with the immediate contribution of labor to the family. More importantly, placing unnecessarily strict limits on girls ran counter to the imperative that both boys and girls grow up to be "useful." Whether out of necessity or flexibility, many parents surely took their children's interests and abilities into account when they structured their children's work and leisure time.[22]

Purposeful Reading: Recognizing the Child Audience

As Americans formulated new approaches to child rearing in the early to mid 1800s, they also sought to create more distinctly American reading for their children. As this section will detail, children's literature responded to the collective anxieties of a changing society by stressing moral education and patriotism, good deeds and humility, hard work and filial piety. These virtues extended to boys and girls. At the same time, the aspirations of the rising middle class figured heavily in shaping recreational reading for boys and girls as "women and youth" were increasingly perceived as victims of the "novel reading disease." As upper- and middle-class adults asserted their responsibility to safeguard the fragile social order and to ensure that the nation's sons and daughters were raised properly, these duties increasingly required censoring their entertainment, limiting choices, and providing appropriate books.

Prior to the Civil War, children's recreational reading was satisfied largely by juvenile periodicals. Figure 1-1 shows the start dates of new children's periodicals to illustrate the rising

[22] On instructional materials see, Jean Ferguson Carr, et al., *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers and Composition Books in the United States* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005); Mary Ryan, *Empire of the Mother*. On parental flexibility, see Anne Scott MacLeod, "American Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century: Caddie Woodlawn's Sisters," in *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 3-29.

investment in children's recreational reading by entrepreneurs.[23] R. Gordon Kelly's extensive search for American children's periodicals reveals that the juvenile periodicals started early in the century were essentially publishing experiments. He finds that most publications were short-lived and many were attached to religious publishing. Children's periodicals expanded significantly through the 1820s with 24 new publications established. With the extension of publishing outside the Northeast, offerings for children rebounded again and 29 new periodical emerged in the 1830s alone.[24]

The visibility of children's periodicals benefitted from broader developments. The mass circulation emphasis of the "penny press" in the 1830s encouraged a new orientation to more overt commercialism and a national scale.[25] Likewise, though many children's periodicals were modeled on British periodicals, a nationalist interest spurred the creation of more distinctly American publications suitable for young citizens; thus, as the rising middle class adopted a more distinctly American form of childhood, the message of children's periodicals shifted accordingly.[26] For example, publications such as The *Youth's Companion: an illustrated weekly paper for young people and the family* (1821-1929) or *Juvenile Miscellany* (1826-1836) strongly

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[23] Kelly, *Children's Periodicals of the United States,* Introduction. Kelly and others compiled 423 titles. I drew upon this list to track new periodicals because, though limited, it recaptures some sense of what the population of children's recreational reading was in the Nineteenth Century. As Kelly notes, however, identifying a representative and comprehensive list of children's periodicals is an impossible task. Many disappeared when they failed to attract or keep subscribers; little record of their publication history survives.

[24] *Ibid.* See Figure 1-1.

[25] Schudson argues that the "penny press" marked a significant kind of "commercial revolution." "Penny papers" moved from a subscription model to a lower-priced publication sold on the streets by newsboys. This business model relied on high circulation and advertising revenue. Michael Schudson, "The Revolution in American Journalism in the Age of Egalitarianism: The Penny Press," in *Discovering the News: A Social History of Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 12-60. Though periodicals and newspapers became more affordable and democratized, books remained expensive and they were less widely distributed. See Ronald Zboray, "Antebellum Reading and the Ironies of Technological Innovation," in *Reading in America: Literature and Social History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 180-200.

[26] See especially, Gillian Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and their Books, 1621-1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), Chapter 3.

emphasized the fundamental virtues affixed to American childhood: education, self-improvement, and obedience. [27]

As the emphasis on "youth" suggests, most children's periodicals were intended for both boys and girls prior to the Civil War, and this "universal audience" held true across other children's publications as well. The reliable market for schoolbooks and classics gave publishers little incentive to build up lists for children, much less divide an already limited audience by producing exclusively for boy or girl audiences. Moreover, adults who purchased reading material on children's behalf considered these principles and lessons appropriate for both sexes. Faced with limited options, boys and girls were unlikely to reject the few amusing stories made available to them. For these reasons, a story with a male or female protagonist might suggest to us that it held a greater appeal to boys or girls, but it did not signal a divided audience.[28]

While children's periodicals became more common during the early- to mid-1800s, children's books printed with any regularity were for education and religious instruction, and entertaining books for children were slow to emerge.[29] Annual gift books were published for the holiday season, and the print-runs were relatively small. These publications were expected to espouse the virtues of domesticity, democracy, and Christian morality. For example, minister and teacher Jacob Abbott wrote the *Rollo* books to entertain, promote reading and reasoning skills, and cultivate "the amiable and gentle qualities of the heart."[30] The dissemination of this

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[27] See Mabel F. Altstetter, "Early American Magazines for Children," *Peabody Journal of Education* 19, no. 3 (1941); Kelly, *Children's Periodicals of the United States*; James Marten, ed. *Lessons of War: The Civil War in Children's Magazines* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999).

[28] On gender and children's reading, see especially Elizabeth Segel, "'As the Twig Is Bent . . .': Gender and Childhood Reading," in *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*, ed. Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 165-86. See also, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*, 1st ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1985), 25, 212-213.

[29] On early nineteenth-century children's literature, see Avery, *Behold the Child*, Chapters 3-6; John C. Crandall, "Patriotism and Humanitarian Reform in Children's Literature, 1825-1860," *American Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1969): 3-22; MacLeod, *A Moral Tale*.

[30] Jacob Abbott, *Rollo at Play; or, Safe Amusements* New ed. (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1855). Abbott wrote nearly 200 books – most for children – as well as a parenting guide. Jacob Abbott, *Gentle Measures in the Management and Training of the Young* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1871). See especially, Mary Cable, *The Little Darlings: A History of Child Rearing in America* (New York: Scribner, 1975), 100-101.

purposeful reading material was furthered by Sunday school libraries, the only source for borrowed books in many areas of the United States.[31]

Notable exceptions to universally-appropriate children's literature were companion volumes designed to present boys and girls with models for adulthood. Boys were offered guidance to become "future electors, legislators, judges, ministers, lawyers, and physicians," while girls were provided advice to become "well-bred, intelligent, refined, and good." [32] These books were accompanied by a growing number of new authoritative guides intended for "young men" and "young ladies" to read and follow.[33] In a sense, these guides strengthened the hand of the parent by indoctrinating boys and girls with the message that they should respect adult authority and by depicting the difficulties experienced by children who shamed their families. At the same time, these guides indicate a lack of certainty that fathers and mothers were getting the job done. Thus, in the spirit of self-education, a child could be relied upon, at least in part, to develop a strong moral outlook, appropriate aspirations, and practical knowledge, even in the absence of a responsible guardian.

Cheap Literature and the Threat of "Light Reading"

As purposeful reading materials for children became more fully established in the early nineteenth century (*e.g.*, periodicals, textbooks, gift books), the rise of recreational reading for children was shaped by larger changes in commercial publishing and commercial leisure. The identification of new reading publics (*e.g.*, women, children, the working class) challenged American publishers to innovate if they wanted to remain competitive. At the same time, the

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[31] On Sunday School libraries, see Boylan, *Sunday School*, 48-52, 157.

[32] Quotations from: Harvey Newcomb, *How to Be a Man: A Book for Boys, Containing Useful Hints on the Formation of Character* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1847); Harvey Newcomb, *How to Be a Lady: A Book for Girls, Containing Useful Hints on the Formation of Character* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1852).

[33] For examples, see John S. C. Abbott, *The Child at Home, or; The Principles of Filial Duty, Familiarly Illustrated* (New York: The American Tract Society, 1833); Anonymous, *Bosses and Their Boys, or The Duties of Masters and Apprentices* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1853); Mrs. John Farrar, *The Young Lady's Friend* (New York: Samuel S. & William Wood, 1849); Mrs. Lincoln Phelps, *The Fireside Friend; Or Female Student, being advice to young ladies on the important subject of education* (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, 1840).

proliferation of cheap publications and novel-reading were perceived as threats to the social order, particularly when in the hands of women. Although novels were not usually targeted at the youngest of children during the early- to mid-1800s, as I detail below, critics feared that they could fall into the hands of the young – with drastic consequences. This anxiety, and the response it triggered, served as a model for subsequent debates about children's reading and would strongly influence the shape of the children's literary market for decades to come.

Women reading fiction drew harsh criticism in the early 1800s. For example, my research uncovered that a short-lived Boston periodical, *The New England Quarterly Magazine; Comprehending Literature, Morals and Amusement,* printed a letter to the editor entitled, "Novel Reading, A Cause of Female Depravity" in 1802. The writer suggests that novels created "great calamity, in the middling orders of society," poisoning the minds of young women and making them "slaves of vice."[34] Strikingly, in 1817, "Novel-Reading, A Cause of Female Depravity" resurfaced with minor changes in another Boston publication, *The Atheneum; or, Spirit of the English Magazines*, which, in turn, reprinted it from a fashionable British women's magazine, *La Belle Assembleé* [sic].[35]

The repetition of the piece reflects the persistent uproar against popular fiction during this period. It also speaks to the rampant practice of reprinting. The rapid growth of American publishing in a relatively short span of time confronted a hungry audience of readers; new content was in high demand. Meredith McGill argues that the American national literature and national culture of the 1830s and 1840s was rooted in regional production and transnational consumption

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[34] "Novel Reading, A Cause of Female Depravity," *The New England Quarterly Magazine; Comprehending Literature, Morals and Amusement,* April-June 1802, 172. The controversy over the novel was not new. See especially, Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), Chapter 2.

[35] "Novel-Reading A Cause of Female Depravity," *The Atheneum; or, Spirit of the English Magazines,* 15 August 1817, 717. The British version: "Novel-Reading A Cause of Female Depravity," *La Belle Assemblée; or Court and Fashionable Magazine,* May 1817, 219.

made possible by cheap reprints.[36] Without copyright protections, some American publishers freely reprinted foreign books and periodicals in a cheap format. Piracy proved to be essential to the development of profitable American publishing, and it established a cohort of publishers who would strongly influence industry practices through the Twentieth Century.[37]

From the outset, the problem of "light reading," and specifically novel-reading, was defined as a matter of age, gender, and class. Its "most pernicious" influence was presented as especially threatening to women and the young. For example, in 1808, Rev. Edward Magin argued that novel-reading distorted a woman's view of the world, giving her false expectations and distaste for real life. He claimed this greatly increased the likelihood that she will be "the wanton mistress of a profligate" rather than "the seemly wife of a respectable husband." Magin concluded with a specific appeal "that parts of this humble essay may be the means of awakening some serious reflections in the minds of those who by nature or accident are the guardians of the young."[38]

The controversial nature of novel-reading also meant authors and publishers had to walk a careful line between appeasement and appeal. For example, a revised edition of Richardson's, *Pamela or, Virtue Rewarded, in a series of letters from a beautiful young damsel to her parents*, includes the following statement as to its intent:

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[36] Meredith McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), Chapter 2.

[37] While the highly successful British authors of the Victorian Era received little or no financial gain from sales in the U.S., American authors were similarly pirated by British publishers. There were longstanding efforts to establish an International Copyright Law. Among them were a campaign launched by Washington Irving in 1842 and inspired by his interaction with Charles Dickens, a vocal advocate for copyright protection. See Melissa J. Homestead, *American Women Authors and Literary Property, 1822-1869* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Lawrence H. Houtchens, "Charles Dickens and International Copyright," *American Literature* 13, no. 1 (1941): 18-28; Max M. Kampelman, "The United States and International Copyright," *The American Journal of International Law* 41, no. 2 (1947): 406-29.

[38] Though an English publication, Mangin's treatise was summarized and reviewed in American publications. Rev. Edward Mangin, M.A., *Light Reading, as it may be supposed to influence moral conduct and literary taste* (London: James Carpenter, 1808), 9, 107, 109, 211-12.

> Published in order to cultivate the principles of virtue and religions in the minds of the youth of both sexes. A Narrative, Which has its foundation in truth, and at the same time that it agreeably entertains, by a variety of curious and affecting incidents, is entirely divested of all those images which, in too many pieces calculated for amusement only, tend to inflame the minds they should instruct.[39]

Despite these attempts to pacify critics, the disapproval remained the same: women and youth naturally sought out "evil amusements" and they were "peculiarly susceptible of impressions."[40] They cautioned that guarding against a novel addiction was a difficult, but necessary, imperative.[41]

Beyond their objections to novel-reading, critics typically made a broader argument about leisure activities. Choosing the proper pursuits to fill one's time was posed as a weighty issue. Few, it seems, were living up to the appropriate standards. For example, one critic suggested that young people "in the middling classes" should not dwell on "acquirements called accomplishments . . . because they often give a distaste for humbler concerns in which it is their first duty to engage."[42] In staunch support for middle-class values and tastes, he observed that the higher ranks of society were susceptible to wasting their leisure on "trifling" pursuits that "too commonly produce vanity and affectation."[43]

Alongside the affirmation of middle-class taste and values, early critics also used this issue as an opportunity to reassert paternal authority. They advised that every concerned parent must watch over his child's reading, removing "such books as may tend to instil [sic] false

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[39] Samuel Richardson, *Pamela or, Virtue Rewarded, in a series of letters from a beautiful young damsel to her parents* (London: J. Wallis, 1813). *Pamela* was published originally in 1740 and revised several times. For a detailed analysis of *Pamela* and girlhood, see Lynne Vallone, *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Chapter 2.

[40] "On Novel Reading," *The Guardian, or Youth's Religious Instructor,* 1 February 1820, 46.

[41] Some argued that the problem was not fiction, but the immoral character and abundance of new, inferior novels. Still, they held out little hope that the form could be redeemed. See "On Romance and Novel Reading," *The Gleaner, or, Monthly Magazine,* 1 June 1809, 449. See also "On the Cause of the Popularity of Novels," *The Literary Magazine and American Register,* June 1807, 410; "Novel-Reading," *The Pittsburgh Recorder, Containing Religious, Literary, and Political Information,* 14 August 1823, 472.

[42] "Letter Addressed to a Young Lady, Who had requested advice on the choice of her pursuits," *The Guardian, or Youth's Religious Instructor,* 1 February 1823, 44.

[43] *Ibid.*

sentiments, vitiate the taste, or corrupt the morals of his beloved offspring."[44] Giving children novels will only ruin them. Many critics also equate literary taste with a form of physical appetite. For example:

> The misfortune is, that the *stimulants* used to attract at first, must be not only continued, but heightened to keep the attraction. . . The early use of *savoury dishes* is not usually followed by an appetite for *plain food*. To the taste, thus pampered, history becomes dry, grammar laborious, and religion dull.[45]

If these cautions were not enough, the author then recounted the recent "cool, premeditated suicide" of a 17-year-old young lady in Ohio, who despite being "heiress to a considerable property" and "well educated" still fell victim to "extreme sensibility, and romantic ideas, created by *novel reading.*"[46]

Critics asserted that easy access to novels posed an immediate danger to the girl's well-being, and it undermined the work of female education. Young girls were believed to easily abandon their studies for the obsession of the circulating library. The novel-reader's "healthy literary appetite" is destroyed; her careless reading makes her selfish and vain; she rejects the Bible and ignores the Sabbath; she has "a low standard of taste."[47] Though primarily a female problem, a young boy was not immune to bad reading. He could make foolish choices, becoming a habitual novel-reader who squanders his time: "those books which ought to be his delight, will be to him what water is to the drunkard, and wholesome food to the epicure."[48]

To be sure, such guidance received some following, particularly among the more devout readers of evangelical publications who needed little persuading on the issue. However, my research finds that the question of novel reading grew more complicated as it became clear that,

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[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*. Emphasis mine.
[46] *Ibid*. Emphasis original.
[47] "Communications," *The Rural Repository Devoted to Polite Literature, Such as Moral and Sentimental Tales, Original Communications, Biography, Traveling Sketches, Poetry, Amusing Miscellany, Humorous and Historical Anecdotes*, 11 December 1824, 108; "The Disease of Love," *Boston Medical Intelligencer*, 14 December 1824, 126; "On the Evil of Novel Reading," *Religious Monitor and Evangelical Repository*, August 1827, 113
[48] "The Effects of the Perusal of Novels on the Character and Happiness of the Student," *Episcopal Recorder*, 1 December 1832, 140. See also, "Lectures on the Influence of Fictitious Literature, by Dr. Mason," *The New York Herald*, 29 December 1848, 5.

moral or not, people were reading fiction. Beginning in the 1820s, the anxiety over light reading by adults continued, but was reframed as less a question of quality and more a question of quantity. In the midst of the enormous popularity of Scott's *Waverly* novels, some suggested: "Under proper restrictions, novel reading cannot be injurious to morals: on the contrary, we consider it both amusing and instructive. The only danger is that of running into excess."[49]

In all of these critiques, the audience and the consequences of novel-reading are decidedly gendered. Men are presented as exercising far greater restraint and better taste than women and children. By contrast, female readers and young readers were believed to be vulnerable to "light fiction" and the "novel-reading disease" because they favored the sickly sentimentality that undermined rationality. The threat of fiction was "infinitely more dangerous" for females because they were more susceptible to the "injurious excitement" and "physical evils" of novel-reading, and it was believed that they had less immediate interest in knowledge and intellectual matters.[50] In severe cases, the disease created a voracious appetite for excitement as readers neglected their responsibilities to devour novel after novel; this incessant over-stimulation harmed their mental and spiritual health of the afflicted reader.

In 1852, the Ladies' Department of the *Ohio Cultivator* again took up the question of "light reading." For her part, editor Josephine Bateham believed the poor state of reading to be "the main cause of that *mental indolence* which exists among so large a portion of the farming community, and is the *great obstacle* to all improvement."[51] Bateham encouraged readers to send

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[49] "Literature: On the Moral Tendency of Novel Reading," *The Minerva; or, Literary, Entertaining, and Scientific Journal Containing a Variety of Original and Select Articles, Arranged Under the Following Heads: Popular Tales, the Gleaner, the Traveler, the Drama, Biography, Arts and Sciences, Literature, Poetry, etc.*, 18 October 1823, 223.

[50] "The Influence of Novel Reading In Forming the Character of Young Females," *Christian Index,* 29 June 1837, 424; "Female Education," *The Literary Emporium; a Compendium of Religious, Literary and Philosophical Knowledge,* 1 June 1846, 2; "Light Reading by Females," *Ohio Cultivator,* 1 June 1852, 174; "The Devil in Literature," *The National Magazine; Devoted to Literature, Art, and Religion,* February 1853, 124; "Literature and Liquor," *The Daily Picayune,* 13 March 1853, 1; "The Influence of Works of Fiction," *The Boston Herald,* 9 August 1856, 2; "Female Novel Readers," *Christian Enquirer,* 6 December 1856, 1.

[51] "Why Farmers do not Read" *Ohio Cultivator; Devoted to Agriculture, Horticulture, and Domestic and Rural Economy,* 15 March 1852, 93. Emphasis original.

in their views on this evil and its effects on society. Paulina, a reformed "devourer of books" from the Western Reserve, wrote in:

> Oh, dear girls, no longer, I conjure you, cramp and dwarf your heaven born spirit by the mental intoxication produced by works of fiction. Suffer not the blessed spirit of reason to fold her mild wings, and perch herself upon the dangerous and doubtful wave of wild imagination.[52]

Paulina's letter echoes Bateham's belief that "mental intoxication" from pernicious literature threatened a girl's chances of being educated into respectability, usefulness, and success. The only cure for misguided reading was to provide a better class of literature that would interest the child, benefit their character, and strengthen their tastes against the temptations of injurious fiction.

Not surprisingly, excessive novel reading by women posed a formidable problem. Editorials and letters to women's magazines suggested that four-fifths of novel-readers were women and that publishers catered to them with "high-wrought pictures of high life for one class of these lady readers, and high-wrought pictures of low life for another class."[53] "American women should be something more than mere story swallowers," wrote the *Christian Observer*.[54] In isolation, this rhetoric was a strong indictment of women, but, in combination with their growing responsibility as mothers, it raised serious questions about the ability of a mere story swallower to cultivate the tastes of nation's children.

As subsequent chapters will show, attentive fathers and mothers had to cultivate the child's taste, and, given their predisposition to novel reading, women's ability to raise the next generation was up for debate. One observer wrote, "the fresh heart of childhood requires also the

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[52] Paulina, "Light Reading by Females." *Ohio Cultivator; A Semi-Monthly Journal Devoted to the Improvement of Agriculture and Horticulture and the Promotion of Domestic Industry*, 1 June 1852, 174. Paulina was one of several regular contributors and it is likely that her letters were penned by Josephine Bateham or her husband, and publisher of the *Ohio Cultivator*, Michael Bateham. Paulina recounts wasting of her leisure on novel reading and her subsequent rejection of fiction's "pernicious influence" in the 15 October 1850 issue.

[53] "Female Novel Readers," *Christian Observer*, 22 September 1859, 152.

[54] *Ibid.*

wise masculine understanding."[55] Equally important, while adult reading eroded into a battle against excessive indulgence, critics continued to argue that writers and publishers were accountable for providing "the best mental food" to appeal to children's intellect and healthy spirit.[56] In the critic's estimation, recent fiction simply failed to reach a level of quality worthy to the task. The preoccupation with providing the highest standard of reading for children as a counter-measure against popular fiction would become a powerful factor behind the emergence and consolidation of the children's book field.

As Americans gained more leisure time and higher literacy levels over the course of the Nineteenth Century, the growing reading public demanded more stories. Novels filled the shelves of homes and public libraries. And, as the habit spread, no reader was safe from the lure of excessive novel reading and the ill-effects of bad books. In 1863, renowned physician Isaac Ray observed:

> (N)ovels are now read by every description of person, and by many who read nothing else. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the old and the young, men and women, boys and girls, yield alike to the fascination; some for the sake of amusement and the desire of a new sensation; some from curiosity to see for themselves what has excited so strongly the interest of others; and a few for the commendable purpose of becoming acquainted with every form of intellectual manifestation.[57]

In his detailed assessment of the effects of reading on mental health, Ray notes that novels "of a certain class" are filled with "coarse exaggerations of every sentiment" and "every possible form of unnatural excitement."[58] These books posed a threat because they distorted fact in favor of fantasy. Likewise, romantic novels skewed the reader's perceptions and bred discontent in marriage and family life. Popular English and French novels depicted adultery, suicide and murder. Under this terrible influence, the reader could not help but begin to condone – or worse, commit – all forms of vice.

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[55] W.A. Jones, "Children's Books," *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review*, December 1844, 536.
[56] *Ibid*., 541.
[57] Isaac Ray, *Mental Hygiene* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), 242.
[58] *Ibid.*

Conclusion

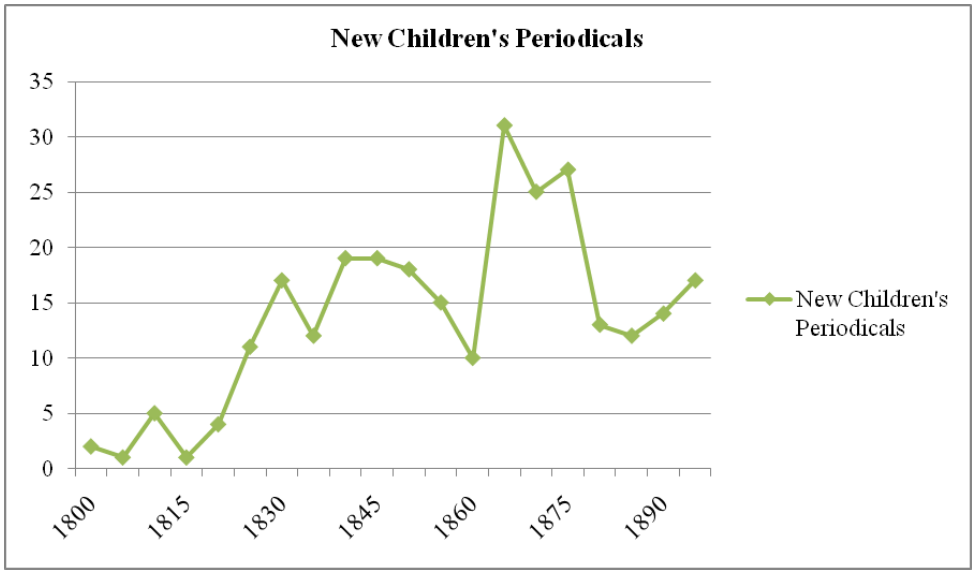
To understand how a gender distinction emerged in children's recreational reading in the late-Nineteenth Century, we must attend to changing assumptions about childhood, as well as the prominent role that the middle class played in shaping those assumptions. From the early- to mid-1800s, American childhood took on new importance. In a nation that prized independence, it stood to reason that children had some right to their own preferences, but their immaturity prevented them from making consistently moral and rational decisions. Consequently, children's literature was usually intended for both boys and girls, and it was designed to achieve a particular end (*e.g.*, education, religious instruction).

At the same time, higher literacy rates and newfound leisure time brought children growing recognition as recreational readers and as a distinct reading public with its own needs and interests. Though deeply informed by emerging middle-class beliefs, children's recreational reading emerged in highly volatile context. Children were very much a part of what Lehuu terms the "circus atmosphere" in American publishing. Anxieties about children's entertainment were heightened as sensational fiction was viewed as a matter of dangerous contrasts: everyday life paled in comparison to youthful exuberance and whirlwind romance found in the pages of novels. Yet, despite the public attention given to the issue of novel reading and despite the efforts of influential authorities (*e.g.*, ministers, editors, reformers, and physicians) to ward off the threat of light reading, the message went largely unheeded by much of the American public.

As the next chapter will show, the separation of children from adults presented a distinct market for new publications in the aftermath of the Civil War. As late-nineteenth-century publishers experimented with more recreational reading for children, the separate shelves of children's literature were built upon the foundation set by light reading. Some producers drew upon the standard associations of gender and genre that already were well-established, offering manly adventures for boys and romances for girls. Likewise, influential adults continued to view recreational reading as a battleground in which parents must protect their children from the

damaging effects of bad books while also providing them with the healthy benefits of good literature.

Figure 1-1. New Children's Periodicals Established in the Nineteenth Century



CHAPTER TWO

A Taste for Books:
Recreational Reading for Boys and Girls in the late-Nineteenth Century

> Now, children, from infancy, have a decided bias for stories, and if not allowed to satisfy their tastes in this particular, under the eye and with the approbation of their parents, will, in *nine cases out of ten*, seek the enjoyment clandestinely, and thus naturally fall victims to the blood-and-thunder literature of the day that is so plentiful and so easy of access.
>
> "Reading for Children."
> *Saturday Evening Post*, 1877[1]

Buoyed by steadily growing audiences for more diverse publications, American publishers began to experiment with gender-specific recreational reading for children in the 1860s and 1870s. In particular, dime novel publishers gained noteworthy success and notoriety for their inexpensive stories intended for young readers. These publishers approached boys directly as customers and offered them an abundance of westerns and adventures. As the literary interests of boys and girls strayed from their instructive beginnings to exciting blood-and-thunder stories, however, these publishers faced strong and growing resistance from an anxious middle class.

This chapter examines how American publishers and the public adopted what I term "separate shelves" – the practice of classifying some children's books as intended for a gender-exclusive audience. Dime novel publishers reproduced and perpetuated the established association of gender and genre (*e.g.*, masculine adventures for men, romance for women). As discussed below, boys' books proved to be highly successful and, as a result, boys were recognized as a new and valuable market for exclusive, inexpensive publications. By contrast, though some girls did read their brother's cheap fiction, they were perceived as less interested and less accessible than boys. It was also widely-held that girls joined the audience for "women's

[1] "Reading for Children.," *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia), 4 August 1877, 4. Emphasis mine.

novels" at an earlier age. Consequently, books intended just for girls remained relatively less common because the audience for them was viewed as limited.

The rise of cheap fiction and boys' dime novels also triggered public concern that boys (and girls) were naturally prone to choose "bad" entertainment. Throughout the late-nineteenth century, many middle-class adults became increasingly concerned by the growing commercialization of entertainment, and they were especially wary of giving children any recreational reading that might cause boys and girls to neglect their social responsibilities. Influential adults (*e.g.*, concerned parents, social reformers, ministers, and moral authorities) demonized the dime novel publisher for capitalizing on boyish rebellion, and they fostered the belief that boys were especially vulnerable to negative, low-class influences. In newspapers and magazines, they cautioned parents, and especially mothers, to be vigilant. Drawing upon the strategies established by the "novel-reading disease" of the previous decades, these influential actors also worked actively to persuade parents to cultivate their children's recreational reading, and they built their campaigns on the wider effort to define literary tastes and ensure that middle-class children would fulfill expectations that they would become middle-class adults (*e.g.*, social reproduction).[2]

From this platform, the middle-class boy emerged as the central figure in the battle over children's recreational reading. At the same time, the success of boys' dime novels, and perceived threat they posed to children's futures, prompted new recognition of the middle-class parents as a potential market for children's books. Drawing on the prevailing belief that cheap fiction undermined parental authority, some publishers introduced "quality" periodicals as a direct counter-measure to the pervasive "blood-and-thunder" stories. Though the content of the publications expressed the norms of masculinity and femininity expected from the middle-class,

[2] My emphasis on the middle class builds upon Ann Douglas' argument that middle-class Protestant women were a new force in the literary market and they used their position as consumers of literature to influence matters of taste. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998 [1977]), 9.

these periodicals were deliberately gender-inclusive and presented as appropriate for both boys *and* girls.

Middle-Class Childhood and the Anxieties of Entertainment

Childhood in America underwent dramatic changes in the late-Nineteenth century, including the rise of particular class and gender distinctions. This transformation both presaged and enabled notable shifts in children's reading – including the emergence of new gender-specific recreational reading intended for boys. This section details changing beliefs about American childhood following the Civil War, as middle-class children became increasingly protected and they became a focal point of family spending. As middle-class boys and girls became more protected from the harsh realities of the adult world, their isolation from economic productivity also coincided with their growing value as consumers.

Viviana Zelizer finds that between 1870 and 1930 children were rendered emotionally "priceless" and economically "worthless" – a process she describes as "sacralization."[3] During this period, the ideal American childhood developed into a longer period of dependence, as well as a time of greater indulgence.[4] Child-rearing advice largely dismissed earlier practices that stressed control and continued the trend toward nurturing. Instead of order and obedience, the model of American childhood increasingly privileged children's emotional well-being. Adults had to care without being too permissive, to discipline without being too rigid. These views were widely disseminated to a growing, national audience. Parenting guidance appeared regularly in popular subscription magazines; several child-rearing books were the best-sellers of their time.[5]

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[3] Viviana A. Rotman Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 1-12.

[4] On late-nineteenth-century American childhood, see especially Karin Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992); Barbara Kaye Greenleaf, *Children through the Ages: A History of Childhood* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978); David I. Macleod, *The Age of the Child: Children in America, 1890-1920* (New York: Twayne, 1998); Elliott West and Paula Evans Petrik, ed., *Small Worlds: Children & Adolescents in America, 1850-1950* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992).

[5] See Mary Cable, *The Little Darlings: A History of Child Rearing in America* (New York: Scribner, 1975); Ann Hulbert, *Raising America: Experts, Parents, and a Century of Advice About Children* (New York:

Zelizer argues that the priceless child was removed from the commercial world and "belonged in a domesticated, nonproductive world of lessons, games, and token money."[6] Children from more affluent families received a growing list of "necessities," as well as treats and gifts. With the expansion of consumer culture and the commercialization of religious and family holidays, an emerging network of advertising and mass-produced commodities also leveraged the sentimental value of children as a new opportunity to stimulate sales.[7]

Though middle-class Americans became less restrained in their spending habits, they remained reluctant to expose children directly to the marketplace. Likewise, there were some objections to children handling money. For example, in 1883, an observer lamented that giving children piggy banks "had done harm enough to counterbalance the good of all other toys" because they learned avarice and "shop-keeper's philosophy."[8] By the turn of the century, however, many upper- and middle-class parents were persuaded that children deserved to shop, and boys and girls played a notable role in the "conspicuous consumption" observed by Veblen.[9]

Alfred A. Knopf, 2003); Peter N. Stearns, *Anxious Parents: A History of Modern Childrearing in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Peter N. Stearns and Timothy Haggerty, "The Role of Fear: Transitions in American Emotional Standards for Children, 1850-1950," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 1 (1991): 63-94.

[6] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, 11.

[7] One 1888 editorial suggests readers give Christmas gifts to their children, even at the cost of self-deprivation, as a remedy to the misery of modern life. "Topics of the Time," *The Century, a popular quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1888): 311-12. On family dynamics and consumption, see "Mom, Dad and the Kids: Toward a Modern Architecture of Daily Life" in Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976): 113-84. On the commercialization of Christmas, see Russell Belk, "A Child's Christmas in America: Santa Claus as Deity, Consumption as Religion," *Journal of American Culture* 10, no. 1 (1987): 87-100; Russell Belk, "Materialism and the Modern U.S. Christmas," in *Interpretive Consumer Research*, ed. Elizabeth Hirschman, 75-104. (Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1989); Susan G. Davis, "'Making Night Hideous': Christmas Revelry and Public Order in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia," *American Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1982): 185-99; Cara Okleshen, Stacy Menzel Baker, and Robert Mittelstaedt, "Santa Claus Does More Than Deliver Toys: Advertising's Commercialization of the Collective Memory of Americans," *Consumption, Markets & Culture* 4, no. 3 (2001): 207-43; Penne L. Restad, *Christmas in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[8] "Old Children," *Century Illustrated Magazine* XXV, no. 4 (1883): 633. On the introduction of monetary allowances for children, see especially Anna Kohler, "Children's Sense of Money," *Studies in Education* 1, no. 9 (1897): 323-31.

[9] Veblen repeatedly mentions children as participants in the performance of conspicuous consumption. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Dover Thrift Editions (New York: Dover Publications, 1994 [1899]). For example, 52-53.

Historian Daniel Cook finds that mothers were positioned as intermediaries in children's consumption.[10] Early advertising trade literature regarded children as indirect consumers with more value as future adults than as current buyers.[11] Advertisers also sought to encourage brand loyalty, particularly among girls. To that end, they took advantage of the new burst of post-Civil War periodicals, and they placed ads in children's periodicals to begin recognition early (See Figure 2-1). In part, the job of child-directed advertisements was to encourage children to tell their mothers to buy; easy readability, visual interest, and a memorable impression were of the utmost importance. Both boys and girls also collected advertising trade cards, and advertisers were more than happy to fill their scrapbooks.[12]

Separating the Boys from the Girls

The extraordinary changes over the course of the Nineteenth Century had effectively transformed the model of American childhood from one of obedience and duty to one increasingly defined by care and commodities. The adoption and normalization of essentially middle-class expectations for children also was accompanied by an acceptance of more, and more rigid, gender distinctions among children. New standards for middle-class family life further encroached upon children's common experiences as more distinct and exclusive expectations emerged for boys and girls.

Late-nineteenth-century boyhood was viewed as an escape from adult pressures and as a crucial gateway to adult masculinity. Middle-class boys faced the looming pressures of longer schooling, white collar professions, as well as family and civic responsibilities. Boys could be

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[10] Daniel Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer*, 22-40.

[11] Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 178-83. Interestingly, Ellen Garvey finds that late-Nineteenth Century advertisers approached adults not just as different audiences for different products, but as different kinds of readers. Men, they claimed, preferred a simple and direct address. Women, on the other hand, enjoyed leisurely reading story-filled ads, and they valued ads because they trained them to be better consumers.

[12] Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor*, 42-72. See also, Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 166-69.

educated into rational men under the appropriate guidance; they also were susceptible to negative influences and easily could be corrupted. With stakes so high, a boy's potential failings represented a threat to the future and adults grew increasingly anxious about the "boy problem." The growing popularity of the "bad boy" who was prone to lie, steal, and cause injury, served as a caution to the young and, perhaps, as a reminder to men of their Christian duty.[13]

By contrast, ideal American girlhood continued to favor modest, conservative, lady-like behavior that mirrored the expectations of adult femininity. Girls were portrayed as having less will-power; this left them perpetually in need of protection. Moreover, the ideal of female delicacy continued to undermine girls' opportunities to break from middle-class respectability or claim complete self-sufficiency. Interestingly, girls were described as maturing more quickly than boys. Yet, women portrayed daughters as more of a problem than sons.[14] In 1881, fourteen-year-old daughters were at the end of their childhood, and their mothers were encouraged to tolerate the lingering "little impertinences, the saucy retorts, and unflattering personalities" that were the last remnants of an outgrown girlhood.[15] Girls were viewed as easily spoiled because they were "more flattered and indulged, than respected, from their cradle on up."[16] Critics observed a disturbing trend in girls toward the precocious and pretentious behavior (*e.g.,* flirting, gossip, fashion, and reputation), and they rejected society's indulgence of these "little celebrities."[17]

Securing Class Boundaries

Though the progression toward a priceless childhood affected all classes, middle- and upper-class parents were more able to absorb the financial burden of their children's dependence, particularly while the public supports (*e.g.,* child labor laws, child welfare agencies) for a more

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[13] On boyhood, see Kenneth Kidd, *Making American Boys: Boyology and the Feral Tale* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2004); Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, Chapter 3.
[14] Linda W. Rosenzweig, *The Anchor of My Life: Middle-Class American Mothers and Daughters, 1880-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), Chapter 2.
[15] H. S. B, "Five and Fourteen," *Century Illustrated Magazine,* XXIII, no. 1 (1881): 147.
[16] See Harrison Constance Cary, "American Children at Home and in Society," *Century Illustrated Magazine,* XXV, no. 5 (1883): 796.
[17] See Henry James, Jr., "The Point of View," *Century Illustrated Magazine* XXV, no. 2 (1882): 248-69.

secure childhood were relatively underdeveloped. Middle-class parents were encouraged to invest more in their children and, in turn, to expect more from them. As these parents gave more time, attention, and money toward nurturing children, the previous value given to large families was effectively displaced by the call to raise and invest in fewer children. The weight given to children's achievements also shifted as boys and girls were obligated to prove their new worth.

Throughout the late-Nineteenth Century, the idealized American childhood continued to be defined by adult aspirations and adult anxieties. As the rising middle class separated adults and children, however, they also asserted and protected middle-class values. In this framework, the promise of children was in their ability to reflect not only the progress of American society and American values, but to successfully replicate the social standing, tastes, and advantages of their position. At the same time, children carried the potential of failure; in the shadow of every middle-class child was the problem adolescent he or she might become. The flaws of the child also implicated the parents. As well-known author Kate Douglas Wiggin observed, "How should parents hope to escape the universal interrogation point which is leveled at everything else?"[18]

Thus, while the model of late-nineteenth-century childhood afforded new comforts to some children, failure to parent and failure to succeed took on new meaning. Countless publications described in extraordinary detail what would become of fallen children. Preventing a child from becoming part of the "boy problem" or the "girl problem" became an imperative. Likewise, the presentation of the problem evolved from cautionary tales about unruly children to more deeply threatening social unrest and vice.[19] And, as I discuss later in this chapter, middle-class activists effectively raised this specter of corrupted youth to address children's reading habits.

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[18] Kate Douglas Smith Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith, *Children's Rights: A Book of Nursery Logic* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1892), 247.

[19] This, in turn, paved the way for the highly-regarded behavioral regimes prescribed by child experts at the turn of the Twentieth Century. For a summary of this literature, see David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 87-98.

At the same time, child protection was taken up by reform movements in the aftermath of the Civil War. Social activism intensified in part because abolitionists picked up new causes (*e.g.*, temperance; pure food and drink; prostitution; urban housing; working conditions; sanitation and public health; infant mortality; juvenile delinquency).[20] Traditional moralists had long pointed to social problems as indicators of social decay and individual weakness. New activists also turned to public solutions to address class-based concerns by expanding child-centered professions and institutions (*e.g.* child-saving agencies, kindergartens, playgrounds, orphanages, juvenile courts, children's libraries and clubs) to promote child development across classes and, in the process, to support and disseminate the values of a priceless middle-class childhood.

Though numerous campaigns worked to bring fundamental aspects of priceless childhood to all children, poverty and discrimination effectively disenfranchised large numbers of them. Despite the importance granted to children by the idea of middle-class childhood, the expansion of the Children's Aid Society indicates that the homeless and neglected children in cities remained a sizeable and persistent problem. Between 1853 and 1929, the Society placed more than 200,000 abandoned and runaway children with rural families via the "orphan train."[21] Likewise, Joseph Kett finds that middle-class parents worked to secure their children's social position by increasing public schools and obligatory attendance, but the working-class child was more likely to leave school in early adolescence. During the late-nineteenth century, American

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[20] On social activism and specific reform movements, see for example, Allen Freeman Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984); Lorine Swainston Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders, 1879-1914* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1999); Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*, Gender & American Culture. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Eric C. Schneider, *In the Web of Class: Delinquents and Reformers in Boston, 1810s-1930s* (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Jennifer Trost, *Gateway to Justice: The Juvenile Court and Progressive Child Welfare in a Southern City*, Studies in the Legal History of the South. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005).

[21] In 1853, Charles Loring Brace founded the society and used "boys meetings" to draw in poor children who avoided the formal Sunday School system. He built a large-scale foster care system of lodging houses, training schools, and reading rooms for children. See Stephen O'Connor, *The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For a broader view children's aid societies and their activities, see the work of "city missionary" Rev. J.F. Richmond, *New York and its Institutions, 1609-1873* (New York: E.B. Treat, 1872).

society "witnessed a radical differentiation of the economic opportunities available to middle-class and lower-class young people."[22]

The middle class was tightening its boundaries through childhood in other ways as well. Reform campaigns were complicated by the frequent assertion of class bias and "respectably racist" positions.[23] For many reformers, social standing defined a child's susceptibility to negative influences, as well as their receptiveness to instruction. Immigrant and impoverished children were perceived by some as a threat, and they were used to underscore the demand for cultural assimilation. Likewise, the intellectual influence of eugenics also attributed great importance to raising biologically "fit" children.[24] As Linda Gordon suggests, the politics of reform often "reflected the values of the social movements from which it grew. It shared the feminist emphasis on illegitimate male power, the moralism characteristic of the social purity (anti-drinking, anti-prostitution) campaigns, and the socially elite assumptions of both."[25] These reformers struggled to define a set of policies that protected the innocent and vulnerable, while also addressing the overwhelming social problems attributed largely to an uncontrolled, increasingly centralized, working class.

These concerns were accelerated by the fact that middle-class parents were having fewer children and merely raising them according to the "appropriate" standards did not assure the future of the race. Fear of race decline among some white, Protestant, middle-class men prompted

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[22] Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 5, 171.

[23] For example, Jeanne Petit details the gender and race ideologies that informed congressional efforts to bar eastern European immigrants as "undesirable." See Jeanne Petit, "Breeders, Workers, and Mothers: Gender and the Congressional Literacy Test Debate, 1896-1897," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 3, no. 1 (2004): 35-58. On the broad influence of eugenics, see Lois Cuddy and Claire Roche, eds. *Evolution and Eugenics in American literature and culture, 1880-1940: Essays on Ideological Conflict and Complicity* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2003). See also, Wendy Kline. *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[24] On the perception of immigrant and poor children, see Selma Berroll, *Immigrants at School* (New York: Arno Press, 1978); Selma Berrol, *Growing up American: Immigrant Children in America, Then and Now* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995); Nasaw, *Schooled to Order*.

[25] Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston, 1880-1960* (New York: Viking, 1988), 20.

attacks against contraceptive use and family limitation.[26] Scholars also note that proponents of Muscular Christianity opposed the "feminization" of Protestantism and viewed American manhood as in need of rescue. They also advocated male courage and endurance, while promoting the belief in the inherent developmental inferiority of women and non-white men.[27] They invested heavily in reaching and recruiting young members through the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); one of their most successful and wide-reaching campaigns was the organization of amateur sport to encourage boys and men to reestablish their rightful place.[28]

Popular Publishing and the Rise of Commercial Entertainment

To understand the emergence and reproduction of gender distinctions in children's recreational reading in the late-Nineteenth century requires that we first attend to the broader growth of popular publishing. This section briefly details the commodification of literature fueled by: (1) the emergence of a national reading public, (2) increased publishing capacity, (3) the rise of bestselling fiction, (4) the concurrent commercialization of entertainment. The remainder of the chapter will detail how the transformation of American childhood and the assertion of middle-class values translated into new gender distinctions in children's recreational reading.

Rising literacy levels dramatically expanded the reading public and fostered leisure reading, especially among the middle class. Though many people continued to read aloud in the home, reading became a more private experience for late-nineteenth-century Americans. More

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[26] See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Women and Their Role in Nineteenth-century America" *Journal of American History* 60 (September 1973): 332-356.

[27] Muscular Christianity was imported from England in the 1860s. It began in private religious schools, and was later popularized by the YMCA. Interestingly, white Muscular Christians worried that weakness was contributing to the decline of the race; cultivating physical prowess was designed to counteract this threat and resume their "rightful place" of power. By contrast, black Muscular Christians viewed male weakness as an obstacle to civil rights. See Nina Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt, *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

[28] Sport gained mass appeal, in part, because it complemented existing interest in public health and fitness. It also supplied middle-class people with the physical activity and camaraderie unavailable in their more sedentary, competitive workplaces. See especially Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

families established personal home libraries, and they dedicated more space and furniture to accommodate recreational reading.[29] As such, reading became a more commonplace and personal activity that allowed for the indulgence of individual tastes.[30] Conservative middle-class standards continued to shun fiction in favor of history and biography, with the possible exception of moral and temperance stories. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of fiction sales suggests that many readers ignored this recommendation and showed greater autonomy in choosing their entertainment. In short, recreational reading took up where moral uplift left off, paving the way for more secular publications.

The reduction of printing costs combined with a rise of advertising allowed newspaper circulation to increase seven times between 1880 and 1900; during the same period, three times the number of books and editions were published.[31] Newspapers and magazines publicized spectacles and made performers into celebrities.[32] Sports coverage appeared in diverse publications and helped to make baseball a national pastime. As more subscription magazines accepted advertising, they introduced the rural and urban public to the growing abundance of commodities and familiarized them with new national brands. Department stores used publications and advertising to promote themselves as destinations, and mail-order catalogs extended the reach of mass-produced commodities.[33] Access to reading material was facilitated

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[29] On reading habits in the middle-class home, see Linda M. Kruger, "Home Libraries: Special Spaces, Reading Places" in eds. Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth, *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 94-119. On the evolution of home libraries, see Ronald Zboray and Mary Zboray, "Home Libraries and the Institutionalization of Everyday Practices among Antebellum New Englanders," *American Studies - Libraries as Agencies of Culture* 42, no. 3 (2001): 63-86.

[30] See especially, C Kaestle, *Literacy in the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). See also, Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*.

[31] Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976), 43.

[32] On celebrity, see the careers of escape-artist Harry Houdini and body-builder Eugen Sandow in John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 52-53, 63.

[33] James D Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society, 1865-1920* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 44. In 1872, Montgomery Ward & Co. established large-scale mail order. Sears, Roebuck, and Company followed in 1893. Major department stores including Marshall Field & Company and Macy's also had catalogs On department store advertising, see Ralph M. Hower, *History of Macy's of*

by new retailers, book clubs, lending libraries, and a wide assortment of publications could be bought or borrowed with relatively little effort.[34]

Across the publishing industry, producers deliberately oriented their content to appeal to the perceived interests of a more narrow audience in the hopes of securing consistent readership under competitive conditions. For example, *Hearth and Home*, a weekly publication for women, featured opinions on domestic life, child-rearing, and women's rights.[35] As scholars note, the mass-market "magazine revolution" of this time was particularly strong in women's magazines. Their advertising revenue was well ahead of general-interest magazines, and their circulation grew faster and remained much higher than general magazines through the turn of the century. Women also were regarded by many as a powerful factor driving the demand for bestselling novels.[36]

In this context of expanding supply and demand, subscription periodicals featured serialized fiction to attract their targeted readers. This enabled the publications to operate successfully as a vehicle for advertising and to qualify for reduced second-class mail rates.[37]

New York, 1858-1919; Chapters in the Evolution of the Department Store (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943). James Playsted Wood, *The Story of Advertising* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1958), 185.

[34] See L Coser, C Kadushin, and et al, *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), Kenneth Davis, "Trends in Twentieth Century Mass Market Publishing," in *American Literary Publishing Houses, 1900-1980*, ed. Peter Dzwonkoski, 397-417. (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1986); Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism; a History of Newspapers in the United States through 250 Years, 1690-1940* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941); Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes; the Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1947); Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957); Janice A. Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); John William Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States* (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1972).

[35] *Hearth and Home* was edited by Harriet Beecher Stowe from 1868-1875. See Rima Apple, *Perfect Motherhood: Science and Child Rearing in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 4-10.

[36] The literature on gender and popular reading is vast. See especially, Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing, and Zola* (New York: Methuen, 1985); Helen Damon-Moore, *Magazines for the Millions: Gender and Commerce in the Ladies' Home Journal and the Saturday Evening Post, 1880-1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Mary Ellen Waller-Zuckerman, "'Old Homes, in a City of Perpetual Change:' Women's Magazines, 1890-1916," *The Business History Review* 63, no. 4 (1989): 715-756; Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *A History of Popular Women's Magazines in the United States, 1792-1995* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998).

[37] For details on advertising and fiction in magazines, see Wood, *The Story of Advertising*, Chapter 12. See also, Helen Damon-Moore and C Kaestle, "Gender, Advertising, and Mass-Circulation Magazines," in

Following the example set by European publishers, Americans began printing serial stories to hook readers into becoming repeat customers. These stories ran over several consecutive issues, often with each episode ending in a "cliffhanger."[38] The strategy proved enormously successful.[39]

Dime novels and story papers also gained crucial momentum from an avid readership, particularly among the working-class.[40] As their names suggest, these were complete novels offered for a very low price. In 1860, Beadle & Co. released the first dime novel, provocatively titled, *Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*. The novel was a reprint of a popular magazine serial and it sold thousands of copies almost instantly. During the Civil War, Beadle & Co.'s dime novels were used as morale boosters for the Northern army, rivaling the Christian

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Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading since 1880, ed. C Kaestle, 245-93. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993); T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Mott, *A History of American Magazines*; Richard M. Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Verso, 1996); Matthew Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order: Popular Magazines in America, 1893-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*.

[38] In the 1830s, two Parisian newspapers dropped their prices and accepted more advertising; they found that they could maintain high circulation by publishing novels in installments. At roughly the same time, Dickens popularized the serialized story, a literary form that captivated, and capitalized on, the mass audience. See especially, Heather Haveman, "Antebellum Literary Culture and the Evolution of American Magazines," *Poetics* 32, no. 1 (2004): 5-28. On the French serial see, David Coward, "The King of Romance" http://books.guardian.co.uk/lrb/articles/0,6109,937969,00.html. On Dickens, see Jennifer Poole Hayward, *Consuming Pleasures: Active Audiences and Serial Fictions from Dickens to Soap Opera* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997): 1-71. On the use of the "cliffhanger," see Quentin James Reynolds, *The Fiction Factory; or, from Pulp Row to Quality Street; the Story of 100 Years of Publishing at Street & Smith* (New York: Random House, 1955), 32.

[39] For example, in 1869 E. C. Allen founded the *Peoples' Literary Companion* (1869-1907), a monthly "farm and home" was designed deliberately used fiction to attract readers to his magazine which was, in essence, a mail-order catalog. By 1895 *Peoples' Literary Companion* had an astonishing circulation record – over two million copies a month. It spawned numerous imitators, and was a precursor to the widespread adoption of advertising by other periodicals. *Peoples' Literary Companion* predates the mail-order catalogs from Montgomery Ward (1872) and Sears (1886), and the modern mass-market magazine, including *Ladies Home Journal* (1883), *Cosmopolitan* (1886), *Munsey's* (1889), and *McClure's* (1893). On E.C. Allen, see Robert W. Lovett, "Publisher and Advertiser Extraordinary: The E. C. Allen Collection," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 24, no. 4 (1950): 210-15; Dorothy Steward Sayward, *Comfort Magazine, 1888-1942: A History and Critical Study* (Orono: University of Maine, 1960).

[40] For extensive discussion on this point, see especially, Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture America* (New York: Verso, 1987); Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

Commission's *Come to Jesus* in popularity.[41] Following on their success, Beadle & Co. published hundreds of *Beadle's Dime Novels*. Beadle & Co.'s success also brought competition, first from former-employee George Munro and his *Munro's Ten Cent Novels* (1863). By 1885, publishers Street & Smith, Frank Tousey, and Norman Munro also were actively marketing half-dime and dime libraries.[42] Dime novel publishers also oriented some offerings to a specific segment of the adult reading public, including many highly popular frontier and war stories for the male audience.[43] In some cases, newsstands refused to sell these publications because they featured sex and crime stories, but saloons, barbers, and hotels could purchase them at a reduced cost, and circulated them widely to boys and men.[44]

Concurrent with the commodification of literature was an exceptional growth of public amusements intended to appeal to a wider range of Americans (*e.g.*, women, families, the working class). An overall rise in the standard of living gave more Americans some disposable income to spend on some form of entertainment, and people of all classes increasingly expected free time and sought gratification away from work.[45] Countless people adopted traditional pastimes and helped to create new ones. Moreover, the transformation of the American economy from primarily rural-agrarian to urban-industrial allowed city-dwellers to find others with common interests, and to organize groups, locations, and opportunities for leisure activities.

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[41] James David Hart, *The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 153-55. Irwin Beadle, Erastus Beadle, and Robert Adams founded Beadle publications. By 1863 sales of dime novels exceeded five million copies.

[42] Dime novel producers commonly issued books separately, but packaged books as libraries to encourage the sale of more titles. On dime novels, see J. Randolph Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000); Albert Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels; the Story of a Vanished Literature* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950); Daryl Jones, *The Dime Novel Western* (Bowling Green: Popular Press, Bowling Green State University, 1978); Christian Messenger, "Sport in the Dime Novel," *Journal of American Culture* 1, no. 3 (1978): 495-505; Edmund Lester Pearson, *Dime Novels; or, Following an Old Trail in Popular Literature* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1968 [1929]).

[43] Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion*, xxi.

[44] See Mott, *A History of American Magazines*. See also, John Rickards Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage, 1850-1950* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1974), 57-69.

[45] On the division of work and leisure time, see Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 35-40.

New commercial entertainment attracted many Americans as a source of fun, indulgence, distraction, and spectacle. Chief among these were the hoaxes and exhibitions presented by P.T. Barnum. Although the expansion of commercial entertainment remained firmly rooted in cities, as the railroad network expanded, small towns soon fell within the reach of more mobile amusements. P.T. Barnum gained a national reputation through his traveling shows and circus. Traveling entertainers also established new distribution patterns, and this touring circuit eventually transferred Northeastern city amusements across the country.[46]

The rise of public entertainment also transformed American leisure from relatively informal pursuits to organized, profitable mass culture.[47] And, though urbanization was gradual and uneven, the late-nineteenth century marked an extraordinary expansion of amusements in the heart of American cities. By the turn of the century, large cities had supplied much needed infrastructure (*e.g.*, electricity, transportation systems, accommodations) to support mass entertainment. Urban policies increasingly focused on land use for recreation, and transportation systems expanded with commercial development in mind. Neighborhood saloons remained prominent fixtures, but the influx of new people and the increased regulation of liquor sales encouraged countless drinking establishments clustered around business centers. Elegant

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[46] From the 1850s, Barnum produced relatively inexpensive amusements intended to titillate and disturb his fascinated crowds. See James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Foster Rhea Dulles, *A History of Recreation; America Learns to Play*, 2d ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965); Benjamin Reiss, *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). Mass media and nationalized entertainment also facilitated the transfer of rural forms of amusement to the city. For example, blackface minstrelsy was well-known in the rural south, yet touring shows from the city redeployed this form back to small towns with great success. Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1990), 166. See also, Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, Race and American Culture.(New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[47] This area of scholarship is well traveled. In this section, I briefly summarize patterns detailed in the following works. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). On the process of commercializing leisure, see especially Richard Butsch, *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption*, Critical Perspectives on the Past. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). On saloons, see Perry Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983). For discussion of city nightlife, see "After the Ball: Hotels and Lobster Palaces, 1893-1912." in Lewis A. Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 32-59.

restaurants and Broadway nightlife offered the wealthy elite some relief from tight social circles, offering the young and affluent the pleasures of luxurious food and the company of chorus girls.

For those seeking outdoor recreation, public parks offered the opportunity to socialize and to enjoy amateur sports.[48] Vacationing became popular as improved transportation brought tourists and holiday crowds to enjoy the abundance of city entertainment. Trolleys made spectator sports more accessible, and accomplished baseball teams played before crowds of fans.[49] Amusement parks also became extraordinarily successful. For example, by 1880 Coney Island had six million visitors a season.[50]

Many of these commercial amusements appealed especially to people in their teens and twenties.[51] Growing cities had a sizable population of young, unmarried men and women; many arrived as rural migrants or immigrants. Though they were obligated to contribute the majority of their income to the household, as workers they also expected leisure. With less domestic responsibilities to keep them home, young men and women had the time and disposable income

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[48] Business also capitalized on the growing market for entertainment-related goods. Recreation and amusement increasingly required participants to purchase equipment, attire, rule books and manuals, and memberships to clubs. For example, the Spalding Guide established rules for numerous sports. It also allowed Spalding to promote his brand of sporting goods and established a near-monopoly of Spalding sports equipment by the turn-of-the-century. Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage*, 76.

[49] See Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982); Steven A. Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports*, Sports and Society. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Steven A. Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era*, Rev. ed., Sport and Society. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Dale A. Somers, *The Rise of Sports in New Orleans; 1850-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972).

[50] See Dulles, *A History of Recreation*. Elite resorts offered wealthy Americans the opportunity to amuse themselves and affirm their status. Daylong picnics and excursions were increasingly common, especially for those who could not dedicate precious leisure time to extended travel. For an excellent study of vacationing see, Cindy Sondik Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Details of popular destinations during this period can be found in Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Jon Sterngass, *First Resorts: Pursuing Pleasure at Saratoga Springs, Newport, and Coney Island* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). On Coney Island, see also John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*, American Century Series. (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978).

[51] Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*(Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 97; David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 154.

to devote to entertainment. And, though women had more limitations than men, a loosening of restrictions and a willingness to break rules allowed more young people to enjoy commercial amusements. Public entertainment proved all the more attractive because it permitted men and women to socialize freely without extensive supervision. By the 1890s, American youth had moved toward a peer-oriented popular culture.[52]

Despite fifty years of gradual movement toward separate leisure time, there remained no firm consensus on the value leisure in America. Even as conservative members of the middle class accepted the merit of some recreation, many commercial amusements were simply too superficial, dishonest, and ill-bred for them. Consequently, as conspicuous leisure was adopted by the middle class, they formed an unparalleled mass market demanding respectable leisure activities. Cultivating an appreciation of high culture partially appeased middle-class aspirations toward inclusion in refined activities, while allowing the upper classes to exercise some control over those beneath them.[53]

Most new amusements, however, faced strong resistance from critics who believed commercial entertainment had a dangerous influence, especially on women and children.[54] Reformers mounted campaigns to restore "manners and morals" to America; seemingly every form of commercial amusement was targeted for reform. Entertainment reform also gained attention and support from a wide range of people including, elite businessmen, religious leaders,

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[52] Erenberg, *Steppin' Out*, 5.

[53] On the changing leisure of the wealthy, see E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989). Public appreciation of high culture was also used for practical purposes by people who understood the financial gains to be made from appearing refined, see for example Steve Goodson, *Highbrows, Hillbillies & Hellfire: Public Entertainment in Atlanta, 1880-1930* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 110-111.

[54] Working-class leisure was equally complex. For some, mass amusements created anxiety because they were perceived as a threat to ethnic traditions and neighborhoods. For others, participation in public entertainment signaled that one could afford to indulge. Most workers were surely constrained by limited time and money, as well as the expectation that they contribute to the family income. Nevertheless, the opportunity to project financial comfort and independence was a powerful lure. Working-class participation in commercial culture also has been read as depoliticizing: commercial entertainment offered gratification, but redirected working-class men and women away from political mobilization. By contrast, others find that working-class engagement with commercial culture contributed to identification as women, workers, and Americans.

university professors, and settlement workers.[55] Not surprisingly, the leisure reading of children drew the ire of such reformers.

Books for Boys: Gender, Class, and Children's Recreational Reading

The basis for a serious and consistent investment in children's recreational reading began with the emergence of the priceless middle-class child. Children's growing entitlement to some form of amusement changed the way boys and girls were understood as a reading public. Likewise, government support for public schools promoted higher literacy rates among children made them an increasingly viable audience for publishers.[56] As popular publishing and commercial entertainment expanded, adults also became steadily more interested in extending entertainment to children. However, widespread adoption of leisure reading encouraged expansion into the children's market, just as the rise of age barriers rendered adult material increasingly forbidden to children.

Middle-class investment in priceless childhood pulled children's publishing in two directions. First, as this section will detail, boys proved to be a particularly valuable replacement audience for dime novels, especially as adults lost interest in the form and were drawn to an abundance of new entertainment choices. Publishers of cheap fiction found growing success with the boy consumer, and they approached this boy audience directly. This served to establish the first "separate shelf" of recreational children's books dedicated specifically for boy-readers. Second, the response of moral authorities and rival publishers to the rise of cheap fiction for boys, worked collectively to establish a set of "quality" publications intended for both boys *and* girls.

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[55] Dulles, *A History of Recreaion,* 283. Reformers also gained diverse allies. At times, even purveyors of commercial entertainment picked up isolated reform issues. For decades, P.T. Barnum lectured on temperance regularly as he traveled the county: "He was not in the circus business merely to make money, he told the country. It was his mission to 'provide clean, moral and healthful recreation for the public.'" Barnum quotation from P.T. Barnum, *Struggles and Triumphs* (Buffalo, 1889), 356.

[56] See Nasaw, *Schooled to Order*, 1-80.

Separating the Child Reader

The growing demand for some form of leisure and amusement for children had complex effects in the publishing industry. Traditionally purposeful textbooks underwent a significant transformation with the McGuffey Readers, which featured stories and pictures designed to make learning to read less bland and more fun.[57] Children's books became a popular gift, stimulating a market for attractive editions of favorite stories. British imports retained a strong presence, but more American publications soon found their way into the hands of young readers. As Figure 2-1 illustrates, recreational reading was apparently on the rise as an abundance of new American children's magazines emerged to address their interests.[58] There also was a high demand for new juvenile literature, particularly by known authors.[59]

Nevertheless, through the 1870s, children were a growing, but as-yet unproven, audience. Some authors and publishers continued to appeal to a wider audience. For example**,** *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was written for adults, but Mark Twain was persuaded to edit and package it as a boys' book. Even so, in his preface, Twain appealed to an adult readership as well:

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[57] The McGuffey Reader was extraordinarily successful with sixty million copies sold in the 1870's and 1880's. The readers promoted virtues of good character, duty, and thrift, and thus were well-suited to their market. Charles H. Carpenter, *History of American Schoolbooks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), 85-86. The readers also promoted an idea of American success that emphasized honesty, diligence, and a newfound commitment to material gain. Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces That Have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 2.

[58] See especially, Kelly, *Children's Periodicals of the United States*; Kelly, *Mother was a Lady: Self and Society in Selected American Children's Periodicals* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974). For examples, compare: *Little American* (1862-1864), *Little Corporal* (1865-1875), *Our Young Folks* (1865-1873), and *Riverside* (1867-1870).

[59] For example, the publication of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Men* (1871) had to be delayed until publishers could fill the fifty thousand advance orders. Reported in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *Our Famous Women: An Authorized Record of the Lives and Deeds of Distinguished American Women of Our Times* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1975; reprint, Hartford: A. D. Worthington, 1883), 44. As with any best-selling author, there is some question as to whether *Little Men* was truly in high demand, or publishers were indicating popularity and the threat of scarcity to stimulate demand. In either case, the orientation toward creating bestsellers for children is evident.

> Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in. [60]

This strategy had the potential to generate sales, but the public increasingly objected to children and adults reading the same publications.[61] While the "novel-reading disease" of the antebellum era had faded, the alarm over fiction and its influence continued to sound, particularly as priceless childhood called for greater protection and sheltering of boys and girls from the adult world.

Twain's deliberate effort to diversify his audience beyond the children's market is further evidenced in the following letter from 1892 regarding the sequel to Tom Sawyer:

> I conceive that the right way to write a story for boys is to write so that it will not only interest boys but will also strongly interest any man who has ever been a boy. That immensely enlarges the audience. Now this story doesn't need to be restricted to a childs [sic] magazine – it is proper enough for any magazine, I should think, or for a syndicate. I don't swear it, but I think so.[62]

Though Twain may have envisioned *Tom Sawyer Abroad* as a book for a wide audience, by 1892 the market was far less receptive to mixing adult and child audiences. *Tom Sawyer Abroad* was serialized in *St. Nicholas*, a children's magazine.

Blood-and-Thunder: Cheap Fiction for Boys

Though the growing assertion of age barriers posed a serious challenge for producers of story papers and dime novels seeking the widest possible circulation, the established market for juvenile periodicals offered a valuable model. As Figure 2-1 illustrates, children's periodicals

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[60] Preface to Mark Twain and Lee Clark Mitchell, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, The World's Classics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Original publication, 1876. On marketing *Tom Sawyer*, See Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, 157.

[61] In the 1870s, reviewers began compiling list of "books for girls, "books for boys," and "books for children," in an effort to separate children's reading from that of adults. Following the widespread success of *Little Women*, the line between juvenile fiction and adult novels was clearly in place. In the 1880s, both *Publishers' Weekly* and *Library Journal* noted and advertised "books for adults" as separate from children's literature. On objections to children reading adult literature, see for example, W. H. Brett, "Books for Youth," *Library Journal* 10, no. 6 (1885): 127-8; Rev. Bernard O'Reilly, L.D., "What girls should not read," in *The Mirror of True Womanhood: A Book of Instruction for the Women of the World*, 13th edition, 237-39.

[62] Twain Letter to Fred J. Hall, 10 August 1892. Mark Twain and Albert Bigelow Paine, *Mark Twain's Letters* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1917), 566

rebounded after the Civil War as entrepreneurs produced 37 new magazines between 1866 and 1870.

These new periodicals faced stiff and growing competition. For example, the largest circulating children's periodical, *The Little Corporal* (*est.* 1865), offered its subscribers a "books by mail" service. The advertisement for this service included the following: "We do not handle books of the Dime Novel, or extra sensational, blood and murder style, but only books of the better class, such as intelligent people ought to read."[63] The fact that the publisher of *The Little Corporal* had to make this rule explicit suggests that he sought to associate his publication with only "respectable works" and that he anticipated (or received) orders requesting dime novels.

Though the dime novel was intended for a mass audience and featured adult protagonists, the popularity of adventure stories with the boy-reader gained significant public attention. For the dime novel publisher, this development offered an ideal opportunity to cultivate a new reading public, at an earlier age, and in an increasingly competitive market. However, as this chapter will detail, the opportunities presented by the boy-reader did not meet with the approval of influential members of the middle class.

My research finds that the market for dime novels and story papers had two distinct phases (see Table 2-1).[64] Between 1860 and 1873, publications for adults accounted for the vast majority of the market. Publishers addressed boys and girls collectively with "youth" publications, such as *Frank Leslie's Boys' and Girls' Weekly: An Illustrated Journal of Amusement, Adventure, and Instruction* (1866-1884).[65] These youth publications were illustrated,

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[63] "Books By Mail.," *The Little Corporal.*, March 1869, 45. For further evidence of young readers turning to sensational novels in the 1860s, see for example "Modern Novel-Reading and its Victims," *The Dartmouth* 1, 1 (1867): 99-100; Connecticut State Board of Education, "Report of the Secretary – Libraries," *Annual Report of the Board of Education* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1868): 83; "The Novel and Novel Reading," *Princeton Review* XLI (April 1869): 203-234.

[64] For details on how I have defined and accounted for various forms of cheap fiction, see Appendix A.

[65] I place publications in the "youth" category based upon available publication information. In nearly all cases, the appearance of "boys and girls" in the title provides a clear indication of the intended, inclusive audience. On *Frank Leslie's Boys' and Girls' Weekly: An Illustrated Journal of Amusement, Adventure, and Instruction,* see Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion,* 156. See also, Kelly, *Mother was a Lady*; Kelly,

sometimes in color, and they featured a variety of exciting serials and short stories intended for all young readers.[66] At this time, libraries and weeklies published for boys exclusively were minimal, and girls had no publications of their own. Beginning in 1874, a new phase of cheap fiction began. Youth publications held relatively steady, while boys began to draw attention away from the adult market. In short, the audience for dime novels shifted to favor eight- to sixteen-year-old boys.[67]

To better account for the reorientation of cheap publications toward the boy audience, it is useful to examine Beadle & Co.'s production of dime novels. Between 1860 and 1873, Beadle & Co. produced 797 dime novels for adults.[68] They published only one title expressly for boys – a holiday-season edition of *Robinson Crusoe*.[69] Nevertheless, Beadle's dime novels were quickly adopted by young boys. These cheap books were affordable, accessible, and recognizable: "Conveniently shaped for the pocket, they promptly became an inseparable part of the outfit of the boy (and to some extent of the girl also) of the period."[70] Beadle & Co. took note of their readership and, building on their experience publishing a monthly magazine for boys and girls, they responded by marketing certain dime novels as specifically intended for the juvenile market.[71]

Children's Periodicals of the United States; Madeleine B. Stern, *Purple Passage; the Life of Mrs. Frank Leslie* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953).

[66] Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion*, 108-181.

[67] *Ibid.*, xxi.

[68] I calculated all figures for Beadle & Co. publications from information provided in Johannsen's comprehensive study of the publishing house. Johannsen provides a history of the firm, biographies of its publishers and its authors, as well as the most complete list of its publications.

[69] *Robinson Crusoe*, though initially not a children's book, was a classic by the time Beadle reprinted it in 1864. I attribute this title as the lone precursor to Beadle's subsequent boys' dime novel collections because it was a popular novel for boys to read, Beadle reprinted the title as his first offering in his first collection for boys (*Boys' Books of Romance and Adventure)*, and a sketch of Robinson Crusoe appears on the front page of the novels in the collection.

[70] Charles Harvey, "The Dime Novel in American Life," *Atlantic Monthly* July 1907, 38-39.

[71] The Beadle brothers published *The Youth's Casket* (1852-57), a new magazine "for amusement and instruction." In 1855, the magazine changed editors and Harriet E.G. Arey introduced a more feminine tone in addition to the standard poems, lessons, and stories. Kelly, *Children's Periodicals of the United States*, 496-500.

In 1874 Beadle & Co. produced the *Beadle's Boys' Books of Romance and Adventure*, a collection of twenty-one titles issued over the course of the year.[72] The collection was short-lived, probably in part because of its high price. Beadle made an adjustment. In 1877 he launched a *Half-Dime Library* a semi-weekly for the boy audience, followed by *Beadle's Boy's Library of Sport, Story and Adventure* (1881) a weekly also priced at a nickel.[73] As Table 2-2 indicates, between 1877 and 1905, titles expressly for boys accounted for 1608 titles or 42% of all Beadle dime novels. The abundance of titles advertised especially to boys is a strong indicator that they were a favored audience for publishers. Boys also likely continued to read Beadle's adult offerings.

The practice of producing for boys was imitated by other publishers as they entered the market. By 1900, there were 60 libraries and weeklies intended for boys. Rivaling Beadle's contributions were the noteworthy: Tousey's *The Five Cent Wide Awake Library* (1878-1898), and Street & Smith's *Diamond Dick, Jr.: The Boys' Best Weekly* (1896-1911).[74] While publishing for boys was extraordinarily successful, simply targeting the boy audience did not in itself guarantee success. *Home Library: Pure Reading for Boys* (Cobb, Baldwin & Co., 1875), for example, lasted a mere six issues.

Several factors facilitated the growth of this market. First, the most successful authors for the juvenile market were well-known and exceptionally prolific. Notable among them were Edward Ellis, "Oliver Optic," "Harry Castlemon," and Horatio Alger, Jr. [75] They found early

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[72] This library marked Beadle's first use of "boy" in the publication title, indicating a direct and exclusive targeting of boy readers. Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels,* Volume I. 58, 172-73.

[73] *Ibid.* See also, Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion,* 1.

[74] Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion,* 85. Dime novels and story papers drew a pool of prolific, skilled writers. For example, *Diamond Dick, Jr.* was edited by Theodore Drieser between 1904 and 1906.

[75] Many authors of cheap fiction wrote under pseudonyms. For convenience, I use the pseudonyms to reference any writers with pen-names that overshadowed their own. Pseudonyms are given in quotation marks with biographical information in the notes. Edward Ellis (1840-1916) wrote under his own name and several pseudonyms for Beadle. Prior to switching to juveniles, he wrote *Seth Jones, or the Captive of the Frontier* (1860), the most successful of all Beadle dime novels. It eventually sold over 600,000 copies. David Hamilton Murdoch, *The American West: The Invention of a Myth* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2001), 35. "Oliver Optic" (William Taylor Adams, 1822-1897) edited several children's periodicals

popularity and consistent readership by contributing stories to newspapers, story papers, and magazines including *Munsey's*, *School and Schoolmate*, *The Golden Argosy*, and *Comfort*, among others. Their magazine stories often were compiled and released in book form, and their series sold several million copies.[76]

Second, while contributions by these authors anchored publications and accelerated sales, the bulk of the stories in cheap publications were "machine-made" by writers-for-hire.[77] "Fiction factories" supplied much-needed content to the weeklies and dime novel publishers. In "Literary Factories," Edward Bok revealed how fiction was "written by the yard."[78] Employees of the literary factory generated outlines for stories based on unusual articles in weekly periodicals. These were sent to one of the hundreds of available writers who converted outline into story for a fee to be paid upon completion.[79] Fiction factories could make extraordinary profits on these stories both by volume production and by the success of a hit story. Dime novel libraries and story papers also frequently reprinted material from other sources. Titles appearing in *Beadle's*

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including *Oliver Optic's Magazine*, and wrote over one hundred books for boys. "Harry Castlemon" (Charles Austin Fosdick, 1842-1915) was author of over fifty boys' books. Both "Optic" and "Castlemon" were famous for their boys' books with outdoor and Civil War themes. Horatio Alger, Jr. (1834-1899) wrote under his own name. He was published predominantly by Street & Smith and Norman Munro. Alger, Jr. wrote over one hundred boys' books, mostly the "rags to riches" stories which made him famous.

[76] The commercial and material success of writers of cheap fiction is difficult to quantify accurately. Writers could earn a living from their work, but they had to produce in large quantities. For example, for the first dime novel Beadle & Co. published, author Ann Stephens received $250 -- compensation usually ranged from $100 to $150. Harvey, "The Dime Novel in American Life," 38.

[77] "Machine-Made Literature: A Shop Where Blood and Thunder Stories Are Manufactured," *The Washington Post*, 6 May 1883, 3.

[78] Their work was edited to conform to prevailing tastes, and the stories were then sold to "the cheaper sensational weeklies, to boiler-plate factories and to publishers of hair-curling libraries of adventure." Bok was a highly successful publisher and author, as well as the editor of *Ladies' Home Journal*. Edward William Bok, "Literary Factories," *Publishers' Weekly* 42, no. 1072 (1892): 231. Republished from the *Boston Journal*. The fiction factory is not an American invention. Previous incarnations of the fiction factory centered on a known author who was accused of employing anonymous writers to produce stories published under their name, as in the case with Alexandre Dumas. Others, such as Balzac, published under pseudonym numerous stories that were the product of collaborations. For additional accounts and analysis of production in literary factories, see especially "Fiction Factories: The Production of Dime Novels," in Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 17-26.

[79] The factory served as the conduit between writer and publisher; Bok discloses that several reputed writers work for the factory under pseudonym to conceal their authorship of more "sensational," and thus less "literary," works. See for example, Louisa May Alcott and Madeleine B. Stern, *Louisa May Alcott Unmasked: Collected Thrillers* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995); Madeleine B. Stern, *Louisa May Alcott: From Blood & Thunder to Hearth & Home* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

Boy's Library, for example, were commonly recycled from Beadle & Co.'s other libraries with little or no revision.[80]

Finally, many publishers also continued to rely on the age-old strategy of piracy. American publishers continued to reprint foreign works without permission and without paying royalties to the author. For boys' publications piracy meant repackaging serials with new, brightly colored covers and minimal editing. *Handsome Harry: Stories of Land and Sea* (Tousey, 1899), for example, was originally a British serial.[81] Piracy of foreign works enabled publishers to keep their costs low. Consequently, American authors experienced a disadvantage in selling their material to publishers, and also faced difficulty gaining readers because their books were often sold at higher prices than pirated publications.[82] Eventually reputable publishers began issuing their own cheap libraries to compete, while also calling for international copyright.[83] These conditions strengthened the fiction factory system by rendering the professional author more likely to need work as a writer-for-hire.

With hundreds of new titles entering the market, publishers also developed new marketing strategies in order to distinguish individual products from those of competitors. Juvenile weeklies and cheap novels promoted themselves with an emphasis on low price, high

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[80] Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels*.
[81] Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion*, 125.
[82] In the 1880s, Victor Hugo and others held European conferences on behalf of international copyright. Sociologist Wendy Griswold argues that this absence of copyright protections for foreign authors encouraged American authors to write about distinctly "American" subjects and settings because they had to distinguish themselves from the "free" books available from British and French writers. Wendy Griswold, "American Character and the American Novel: An Expansion of Reflection Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 86, no. 4 (1981): 740-65. By the 1890s fourteen publishers were producing cheap libraries of pirated works; new titles were being printed at an extraordinary rate of a novel a day. Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels*, 76. See also Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia Cushman Schurman, ed., *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks* (New York: Haworth Press, 1996).
[83] Lydia Cushman Schurman "The Effect of Nineteenth-Century 'Libraries' on the American Book Trade" in Sullivan and Schurman, eds., *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes*, 98-121. Additionally, producers of cheap libraries established strong relationships with department stores, much to the dismay of older publishing houses. References to department store libraries appear on page 104. Norman Munro published *Macy's Popular Star Novels*, Jordan Marsh published *J.M. & Co's Popular Standard Novels* and *Seaside Library*. Interestingly, John Wanamaker was critical of cheap libraries when he served as postmaster general (during the heyday of Comstock) but later sold his *Keystone Library* at cheap prices.

entertainment-value, and the merits of their own popularity. For example, Frank Munsey, an enormously successful publisher, called attention to: the size of the weekly, the reduced price, the featured stories by well-known writers, the illustrations, and the desire for high circulation.[84] In an effort to replicate the unparalleled sales of cheap novels and mass-market magazines, book publishers also capitalized on a book's perceived "popularity" and turned to advertising to stimulate sales.[85] Publishers commonly revealed (or exaggerated) sales volume to fuel interest in books on the basis of their popularity.[86] Book promotion frequently referenced a writer or illustrator's previous work, building reputations upon past success.

Finally, publishers standardized the dimensions of their books, often including signature marks and colors. Beadle & Co.'s dime novels, for example, were often referred to as "yellow backs" because of their consistent use of yellow covers. Publishers paid new attention to format, and they placed advertisements on their end papers. Cover illustrations were of special importance to the dime novel as they provided an eye-catching attraction to potential buyers. Beadle's *Boys' Books of Romance and Adventure*, for example, was only the second time Beadle employed color in the cover illustration – an added expense designed to capture boys' attention.

Why Not Girls?: The Perceived Limitations of the Girl Audience

If boys were once the unintended readers of cheap publishing in the earlier decades, they became its explicit target in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. The situation for girl readers proved to be more ambiguous. As in the adult market, boys were offered stories of adventure, weapons, young ladies in distress, and the opportunity to triumph over "savages." Young heroes

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[84] See for example "Advertisement: The Argosy," *Outing, an Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Recreation,* April 1891, VIX.

[85] This practice was adopted by the juvenile market. The best-seller orientation in book publishing began with the success of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. See Susan Geary, "The Domestic Novel as a Commercial Commodity; Making a Best Seller in the 1850s," *Bibliographical Society of America* 70 (1976): 365-93.

[86] *Ibid.*, 362.

engaged in exciting, often patriotic, adventures.[87] There is every indication that this formula was enthusiastically welcomed by boys. As one reader recalls:

> How the boys swarmed into and through stores and news-stands to buy copies as they came hot from the press! And the fortunate ones who got there before the supply gave out – how triumphantly they carried them off to the rendezvous, where eager groups awaited their arrival![88]

Producers published what they believed would appeal to boys because, unlike more costly or "appropriate" publications selected and purchased by adults, children saved their pennies and bought cheap fiction for themselves. Working boys were more likely to have access to dime novels than those of more privileged backgrounds. These boys had less adult supervision and more interaction with the adult world. They also had pennies. Press coverage of working children references newsboys as avid dime novel readers, and reports of court proceedings include cases of newsboys caught stealing dime novels.[89]

The reasons behind the lack of girls' story papers and dime novels are difficult to pin down. Girls were not immune to cheap fiction, but there were almost no publications exclusively for them. One attempt, Beadle & Co.'s *Girls of To-day A Mirror of Romance* (1875), featured stories with school-settings, fashionable clothes, and family drama. In their stories, young girls face trials and excitement usually within domestic relationships. *Girls of To-day* lasted only twenty-five issues. [90] One observer of the time suggests access may have been a key issue: "The girls, in fact, are under closer supervision, and are apt to have duties for their leisure hours in the

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[87] For example, Street and Smith published the first issue of *The Boys of the World: A Story Paper for the Rising Generation* in October of 1875. The cover features a story, "Phil, the Fearless; or, The Firebrand of Wabash" by Herman Burford. An accompanying illustration depicts a wilderness scene; a boy, presumably Phil, is holding a rifle. A young girl stands behind him in a protected position. An older man in uniform points to several hatchet-wielding men; his gesture indicates that he is encouraging Phil to shoot at them. The caption reads: "Phil, The Fearless . . . A Sharp Whistle Form His Lips, And A Half Score Of Savages Rose From The Rocks." An illustration of this issue can be found in Reynolds, *The Fiction Factory,* 53.

[88] Harvey, "The Dime Novel in American Life," 37.

[89] See for example, "The Newsboy," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 July 1865, 8. "Local Intelligence," *New York Times*, 6 May 1867, 2.

[90] One issue features an anonymous story "Kate Darling, or The Queen of the School." The illustration shows a conventional middle-aged, middle-class man. He is seated in a library and his expression is angry. He points an accusing finger at a young, well-dressed woman – presumably Kate. She holds a letter and appears distressed. People who purchase this paper receive a "beautiful engraving of The Queen of the School." See Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels,* 470-73.

household. They have less pocket money, and few of the ready means of replenishing it at a pinch of [sic] their enterprising brothers." [91]

To be sure, some girl readers found sufficient amusement in publications intended for boys and youth, and they did not seek out exclusive material. For example, Beadle's *Half-Dime Library* included at least 20 titles that feature a girl protagonist (e.g., *Girl Storm Pilot, Girl Queen of the Boy Police League*, and the like).[92] Another explanation is simply that girls abandoned juveniles early and turned to women's publications, including the abundance of women's magazines finding success in the late-Nineteenth Century.

There are also indications that girls read love stories and the "salacious and vicious" French novels published for women readers.[93] Moreover, scholars note that working-girl novels and serials had a strong presence in adult story papers.[94] These could easily have appealed to girls in precisely the same way that the dominant frontier adventures for men drew in the boy reader. Yet, while publishers could tone-down the violence of adult adventures to make them more suitable for boy readers, romantic themes are less easily adaptable to a form that is both interesting and "appropriate" for a young audience.

Bad Books Make Bad Boys: Moral Authorities and the Campaign Against Dime Novels

The proliferation of cheap publishing for children did not emerge in a vacuum. As was the case with commercial amusements, the growth of inexpensive leisure reading for children generated much concern. Early dime novels received mixed reviews, but Beadle & Co. strongly

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[91] W.H. Bishop, "Story-Paper Literature," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1879, 385. Given what we know of the varying access girls had to other forms of entertainment, this assessment is likely to be a partial explanation for the dime novel publishers' emphasis on boy readers. For discussion of working-girl readers of story papers, see Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 185-200.

[92] Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels*, Volume II, 368. The *Half-Dime* library also includes well over one hundred titles referencing a boy protagonist. These range from *Boy Bear-Slayer of the Sierras* to *Boy Tramp-Detective*. *Ibid.*, 348.

[93] "Morality in Fiction," *Outlook*, 5 January 1901, 67.

[94] See Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, Chapter 10. See also, Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Chapter Three. On working girls as readers, see especially Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, Chapter One.

favored moral stories.[95] These stories were designed to entertain. The characters and their escapades were extraordinary, but their behavior ultimately affirmed the good, moral, and upstanding. The illustrations were provocative. As new producers entered the field, competition grew fierce and triggered a shift from the "clean" stories introduced by Beadle to a more sensational, "blood and thunder" variety.[96] With this transition, the relatively innocuous quality of cheap fiction was swiftly replaced by assertions that it was poisonous and harmful. Mothers, in particular, had a duty to guide and reform the reading habits of their sons and daughters; dedicated middle-class mothers were not to permit their children to read carelessly. However, it also represented a contradiction because women protected children from precisely the activity to which they had notoriously "fallen victim."[97]

The enthusiasm expressed by boy readers was accompanied by an equally strong resistance on the part of some adults. Four groups played instrumental roles in efforts to regulate boys' and girls' recreational reading. First, moral authorities undertook an aggressive campaign against cheap fiction. Second, rival publishers positioned themselves as "quality" producers, and capitalized on the middle-class parents' desire to shelter their children from "trash." Third, librarians and reformers removed cheap fiction from circulation and guided parents to "better books" for boys and girls. Finally, educators endeavored by force and persuasion to instill good reading habits in children. While advocating for better children's literature and better reading habits, these groups took aim at "poisonous books," namely the publishers, writers, and purveyors of story papers and dime novels.

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[95] Interestingly, some critics believed early Beadle dime novels showed potential to "elevate" the quality of cheap publications. Denning notes the example, "Beadle's Dime Books," *The North American Review* XCIX., CCIV (1864): 303. See also, "Varieties," *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* 63, no. 1 (1864): 135.

[96] Robinson Henry Morton, "Mr. Beadle's Books," *The Bookman; a Review of Books and Life* 69, no. 1 (1929): 18.

[97] As Douglas noted, "young Victorian women spent much of their middle-class girlhoods prostrate on chaise lounges with their heads in 'worthless' novels. . . 'Reading' in its new form was many things, among them it was an occupation for unemployed, narcissistic self-education for those excluded from the harsh school of practical competition." Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 10.

As this section will show, though tied to generational conflict and class concerns, gender distinctions were especially salient to the mobilization of campaigns against commercial amusement which gained intensity as priceless boys (and girls) fell victim to the blood-and-thunder stories of the dime novel. While boys (and girls) were corrupted by "blood and thunder" stories, protecting the innocence of middle-class boys operated as a counterpoint to the depravity of cheap amusements. To be sure, daughters fell prey to love stories and "foreign novels."[98] In 1874, *The North American Review* claimed:

> The harm that they do is by the excitement their interest arouses. The fictitious heroes and heroines usurp the place that should be filled by the living, and the reaction from this excitement is very sure to have an injurious effect on growing girls, whose bodies are extremely sensitive to mental influences.[99]

According to this position, bad reading weakened girls' physical and mental health, robbing them of their vitality. Mothers, in particular, had failed their daughters by neglecting to monitor them or worse, by indulging their insatiable desire for sensational stories.[100]

Though I found no explicit statements to account for the focus on boys as the primary victim of dime novels, it stands to reason that the abundance of boys' books focused attention more directly upon them. Given that there is some indication that girls also read blood-and-thunder stories, however, this omission also suggests that the threat to boyhood was considered more immediate or commonplace. Romance novels might damage a daughter's perceptions of

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[98] T. Bentzon, "The French Novel and the Young Girl," *Outlook*, 5 January 1901, 80-8; "Morality in Fiction," *Outlook* 5 January 1901, 11; "Pernicious Literature."; "What Our Young Daughters Read," *Harper's Bazaar* 29 September 1883, 610.

[99] "Sex in Education," *The North American Review* CXVIII, CCXLII. (1874). This is a summary of Edward Hammond Clarke, *Sex in Education or, a Fair Chance for the Girls* (Boston: J.R. Osgood and Company, 1874). Clarke's book created some controversy about girls' education because he claimed that schooling could damage their health leading to infertility.

[100] The argument against poisonous novels figured into calls for better education for girls and calls for parents to better supervise their daughters. Advocates for girls' education and physical activity also believed novel reading harmed girls. See E. B. Duffey, *No Sex in Education, or, an Equal Chance for Both Boys and Girls: Being a Review of Dr. E.H. Clarke's "Sex in Education"* (Philadelphia: J.M. Stoddart, 1874), 77; Anna C. Brackett, *The Education of American Girls. Considered in a Series of Essays.* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1874), 64-80; "Health Department: A Cure for Delicate Girls," *Arthur's Illustrated Home Magazine* February 1878, 116; Charles Kingsley, *Health and Education* (New York: D. Appleton, 1874). Describing novel-reading as addictive was commonplace. See for example, L. Mallette Anderson, "Novels and Novel-Reading," *Potter's American Monthly*, March 1879, 187-94.

marriage and motherhood, but reckless adventure posed the possibility of truancy, runaways, and violence.

Popular Poisons: Discourse on Child Readers of Cheap Fiction

Throughout the late-Nineteenth Century, critics continued to describe children's reading in terms of appetite. [101] Children were prone to a "poor diet" of cheap fiction that ruined their "reading taste" and cultivated "coarse digestion." Cheap books were "addictive" in ways comparable to alcohol or cigarettes. Dime novels were enticing candies that children would devour if unsupervised. Boys "gorged" themselves on highly sensational stories. This reading would poison them, rendering them unfit for their position in society, instead turning them into immoral juvenile delinquents. For example, an 1865 article in *The Youth's Companion* claimed that familiarity with fictionalized violence trained John Wilkes Booth in criminal behavior and led him to assassinate President Lincoln. Boys were cautioned to stay away from "the bloody tales of the weekly story papers, or the flashy, ten cent, yellow-covered literature sold in almost every book store." [102]

The Youth's Companion was not alone. Rivals of the dime novel took news-agents to task for openly selling publications that "contribute to moral ruin":

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[101] A sample of this usage can be found in the following: "Popular Poisons," *The American Monthly Knickerbocker* 63, no. 5 (1864): 419; "Pernicious Literature," *The Old Guard* 4, no. 5 (1866): 312; ; "A Youthful Band of Robbers," *The National Police Gazette* XXII., no. 1109 (1866): 3; "Romantic Adventures of a Young Illinois Girl," *Chicago Tribune,* 26 April 1867, 2; "Effects of Reading Dime Novels," *New York Times,* 7 February 1877, 2; "Dime Novels and Boy Bandits," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* 9 June 1878, 8; "Again the Yellow Backs," *Boston Daily Globe,* 15 March 1884, 1; "Beadle's Boys. A Brace of Dime Novel Disciples," *Wheeling Register,* 15 Mary 1883; "Shot While Chastising His Son," *New York Times,* 5 March 1884, 2; "What the Boys Are Reading," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* 11 December 1881, 4; Barnard Charles, "Pernicious English Novels," *The Critic: a Literary Weekly, Critical and Eclectic* 3, no. 64 (1885): 133; "A Specimen Dime Novel Student," *New York Times,* 28 May 1886, 1; "Dime Novels and Murder," *The Atlanta Constitution,* 20 July 1886, 4; "A Boy Runs Away from Home," *The Washington Post,* 29 September 1889, 1; "The Christmas Pistol," *The Washington Post,* 26 December 1889, 2; "Minister's Son and Dime Novels," *Boston Daily Globe,* 18 June 1894, 6. For a Foucauldean analysis of tropes of reading, see Steven Mailloux, "The Rhetorical Use and Abuse of Fiction: Eating Books in Late Nineteenth-Century America," *boundary 2* 17, no. 1 (1990): 133-57.

[102] Equating bad literature with the most extreme criminal behaviors surely must have caught readers' attention, especially as it speaks so directly to Northern patriotic sentiments. "Booth and Bad Literature," *The Youth's Companion,* 11 May 1865, 38. *The Youth's Companion* reached a lot of young readers and was highly regarded.

> Look at that boy coming. See the clear eye, the sensitive cheek, the frank look. You know him through and through, for you have been a boy. Young, inexperienced, in a sense at your mercy, what will you do with him? How can you go home without remorse, how can you look in your wife's face, how can you fall honestly asleep if you have sold that boy a paper or a book which can have but one effect, and is intended to have but one?[103]

This editorial then advocated for the more up-standing publishers – Appleton, Harper's, Scribner's, and Putnam – claiming they knew how to successfully "gratify an innocent and noble public taste, not to prostitute themselves into rascals by degrading it and outraging public decency."[104] Surprisingly, in 1868, Appleton was producing a wide variety of relatively inexpensive publications, as well as pirated works from Dickens and Marx. *Harper's* had essentially invented the inexpensive "libraries" with their *Library of Select Novels* (1831). Yet, they still achieved and asserted their reputation as "respectable" rather than cheap.

Producers of more expensive publications claimed that measuring success by circulation numbers proved a publication was of poor quality. They objected to the openly commercial quality of the books, and the tendency for "libraries" to rely on foreign literature. For instance, some publishers and booksellers advanced the idea of judging books by their covers: a cheap-looking book was a poor quality book, inside and out.[105] The success of cheap fiction undoubtedly had the attention of middle-class publications, and this proved an effective strategy against dime novels.

Even books that were not dime novels faced growing scrutiny from critics. In 1873, Lucy McKim Garrison reviewed four new children's books for *The Nation* in advance of the Christmas

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[103] "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's new monthly magazine*, April 1868, 665-666.

[104] *Ibid*. See also Madeline B. Stern, *Publishers for Mass Entertainment in Nineteenth Century America* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co.), 9-25, 151-56.

[105] Dawn Fisk Thomsen " 'It is a pity it is no better': The Story Paper and Its Critics in Nineteenth-Century America" in Lydia Cushman Schurman and Deidre Johnson, eds., *Scorned Literature: Essays on the History and Criticism of Popular Mass-Produced Fiction in America*, Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 83-95. *Publishers' Weekly* claimed it was "difficult to generalize as to what classes of readers buy these broadsheets," yet they easily went on to presume they were readers of weekly story papers and dime novels – a class of readers that offended the more refined, literary taste. "The Cheap Libraries" *Publishers' Weekly*, 6 October 1877, 396-397. Quoted in Denning, *Mechanic Accents*.

holiday.[106] Though she concedes that the books are "inventive" and "amusing," each fails to live up to expectations. She cites slang, indecency, offensive humor, "baby-talk," and swearing as disappointing, but persistent, elements in juvenile books for boys and girls. She also contends that Americans impose an unnatural and excessive "realism" upon children, leading authors and publishers to treat the child-public as a "sharp little Yankee audience." Garrison proposes that careful guardians should scratch out "epithets" (e.g., "nasty dirty," "nasty wicked," and "nasty filthy") before giving children books. More important, she cautions that if parents provide a "low standard" of amusement, the child-reader would certainly "rest satisfied with his pertness, his slipshod good-nature, his bad breeding; he will not care a fig for such superfluities as discipline, endurance, modesty, or reverence."

In part, this criticism was an extension of long-standing debates about the literary merits of fiction and objections to novel reading. As a daughter of prominent abolitionists and as wife to *The Nation*'s literary editor, Garrison was a political activist with the means and the authority to advocate publicly for the special care that she believed children required. Prevailing beliefs dictated that nurturing children was primarily a woman's responsibility; as the mother of young children, Garrison had a special duty to ensure the content of children's books was appropriate. *The Nation* offered her a platform to raise concerns about children's recreational reading in an influential periodical with a strong reputation for high-quality, impartial reviews.[107]

Clearly, Garrison's objections to the books before her are a much more than a simple matter of literary taste. Garrison casts recreational reading as an essential factor to a child's healthy moral development and personal happiness. She urges parents to view children's books as "a potent factor in the moulding [sic] of mind at the tender age when impressions are strongest and even trifles are not trivial." Rather than give boys and girls "strong meat" that is better suited

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[106] Lucy McKim Garrison "Children's Holiday Books – II" *The Nation*, 4 December 1873, 374-75.
[107] On children's reviewing in *The Nation*, see Richard L. Darling, *The Rise of Children's Book Reviewing in America, 1865-1881*. (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1968), Chapter 7. On Garrison and her family, see Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Growing Up Abolitionist: The Story of the Garrison Children* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

to adults, she suggests that parents should provide children with appealing recreational reading to satisfy their true, imaginative natures. “A boy’s heart craves a hero; and he believes in his hero with all the beautiful literalness and seriousness of early childhood,” she wrote.

Children’s perceived vulnerability is precisely what mobilized campaigns not just for child protection, but for the prevention of vice. Beginning in the 1870s, societies for the suppression of vice mobilized campaigns against obscenity. The most notable and successful of these were Anthony Comstock’s censorship of obscene art and literature, as well as materials relating to contraception and abortion. Sociologist Nicola Beisel finds that Comstock’s formal support came first from YMCA leadership and, by extension, from wealthy and professional elites. She argues compellingly that Comstock’s success came when he effectively convinced the upper- and upper-middle-class that obscenity corrupted children, rendering them unable or unwilling to reproduce their parents’ social position, much less achieve upward mobility.[108]

Over time, books came to be seen as the “shaping influence” over boys – “bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.”[109] Critics and moral authorities cast blame widely: authors and illustrators created immoral and inferior works; publishers produced an abundance of bad reading material and very few quality children’s stories; booksellers and news-agents sold these publications; poorly-monitored Sunday school libraries provided easy access to harmful books; parents failed to protect their children from “poisonous” reading; children – out of ignorance, immaturity, or disobedience – simply read the wrong things. Prompted by stories of exciting city and frontier life, impressionable boys – increasingly from “respectable families” – left their comfortable homes only to find themselves on the streets or worse.[110]

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[108] Nicola Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America*, Princeton Studies in American Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). See especially Chapter Three.

[109] The article was most likely written by one of the editors. The *Christian Union* was founded by Henry Ward Beecher (brother to Harriet Beecher Stowe) as a nondenominational religious periodical. It later secularized and became the family-oriented magazine *The Outlook.* All quotes are from: “Books for Boys,” *Christian Union,* 21 January 1874, 596.

[110] “A Dime Novel Victim,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* 7 July 1877, 8.

A growing hostility emerged as the crusade against dime novels intensified.[111] In newspapers across the country, reading was implicated as a catalyst for juvenile crime.[112] Jesse Pomeroy, a fourteen year-old newsboy of Massachusetts, was sentenced to solitary confinement for life in 1876. His reading material – Beadle and Munro dime novels and "highly wrought stories of violence" – were offered as a crucial factor in his unprovoked murder of two five year-old children.[113] Invoking dime novel reading also became a means for the public to deal with traumatic, incomprehensible realities. Sensational headlines described real tragedies that "read like a chapter from a Beadle dime novel of 'blood and thunder,' or an episode from the 'Mysteries and Miseries of New York.'"[114]

By the 1880s, the battle against cheap fiction was fierce. Comstock's 1883 book, *Traps for the Young*, describes in great detail the damaging influence of obscene books and story papers, particularly on young middle- and upper-class children. Though the upper-classes were mobilized by Comstock, moral corruption of children was a concern that affected all classes. Under the Comstock Law, vice societies could combat the spread of impurity and prevent the pollution of privileged children. Comstock gained allies in the American Medical Association and

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[111] See for example, "The Walworth Murder": "The flashy sensational story papers and novels are educating into a condition of ruffianism a larger class of youths than is dreamed of. . ." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 June 1873, 4.

[112] "Young Girls Steeped in Crime," *New York Times*, 3 October 1884, 5.

[113] Coverage of this trial was national and Jesse Pomeroy barely averted the death sentence. See "A Boy Torturer," *New York Times*, 22 September 1872, 5; "The Murders," *Boston Daily Globe*, 24 April 1874, 1; "A Young Demon," *New York Times*, 24 April 1874, 1; "The Pomeroy Verdict," *Boston Daily Globe*, 11 December 1874, 4; "The Boy Murderer," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 13 February 1875, 2; "The Pomeroy Boy," *Boston Daily Globe*, 28 February 1879, 1; "From His Cell Jesse Pomeroy Pleads for Clemency," *New York Times*, 30 October 1910, 13; "Jesse Pomeroy Dies; in Prison 56 Years," *New York Times*, 1 October 1932, 34.

[114] "The Tennessee Tragedy," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 21 December 1876, 4; "Chapter for a Dime Novel: A Lover of Fourteen Tries to Kill a Girl of Twelve and Then Himself," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 12 May 1885, 1. See also, "One Chapter of a Dime Novel," *The Washington Post*, 6 December 1887, 2; "William Le Roy's Escape.; a Dime Novel in One Chapter," *Boston Daily Globe*, 15 May 1881, 6.

local criminal justice systems. Postal inspectors became fellow guardians of American purity when they provided the evidence for arrests and successful prosecution of immorality.[115]

Anthony Comstock dedicated a full chapter of *Traps for the Young* to dime novels. He recounts numerous stories of boys who: run away from home, misbehave at school, swear, steal, gamble, carry weapons, organize gangs, drink, engage in prostitution, burn houses, wreck trains, commit suicide, and attempt or commit murder – all inspired by their reading of cheap story-papers filled with sensationalist fiction and lurid illustrations.[116] Worse, cheap fiction had completely infected middle-class boys.[117] Comstock's remedy to the problem was for parents to clear their homes of cheap fiction, and to pressure their news-agent to carry only wholesome publications. In keeping with the emphasis on boys as the primary victim of dime novels, Comstock mentions a girl criminal exactly once. The reference is: "A girl of eighteen years of age recently shot her father because he would not consent to her marrying a young man whom the father thought unworthy of her."[118]

In 1883, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) took up a pro-censorship agenda that sought to protect boys from trashy crime papers and girls from sensationalist novels.

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[115] Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*, Princeton Studies in American Politics. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 85-88.

[116] Anthony Comstock and Robert Hamlett Bremner, *Traps for the Young* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 36-37.

[117] The *Athens Chronicle* stated: "The effect of dime novel reading is creeping out in Athens, and the sooner the law abolishes the right to put such stuff on sale, the sooner will the moral nature of our youths be more susceptible to a correct sense of what is right and wrong." "Moral Quarantine Needed," reprinted in *Macon Weekly Telegraph*, 1885. See also, Bishop, 383-385; Eliot McCormick, "A Boy's Appetite for Fiction," *The Century; a popular quarterly*, August 1885, 650; "Books and Authors," *Christian Union*, 14 February 1884, 160. The image of boys of potential being turned to dime novels for lack of better reading in the home is quite common. For example, "Evangelizing the Small Boy," *New York Times* 17 August 1885, 4.

[118] For his own part, Comstock relentlessly went after publishers and purveyors of dime novels. He arrested the editor of *Fireside Companion* on obscenity charges, and in the mid-1880s successfully prosecuted dealers of "crime stories." Comstock and Bremner, *Traps for the Young*, XX. *Fireside Companion* was a high-circulation family story paper published by George Munro beginning in 1867. Interestingly, in his account of one boy's dime novel trauma, Comstock elects to leave out the precise publication. He explains this by stating: "I will not name the volumes [the boy] mentioned, for they are no worse than thousands of others." See Anthony Comstock, "The Suppression of Vice," *The North American Review* CXXXV, CCCXII, (1882), 30-31; Anthony Comstock, "The Extirpation of the Crime-Breeders of the Day a Public Necessity," *Belford's Magazine*, June 1890, 64-75.

The WCTU circulated advice for mothers on helping children to read good books; they also established Anti-dime novel societies and children's books clubs.[119] Beginning in 1887, the WCTU also published the Young Crusader, a monthly paper with "pure" fiction for children, and Oak and Ivy Leaf, a periodical for women under age twenty-five.[120] Historian Alison Parker finds that the Young Crusader offered lessons to children collectively, but it also addressed boys and girls separately and gave unusually focused attention to girls.

The 1892 murder trial of sixteen year-old Alden Fales indicates precisely how volatile the discourse on boy's reading continued to be. The sentencing judge remarked:

> You were a member of a Christian Church. You attended its Sabbath school and were admitted to its communion. Unfortunately you gave yourself up to a literature which stimulated your propensity to obtain property dishonestly and taught you the manner in which noted criminals committed crimes of great atrocity, and the means by which they were successful in avoiding detection and punishment.[121]

In a subsequent statement, the judge urged the public to take action to control the sale of these publications to children. While adults continued to be responsible for boys' and girls' reading, this statement also reflects a shift toward holding boys accountable for their reading choices and for the consequences.[122]

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[119] Alison M. Parker, *Purifying America: Women, Cultural Reform, and Pro-Censorship Activism, 1873-1933*, Women in American History. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), Chapter Two. Additionally, lists of recommended books for young readers were produced by countless organizations including, the Ladies' Commission on Sunday School Books, the Church Library Association, National Young Folks' Reading Circle, the Chautauqua Young Folks' Reading Union, the Columbian Reading Union, and the Catholic Church. See Hewins in Melvil Dewey, ed. *Papers Prepared for the World's Library Congress Held at the Columbian Exposition* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), 945.

[120] Parker, *Purifying America*, 159. Parker finds that the combined circulation of these periodicals to be 44,000. This is far less than the general children's magazines of the time.

[121] "No Mercy for Young Fales," *New York Times* 5 June 1892, 16. On the Fales case, see also "An Appalling Lesson," *Christian Advocate* 67, no. 30 (1892), 508; "Crazed by Cigarettes," *New York Times*, 3 June 1892, 9; "Dime Novels Corrupted Him," *New York Times*, 1 June 1892, 2; "Young Fales's Trial Begun," *New York Times*, 31 May 1892, 3.

[122] The judge noted that the half-dime novels Fales read were "the most pernicious literature that can possibly get into the hands of children." "The Moral in Fales's Case," *New York Times*, 9 June 1892, 6.

A Magazine for Boys and Girls: "Quality" Publishers and the Middle-Class Parent

Amidst this discourse of reformers, the problem for publishers with the middle-class audience in mind was how to create a viable market for a respectable, "quality" children's publication. In 1873 esteemed children's author Mary Mapes Dodge wrote an editorial to the newly-founded *Scribner's* magazine. Dodge asserted:

> A good magazine for little ones was never so much needed, and such harm is done by nearly all that are published. . . We edit for the approval of fathers and mothers, and endeavor to make the child's monthly a milk-and-water variety of the adult's periodical. But, in fact, the child's magazine needs to be stronger, truer, bolder, more uncompromising than the other.[123]

Dodge's emphasis on the deficiencies of current children's publications allowed *Scribner's* to articulate a need to their readers: children, their children, desperately needed a magazine. Later that year, Roswell Smith, one of the publishers of *Scribner's*, founded a children's magazine to satisfy their needs.[124]

St. Nicholas: Scribner's Illustrated Magazine for Girls and Boys (1873-1941) was edited for 32 years by Mary Mapes Dodge. Dodge's extraordinarily successful *Hans Brinker or, The Silver Skates* (1865) gave her strong credibility in the children's market, and facilitated relationships with many influential literary and publishing figures. Her publishing experience gave her the necessary skills to manage a children's magazine.[125] The combined force of

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[123] Mary Mapes Dodge, "Children's Magazines," *Scribner's Monthly*, July 1873, 352.

[124] For publishers, concerns about children's reading represented a commingling of cultural and economic interests. Though it is difficult to document Smith's precise motives for publishing a children's magazine, his correspondence indicates that he viewed fiction as a means of preserving the social order: "As Dickens reformed the abuses in school life in England, and the Jewish quarter in London, so some writer of fiction may yet do a great service in this county, and help to postpone if not prevent the great impending struggle between labor and capital." Roswell Smith, letter to Howells, 17 March 1885, reprinted in *The Rise of Silas Lapham. Scribner's* had a largely female readership and published many women authors, including several who also published in *St. Nicholas.* See also, J. C. Derby, *Fifty Years among Authors, Books and Publishers* (New York: G. W. Carleton, 1884), 706-708. *St. Nicholas* in relation to *Scribner's* covered thoroughly in Arthur John, *The Best Years of the Century: Richard Watson Gilder, Scribner's Monthly, and the Century Magazine, 1870-1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

[125] A widow with two young sons to support, Dodge became a writer and editor for her father's agricultural journal. John Jay Mapes was editor of the journal, *Working Farmer*, which he used to aggressively promote the use of chemical fertilizers in agriculture, especially those he produced. In this respect, *Working Farmer* is not unlike E.C. Allen's catalog-magazines. Mary Mapes Dodge likely gained familiarity with advertising techniques while working with her father. Prior to managing *St. Nicholas* Dodge served as assistant editor

Scribner's financial support and Dodge's editorial leadership placed the magazine at the top of the children's market.

Dodge made her vision for *St. Nicholas* clear in her editorial policy: "To give clean, genuine fun to children of all ages." She "believed that [children's] literature should stimulate and quicken children intellectually, but discourage emotional precocity."[126] *St. Nicholas* successfully drew contributions from well-known writers and artists. Alongside famous talents, Dodge drew in her readership with the highly successful "St. Nicholas League" publishing works sent in by subscribers under the age of eighteen, several of whom later became great writers. [127] Under Dodge's influence, *St. Nicholas* magazine serialized Alcott's *Eight Cousins* (1875), Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886), Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1893-94) and Twain's *Tom Sawyer Abroad* (1894). The books gained strong readership and sales.

From the outset, *St. Nicholas* was a commercial enterprise and a product of its time. In the face of a severe economic downturn (*i.e.*, the Panic of 1873 and the Long Depression through 1879) that placed all publishing in potential jeopardy, Smith risked buying out several children's magazines, each of these based in a different city. By consolidating the periodicals and merging their readership, Smith effectively eliminated much of his competition. At the same time, he achieved a strong, geographically-dispersed, base for *St. Nicholas* from which he steadily grew circulation.

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of *Hearth and Home*, a women's magazine. Mary Jane Horstman, "Dodge, Mary Elizabeth Mapes"; American National Biography Online Feb. 2000. Access Date: 22 September 2006.

[126] Florence M. Sturges, "The Saint Nicholas Years," in *The Hewins Lectures, 1947-1962*, ed. Siri Andrews (Boston: Horn Book, 1963), 270; Phelps, *Our Famous Women*, 288.

[127] Contributors included: Louisa May Alcott, L. Frank Baum, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Charles Dana Gibson, Rudyard Kipling, Jack London, Howard Pyle, Arthur Rackham, Norman Rockwell, Theodore Roosevelt, Jessie Wilcox Smith, Robert Lewis Stevenson, Mark Twain, Kate Douglas Wiggin, and N.C. Wyeth. The *St. Nicholas* League published works by a young e.e. cummings, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Edna St. Vincent Millay, E. B. White, and Eudora Welty. *St. Nicholas* also made concerted efforts to repackage particular books and authors for the children's market. On repackaging adult works see especially, Ingrid Satelmajer, "Dickinson as Child's Fare: The Author Served up in *St. Nicholas*," in *Book History*, ed. Ezra Greenspan and Jonathan Rose (University Park: Penn State Press, 2002). In the 1890s, the magazine published two of Emily Dickinson's poems in a heavily edited form designed to appear child-friendly and accessible.

St.Nicholas was by far the most widely praised children's publication of its time.[128] Smith also sought to separate *St. Nicholas* from the weekly papers, and even the mere magazine. He invested in the highest quality appearance, with each volume bound in attractive covers and filled with the best and brightest illustrations.[129] *St. Nicholas* was printed as something more akin to a book, precious and worthy of special attention. Yet, it capitalized on the periodical form to provide regular fresh content and continuing revenue. Scribner's also reissued *St. Nicholas* in bound volumes with expensive library cases.

St. Nicholas was extraordinarily assertive in introducing children to advertising within its pages. As a counterpart to the St. Nicholas League, the magazine created the St. Nicholas Advertising League, a club that encouraged participants to create advertisements for the magazine following guidelines from the publisher and the advertisers. The advertising contests engaged children in a form of consumer education, teaching them how to read and understand advertising. It also brought them to a new level of engagement with the advertisers appearing in the magazine. The value of *St. Nicholas* was not lost on national advertisers who sought introduction into the homes of privileged children.[130]

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[128] For a detailed analysis of *St. Nicholas* and other magazines of the time, see especially Kelly, *Mother was a Lady: Self and Society in Selected American Children's Periodical*. Smith purchased *The Children's Hour*, *The School-day Magazine*, *The Little Corporal*, and the abundantly popular *Our Young Folks*. Through these acquisitions, Smith was able to draw upon and consolidate the reputations, contributors, subscriber lists, and successful practices employed by his predecessors.

[129] The advertising copy underscores *Scribner's* effort to produce at a standard that was truly exceptional for a magazine: "One of the most beautiful holiday presents for a boy or girl is the elegant volume, bound in red and gold, with illuminated cover linings, containing the numbers of *St. Nicholas* for the past twelve months." The description claims that it "contains so many splendid things that it seems impossible to crowd inside of two covers more delights than are found in this beautiful book." *Scribner & Co's Holiday List: St. Nicholas Bound Volumes*, ed. F. Leypoldt, The Publishers Weekly (R.R. Bowker Company, 1879).

[130] Advertising in children's magazines was rampant. In the 1880's, *Youth's Companion* had an advertising department that created full-page pictorial ads for presentation to manufacturers, particularly those who were not yet committed to the idea of magazine advertising. They sold the first full-page and full-color ad (for baby food) at the unprecedented price of $14,000. Frank Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1929), 471. Cited in Ohmann, *Selling Culture*, 26. For more on advertising in *St. Nicholas*, see Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor*; Catherine Van Horn, "Turning Child Readers into Consumers: Children's Magazines and Advertising, 1900-1920," in *Defining Print Culture for Youth: The Cultural Work of Children's Literature*, ed. Wayne A. Wiegand and Anne Lundin, 121-38. (Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2003).

Smith assumed, probably quite rightly, that *St. Nicholas* would be bought by adults on children's behalf. *St. Nicholas* readers frequently describe themselves as taking a subscription in their home or receiving the magazine as a gift. Thus, appealing to the middle-class parent proved essential to the success of *St. Nicholas* and its imitators.[131] *St. Nicholas* approached parents using three strategies. First, the publication associated itself directly with the cultivation of good children and good taste. Second, *St. Nicholas* appealed to parents as providers. What parent, after all, would not want to expose their child to the best quality reading and the best influences? Finally, *St. Nicholas* aggressively leveraged a parent's desire to please children.[132] As one advertisement for the magazine asserted: "If you want to make the children happy, buy a Christmas number of *St. Nicholas* Magazine."[133]

Boys and girls reading *St. Nicholas* surely felt themselves part of a reading community. The magazine published letters from subscribers in which they comment on articles and stories from previous issues, as well as offer suggestions for future issues. The children tell a good deal about who they are, where they live, what they are interested in, details of their daily life, and significant recent experiences. They often indicate how long they have subscribed and what the magazine means to them. Children could also gain personal recognition from the magazine. For example, those who sent in correct answers to puzzles had their names listed. The ability to

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[131] *Harper's Young People: an Illustrated Weekly* (1879-1895) included the standard stories, instructive essays, and serialized fiction. D. Lothrop & Company's *Wide Awake* (1875-1893) included supplements produced under the direction of the Chautauqua Young Folks' Reading Union. Both were solidly middle class publications and were endorsed by the American Library Association for inclusion in public library collections.

[132] For example, the following excerpt of an advertisement: "If you want your boys and girls to grow up familiar with the best literature and art, and with their best impulses quickened, let them see St. Nicholas Magazine. Price, $3.00 a year. A free copy of St. Nicholas sent to any reader of *Harper's Weekly*." *Advertisement: Century Company*, Harper's Weekly 14 December 1901. Online. Accessed 30 August 2006. In 1881 *Scribner's* changed its name to *The Century* following Smith became chief stockholder and president of the new Century Company. This advertisement appeals to specifically to *Harper's* subscribers; this has the dual effect of potentially drawing current *Harper's* readers to consider a Century publication, and potentially capturing a future adult reader by initiating children as subscribers to a rival magazine.

[133] For example, "Advertisement -- St. Nicholas," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* 43, no. 2246 (1891): 23.

participate served to give children a sense of attachment, while also providing the magazine with valuable insight into their readership.[134]

St. Nicholas set out to stimulate a juvenile belles lettres, and, by all accounts, they achieved their goal.[135] Of the many children's periodicals available in the late-nineteenth century, *St. Nicholas* held consistently high circulation rates and strong critical support. The magazine was highly regarded and library administrators considered it a suitable popular monthly.[136] *St. Nicholas* offered "stories really worth reading by boys and girls."[137] The magazine was regarded as a means to expose children to "wholesome literature cultivated to that degree where his mind will not be contaminated or polluted by the foul and muddy stream now issuing from too great a number of our printing presses."[138]

It is important to note that the 1874 founding of *St. Nicholas* was in direct opposition to cheap fiction. The combination of access to education, leisure time, and spending money made the middle class an especially appealing and reliable market for new publications. Scribner's capitalized on this opportunity and appealed to the concerned (good, fearful, affluent, middle-class) parent. Moreover, *St. Nicholas* echoed this stance in its pages, and took the campaign

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[134] See for example, "The Letter-Box," *St. Nicholas; an Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks*, 21, no. 12 (1894): 1100. The Letter-Box was employed earlier by *Our Young Folks* and *Oliver Optic's Magazine*, among others. The techniques were imitated by *St. Nicholas* with great success.

[135] Much of the credit for *St. Nicholas'* success was attributed to Dodge. Robert Underwood Johnson, poet and editor of *Century* magazine, recalled: "As a mother and a sympathetic woman, she seemed to know children by heart and her wise philosophy found full play in this magazine for young people. . . Mrs. Dodge's theories of the education of children were practical and carefully thought out. She once said to me that the boys of any community could be made friendly to one another simply by the habit of doing the same thing at the same time, as, for instance, drilling or exercising at gymnastics, a theory that has found expression in the Boy Scouts -- a movement, by the way, that was begun by a paper in *St. Nicholas."* Robert Underwood Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1923), 103.

[136] *St. Nicholas* appears in the catalogs of several public libraries. The adoption of the magazine appears to have been quick and widespread. In the 1880s, it was held in libraries in New England, Colorado, Indiana, Georgia, to name only a few. By the turn of the century, *St. Nicholas* appeared on the recommended list of periodicals for libraries. At $3 for a subscription, it was considered within the reach of even small libraries. See for example, Wisconsin Free Library Commission, *Suggestive List of Books for a Small Library* (Madison: League of Library Commissions, 1905); John Cotton Dana, *A Library Primer* (Chicago: Library Bureau, 1899).

[137] Caroline M. Hewins, "Mary Mapes Dodge and the Founding of St. Nicholas," *Publishers' Weekly* 104, no. 16 (1923): 1375-76; Alice Jordan, "St Nicholas Moves Westward," *Publishers' Weekly* 117, no. 26 (1930): 3117.

[138] James Ernest Boyle, *Rural Problems in the United States* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1921), 134.

against "poisonous" books directly to its young readers. An 1880 article cautioned readers against sensational fiction. It asserted that reading illicit fiction would: weaken children mentally, damage their character, inspire selfishness and discontent, and make "the one addicted to it a weak, frivolous, petulant, miserable being."[139] In effect, *St. Nicholas* not only provided children with "good reading," it also served to inoculate them against developing bad habits or bad taste. Author Charles Dudley Warner summed up this sentiment when he wrote to the publishers: "[*St. Nicholas*] is a continual educator of their taste and of their honor and courage. I do not see how it can be made any better, and if the children don't like it I think it is time to begin to change the kind of children we have in this country!"[140] As a periodical, *St. Nicholas* represents unmatched success for its time. Its navigation of the market during a period of severe economic instability and the extraordinary model it set proved highly influential in setting the standards of "quality" that would satisfy the discerning and protective middle-class parent.

Banishing "The Immortal Four": Librarians and Reading Lists for Boys and Girls

Publishers were not the only ones responding directly to public concerns about reading materials for children. Intervening in children's reading became a vehicle for the professionalization of children's library services, particularly for women librarians. In 1875, as librarian at the Young Men's Institute of Hartford, Caroline Hewins found that children strongly preferred the exciting boys' and girls' books written by the authors she termed, "The Immortal Four" – "Oliver Optic," "Harry Castlemon," Horatio Alger, Jr., and Martha Finley.[141] Hewins argued that these writers turned older girls' attention to "sensuously passionate" novels, while

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[139] Quoted in Jane Hunter, *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 61.

[140] Phelps, *Our Famous Women,* 289. Warner is perhaps best known for his collaborations with Mark Twain.

[141] "Martha Finley" was Martha Farquharson (1828-1909). "Finley" wrote several girls' series that tended to follow prim "good girls" throughout their lives. *Elsie Dinsmore* (1867-1905) alone carried on for twenty-eight books. She also wrote extensively for Sunday school publications.

boys read stories full of "profanity and brutal vulgarity."[142] In both, the Ten Commandments were broken repeatedly and without negative consequences. Hewins read several of these novels, and she wrote to the local newspaper asking parents if they knew what their children were reading. She also brought the books to the attention of the president of the Institute. The offending books were discarded immediately and replaced with "better books."[143]

Having cleansed her own library of cheap fiction, Hewins and other librarians mobilized support for children's services and lobbied for library policies in the newly-formed American Library Association. They began by working to ensure children access to libraries by removing age restrictions; prior to the 1880s, public libraries often excluded all children under the age of twelve or fourteen.[144] At ALA conferences, panels addressed children's book selection, cooperation between libraries and schools, and reading instruction. In 1879, Mary Abby Bean of Brookline Public Library gave a speech entitled, "The Evil of Unlimited Freedom in the Use of Juvenile Fiction," at an American Library Association symposium. Bean advocated a straightforward approach to the problem of children's reading: "Lessen the quantity and improve the quality."[145] Librarians generally agreed that children, and often parents, were ill-prepared to distinguish between good and bad books on their own. For some, it affirmed elitist assumptions about "the masses" that read poorly and lived poorly. Reformers took this deficiency as a reason

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[142] Caroline M. Hewins and Jennie D. Lindquist, *Caroline M. Hewins, Her Book* (Boston: Horn Book, 1954), 91.
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] For contemporary discussion of age restrictions, see William I. Fletcher, "Public Libraries and the Young," in U.S. Bureau of Education, Public Libraries in the United States of America. Special Report. Part. 1, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876). On the beginnings of children's library services see, Chapter 1 Elizabeth Henry Gross, *Public Library Service to Children* (Dobbs Ferry: Oceana Publications, 1967); Emily Danton, *Pioneering Leaders in Librarianship* (Boston: Gregg Press, 1972); Cornelia Meigs, *A Critical History of Children's Literature; a Survey of Children's Books in English from Earliest Times to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1953). Some children had access to private libraries or free circulating libraries as early as the 1820s. There were also several hundred Sunday School libraries. The free public library movement vastly expanded access.
[145] Wayne A. Wiegand, *The Politics of an Emerging Profession: The American Library Association, 1876-1917* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), 23-24. See also, Alice Isabel Hazeltine, *Library Work with Children* (White Plains: The H. W. Wilson company, 1917), 39. Bean is the first woman to appear on an ALA conference program as a speaker.

to encourage good reading taste with a missionary zeal.[146] With growing support for "expert" advice, the librarian's position became increasingly authoritative in public discourse.

In library history, Hewins is regarded as a foremother of children's services. She is an early example of librarians' efforts to dictate reading to the public rather than provide them the materials of their choosing. To her much-deserved credit, Hewins was a valuable advocate for children's literature. Her legacy is evident in the many modern "classics" that found favor in libraries and homes for generations. Others in the public library movement suggested that making popular fiction available to children might offer an opportunity to progressively turn their tastes to better reading.[147] At this same time, public libraries expanded rapidly with the infusion of philanthropic support.[148] Public libraries were promoted as an essential source for self-improvement, moral growth, democratization and citizenship, and a preventative measure against many social ills, particularly juvenile delinquency.[149] As plans for new libraries developed, separate reading areas and children's rooms figured prominently in the architectural design.

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[146] The debate about the purpose of the library carried on for decades. The split developed partly along regional lines, with large eastern libraries advocating for educational-focus and rural western and mid-western libraries emphasizing the community role of the library and its recreational uses.

[147] See, for example, General Bartlett's speech described in "Free Libraries and Dime Novels," *Boston Daily Advertiser* (1875). For a counter-position, see "The Free Library as a Factor in the Social Movement," *Friends' Intelligencer* 50, no. 40 (1893).

[148] Andrew Carnegie's dedication to free libraries is attributed in part to his own experience as a young, poor working boy. In an 1889 article to the *North American Review*, Carnegie writes: "It is, no doubt, possible that my own personal experience may have led me to value a free library beyond all other forms of beneficence. When I was a boy in Pittsburg, Colonel Anderson, of Allegheny, -- a name I can never speak without feelings of devotional gratitude, -- opened his little library of four hundred books to boys. Every Saturday afternoon he was in attendance himself at his house to exchange books. No one but he who has felt it can know the intense longing with which the arrival of Saturday was awaited, that a new book might be had." Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," in *North American Review* (Cedar Falls: University of Northern Iowa, 1889), 689. For further discussion of Carnegie's role in library development, see George Sylvan Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries; Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969); George Burwell Utley, *Fifty Years of the American Library Association* (Chicago: American library association, 1926).

[149] Libraries had long been touted as a source of positive social influence, and a means to improve peoples' reading taste. For example, at the newly-founded public library in Sudbury, Mass.: "Travels and histories, works of science, taste, poetry, essays, and choice romances, have taken the place of dime novels and other emphatically *weakly* novellettes of the day." In "Libraries," *Massachusetts Teacher and Journal of Home and School Education* 18, no. 3 (1865): 85.

Beginning in 1882, Hewins and several other influential librarians undertook a series of surveys regarding children's services in libraries.[150] Interestingly, Hewins notes that responses to the question, "What authors are read most by children?" showed a wide variety. Alcott appears most frequently, and others of the "Alger, Castleman [sic], Finley, Optic" sort are popular.[151] She also makes certain to mention: "Seven [respondents] are allowing Alger, Castlemon, Finley, and Optic to wear out without being replaced, and soon find that books of a higher type are just as interesting to young readers."[152] She later adds her own thoughts on the subject of the Immortal Four: "It has been proved by actual experiment that children will read books which are good in a literary sense if they are interesting. New libraries have the advantage over old ones, that they are not obliged to struggle against a demand for the boys' series that were supplied in large quantities fifteen or twenty years ago."[153]

While advocating for the removal of the Immortal Four, Hewins and others also took steps to ensure that they were replaced by publications that met with their approval. With the assistance of *The Publishers' Weekly* and the ALA, Hewins compiled an annotated list Books for the young: a guide for parent and children (1882). The ALA followed this list with Sargent's *Reading for the Young* (1890) and August Leypoldt and George Iles' *List of Books for Girls and*

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[150] The surveys were overseen by several librarians over the years. The results were published in the ALA's *Library Journal*, primarily for use by library professionals. The pool of respondents is small – the first survey received responses from 25 librarians – but grows steadily to over 150 by the turn of the century. Library policies and practices were hardly uniform at this time, and children's access to libraries was a recent development. The surveys give insight into how some librarians viewed children, but they are not necessarily representative of children's services. For example, Hewins poses the question, "What are you doing to encourage a love of good reading in boys and girls?" One librarian responds, "Give a popular boy a good book, and there is not much rest for that book." While using peer influence to encourage good reading is quite intriguing, we cannot assume that it was common practice for librarians to leverage children's friendships. The publication of these reports put ideas into circulation and, in the experimental stage of building children's services, they document how some strategies become formalized.

[151] Caroline M. Hewins, ed. *Readings of the Young*, ed. Melvil Dewey and American Library Association, Papers Prepared for the World's Library Congress Held at the Columbian Exposition (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896).

[152] Hewins specifically mentions "Alden, Ballantyne, Mrs. Burnett, Susan Coolidge, Ellis, Henty, Kellogg, Lucy Lillie, Munroe, Otis, and Stoddard." *Readings of the Young*, 947.

[153] *Ibid.*, 948. Hewins does not indicate what evidence she uses to reach these conclusions. She and her counterparts may have overstated the success of their efforts to remove inferior books; several library catalogs and lists indicate that questionable authors and titles remained on library shelves.

Women and Their Clubs (1895). All were instrumental to establishing certain books as "fit to be read." These lists continued to downplay fiction. Criticism is given to novels considered overly-sentimental, false, or sensational. Preference and praise is granted to realistic stories, knowledge of the subject, and a direct style.[154]

It is noteworthy that lists cannot ignore the popular appeal of certain authors. Over seventy writers of questionable books still appear on the approved lists; the lists simply suggest "higher quality" works by these authors. For example, the ALA list leaves off Twain's most popular works, but includes an early story collection. Moreover, Hewins herself concedes in the preface to her list: "A few stories of modern life that have become general favorites, even though they have faults of style like 'Little women,' or a sensational plot like 'Little Lord Fauntleroy,' are in the list for the sake of the happy, useful home-life of the one and the sunshiny friendliness of the other. Most of the tales of home and school are those in which children lead simple, sheltered lives." [155] Leypoldt and Iles strike a similar compromise: "Unfortunately, many writers of fiction enjoy wide popularity without deserving it; of this class the vicious and depraved are unmentioned [in this list]; others, without being vicious, are frivolous in ideas and defective in taste and skill; of these a few representatives are introduced with a word of warning."[156]

Given the wide distribution of these lists, and their position as the first authoritative guidance for library and personal collections, it is useful to note how their approach and selection

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[154] Among those who receive a qualified review: Louisa May Alcott, "Her style is sometimes careless, as if she had worked too hurriedly"; Emily Bronte, "No pleasure can be derived from reading [*Wuthering Heights*], and its only claim for continued existence is that of a curiosity of literature."; Lewis Carroll "A genius for nonsense verse and comic invention account for the popularity of the books with grown people, if not with children."; Mark Twain, "The real worth of [*The Prince and the Pauper*] has been rather lost sight of – a pity – for greater popularity might have inspired the author to further effort in a similar vein." Augusta H. Leypoldt and George Iles, *List of Books for Girls and Women and Their Clubs with Descriptive and Critical Notes and a List of Periodicals and Hints for Girls' and Women's Clubs* (Boston: Published for the American Library Association Publishing Section by the Library Bureau, 1895), 1, 6, 8, 11.

[155] Caroline M. Hewins, *Books for Boys and Girls; a Selected List*, 3d ed. (Chicago: American Library Association Publishing Board, 1915), 5.

[156] Leypoldt and Iles, *List of Books for Girls and Women and Their Clubs*, 1.

criteria differed for boys and girls. [157] The list-makers indicate that poor recreational reading catered to boys or girls, while good books were almost universally appropriate.[158] When they are mentioned directly, often girls are described as in need of greater encouragement and validation in their reading. For example, Hewins notes the longstanding disapproval for "bookish" girls, and asserts that quality childhood reading is essential for both boys and girls.[159] There is also some expectation that girls and women share reading interests, as do men and boys.

"You Must Get the Boy's Confidence": Cultivating Good Reading Habits

As with librarians, the professionalization of teaching hinged partly on making children's readings a domain over which educators exercised authority. They too allied with "quality" publications and worked against cheap fiction. For example, as early as 1865, *Massachusetts Teacher and Journal of Home and School Education* advocated for *Our Young Folks: An Illustrated Magazine for Boys and Girls*:

> In these days of dime novels it is refreshing to find reading for young people, which, avoiding puerility and sentimentalism, is very attractive, and tends to cultivate a taste for what is worth reading. Teachers will do a good service to their pupils by inducing them to substitute this handsome magazine in place of the trashy stories which are now so abundant.[160]

In the 1890s, educators undertook several studies of children's outside reading. While the methods they employed are flawed, and they cannot be relied upon to assess accurately the range of children's recreational reading, these studies provide valuable insights into the assumptions adults made about children's interests. A 1902 study, for example, asked the reading preferences of 2,500 boys and girls. The findings indicate: "high-school boys frankly avow a liking for the

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[157] Hewins also authored numerous articles on children's reading for the newly established *Library Journal* and *Public Libraries*. Sargent's list compiles Hewins with lists from respected individuals, clubs, and Ladies' Commissions. Only books that were read by the compilers were selected. As an official ALA publication it became the authoritative list for libraries. Augusta Leypoldt was the widow of *Publishers' Weekly* publisher Frederick Leypoldt.

[158] For example, Leypoldt and Iles explicitly state: "Although the List is thus adapted to girls and women, most of its books are as well suited to boys and men as to girls and women – for great literature appeals to all mankind." Leypoldt and Iles, *List of Books for Girls and Women and Their Clubs*, v.

[159] Hewins, *Books for Boys and Girls; a Selected List*, 6.

[160] "Book Notices," *Massachusetts Teacher and Journal of Home and School Education* 18, no. 3 (1865): 102.

"Gun Boat Series," the "Henty Books," Pyle's *Robin Hood*, and Mark Twain; and girls for Miss Alcott, the **"**Elsie Books," and Lamb's Tales from Shakspere [sic]."[161]

Additional surveys indicated that children preferred highly detailed stories with a clearly-defined moral. They preferred modern stories to classics. They liked to read about experiences of daily life that, if somewhat exaggerated, were identifiable with their own lives. They cared about content over style, and favored complete stories rather than excerpts or abridged versions.[162]

The studies also showed that boys had a strong interest in adventure, while girls enjoyed sentimental stories especially as they entered adolescence. From age 14 to 18, boys show a sharp decline in interest in juvenile books and an increased interest in realism with an idealistic view. Girls' tastes also mature, but show a preference for romantic and realistic stories at every age.[163] Another review of ten studies also finds that fiction is highly favored; in nine cases girls read more fiction than boys; girls prefer sentimental stories and boys prefer adventure. Boys and girls enjoy serial stories and these make the list of most popular books and, though interest tapers off as children grow older, series still remain on the list.[164]

Boys and girls knew adults disapproved of cheap fiction. They knew how to acquire it for themselves, and they knew to hide it. Journalist and author Irvin Cobb recounts:

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[161] Allan Abbott, "Reading Tastes of High-School Pupils. A Statistical Study," *The School Review* 10, no. 8 (1902): 595. The "Gun Boat Series" by "Harry Castlemon" (Charles Austin Fosdick) consisted of 7 volumes published from 1864-1868 by Porter & Coates. The "Henty Books" refers to titles by George Alfred Henty a British writer of over several dozen boys' books and editor of a boys' magazine. Pyle's *Robin Hood*, and Mark Twain; and girls for Miss Alcott, The **"**Elsie Books" by "Martha Finley" (Martha Farquharson): a series 28 books tracing the life of character Elsie Dinsmore. They were first published from 1867-1906 by Mead Dodd.

[162] The following studies are summarized in Allan Abbott, "English in Secondary Schools; a Review," *The School Review* 9, no. 6 (1901): 388-402; George Griffith, "Course of Reading for Children," *Educational Review*, Vol. XVII; E.A. Kirkpatrick, "Children's Reading" *The Northwestern Monthly*, December, 1898, January and March 1899; M.B.C. True, "What My Pupils Read," *Education*, Vol. X and Vol.XIV; Clark Wissler, "The Interests of Children in the Reading Work of Elementary Schools," *Pedagogical Seminary*, Vol. V.

[163] Abbott, "Reading Tastes of High-School Pupils. A Statistical Study.," 597-99.

[164] Arthur Melville Jordan, *Children's Interests in Reading* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921). Interestingly, Jordan's own survey of 3,598 children in 3 towns and 1 city lists the Boy Scout Series as most popular with boys 9-11 and boys 12-13. The series is third highest with boys 14-16, and drops only to seventh among boys 17-18. The series is also a favorite of girls 12-13. Though series are otherwise gender-specific in readership, several individual titles are enjoyed by both boys and girls. These include: *Tom Sawyer*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Black Beauty*. Jordan concludes that boys' and girls' reading interests are, for the most part, highly dissimilar. Jordan, 71-73, 128-29.

> I read them at every chance; so did every normal boy of my acquaintance. We traded lesser treasures for them; we swapped them on the basis of two old volumes for one new one; we maintained a clandestine circulating-library system which had its brand offices in every stable loft in our part of town. The more daring among us read them in school behind the shelter of an open geography [sic] propped up on the desk. [165]

In the face of this enthusiastic reception for "bad reading," many educators concluded that the only way to turn children away from the cheap was to somehow interest them in better literature.[166]

As superintendent of Cincinnati schools, John Peaslee argued that children read dime novels because they did not have better reading in their homes. They could acquire trashy reading at the same shops that sold school books and supplies, their lurid pictures on display in shop windows. Once enticed by the images, boys and girls buy them for five or ten cents and "devour" them. Peaslee stated that Cincinnati schools were much improved by the systematic introduction of his program for good reading.[167]

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[165] Irvin S Cobb, "A Plea for Old Cap Collier," *The Saturday Evening Post* 1920. 3. Writer O. Henry read Munro dime novels as a boy and, borrowing from their style, told stories to his friends. O. Henry: C. Alphonso Smith, *O. Henry Biography* (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1916), 89. See also Anderson, *The Dime Novel in Children's Literature*, 65. Similarly, Robert Underwood Johnson, poet and editor of *Century* magazine, recalled his childhood reading: "We young boys of the village who were friends used to pass about these tales of Indian life and other adventures and often might have been caught in the tall grass 'down the railroad' absorbed in them. To be candid, I feel that I am not a little indebted to their fascination." Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays*, 30.

[166] For example, noted librarian John Cotton Dana recalled reading forbidden dime novels with his friends: "By some chance Ballantyne's *Wild Man of the West* in hard covers got into our house, and all of us boys read it, and I guess all the boys in the neighborhood. If there ever was a dime novel, that was one. It was a bound book, so it passed as reputable." Clearly, some of the objection to dime novels and cheap fiction was more a question of form than of content. Quoted in Vicki Anderson, *The Dime Novel in Children's Literature* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2005), 69. Dime novelist Edward Ellis tells a story of covering a dime novel in an attractive binding and presenting it to a school superintendent who was prejudiced against cheap fiction. The superintendent described the moral tone of the book: "It is *clean*. It does not contain a single evil thought; its tendency is in the right direction, and it leaves a pleasant taste in the mouth. I consider it the right kind of literature to put in the hands of the young." See Pearson, *Dime Novels*, 101-103.

[167] John Peaslee, *Thoughts and Experiences in and out of School* (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1900), 69. Teacher-education perpetuated these beliefs and strategies about children's reading. For example, Edwin C. Hewett's *Elements of Psychology; Designed Especially for Young Teachers* (1889) states: "In the admiration that boys conceive for the characters depicted in the robbers and Indian killers of the wretched "dime" literature of the day, lies the chief danger of the poisonous stuff. And the young girl's admiration of the vain, vapid character of the heroine in the trashy novel she reads, is likely to work lasting injury to her, for the same reason. There is little danger to threatening the character of any young person whose

By contrast, Henry Sabin, the superintendent of Iowa schools, contends that boys seeking stimulating reading may be turned toward higher quality stories if the teacher makes the effort. He suggests that teachers encourage students to bring their outside reading to school, including dime novels. He claims: "You must get the boy's confidence, which you do not get when you destroy a book in which he has the right of ownership. I have seen revenge, anger, and malice flash out of the boy's eyes at the destruction. . . The right of ownership is just as sacred to the boy as to the man."[168]

The Demise of the Dime Novel

An 1899 paper entitled "The Degeneration of the Dime Novel," by Robert Bellows describes at length the forty-year history of the form.[169] In Bellows estimation, the dime novel was essentially harmless. Despite its artistic flaws, the books were essentially moral in character. In its place, he indicates that "the masses" turned to realistic sensationalism found in "columns of police crime and scandal in the daily papers."[170] In his opinion, replacing Beadle's "yellow back" books with a daily dose of "yellow journalism," was both widespread and dangerous. By the end of the century, dime novels were remembered increasingly with nostalgia as the wholesome, exciting reading of a generation of boys.

As Michael Denning notes, cheap libraries and passé popular fiction became "the pulp provenance of children."[171] This meant an overall decline in sales, but a potentially reliable market for dated material. With the stiff competition of other cheap amusements, the child reader was becoming a valuable consumer. And, though dime novels and cheap story papers continued

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admiration is thoroughly fixed only on such people as are noble, and such things as are "pure, honest, lovely, and of good report." Hewett, 154.

[168] Henry Sabin, *Common Sense Didactics for Common School Teachers* (Chicago: Rand, 1903), 318. See Philip Jordan, "Edwin L. Sabin, Literary Explorer of the West," *Books at Iowa* 22 (1975). In Sabin's case, it is interesting to note that his son became a writer of boys' series in the early-twentieth century and had great success with frontier stories beginning in 1913.

[169] Robert Peabody Bellows, "The Degeneration of the Dime Novel" *Writer* 12, no. 7 (1899): 97-99. Bellows delivered this paper at Harvard Commencement.

[170] *Ibid.*, 99.

[171] Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 201.

to offend middle-class respectability, their perceived influence was dropping significantly. By the 1920s, dime novels would become collector's items and a feature in library exhibitions.[172]

Table 2-3 summarizes the life cycle of the dime novel. Though the form faded as adult readers began to lose interest in an amusement that had seen its day, boys (and girls) still enjoyed flashy, cheap books about triumphant heroes (and romantic heroines). Bellows observations suggest that while adults may have shunned the dime novel, it successfully retained large numbers of young readers. He wrote:

> It is true that there are toy shops, cheap bakeries, candy stores, and like haunts of impressionable youth, where sensational literature in large, gay colored covers is still sold. But the sales of the dime novel are year by year decreasing, and those qualities which went with it, in the days of its tropical luxuriance, are becoming less and less marked. Old sleuth has tracked down his final villain. *Deadwood Dick* has followed his last trail.[173]

Bellows notes that adult readers grew tired of the overly-familiar stories of dime novels. Though formulaic stories become exhausted with an individual reader over time, to children the formula is new. For each generation, then, writers and publishers might profit by making relatively minor updates to the story and adapting a well-worn pattern for young readers.

Conclusion

One of the pivotal questions for American parents of the late-Nineteenth Century was: *What should children read?* During the decades following the Civil War, the popularity of bestselling fiction continued unabated and the prospect of entertaining American children represented a challenging opportunity. Dime novel publishers experimented with cheap fiction for children and they placed deliberate emphasis on gender distinctions in their content. This is, in part, because boys were direct consumers. For boys, publishers created adventures which drew

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[172] Brothers James, "Dime Novels Rescued from Woodshed Eclipse," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 November 1922, iii41; New York Public Library, *The Beadle Collection of Dime Novels Given to the New York Public Library by Dr. Frank P. O'brien* (New York: New York Public Library, 1922); Charles Willis Thompson, "That Maligned Innocent, the Dime Novel," *New York Times*, 3 November 1929, BR2.
[173] *Ibid.*, 97.

upon established assumptions about masculinity and, they adapted adult stories to satisfy the demands of the boy audience.

Notions of what children should read became especially gendered and the practice of creating gender-specific children's books (*e.g.,* what I term "separate shelves") emerged with a considerable emphasis on the boy reader. It was widely-held that many girls read boys' books; girls also were believed to turn to "women's novels" at an early age. Consequently, publishers found the market for girls' books too uncertain and limited.

During the late-Nineteenth Century, American childhood gradually became a more secure experience as upper- and middle-class elites supported greater protection and indulgence of children. As an increasingly uncertain middle class confronted rising commercial entertainment and popular publishing, they recognized the opportunities for more access and variety, but also expressed anxiety about an erosion of social boundaries and standards of taste.

In this context, the abundance of inexpensive and highly popular blood-and-thunder stories intended for boys (and girls) lent new urgency to the question of children's recreational reading, particularly as the expansion of popular publishing and commercial amusements were perceived as a threat to middle-class values. Influential adults feared that literary "trash" (*i.e.,* dime novels and other cheap fiction) was damaging their children's literary taste, deteriorating the quality of American literature, and jeopardizing the future of the nation.

Boys' access to a growing abundance of cheap publications in the 1870s prompted new concerns about of parental authority and the perceived threat to social reproduction. In response to these anxieties, new attention was given to regulating children's reading habits. As adults sought to define recreational reading for children, the ensuing debates about the threat of cheap fiction revealed evolving notions about what constituted the nature of "boys" and "girls." Adults asserted that an unchecked appetite for bad reading would surely ruin their impressionable minds. Moral authorities, librarians, and teachers battled to protect children from the dime novel, and

they turned their attention heavily on the middle-class boy because he was perceived to be most at-risk.

New "quality" periodicals capitalized on adult anxieties by promoting themselves to parents as superior, and even necessary, for the protection of the literary tastes of their sons and daughters. Drawing upon middle-class anxieties and aspirations, "quality" publishers allied successfully with newly-professionalized librarians and teachers. Together, they gained favor with middle-class adults who advocated for a protected form of childhood and who sought tasteful recreational reading for their children.

As the next chapter details, the legacy of the dime novel proved far-reaching for American children's entertainment. The successful re-imaging of dime novels as boys' books encouraged publishers to produce exclusive children's entertainment that actively segmented the audience by gender. By the turn of the Twentieth Century, boys had become a reliable audience and boys' books were standard fixtures in the nascent children's book field. Children's recreational reading also familiarized this young audience with serialized stories, and publishers were learning that they could successfully market ongoing series of books.[174]

Much as boys became the inheritors of the dime novel, in the early decades of the Twentieth Century, girl-readers emerged as a recognized audience for recycled and adapted boys' stories, as well as more original recreational reading of their own. Nevertheless, the opportunities of the boy and girl audiences continued to carry unique challenges as the criticism applied to the nineteenth-century cheap fiction was transferred almost seamlessly to this new form of "poisonous" publication: the boys' and girls' series books of the Twentieth Century.

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[174] On the literary history of children's series, see Gail Murray, "Middle-Class Child Consumers, 1880-1920" *American Children's Literature and the Construction of Childhood* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1998). See also Faye Riter Kensinger, *Children of the Series and How They Grew, or, a Century of Heroines and Heroes, Romantic, Comic, Moral* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987).

Figure 2-1. New Children's Periodicals Established in the Nineteenth Century

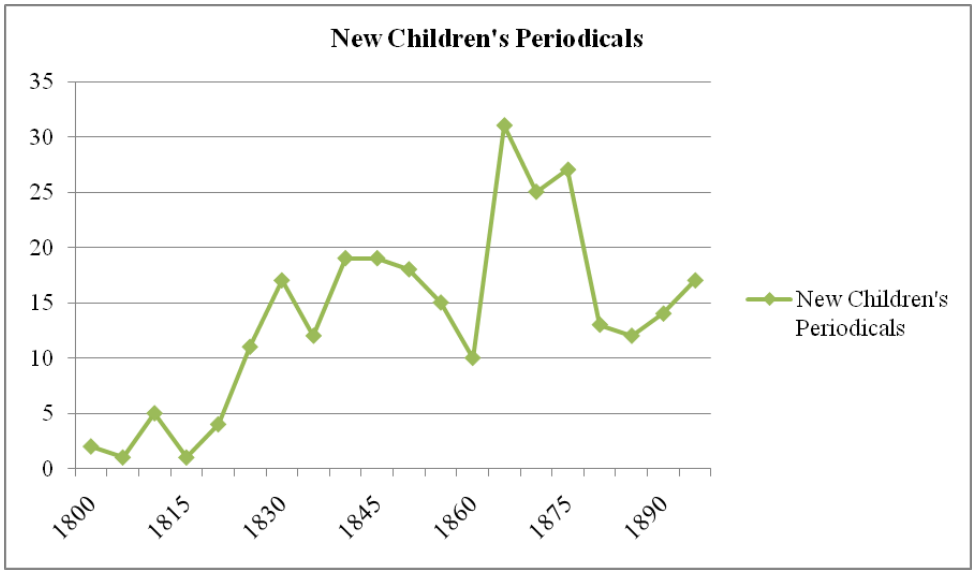

Table 2-1. Distribution of Cheap Libraries and Story Papers by Intended Audience [175]

Period	Adults	Youth (Boys & Girls)	Boys	Girls
1860 – 1873	87.4%	10.7%	1.9%	0%
1874 – 1900	48.2%	11.5%	40.2%	.1%

[175] Publication history is complicated by the fact that this literature was not of interest to libraries until well after many publishers folded. My analysis of the shift in the dime novel audience is drawn from Cox's bibliography of dime novels and Philip H. Young,'s *Children's Fiction Series: A Bibliography, 1850-1950*, with additional verification from dime novel digitization projects at Syracuse and Stanford. This data set covers both adult and juvenile publications from 1860-1943. It includes a total of 284 unique libraries and story papers, and accounts for a total of 53,550 titles.

Table 2-2. Beadle Libraries Introduced in 1877 or Later

Library (* targeted specifically toward boys)	**Total Number of Titles**
Fireside Library	145
Frank Starr's Ten Cent Pocket Library	6
Frank Starr's New York Dime Library	26
Sunnyside Library	6
Half-Dime Library *	**1168**
Dime Library	1103
Waverley Library	353
Boy's Library *	**440**
Pocket Library	492
Popular Library	48

Table 2-3. The Life Cycle of Dime Novels

Period	Dime Novel Audiences	Representative Title	Dominant Practices	Dominant Responses
1860-1873	Adults & Boys	*Seth Jones; or, The Captives of the Frontier* (Beadle, 1860)	Early adopters of the form rely on heavy advertising, low price, rapid turnover of new titles. Piracy and reprints of serials are common.	Moralists, reformers, and middle-class publications object to cheap fiction.
1874-1895	Boys & Adults	*Our Fellows; or, Skirmishes with the Swamp Dragoons* (Porter & Coates, 1887)	Competition builds as other publishers imitate of many Beadle & Co. strategies. Some respond by creating specialized publications for boys.	New professionals attempt control to recreational reading. "Quality" publishers market a "healthy diet" of children's books to parents.

CHAPTER THREE

More Books in the Home!:
Boys' Books and Girls' Books, 1900-1930

> What are the best books for young girls, of different ages? Are the boys' books better than those written for their sisters? Is there any book about a good, average, every-day sort of girl heroine? – a girl such as "Tom Bailey" is a boy? What is the favorite book of girl readers? Have they any book as universally read as "Robinson Crusoe"? We should like to hear from our readers in answer to these questions.
>
> "Girls' Books"
> *St. Nicholas; an Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks*, 1900[1]

The early decades of the Twentieth Century were a time of expansion in gender-specific books (*i.e.*, what I term *separate shelves*), as producers and the public turned new attention to the girl audience. As the preceding chapter of this dissertation details, boys' dime novels introduced gender-specific recreational reading to boys during the late-Nineteenth Century. This established the gender distinction in the nascent children's book field. The success of boys' books focused significant attention on boys as readers and as consumers. By contrast, it was believed that girls' reading tastes matured more quickly than boys. Girls also showed an interest in reading books intended for boys, while boys were expected to reject feminine stories. By 1900, however, the limited interest in girls' books began to give way across the children's book field as recognition of the girl reader offered new opportunities to grow in an exceedingly competitive market. As the quotation above suggests, even *St. Nicholas*, a well-established magazine intended for both boys *and* girls, could not ignore the prevalence and possibilities of gender-specific reading.

Publishers of "cheap fiction" continued to market inexpensive publications directly to boys in the early decades of the Twentieth Century. They also sparked two innovations. First, they created and packaged related books as a series thereby creating a stronger opportunity to sell

[1] "Girls' Books," *St. Nicholas; an Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks* 27, no. 10 (1900): 922.

multiple titles to repeat customers. Second, they approached girls as a separate audience for more series of their own. Interestingly, many of these girls' series were modeled closely on existing boys' series. The development of boys' and girls' series books and the recycling of stories greatly expanded the volume of cheap publications available to children. It also marked an important move in the evolution of separate shelves as the audiences for boys' books and girls' books became more explicitly gender-exclusive.

Girls' and boys' series emerged in a context where children were gaining greater recognition as consumers. As the strategy of training adult consumers became deeply ingrained into the American national identity, it acted as a model for raising the child consumer. At the same time, anxieties about children's recreational activities prompted a continued condemnation of commercial amusements (including cheap fiction), as well as a concerted effort to regulate boys' and girls' leisure activities (including their recreational reading).

As this chapter details, between 1900 and 1930, adults became more organized in their attempts to advance "appropriate" forms of entertainment. Their efforts focused on channeling children into sponsored activities designed to train them as book buyers. This strategy was exemplified by the creation of Children's Book Week, a collaborative undertaking by child-oriented professionals and publishers seeking to create a more profitable, middle-class, children's market. However, my research illustrates how the mechanisms that promoted "better books" also were responsible for encouraging boys and girls (and their parents) to buy *more* books. As boys and girls engaged in higher levels of consumption, a more intense and direct engagement with the commercial sphere became an integral part of American boyhood and girlhood.

Priceless Childhood and the Anxieties of Leisure

As Viviana Zelizer observed, between 1870 and 1930, "priceless childhood" granted American children greater sentimental value and afforded them more protections from the adult

world.[2] This section examines the continued alignment of American childhood with middle-class values, particularly in light of the new tensions posed by increased leisure time and the expansion of American consumer culture. Between 1900 and 1930, children's participation in the commercial sphere was marked by a growing expectation of consumer autonomy. As later sections of this chapter demonstrate, increasing consumption coincided with the rise of separate, organized activities for boys and girls. These transformations strengthened the class and gender distinctions in childhood and, in turn, expanded gender-exclusive recreational reading in the children's book field.

During the late-Nineteenth Century, American beliefs about childhood gradually favored the model of a more sheltered, middle-class child. At the turn of the Twentieth Century, psychologists and social workers became the leading experts on child-rearing.[3] As they advanced a scientific view of childhood, these new authorities emphasized careful attention to "character building" – a concept strongly endorsed by members of the middle class. Though grounded in social science, the moral trajectory of these views remained readily apparent: "What we are after is self-propelling goodness. We are trying to produce men who will do right because they like to."[4]

Early-twentieth-century childhood also was marked by a sharper gender division. Karin Calvert observes that by 1910, gender distinctions emerged in the arrangement of personal space,

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[2] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 11.

[3] For an overview of the transformation of American childhood, see David I. Macleod, *The Age of the Child: Children in America, 1890-1920*, Twayne's History of American Childhood Series. (New York: Twayne, 1998); Elliott West and Paula Evans Petrik, ed. *Small Worlds: Children & Adolescents in America, 1850-1950* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), Introduction.

[4] William Byron Forbush, *The Boy Problem in the Home* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1915), viii. See also, G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence; Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (New York: Appleton and Company, 1904); G. Stanley Hall and Theodate L. Smith, *Aspects of Child Life and Education* (Boston: Ginn, 1907); Joseph Lee, *Play in Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1915). Though this mission is most frequently espoused by evangelical Protestants, similar sentiments can be found in countless texts. For example, "The period of youth should be given over to good character-building. Character-building should not be done upon a basis of fear. Right living must become a religion, an emotion. An emotional opposition to evils must be instilled." Superintendent of Federated Jewish Charities, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Maurice B. Hexter, "Implications of a Standard of Living," *American Journal of Sociology* 22, no. 2 (1916): 217.

as the universality of children's rooms gave way to gender-specific furnishings and aesthetic choices that visually reflected different expectations for boys and girls. Most notably, she finds that boys' rooms commonly adopted a purposeful military theme with desks and bookshelves, while girls' rooms remained more old-fashioned in style.[5] Likewise, Michael Kimmel finds, "boys' and girls' spheres of play were, for the first time, completely separated." Fathers sought father-son togetherness and feared a young boys' identification with his mother and sissification by playing with his sisters.[6]

Early-twentieth-century mothers faced new scrutiny because their dominance in child-rearing now provoked fears that women had made boys "soft." The absence of male guidance was viewed as highly detrimental, particularly to boys. To ensure the successful transmission of strong middle-class values (*e.g.,* cultural capital), fathers were reminded of their child-rearing obligations and urged to take active interest in daily child care.[7] To further persuade fathers to get involved, experts increasingly portrayed parenting as managerial, rather than natural. For example, in his book *The Job of Being a Dad*, Frank Cheley stated: "Indeed, the whole *profession* of fatherhood and motherhood is much more exacting than it used to be. But it is in every way worth while [sic]."[8]

Children took up a central role in advertisements, indicating their growing value as consumers and their symbolic value in the family.[9] Advertisers increasingly associated children

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[5] See Karin Calvert, "Children in the House, 1890 to 1930," in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, ed. Jessica Foy and Thomas Schlereth (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 87-90.

[6] Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 160.

[7] See Maxine P. Atkinson and Stephen P. Blackwelder, "Fathering in the 20th Century," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 55, no. 4 (1993): 975-86; Ernest R. Groves, "The Family," *American Journal of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (1928): 150-56; Robert L. Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993).

[8] Frank H. Cheley, *The Job of Being a Dad* (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1923), 23. Emphasis mine. Cheley was very active in the YMCA and he was a prolific author on the subject of raising boys to be good men. His other publications include: *Some Reasons Why Some Men Are Successful Fathers* (1921), *Father and Son Library; A Practical Home Plan of All Round Development for the Boy* (1921), *Bettering Boyhood; Boystuff, Home Life and Leadership* (1931), *Fathering the Boy* (1933).

[9] See Victoria Alexander, "The Image of Children in Magazine Advertisements from 1905 to 1990," *Communication Research* 21, no. 6 (1994): 742-65.

with "the good life." In this context, boys and girls were afforded more comforts, more leisure time, and specialized commodities, particularly among the middle- and upper-classes. Early-twentieth-century boys and girls remained at the heart of holiday gift giving and a focal point of consumer culture. This happy, well-dressed, well-fed child with a new toy was an image middle-class parents could literally buy into. And, as I detail below, children moved more fully into the commercial sphere as their direct exposure to consumption increased.

At the same time, social critics voiced growing distress about the effects of American consumer culture. In particular, the standard criticisms of lower-class "cheap" amusements and the associated vices now included fears that the middle class was succumbing to the shallowness of materialism. The character of the middle class was at stake.[10] By the 1920s, buying appropriately was viewed as a challenging task as the market was inundated with new products and marketing techniques.[11] Equally troubling was the consensus that an alarming number of people lacked the skills and knowledge to buy intelligently.[12]

This anxiety is in keeping with an undercurrent of distrust in women's ability to raise children and manage households. With the pervasiveness of consumer culture and ready-made goods, buying for the family was widely regarded as a productive activity. Women's control over household buying was bolstered by the formation of the American Home Economics Association in 1909. Women's publications regularly called attention to the opportunities and obligations associated with women's consumer role. It was imperative that they be trained to make conscientious decisions in their household spending and in their use of "pin money, birthday

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[10] See especially, David Horowitz, *The Morality of Spending: Attitudes toward the Consumer Society in America, 1875-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940*.

[11] Advertising alone accounted for more than one billion dollars a year. Percival White, *Advertising Research* (New York: Appleton and Company, 1927), 4.

[12] See especially, Newel Comish, *The Standard of Living; Elements of Consumption* (New York: Macmillan, 1923); Henry Harap, *Economic Life and the Curriculum* (New York: Macmillan, 1927); Elizabeth Ellis Hoyt, *The Consumption of Wealth* (New York: Macmillan, 1928); Hazel Kyrk, *A Theory of Consumption* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923).

money, allowances, etc."[13] Purchasing power needed to uphold standards of good taste, as well as support quality control, price stabilization, and even social justice in the manufacturing process. Successful consumption relied upon training, careful preparation, and responsible habits.[14] Historian Charles McGovern finds that advertisers presented consumption as a key element of civic duty, equating buying with political activity and product-selection as a form of voting.[15]

Although parents still had substantial authority over the middle-class child, Historian Daniel Cook finds that in the early decades of the Twentieth Century the role of mothers began to erode. Instead, advertisers promoted the idea of children as autonomous subjects entitled to participate in consumer culture.[16] Likewise, Historian Lisa Jacobson observes that admen and magazines celebrated the boy consumer as an opportunity to remodel consumption into a more rational, restrained, masculine activity.[17] Girls and boys were increasingly regarded as challenging consumers with real preferences and the money to back them up.

Middle-class children were perceived as demanding entertainment to satisfy their own preferences and they had more disposable income. The astronomical growth of hobbies and fan culture allowed businesses to profit from new revenue streams from child consumers. This development was particularly valuable because, while children had more access to leisure time and money, much of it would be spent on products to be enjoyed at home. By the 1930s,

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[13] Bertha June Richardson Lucas, *The Woman Who Spends, A Study of Her Economic Function*, (Boston: Whitcomb & Barrows, 1904; Revised edition, 1910), 130.

[14] See Monica Brasted, "The Reframing of Traditional Cultural Values: Consumption and World War I," *Advertising & Society Review* 5, no. 4 (2004); Christine Frederick, *The New Housekeeping; Efficiency Studies in Home Management* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913), Anna Richardson, "The Woman Administrator in the Modern Home," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 143 (1929): 21-32; Benjamin Andrews, "The Home Woman as Buyer and Controller of Consumption," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 143 (1929).

[15] Charles McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. See especially "The Nationalization of Consumers: The Political Language of American Advertising, 1890-1930," 62-95.

[16] Daniel Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer*.

[17] Lisa Jacobson, "Manly Boys and Enterprising Dreamers: Business Ideology and the Construction of the Boy Consumer, 1910-1930," *Enterprise Society* 2, no. 2 (2001): 225-58.

advertisers appealed to children with a wide array of promotional trinkets, story books, clubs, games, and contests.[18]

Allowing children to select according to their own preference also marked a recognition of their ability to make decisions. However, the minimal record I found of children's actual use of money indicates that children who earned money demonstrated the strongest tendency to put it to practical use, while those who received money as a gift were inclined to waste.[19] Training priceless children to value money posed a significant challenge. As I detail later in this chapter, the evidence from the children's book field suggests that the belief in children's inherently poor taste continued to deeply unsettle the American public. As a result, concerned adults collaborated extensively with publishers to engage children in more controlled, "appropriate" book-buying activities.

Taking a cue from the adult model, children's consumption took on the quality of productive activity. Lessons in wise spending and careful buying were incorporated into child-rearing manuals with growing regularity. Textbook publishers and government agencies also produced several school books to instruct children in saving and thrift.[20] Playing store was formalized for educational purposes in the 1910s with the publication of *The Model Store-Keeping Method of Instruction for Elementary Schools*, a program of "play-work" designed to "take the life of the world into the work of the classroom."[21] These games served as a means to

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[18] Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 42-72; Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 166-69.

[19] "Children's Valuation of Money," *School Journal* (1900): 427-28.

[20] On thrift education, see Lisa Jacobson, *Raising Consumers*, Chapter Two. For examples, see W. H. Carothers, "Thrift in the School Curriculum," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 87 (1920): 219-24; A. Frederick Collins, *Money Making for Boys* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917); Edwin A. Kirkpatrick, *The Use of Money; How to Save and How to Spend* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill company, 1915); Anna Steese Sausser Richardson, *Adventures in Thrift* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill company, 1916); R. R. Smith, "Thrift Week," *The English Journal* 7, no. 4 (1918): 263-66, division United States. Dept. of the Treasury. War loan organization. *Savings, Thrift Day Program for Use in Elementary and High Schools* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1919).

[21] Henry Sterling Chapin, "The Model Store-Keeping Method of Instruction for Elementary Schools," *Educational Foundations: A Journal of Pedagogy* XXVI (1914): 22. This program was adapted from the

instruct children in a myriad of basic subjects (*e.g.*, simple mathematics, reading and language acquisition, social skills) while also presenting standard interactions, the purpose and significance of money, and the relative value of commodities. Teaching children to be good consumers contributed to the larger goal of putting a skilled consumer in every household, particularly in immigrant homes where children were viewed as primary consumers and the schools were a force for assimilation.

Regulating Children's Leisure Time

It is important to recognize that the emergence and continuation of separate shelves in the children's book field occurred within a broader context of changing notions about American childhood and children's recreation. In the late-nineteenth century, the predominant approach was for moral reformers to prohibit children's access to cheap amusements while also attempting to impose good reading taste upon them. Between 1900 and 1930, beliefs about children's leisure shifted toward greater indulgence of their preferences and an equally strong effort to train children into good habits.

For example, at the turn of the Twentieth Century, reformers expressed concern that tenement children did not get fresh air and exercise. This led to the creation of playgrounds in public parks. The construction of playgrounds, reformers suggested, was a matter of life and death:

English School Shop Idea, and it relies on manufacturers' donations of "dummy goods" in authentic packaging to serve as props for instruction. *Educational Foundations* provided free equipment and assistance to schools adopting this copyrighted program. It also published a regular monthly column with lesson plans and success stories. Manufacturers were inclined to supply materials because it got around anti-advertising rules in schools and, in fact, placed products in classrooms with educator and administrator approval.

> Play – wholesome, supervised play – is just as essential to the life and growth of the child as food and raiment. Many of our larger cities in their mad race to amass great wealth and to increase their populations have completely lost sight of this elemental necessity of child life. They are rapidly erecting buildings on every vacant lot until the children have been forced into the streets to play without any care or supervision from their elders. Small wonder that we have paid the penalty in the death of hundreds of our little ones, and in the moral ruin of thousands of others. Experience has shown that, by providing adequate playground facilities for a thickly populated community, delinquency in that neighborhood can be reduced from 30 to 50 per cent, to say nothing of the protection to the lives and limbs of the children.[22]

Public playgrounds situated children's leisure under public management with the express purpose of teaching children to become good citizens who show respect for property and for one another.[23] Playgrounds were promoted as actively reducing delinquency, illness, and vice.[24] Organized activities were seen as a potential means to reduce "race antagonism," an alternative to gangs and, with careful supervision, a means to diffuse the more criminal tendencies of existing gangs.[25] By 1926, there were over 5,000 playgrounds in the United States; they were operated increasingly by trained specialists.[26]

Interestingly, though many businessmen initially resisted the idea of mass leisure, they began to see advantages to giving working-class families the opportunity to enjoy productive, healthy, moral recreation. Employers arranged outings, clubs, and vacation funds. Corporations

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[22] James Hoge Ricks, "The Juvenile Court and Public Welfare," *Journal of Social Forces* 1, no. 2 (1923): 122.

[23] Early playgrounds were often situated in school yards and constructed with the financial support and leadership of woman's clubs and municipal grants. Supervision was provided school employees, trained kindergarten instructors, police officers, or neighborhood volunteers; these guardians acted as parental figures to the children. Public recreational facilities spread quickly to the majority of states with relatively strong support from the communities. Sadie American, "The Movement for Small Playgrounds," *American Journal of Sociology* 4, no. 2 (1898): 159, 163. See also Jane Addams, "Recreation as a Public Function in Urban Communities," *American Journal of Sociology* 17, no. 5 (1912): 619.

[24] Some advocated keeping playgrounds open at night in order to offer proper social activities for young people – "a new and effective rival" to dance halls, poolrooms, "red light areas" and saloons. Curtis, 806, 811-12; J. L. Gillin, "The Sociology of Recreation," *American Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 6 (1914): 832-833.

[25] Frederic M. Thrasher, "Social Backgrounds and School Problems," *The Journal of Educational Sociology* 1, no. 3 (1927): 121-30.

[26] Weaver Pangburn, "Trends in Public Recreation," *Social Forces* 4, no. 1 (1925): 111; James Hoge Ricks, "The Juvenile Court and Public Welfare," *Journal of Social Forces* 1, no. 2 (1923): 122.

were active sponsors of company sports teams.[27] Local political machines and labor unions sponsored similar opportunities.[28] Common as these offerings became, the motives behind them were hardly pure. Team-building exercises, vocational training, and respect for authority were ingrained in some programs.[29] The success of these offerings appears to have been limited. In one factory, only a small portion of the workforce participated in company-sponsored leisure, with the notable exception of the very popular activities for children.[30]

The real and perceived success of the Playground Movement was sufficient to encourage related "vacation school" initiatives to care for children during the summer months.[31] With the support of school committees, civic federations, and women's clubs, reformers promoted vacation schools as a deterrent to the natural indolence that they believed would otherwise surely

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[27] "By the middle of the second decade numerous industries promoted athletics among their employees. Among the business organizations and industries sponsoring athletic clubs were R.H. Macy's and John Wanamaker's of New York, Johnson and Johnson of New Brunswick, General Electric of Schenectady, Michelin of Milltown, New Jersey, and Borden's Milk and Metropolitan Life of New York. Wanamaker employees, banded together in an athletic association which founded one of the annual winter athletic classics, the Millrose Games. Basketball was rising in popularity and Philadelphia had its Industrial League of Basketball Clubs. Few industries went as far as the Goodyear Company and employees who sponsored baseball, football, track, hockey, skating, basketball, volleyball, tennis, and even cricket. Akron's other factories formed a City Industrial League and engaged in athletic contests. Nor were sports neglected by the United States Steel Corporation, which apparently found that recreational and athletic facilities made for better workers." John Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage, 1850-1950* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1974), 181.

[28] Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 92.

[29] For example, one department store employee association offered a variety of club activities to turn-of-the-century employees; these were designed to give them a wholesome diversion and "various programs may stimulate thinking or lead to character-building or make for better performance on the job." Paid and unpaid vacations were also used by managers to deal with the problem of having more staff than needed during slow seasons. Mary La Dame and Russell Sage Foundation. Dept. of Industrial Studies., *The Filene Store; a Study of Employes' Relation to Management in a Retail Store* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1930), 222. On vacations, Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

[30] Tamara K. Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49-50. The company sponsored Boy Scouts, a supervised playground, a swimming pool, and a dentist and trained visiting nurses to treat employees' children.

[31] Though increasingly accepted by school administrators, the vacation school program confronted some opposition. For instance, the introduction of vacation school in Atlanta in 1914 met with resistance among teachers who were expected to work an additional two months without any added compensation. Wayne Urban, "Organized Teachers and Educational Reform During the Progressive Era: 1890-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1976): 42.

overcome the urban poor.[32] These schools spread throughout the country and developed an extensive list of recreational offerings designed to address the difficult challenge of building a child's character.[33]

Issues of inclusion and exclusion were integral to the campaigns to structure children's leisure. Boy and girl areas were separated on some playgrounds. In structured activities, younger children often played together, but 'advanced' groups emphasized gendered activities (*e.g.*, carpentry for boys, sewing for girls). This division may have been challenged by more outspoken boys and girls, but the investment in gender separation on the part of supervising adults is evident:

> In one school which I visited the principal was laying most stress on organized play, and was training the boys in companies for a tournament in hand-tennis, endeavoring to rouse their ambition to attain the highest degree of skill. The girls were having games and dances, and were utilizing the small space allotted to them in a really remarkable way. It struck me as an excellent training to teach them how to use the small spaces in their home and street.[34]

Though the moral tone common to nineteenth-century games was replaced by an encouragement of spontaneity and physical activity, children were to be educated through organized games and rational play.[35]

Training in the appropriate skills appears to have been a dominant component in any child's activity. Expectations that boys would become workers encouraged an emphasis on competition, self-control, and respect for authority. Among girls, emphasis on care-giving and delicacy was paramount, but may be accompanied by other skills-training.[36] Boys and girls were

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[32] Early "vacation schools" were strongly endorsed as a means of providing the benefits of adult guidance to children who would otherwise be on their own. Vacation schools offered structured play and activities featuring toys and games, outings to local parks and the surrounding countryside, training in industrial skills, and competitive sports. Sadie American, "The Movement for Vacation Schools," *American Journal of Sociology* 4, no. 3 (1898): 309-25. See also, O. J. Milliken, "Chicago Vacation Schools," *American Journal of Sociology* 4, no. 3 (1898): 289-308.

[33] Pangburn, "Trends in Public Recreation," 112.

[34] American, "The Movement for Vacation Schools," 315.

[35] See for example, Charles Zueblin, "Municipal Playgrounds in Chicago," *American Journal of Sociology* 4, no. 2 (1898): 151; W. A. Anderson, "Play in Rural Life," *Social Forces* 4, no. 1 (1925): 115

[36] Mary Cable, *The Little Darlings: A History of Child Rearing in America* (New York: Scribner, 1975), 108.

encouraged to conform to the activities of their group. Consequently, children's recreation was meant to serve as instruction for adult roles, it also operated to separate children through distinct activities, opportunities, and expectations.

Widespread participation indicates that playgrounds held some favor among children and provided them with enjoyable experiences. However, reports also indicate that children were reluctant to go to city playgrounds outside the immediate vicinity of their homes and some children expressed a decisive preference for street-play over the supervised activities of playgrounds, parks, and clubs.[37] Throughout the early-twentieth century, tenement children and homeless children spent a great deal of time playing in the streets. Many worked on the streets, often as newsboys and girls. Still more were truant from school with little fear of being punished.[38] Discrimination in educational opportunities also was evident, particularly in immigrant neighborhoods and in the southern states.[39] The problem of occupying children's time outside of school plagued towns and rural communities as well.[40]

These children invented games when left to their own devices, but they appear to have spent much of their leisure time with very little to do.[41] A 1914 survey offers a vivid account of the absence of children's recreation:

> In two trips about the city in the time after school, in the observation of 123 children, the first night I found 3 were riding bicycles, 5 were running errands, 4 were chasing each other, 70 were loitering up and down the street, and 40 were loafing or playing listlessly in front of their houses.[42]

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[37] Curtis, "The Scope and Tendencies of the Play Movement," 432; Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and at Play* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1985), 37-38.

[38] David Nasaw, *Children of the City*; David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1993).

[39] The proportion of African American children enrolled in high school in 1917 was roughly one-ninth the national average, and class sizes averaged 56 students for each teacher. See United States. Office of Education., Thomas Jesse Jones and Phelps-Stokes Fund, *Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1917). Volume 2, 14-18. See also, United States. Office of Education., "Biennial Survey of Education," (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1921), 124-25, 205.

[40] Harlan Douglass, *The Little Town, especially in its rural relationships* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 208.

[41] Gary S. Cross, *A Social History of Leisure since 1600* (State College, PA: Venture Pub., 1990), 111.

[42] Henry S. Curtis, "The Playground Survey," *American Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 6 (1914): 795.

Whether children lacked access to activities or simply rejected what was offered, the idle and unsupervised child was viewed as highly vulnerable to commercial amusements and vice. The belief that children were commonly exposed to alcohol and prostitution especially distressed reformers.[43] Commercial amusements of all varieties roused fears of moral degradation, scandal, and promiscuity.[44] Unable to topple the popularity of dance halls, reformers opened licensed halls offering respectable opportunities for dancing without liquor or promiscuity.[45] Similarly, club dances in rented halls included young boys and girls who attended with chaperones.[46]

Still, the growing tendency toward a peer-oriented culture represented a further intrusion on family bonds and parental authority.[47] As one study noted:

> Commercialized forms of recreation are organized to cater to the special interests of the different age, sex, and cultural groups of the population. Thus in our neighborhood the older men prefer the informal sociability of the saloon club life; the young men are attracted by the more active forms of amusement offered by the poolroom, or by the sex attractions of the cabaret or cheap dance hall; the young women attend the up-town dance halls or the movies; the small children attend the movies, while the mothers have little or no recreational life save an occasional visit to the motion-picture theater or the club life afforded by the church.[48]

The lure of commercial entertainment also exacerbated the real and perceived loss of farm youth to the cities, further spurred concern about the loss of agricultural techniques, practical and manual skills, and domestic arts.

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[43] For discussion of children's access to liquor, see Perry Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 49, 101-103. See also, Louise de Koven Bowen and Jane Addams, *Safeguards for City Youth at Work and at Play* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), 217-218.

[44]Though many bachelors and single women in the city maintained ties to family, critics imagined them unattached and unprotected from these corrupting influences. Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 97; Nasaw, *Going Out*, 154; Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[45] Lewis A. Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 20-21.

[46] Leroy Bowman and Maria Ward Lambin, "Evidences of Social Relations as Seen in Types of New York City Dance Halls," *Journal of Social Forces* 3, no. 2 (1925): 291.

[47] Erenberg, *Steppin' Out*, 5. Commercial recreation was especially appealing among adolescents who sought space for dating and courtship. See Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

[48] R. D. McKenzie, "The Neighborhood: A Study of Local Life in the City of Columbus, Ohio," *American Journal of Sociology* 27, no. 5 (1922): 600.

The occasional visit to the motion-picture theater was not regarded as a harmless matter. As hundreds of thousands flocked to nickelodeons, the obsessive viewing inflicted "nickel madness" on young and old alike; estimates from the time report children to be between one-quarter and one-half of the regular audience.[49] The cheap theaters in major cities caught the attention of politicians and reformers, who increasingly saw commercial amusements as a sure path to vice. Nickelodeons used deceptive advertising to draw in crowds, but evidence suggests they were hardly risqué. As one commentator reports, "And after all it is an innocent amusement and a rather wholesome delirium."[50] In 1908 Mayor McClellan of New York City revoked licenses from nickel theaters in response to concerns about immorality.[51] Though they reopened the theaters quickly, new regulations were imposed and censorship was imminent. From the nickelodeon, it was evidently a slippery slope to the dance hall, the saloon, and prostitution.

Social Distinctions and Character-Building Organizations

The establishment of several new child-centered movements offered consistent, local, organized activities for children (*i.e.*, Boy Scouts, 1897; 4-H, 1902; Camp Fire Girls, 1910; Girl Scouts, 1912; Girl Reserves, 1918). Motivated by civic interests, and grounded in support from the YMCA, these groups grew to an enormous scale mobilizing children into purposeful activity under skilled leadership. This supplemental role was designed to address the real and perceived effects of changing communities. Simply put, as society valued supervising children, both to prevent bad behavior and to encourage good, the efforts of school, family, and church were increasingly inadequate to keep children and adolescents sufficiently under control. As this section details, as priceless childhood afforded (middle-class) boys and girls new opportunities

[49] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in and Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1983), 197. Nasaw, *Going Out*, 169.
[50] Barton Currie, "The Nickel Madness," *Harper's Weekly*, 24 August 1907: 1246-47.
[51] Social workers and ministers feared the lower-classes would turn away from Christian morality if they were exposed to films featuring vice. In this case, they rejected a movie recounting the scandalous murder of a New York City playboy over the deflowering a chorus girl. Erenberg, *Steppin' Out*, 62. These views are strikingly similar to the "novel-reading disease" and protests against boys' dime novels as "traps for the young." As I detail later in this chapter, they also echo the most extreme anxieties over "combustible" juvenile series.

for recreation organized under the direction of dedicated and trained leaders, new distinctions were emerging. Specifically, the rise of organized recreational activities for children strengthened and expanded the investment in gender distinctions in American childhood and an early hint of more narrow age segmentation.

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), turned first to white, Protestant, middle-class boys. The evangelical underpinning of the YMCA guided the organization's activities even as it was popularized through recreational centers. As they later reached out to communities where the needs were severe and largely unmet, the YMCA's programs presented effectively an interdenominational, but decidedly Christian, set of values.[52] Through "character-building" programs, the YMCA and the BSA claimed to address the void left between home, school, and church, by nurturing boys' mental, physical, and spiritual growth during their adolescent years.

Despite their success, there was frequent conflict in the goals of these programs. As historian David Macleod notes,

> At one moment, character builders lamented that middle-class schoolboys were flabby and effeminate, at another, that they were pushy and undisciplined. The trouble was that character builders demanded both strength and control: boys must be manly yet dependent, virtuous without femininity in a culture which regarded women as more moral than men. These contradictions were embedded in the role which adults now demanded of middle-class boys."[53]

MacLeod and others argue convincingly that the BSA was used as a means of gaining support and stability for institutions, including indoctrinating western ideologies of heterosexual masculinity and male dominance.

Racial segregation proved to be a stumbling block for the BSA's doctrine of brotherhood. The BSA left membership policy to the local troops; this allowed to organization to continue to

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[52] See, for example, Campbell C. Johnson, "Negro Youth and the Educational Program of the Y.M.C.A.," *Journal of Negro Education* 9, no. 3, The Negro Adolescent and his Education (1940): 354-62; Mayer N. Zald and Patricia Denton, "From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the Ymca," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1963): 214-34.

[53] David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 32.

claim inclusion without offending communities that opposed or enforced segregation. Parsons notes, "Some southern Scouters tried to deny African Americans membership in the movement altogether, and in 1919 white Scout leaders in Atlanta and Chattanooga threatened to march on city hall and burn their uniforms if black troops began in their cities."[54] Organizations supporting equal rights consistently challenged scouting's exclusionary practices, despite the movement's claims of universal brotherhood.[55]

For rural youth, the 4-H evolved out of agricultural competitions and exhibitions, as well as the federally-approved Cooperative Extension system. Although the 4-H included boys and girls, member activities remained largely divided by gender. Boys took part in growing contests and scientific experiments. Girls did needlework projects and held cooking exhibitions. Support for these programs came from sponsorship by magazines, seed companies, and colleges, especially in the case of state-wide competitions with expensive prizes. By 1920, 4-H had taken hold as dependable, even instrumental, resources for American communities. [56]

From their inception, there was resistance to girls' participation in boys' organizations on both sides of the Atlantic.[57] The organizing of the Girl Scouts in the 1910s made a concerted effort to promote a set of universal values and training for girls. The organization intended to

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[54] Timothy Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 64.

[55] For full analysis of the BSA's origins, ideology, and policies, see: Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920*; Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement*.

[56] 4-H was encouraged by educators concerned about the quality of rural education and its relevance to rural life. Some activities were also organized at the local level, most commonly by superintendents of schools with supervision from teachers. For additional details of early 4-H activities, see Franklin M. Reck, *The 4-H Story; a History of 4-H Club Work* (Chicago: National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work, 1951).

[57] Katharine O.Wright, *Twenty-five Years of Girl Scouting, 1912-1937* (New York: Girl Scouts, 1937), 15-16. For a full analysis of the rise of girls organizations in the Twentieth Century, see Susan Miller, *Growing Girls: The Natural Origins of Girls' Organizations in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univeristy Press, 2007). Despite disapproval, a few British girls attended Boy Scout rallies and marched alongside their brothers. The participation of these "young Amazons" was undesirable, if not unacceptable, to the leadership of the Scouts. In response, they created of the Girl Guides, an organization designed to contain and direct girls' enthusiasm for scouting activities. The emergence of the Girl Scouts as a separate movement permitted a similar compromise in the United States.

cooperate with other agencies to advance girls' preparation as wives and mothers as well her participation in social and civic life.[58] Through World War I, Girl Scouts offered service knitting, growing and preserving food, and raising subscriptions for Liberty Loan drives.

In 1917, the Girl Scouts were more than 12,000 members strong.[59] By the 1920s, the national expansion and public presence of the Girl Scouts encouraged the organization's burgeoning membership. At the same time, the organization experimented with distinguishing between the needs of older and younger girls, with the formation of the Brownies. Volunteer leaders were tasked with creating age-appropriate recreational opportunities (*e.g.*, hiking, arts & crafts) that were informed by a deeper sense of purpose.[60]

It merits attention that these organizations maintained gender separation despite sharing a largely common mission and offering very similar sets of activities. For example, summer camps for children quickly gained nationwide popularity under the sponsorship of these national organizations. The founding of the American Camping Association (1910) and the publication of countless manuals and guidebooks further extended the reach and popularity of outdoor recreation for children.[61] Inspired by his work with the YMCA, Frank Cheley built a 4-week summer camp for boys in the Colorado Mountains in 1921.[62] This turn toward physical activity

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[58] Girl Scouts of America, *Blue Book of Rules: with Constitiution and by-laws of the Girl Scouts, Inc.* (New York: Girl Scouts, Inc. National Headquarters, 1919; Revised edition, 1924).

[59] Wright, *Twenty-five Years of Girl Scouting*, 41.

[60] Wright, *Twenty-five Years of Girl Scouting*, Chapter 4. Support and cooperation from prominent organizations (*e.g.*, the National Education Association, Red Cross, the Girls' Friendly, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the General Federations of Women's Clubs) provided the required support to stabilize this rapidly growing movement. Training for Girl Scout leadership became formalized through college courses. The 1922 publication of the *Brownie Book* manual for Junior Girl Scouts encouraged leaders to differentiate more deliberately by age.

[61] For example, Daniel Carter Beard, a founder of the Boy Scout's of America, wrote the enormously popular *New Ideas for Out of Doors; the Field and Forest Handy Book* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1906) and *Shelters, Shacks, and Shanties* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1914). These books were designed to instruct boys of all ages on the construction of rustic shelters, boats, and toboggans, among other things.

[62] Other examples include: Camp Eberhart (YMCA, Michigan, 1909), Camp WeHelo (Camp Fire Girls, Maine, 1910), Treasure Island Scout Camp (Boy Scouts, Pennsylvania, 1911), Camp Crockett (YMCA, Colorado, 1916), Camp Bonnie Brae (Girl Scout's, Massachusetts, 1919), Camp Mary Munger (Girl Reserves/YWCA, Alabama, 1924), and Camp Pahatsi (Boy Scouts, California, 1924). The rapid expansion of camping was not a short-lived experiment. Many of these camps continue to operate today.

echoed the aims of late-nineteenth-century Muscular Christianity and offered a means to transmit leadership skills, personal integrity, and fitness to the next generation. In a parallel move, the Girl Scouts organized large-scale outdoor expeditions in place of "casual camping." The camp experience became a core component of the values these groups hoped to impress upon children, providing "a type of training which every boy and girl should have."[63]

From Dime Novels to Series Books: The Further Gendering of the Children's Book Field

Just as new recreational activities emerged to meet the perceived needs of this generation of children, American publishers began to recognize new opportunities to sell entertaining books to children. In keeping with the patterns described above, producers and the public adopted the view that boys and girls had distinct reading tastes. In turn, publishers of inexpensive fiction began creating more publications for boys *or* girls (See Figure 3-1). My research finds that between 1900 and 1930, boys' books became more exclusively the domain of boys while girls were offered more books of their own. This section demonstrates the expansion of gender-specific recreational reading through patterns in the 4,500 new boys' and girls' series books published during the "golden age" of juvenile series.

My review of publishing industry reports indicates that between 1900 and 1915 juvenile books of all kinds (*i.e.*, textbooks, readers, classics, etc.) amounted to over 10,000 new books and editions.[64] At minimum, over 2,300 of these new books were cheap fiction titles intended to

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[63] H. S. Curtis, "The Scope and Tendencies of the Play Movement," *Social Forces* 5, no. 3 (1927): 431.

[64] See "American Book Title Output, 1880-1918," in John William Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States* (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1972). Volume II: The Expansion of an Industry 1865-1919. Appendix A. 675-708. Juveniles were consistently between 4-9% of annual book production for every year. It is unclear whether *Publishers' Weekly* included all juveniles in their records. Their decision to omit cheap or low-quality "libraries" from their fiction totals suggests that the total number of juveniles, and their share of the market, may in fact be substantially higher. The burst of children's books, and especially juvenile series, was not entirely welcomed. *Publishers' Weekly* expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the books, asserting that the vast majority of juveniles were unremarkable and that "the business was sadly overdone." *Publishers' Weekly*, 25 January 1896, 176ff. Quoted in Tebbel, 688. Yet, their prediction that juvenile fiction was "an exhausted field" proved to be mistaken. *Publishers' Weekly*, 28 January 1899, 169ff. Quoted in Tebbel, 691.

entertain boys and girls. And, unlike books with more limited printings (*e.g.*, gift books and expensive editions), these titles amounted to literally millions of copies.

Many boys' books continued practices developed by late-nineteenth-century boys' dime novels. For example, in 1911, Frederick A. Stokes Company commissioned a manuscript reader to write *Hike and the Aeroplane*, a formulaic boys' book of the $1 variety. Few details are known about the book's production. The writer – a recent Yale graduate, aspiring author, and young man with bills to pay – reportedly completed the manuscript in three weeks (or possibly two months). In exchange, he was paid one (or possibly two) months of his regular salary. Stokes printed 1,000 copies of *Hike and the Aeroplane*. In the absence of sales records, it is safe to assume that the book sold as well as any average boys' book, but not well enough to merit the sequel or series that commonly followed a particularly strong-selling boys' book.

While so many other boys' books registered no critical notice of any kind, *Hike and the Aeroplane* is noteworthy for its time insofar as it managed to merit a favorable review in *The Bookman:*

> A school story that spends most of its time out of school, but which won't be the less liked for that is *Hike and the Aeroplane*, by Tom Graham (illustrated by Arthur Hutchins. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company) It is a wonderful machine, and Hike's adventures as he crosses the Continent in it, and plays round generally, in Mexico with thrilling desperadoes and elsewhere with moonshiners, refugees and the War Department, only to be hazed when he gets back to school, will keep any boy or girl up after bedtime to see the end of it all.[65]

Though *The Bookman* review does not explicitly classify *Hike* as a boys' book, the plot summary conforms to the standard features of a boys' story. Boys' books adopted standard formulas to relate the exciting escapades of boy-heroes, often balancing familiar settings and recognizable relationships with an infusion of the latest technologies and exotic locations. An adventure with Mexican desperadoes surely resonated with current news headlines about the ongoing Mexican Revolution. Likewise, the addition of the aeroplane gives the story a contemporary update needed

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[65] Hildegarde Hawthorne, "Dawn on the Bookshelf: Children's Books of 1912 – In Two Parts – Part II," *The Bookman: A Review of Books and Life* 36, no. 5 (January 1913): 579.

to appeal to a new generation of boys. Critical discussion of the book also consistently refers to it as a boys' book. And, in keeping with the prevailing belief that many girls would read their brothers books, it is not surprising that the reviewer suggests *Hike* will entertain boys and girls alike.

Hike and the Aeroplane receives minor recognition today as the first novel of future Nobel Laureate, Sinclair Lewis. In terms of literary history, it is an amusing footnote to the biography of an acclaimed American author.[66] Despite its notable parentage, the book could not be more common. It was one of at least 185 new "boys' books" published in 1912 alone, and at least 17 of these featured aviation themes.[67] Alongside the likes of The *Rover Boys in the Air or, from College Campus to the Clouds* (Grosset & Dunlap) or *The Boy Scouts of the Air in Northern Wilds* (Reilly & Britton), *Hike and the Aeroplane* was a thoroughly recognizable, and nearly interchangeable, product.

Some publishers built on the success of dime novels with a steady stream of inexpensive books containing a single, complete, entertaining story. With growing frequency, however, these publishers offered the same formulaic stories, but featured a consistent cast of characters or a common theme across several books. These juvenile series often reprinted established serial stories from boys' story papers. This strategy quickly proved successful, and, over time, original series (as opposed to reprints) became increasingly popular.[68]

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[66] On Lewis' early writings, see American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1959); Richard R. Lingeman, *Sinclair Lewis: Rebel from Main Street* (St. Paul, MN: Borealis Books, 2005); *Nobel Prize Library* (Del Mar, CA: A. Gregory; CRM Pub., 1971); Mark Schorer, *Sinclair Lewis, an American Life*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961). Though *Hike and the Aeroplane* began its existence as an inexpensive, standard-issue, boys' book, Lewis' reputation affected its value. Few copies of the book remain in existence; as a collector's item, the first edition is a rare find. At the time of this writing, a signed copy is available from an antiquarian book dealer for the asking price of $17,500. The book includes this note: "May 21, 1931, Dear Mrs. Smith: Yes I was guilty of 'Hike & the Aeroplane.' It's shocking to remember one's past crimes. Sincerely yours Sinclair Lewis." http://www.qbbooks.com/details.php?record=42263&URLPAIR= (2007, accessed).

[67] The patterns in juvenile series production discussed in this chapter are supported by the data set detailed in Appendix A.

[68] For example, in 1896 Gilbert Patten's *Frank Merriwell* stories were published in Street & Smith's *Tip Top Weekly*, a 5-cent story paper that sold over 500,000 copies every week. Merriwell was a star athlete and Yale student. He was honorable, conscientious; issue after issue he faced every challenge and led his

Typically, each book in an early-twentieth-century juvenile series is a new episode of the series. The stories stand alone and in many cases can be read in any order. Readers can easily pick up a series mid-stream. The goal is to arouse interest in reading (and buying) the series as a whole, rather than finding satisfaction in single books. In a juvenile series, each individual story needed its own appeal (*e.g.,* heroes, rescues, quests, courage), but the survival of a series was determined by the ability of each book to perpetuate the series through sale of the next volume. Thus, some (less successful) series stop after only a few titles, while others number in the hundreds of titles. Additionally, the early titles of a long series often were reprinted several times; later numbers usually have smaller printings because readership and interest wane.

My research finds that by 1930 publishers had introduced nearly 700 new series (over 4,500 new series titles) to the children's market. As Figure 3-1 indicates, prior to World War I, boys' books dominated the series market. In the 1910s, however, producers began experimenting with a new type of series book for girls. Early success, led to the introduction of several more girls' series. In the mid-1920s new series for girls surpassed those for boys for the first time. Although there was a brief decline as boys' series experienced revitalization in the late-1920s, girls' series books would retain a strong presence in the market.

Boys' Series and Girls' Series: The Stratemeyer Syndicate, 1900-1930

Edward Stratemeyer achieved noteworthy success as a writer and editor of boys' stories. He began his career in the 1880s and subsequently became an editor for a Street & Smith story paper. Stratemeyer wrote under his own name and several pseudonyms. In 1905, he built upon his achievements by opening his own juvenile fiction factory, the Stratemeyer Literary Syndicate.

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team to victory. Publishers subsequently compiled over 200 Merriwell books which were sold in series. The character and formula established by Standish was imitated heavily by later series producers. Steven A. Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era*, Rev. ed., Sport and Society. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 25. See also, John Levi Cutler, *Gilbert Patten and His Frank Merriwell Sage: A Study in Sub-Literary Fiction, 1896-1913* (Orono, ME: Univeristy of Maine Press, 1934).

With nearly 100 series and 1,400 titles to their credit, the Syndicate would be responsible for the most well-known and profitable juvenile series of the Twentieth Century.[69]

In his books, Stratemeyer imitated the conventional editor's letter by prefacing his stories with a greeting to his reader. For example, in *The Rover Boys out West or, The Search for a Lost Mine*, author "Arthur M. Winfield" (Edward Stratemeyer) entices his "dear boys" with exciting stories offered exclusively for their amusement. "Winfield" writes:

> This book, "The Rover Boys Out West," forms the fourth volume of the "Rover Boys Series," a line of up-to-date stories for Young Americans. Like the other books of the series, this tale's complete in itself. In "The Rover Boys at School" we were introduced to Dick, Tom, and Sam, and their amusing and thrilling adventures at Putnam Hall, a military academy for boys situated in the heart of New York State; in "The Rover Boys on the Ocean" we followed our young heroes during a most daring rescue; and in "The Rover Boys in the Jungle" we learn what true American courage can do, even in the heart of the Dark Continent.[70]

Male pseudonyms cast Stratemeyer's boys' books in a masculine light and call upon boys to join an overtly gendered reading community. "Winfield" appeals to boys as a friendly, almost paternalistic, figure who respects them as fellow readers and who validates their interests. At the same time, Stratemeyer never strays from the promotional opportunity. He closes the letter with this transparent appeal to his young audience: "The success of the first Rover Boys books has gratified me beyond measure, and my one hope is that my numerous readers will find this and future volumes of equal interest."[71]

Stratemeyer markets the series directly to its intended readers with the expectation that boys will buy the books for themselves. He includes teasers that allude to events in previous or future titles, and he appeals to his "numerous readers" in an effort to secure loyal buyers for

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[69] For a summary of Stratemeyer's career, see "Edward Stratemeyer."Dictionary of American Biography Base Set. American Council of Learned Societies, 1928-1936. Reproduced in Biography Resource Center. Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale. 2006. See also, George Waldo Browne, "Edward Stratemeyer," *Writer* 15, no. 3 (1902): 39. Upon their deaths, Stratemeyer completed series books by Alger, Jr. and Oliver Optic – a further testament to his position in the field.

[70] Edward Stratemeyer, *The Rover Boys out West; or, the Search for a Lost Mine* (New York: The Mershon Co., 1900). "Arthur M. Winfield" is one of the many pseudonyms used by Edward Stratemeyer.

[71] *Ibid.*

future books in the series. Stratemeyer capitalized on successful series by publishing more series under the popular pseudonym. To maximize the self-promotion of a series, Syndicate books also had a uniform appearance, common spines and illustrations, and titles that instantly identified the book as part of a larger whole.

The Syndicate was organized as on model akin to the dime novel fiction factory. Stratemeyer wrote some of the series himself, but the majority of Syndicate books were written under contract by professional ghostwriters (*e.g.*, well-known dime novelists, news reporters, and boys' writers). Writers received a flat fee ranging from $75 to $125, as well as the possibility of future Syndicate assignments. The books, characters, and pseudonyms under which the books were to be published were property of the Syndicate. This approach made it possible for contract writers and publishers to produce a large number of series, and it provided a means to control their involvement by keeping rights to the final product securely in Stratemeyer's hands.[72]

While many publishers at this time contracted directly with writers to produce series, the Syndicate was in the business of licensing juvenile series to publishing houses in exchange for royalties. Stratemeyer outlined a series idea and summarized several book plots; he then submitted this material to a publisher for approval. Once accepted, the Syndicate produced the product and submitted it to the publisher to be marketed, distributed and sold.[73] Syndicate series

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[72] Accounts from Syndicate employees and ghostwriters confirm that this was the standard process of series development. Typically, writers finished books in four to six weeks. They also produced additional books and series published independent of the Syndicate. For details on the Syndicate's relationship with authors, see Deidre Johnson, "From Paragraphs to Pages: The Writing and Development of the Stratemeyer Syndicate Series," in *Rediscovering Nancy Drew*, ed. Carolyn Stewart Dyer and Nancy Tillman Romalov (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995). See also, John T. Dizer, "Authors Who Wrote Dime Novels and Series Books, 1890-1914," in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, ed. Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia Cushman Schurman (New York: Haworth Press, 1996); Roger Garis, *My Father Was Uncle Wiggily*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 73-85; Marilyn S. Greenwald, *The Secret of the Hardy Boys: Leslie Mcfarlane and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004); Deidre Johnson, *Stratemeyer Pseudonyms and Series Books: An Annotated Checklist of Stratemeyer and Stratemeyer Syndicate Publications* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982); Leslie McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys* (Toronto, New York: Methuen; Two Continents, 1976).

[73] On the Syndicate's operations, see especially Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992); Johnson, "From Paragraphs to Pages: The Writing and Development of the Stratemeyer Syndicate Series." See also, Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer*

were published extensively by companies that specialized in low-priced reprints (*i.e.*, Cupples & Leon and Grosset & Dunlap). Thus, while Syndicate series were written and published through the combined efforts of a number of people, the production patterns were guided by Stratemeyer's decisions and final ownership of the series remained with him.

Equally important, in 1906, Stratemeyer persuaded publishers to lower their prices on juvenile series and to focus on high-volume repeat customers. While hardcover juveniles often were sold for at least a dollar, he convinced publisher Cupples & Leon to sell his series titles for fifty cents. The affordable price placed series books comfortably within the reach of a boy's limited budget.[74] It is noteworthy that as a former writer for Munsey publications, Stratemeyer was surely aware Munsey had employed this strategy with popular magazines decades earlier. Low prices and volume sales proved equally successful in the juvenile market and, as other publishers imitated this strategy, series books remained an affordable amusement throughout the century.

As might be expected, Syndicate series emulate the most successful features of late-nineteenth-century cheap fiction. Drawing from the boys' dime novel, the series employs thrilling plots, familiar and exotic locations, and recurring characters. Following the pattern of the boys' story paper, the series cultivates continuity across multiple books; this practice aims to convert readers into repeat customers. The Syndicate's boys' series publicized their characters as highly polished and idealized versions of real, identifiable boys. Their main characters were relatively affluent, middle-class boys with a tendency to fall into exciting, and highly implausible, adventures. The boys are peer-oriented, patriotic, athletic and capable.[75] Each story contains

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Syndicate: Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, and the Million Dollar Fiction Factory (New York: Ungar, 1986). Chapter 2.

[74] Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 21.

[75] For descriptions and analysis of prominent boys' series, see John T. Dizer, *Tom Swift & Company: "Boys' Books" By Stratemeyer and Others* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1982); Fred Erisman, *Boys' Books, Boys' Dreams, and the Mystique of Flight* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 2006); Francis J. Molson, "The Boy Inventor in American Series Fiction: 1900-1930," *Journal of Popular Culture* 28, no. 1 (1994): 31-48; David Vaughan, "The Possibilities of Flight: The Golden Age of American

scenes of action, but they are not graphically violent. Stratemeyer's series upheld a firm standard of good, clean, stimulating entertainment.[76]

Stratemeyer produced several new series in a year, usually between ten and twenty (See Figure 3-2). Nevertheless, with so many rivals on the market, each new book vied for boys' attention and their pennies. A struggling series would be forced out quickly under competitive conditions. My review of Stratemeyer's output during this period indicates that the Syndicate released several series of similar types. Stratemeyer allowed the market to decide which would continue, thereby limiting risk and building upon success. Series were cross-promoted using advertisements at the end of each book.[77] My review of newspaper ads shows that individual series were used frequently in name-drop fashion, listing highly successful series followed by newer, similar, or less-known series. Ads were commonly placed by department stores in major cities, usually during the holiday season. Series books are consistently among the lowest priced items advertised and likely used as a draw to bring customers in to shop.[78]

How to Make a Boys' Book Look like a Girls' Book

Stratemeyer produced boys' series almost exclusively for the first several years of the Syndicate (See Figure 3-2). Among these were the highly successful *Rover Boys* (1899-1926), *Motor Boys* (1906-1924), and *Tom Swift* (1910-1941). One notable exception to the Syndicate's focus on boys' books was a "tots" series, *Bobbsey Twins* (1904-1979), designed to appeal to young boys and girls. Stratemeyer's reasons for producing primarily for boys are easily identified: he (and many of his early ghostwriters) had successful careers writing boys' stories;

Aviation Series Books, 1927-1932," ed. Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia Cushman Schurman, *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks* (New York: Haworth Press, 1996), 133-45.

[76] See for example, Edward Stratemeyer to Lillian Garis, November 7, 1911, SSR/NYPL, box 21. Quoted in Melanie Rehak, *Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2005), 95.

[77] For a detailed discussion of Stratemeyer, see especially Carolyn Stewart Dyer and Nancy Tillman Romalov, *Rediscovering Nancy Drew* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995).

[78] For full details of my data collection and analysis, see the Introduction and Appendix A.

his editorial experience confirmed boys as a reliable market. In short, Stratemeyer knew how to create, develop, and market books for boys.

While he could put some faith in his ability to produce (and profit from) boys' books, girls were still considered a far less certain audience. Stratemeyer believed that girls turned to popular adult books at an early age while boys remained a reliable audience for juvenile stories. He also had reason to believe that girls read boys' books, but boys would *not* read girls books. In a 1906 letter, Stratemeyer states: "Almost as many girls write to me as boys and all say they like to read boys' books (but it's pretty hard to get a boy to read a girl's book, I think)."[79] Contemporary accounts of children's reading preferences indicate that Stratemeyer's belief that some girls happily read boys' books was, in all likelihood, fairly accurate.[80] Consequently, even a successful girls' series was regarded as having less potential reach and longevity than a boys' series.

Though Stratemeyer and other series producers maintained a decided emphasis on boys' books through 1914, girls' series were an object of growing interest (See Figures 3-2 and 3-3). One factor that turned Syndicate's attention to girls' books was surely the fact that Stratemeyer was the father of two young daughters. Equally compelling was the emergence of girls' series by other producers. The roots of girls' series are in dime novels and story papers as well. For example, the Marion Marlowe series appeared in Street & Smith's *My Queen, A Weekly Journal for Young Women* in 1900. With titles like *Marion Marlowe in Buffalo; or Betrayed by a Rival Company* and *Marion Marlowe in Cleveland; or The Mystery of the Blood-Red Rose,* it follows the formula established in Street & Smith's boys' series. With 29 issues over 2 years, the series

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[79] Edward Stratemeyer to Rowland Stalter, 2 April 1906, SSR/NYPL, box 20. Quoted in Rehak, 24. On Stratemeyer's self-perception as a boys' writer, see Edward Stratemeyer to Gabrielle Jackson, 26 October 1906, SSR/NYPL, box 20. Quoted in Rehak, 93. See also, "The Newarker Whose name is Best Known," *Newark Sunday Call*, 9 December 1917, 1. Accounts of his personal and professional opinions indicate his agreement with the prevailing beliefs about girls' reading (*e.g.*, young girls turned to adult books too early). See Rehak, 94-95.

[80] See Harlan Ballard, "Boys and Girls in the Public Library," *St. Nicholas; an Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks* 28, no. 9 (1901): 837; "Boy Heroes in Many Books," *New York Times* 13 November 1909, BR709.

was a success. The additional success of the *Little Cousin Series* (1901-1937) and the *Little Colonel* (1896-1914) stories brought further attention to the possibilities of girls' series.

As early as 1906 Stratemeyer wrote to authors in an effort to enter the girls' series market. His intention was to create series that followed the model of his successful boys' series. In a letter to a well-known author of girls' stories, he states: "If you know anything about my Rover Boys Series . . . you'll know exactly what I mean. . . We do not ask for what is commonly called 'fine writing,' (usually another name for what is tedious and cumbersome) but want something full of 'ginger' and action."[81]

The Syndicate's first girls' series, *Dorothy Dale*, premiered in 1908.[82] It features the daughter of a Civil War veteran who runs a weekly newspaper. Dorothy is described as sunny, fun-loving, devoted, and active. The stories involve the standard formulas featured in boys' series: school life, domestic crises, gypsies, and mysteries in city and country settings. Following this early success, the Syndicate created several additional girls' series.[83] And, Stratemeyer was not alone in his pursuit of girl readers. Between 1900 and 1910, publishers introduced 54 new girls' series (See Figure 3-3**)**. The trend strengthened in the next decade with the creation of 110 new series for girls.

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[81] Edward Stratemeyer to Gabrielle Jackson, October 18, 1906, SSR/NYPL, box 20. quoted in Rehak. 93. Jackson wrote serialized stories for *St. Nicholas* and several girls' books, and favorable reviews of her work made her a good candidate for Stratemeyer to approach. Stratemeyer's letter indicates that he believed Jackson understood the dividing line between boys' and girls' stories. On Jackson, see "Children's Books," *New York Times* 13 December 1902, BR4; "Juvenile Books for the Yule Tide," *The Independent . . . Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* 53, no. 2767 (1901): 2958; F. D. W., "Literature for Children," *Town and Country* 3158 (1906): 23.

[82] Dorothy Dale was published by Cupples & Leon, and written by Howard and Lillian Garis under the pseudonym "Margaret Penrose." It was quite successful, reaching 13 volumes and ending in 1924. Johnson, *Stratemeyer Pseudonyms and Series Books: An Annotated Checklist of Stratemeyer and Stratemeyer Syndicate Publications*, 191-92.

[83] On girls' series, see especially Dyer and Romalov; Sherrie A Inness, "On the Road and in the Air: Gender and Technology in Girls' Automobile and Airplane Serials, 1909-1932," Journal *of Popular Culture* 30, no. 2 (1996): 47-60; Sherrie A. Inness, ""It Is Pluck but Is It Sense?": Athletic Student Culture in Progressive Era Girls' College Fiction," *Journal of Popular Culture* 27, no. 1 (1993): 99-123; Sherrie A. Inness, *Nancy Drew and Company: Culture, Gender, and Girls' Series* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997); Ilana Nash, *American Sweethearts: Teenage Girls in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Nancy Tillman Romalov, "Modern, Mobile, and Marginal: American Girls' Series Fiction, 1905-1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1994); Nancy Tillman Romalov, "Mobile Heroines: Early Twentieth-Century Girls' Automobile Series," *Journal of Popular Culture* 28, no. 4 (1995): 231-43.

Stratemeyer's forays into girls' series production were grounded in familiar territory. To create several of his early series for girls, Stratemeyer simply adapted some of his existing boys' series. This strategy allowed him to recycle outlines and build on proven success; it also accounts for the remarkable similarity between many boys' and girls' series.[84] For example, *The Boys of Columbia High* (1911) is a classic school series combined with the ever-popular sports story.[85] In 1914, Stratemeyer reworked the outlines for a girls' series, *The Girls of Central High*.[86] The advertising copy for each series (See Table 3-1), and the cover illustrations (See Figure 3-4) mirror one another very closely. To make a boys' series suitable as a girls' series, Stratemeyer made several cosmetic and substantive changes. He consistently used female pen names for girls' series and male names for boys. He substituted heroines for heroes. He emphasized friendship and cooperation, while toning down competition. Boys are more likely to fight, and girls more likely to need rescue (See Table 3-2).

Stratemeyer series books adopted themes emphasize personal responsibility and healthy competition through amateur athletics – a myriad of values that synchronized with middle-class standards. Yet, like the dime novel, his products would be met with strong opposition from moral authorities and rival publishers. Nonetheless, boys' and girls' series were finding readers who

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[84] For example, the *Motor Boys Series* (1906-1924; 22 titles) written under the pseudonym Clarence Young was adapted as the *Motor Girls* (1910-1917; 10 titles) under the name Margaret Penrose. Other examples include: *Outdoor Chums* (1911) and *Outdoor Girls* (1913), *Moving Picture Boys* (1913) and *Moving Picture Girls* (1916), *Radio Boys* (1922) and *Radio Girls* (1922). Generally, the girls' version of the series did not adapt all of the titles.

[85] At least some of the series was ghost-written by St. George Rathborne a prolific nineteenth-century dime novelist. The series was comprised of eight titles published by Grosset & Dunlap. In the 1920s, *The Boys of Columbia High* was re-titled the *Frank Allen* series (after its central character), and reissued by The Garden City Publishing, Co. and several new titles were written. This name change is in keeping with the tendency to move from group-oriented stories in the 1910s to stories featuring a central leading hero in the post-war years. Harry K. Hudson, *A Bibliography of Hard-Cover, Series Type Boys' Books*, Revised edition. (Tampa, FL: Hudson, 1977), 60, 103-104. See also, Johnson, *Stratemeyer Pseudonyms and Series Books: An Annotated Checklist of Stratemeyer and Stratemeyer Syndicate Publications*, 128-28.

[86] The series was written under Stratemeyer pseudonym, Gertrude W. Morrison. Stratemeyer documents indicate that another prolific dime novelist, W. Bert Foster, was the true author. The series lasted for seven titles, also published by Grosset & Dunlap. *The Girls of Central High* was not reissued. Johnson, *Stratemeyer Pseudonyms and Series Books: An Annotated Checklist of Stratemeyer and Stratemeyer Syndicate Publications*, 187-88. Kathleen Chamberlain, *"Being Poor Doesn't Count": Class, Ethnicity, and Democracy in American Girls' School Series, 1900-1920*, ed. Wayne A. Wiegand and Anne Lundin, Defining Print Culture for Youth: The Cultural Work of Children's Literature (Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited, 2003), 118 note 11.

welcomed book after book eagerly. As one observer noted, "Whenever books came in a series, the whole series must be read, and frequently re-read, before anything outside of it would be touched."[87]

Like dime novels, early juvenile series were commercially successful and fiercely denounced. Their industrial-like assembly, high volume, and low prices were equated with poor quality.[88] Critics again claimed that children's insatiable appetite for reading was filled by bad books, which, in turn, encouraged bad behavior and poor taste: reading just one series, even by a good writer, put a child at risk.[89] Careless booksellers and negligent parents were blamed for children's access to inferior publications.

Nevertheless, studies of children's reading taste indicate their preference for exciting stories remained strong, particularly until around the age of 14. For example, a survey conducted by the editors of *Girls' Companion* magazine found that reading was a favorite recreational activity among girls. They concluded: "Such direct testimony from the girls themselves substantiates the general feeling among book-dealers that young people of the present day are constant and omnivorous readers and potential buyers of current literature"[90] These patterns, and the extraordinary profits they reaped, proved influential in the publishing industry and propelled significant changes in their views of the boy and girl consumer in the coming decades.

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[87] Samuel Thurber, Jr., "Voluntary Reading in the Classical High School. From the Pupil's Point of View," *The School Review* 13, no. 2 (1905): 171. See also, Allan Abbott, "English in Secondary Schools; a Review," *The School Review* 9, no. 6 (1901): 388-402; Allan Abbott, "Reading Tastes of High-School Pupils. A Statistical Study," *The School Review* 10, no. 8 (1902): 585-600; Allan Abbott, "An Experiment in High-School English," *The School Review* 12, no. 7 (1904): 550-58.

[88] One critic asserted: "(I)t is usual for the authors of this sort of quantity-production commodity to steal from each other, and from the same few reference books with a nonchalance that would be taken as unmannerly in any other province of letters." Wilson Follett, "Junior Model," *The Bookman; a Review of Books and Life* 70, no. 1 (1929): 11.

[89] Lucy Ella Fay and Anne Thaxter Eaton, *Instruction in the Use of Books and Libraries; a Textbook for Normal Schools and Colleges*(Boston, MA: The Boston book company, 1915), 276. See also, Caroline M. Hewins, *Books for Boys and Girls; a Selected List*, 3d ed.(Chicago: American Library Association Publishing Board, 1915), 15.

[90] This survey, though limited, indicates that questions about girls' reading were being asked and certain conclusions were being drawn about their interests. The survey was responded to by 2060 girls, average age 13.7 years, with a large percentage attending school. "Girl's Reading," *The Publishers' Weekly* 96, no. 2 (1919).

More Books in the Home: Promoting "Better Books" to Priceless Children

This section examines the reactions of rival publishers and the American public to the proliferation of boys' and girls' series, specifically the collaboration between rival publishers and influential adults in increasingly organized efforts to lure priceless children to more (and better) books. The problem of children's reading was interpreted, in part, as one of consumer education. Parents were expected to guide children and properly train them to make good reading decisions (*i.e.,* class- and gender-appropriate). At the same time, producers appealed to children directly and further acclimatized them to consumer-oriented leisure. The mobilization for "better books" during this period adopted the strategy of vigorous promotion, especially through boys' and girls' institutions (*e.g.,* schools, children's libraries, Scouts, etc).[91]

The emergence of Children's Book Week offers an interesting comparison with series publishing because it marks another moment when members of the field began shifting their emphasis to a recognition of boys and girls as consumers. It also merits attention because the project is the most ambitious and most successful collaboration between "quality" publishers and their allies. In its creation, Book Week reveals valuable insight into the compromises struck between influential individuals as they sought to advance separate agendas.

The Vulgar and the Sensational: Discourse on Boys' and Girls' Series Books

As with dime novels, the problem of juvenile series was perceived initially as a boy problem. Nevertheless, girls' reading options were a source of growing concern and disagreement. Early in the century, several reviewers noted that girls' books generally held to a higher standard than those for boys.[92] At the same time, contemporary observers also noted that some girls favored boys' books:

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[91] See for example, G. Stanley Hall, "Children's Reading as a Factor in Their Education," *Library Journal* 33 (1908): 123-24; Edwin Seward Puller, *Your Boy and His Training; a Practical Treatise on Boy Training* (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1916).

[92] "Books for Girls, Morality in Demand is Largely Negative. Why Girls Prefer Books Written for Their Bothers" *Boston Daily Globe* 10 February 1907, 12; Caroline Burnite, "Good and Poor Books for Boys and

> Most girls like so-called "boys' books" much better than they do their own suitably feminine fiction. And if boys do not return the compliment, it is only because 'girls' books' are in general so flat and insipid that the girls themselves are ashamed to read them.[93]

It was suggested that boys exhibited a wider range of reading interests, while many girls stubbornly preferred stories set "in the present time and in surroundings and circumstances similar to her own." [94] Librarians criticized the lack of intellectually stimulating books that appealed to girls' interests. This attentiveness to girls' reading habits intensified over time, particularly following the introduction of a substantial number of new series intended for girls.

As adults worked to structure other areas of children's lives, they carried on their efforts to guide and control children's access to books. It remained the responsibility of adults, and especially mothers, to ensure that children have proper food for their imaginations. These views were disseminated widely through the reviews and publicity for children's books, now a standard feature of magazines and newspapers. For example: "But books, like chocolate creams, have to be tasted to find what is inside; often you get what you want; then again you are direfully disappointed." [95] Without "nourishing" books, children were "driven to the vulgar and the

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Girls," *Public Libraries* 11, no. 7 (1906): 360-62; "Girls' Books," *Outlook* 18, no. 463 (1906); "Real Books for Real Girls," *New York Times* 5 December 1909, LS20; "Some Fiction for Girls," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* 71, no. 3289 (1911): 1326.

[93] "Some Books for Boys," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* 104, no. 3749 (1920): 376. See also, "A Sad Lack of Good Books for Girls," *Dial* 55, no. 657 (1913): 347.

[94] "A Sad Lack of Good Books for Girls."

[95] "Juvenile Books for the Yule Tide." Novel reading, even among adults, remains questionable because "no matter how good, like any other 'sweets,' (they) pall upon the taste if too steadily devoured." "100 Books for Summer Reading," *New York Times* 16 June 1900, BR18. See also, "Candy Books," *St. Nicholas; an Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks* 32, no. 12 (1905): 1148; "Literature for the Young," *The Washington Post* 19 November 1904, 15; Adelaide Bowles Maltby, "Library's Work with Children," *The Outlook* 82, (1906): 360-64; Lucy Ella Fay and Anne Thaxter Eaton, *Instruction in the Use of Books and Libraries*, 2d ed. (Boston, MA: The F. W. Faxon company, 1919), 269; "The Confessions of a Boys' Story Writer," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* 94, no. 562 (1914): 492; Grace Blanchard, "The Multiplication of Series of Books for Young People Considered a Serious Disadvantage," *New York Times* 3 October 1915, 77; "Letters from Book Review Readers," *New York Times* 24 October 1915, BR410; "Standards of Literature," *The Washington Post* 6 December 1912, 6.

sensational, in the shape of the cheap show, the wrong kind of moving pictures, and the trashy book."[96]

Educators continued to try to "cure" children of their poor reading habits and cultivate good taste.[97] Likewise, backed by philanthropic support, the public library and children's librarians worked to instill children with appropriate (middle-class) respect for books, reading, and public space.[98] Librarians also continued to produce an abundance of lists of "Best Books for Boys and Girls" to aid parents. [99] They worked with publishers to compile story collections for children; this editorial role gave them a direct hand in determining what stories stayed in print. Librarians also developed models for children's services that were disseminated through the American Library Association and other professional organizations.[100] At the same time, "quality" publishers became increasingly persuaded that juvenile books could be profitable books, and they were eager to capitalize on their standing as providers of appropriate, middle-class publications.[101]

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[96] Lucy Fay and Anne Thaxter Eaton, *Instructions in the use of books and libraries; a textbook for normal schools and colleges* (Boston: The Boston Book Company, 1915), 269.

[97] Nelson Antrim Crawford, "The Development of Good Taste in Reading," *The English Journal* 3, no. 9 (1914): 562; Max J. Herzberg, "Supplementary Reading for High-School Pupils," *The English Journal* 4, no. 6 (1915): 373; W. S. Hinchman, "Reading Clubs Instead of Literature Classes," *The English Journal* 6, no. 2 (1917): 88; A. Kenngott, "Outside Reading in Modern-Language Instruction," *The School Review* 22, no. 6 (1914): 385-90; Calvin L. Lewis, "The Neglected Side of English," *The English Journal* 3, no. 5 (1914): 282; J. A. Wallace, "A Plan for Outside Reading," *The School Review* 21, no. 7 (1913): 478.

[98] On the role of philanthropy at this time, see Judith Sealander, *Private Wealth & Public Life: Foundation Philanthropy and the Reshaping of American Social Policy from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). Accounts of children's library use indicate that librarians faced some difficulty in gaining control over child patrons. See especially, "The Experiences of Children as Library Users" in Abigail Ayres Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 201-216.

[99] Lists were both national and local. For example, Boston Public Library and Alice M. Jordan, *A List of Books for Boys and Girls, in the Public Library of the City of Boston*, (Boston: The Trustees, 1913); Clara Whitehill Hunt, *What Shall We Read to the Children?* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915); Anne Carroll Moore, *A List of Books Recommended for a Children's Library* (Des Moines: Iowa Printing Co., 1903); "Newark Free Public Library List of Books for Boys and Girls," *Dial* 52 (1912): 236; Frances Jenkins Olcott, *The Children's Reading* (Boston, New York,: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912).

[100] Alice Isabel Hazeltine, *Library Work with Children* (White Plains, NY: The H. W. Wilson company, 1917); Arabelle Jackson, "Report on Library Work with Children," *Library Journal* (1906): 89-97; Maltby; Effie Power, "How to Make the Library More Serviceable to Students of School Age - from the Library Worker's View-Point," *National Education Association: Addresses and Proceedings* (1908): 1104-10.

[101] The advent of bestseller lists in 1895 alerted publishers to the strong sales of some juveniles. The enormous success of *The Wizard of Oz* (1900), *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1904), *A Girl of the*

Despite high levels of support for "good" children's books, and strong incentives for publishers to produce them, booksellers were reluctant to devote precious shelf space to expensive children's books.[102] "Quality" children's books were regarded as suitable Christmas or birthday gifts rather than regular, essential purchases.[103] To complicate the problem, juvenile series books sold well all year long; for the *Rover Boys* and *Dorothy Dale* every day was a holiday. Moreover, some booksellers benefited from library book bans because interested readers would turn to the shops to acquire forbidden titles.[104]

Children's Book Week: the Value of Buying Better Books

"Quality" publishers believed they were underperforming in the juvenile market. Like their counterparts in other arenas of children's lives, publishers and their allies confronted these obstacles by organizing. The result was Children's Book Week, a campaign to challenge cheap fiction and to advocate better reading (and book-buying) habits.

In 1912, E.W. Mumford, of the Penn Publishing Company, delivered a speech entitled "Juvenile Readers as an Asset," at the American Booksellers Association convention.[105]

Limberlost (1909), *Pollyanna* (1913 & 1914), and *Pollyanna Grows Up* (1915) turned publishers' attention to young readers. Michael Korda, *Making the List: A Cultural History of the American Bestseller, 1900-1999: As Seen through the Annual Bestseller Lists of Publishers Weekly* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2001), Introduction.

[102] Publishers and booksellers had the common goal of selling books, but they often disagreed on what methods and what titles might produce the highest profit. Additionally, publishers and sellers alike struggled with the enormous weight of the holiday rush, followed by relatively flat book sales; a poor Christmas turnout could be catastrophic. L Coser, C Kadushin, and et al, *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[103] Mrs Theodore W. Birney, "Christmas Shopping with the Children," *Delineator* 64, (1904): 1032-35; "Many Old Favorites," *Boston Daily Globe* 2 December 1911, 14. Publishers had difficulty meeting seasonal demand, while booksellers had to cope with staffing fluctuations, limited space to display products, and the burden of leftover inventory.

[104] "Fascination with Forbidden Literature," *The Dial; a Semi - monthly Journal of Literary Criticism, Discussion, and Information* Volume LIX., no. 706. (1915): 476. Additionally, by this time, books were a commonplace commodity available in a variety of outlets; the literary-minded specialist shared the task of bookselling with the shop girl, the news-agent, and the mail order catalog. See for example, David L. Cohn, *The Good Old Days; a History of American Morals and Manners as Seen through the Sears, Roebuck Catalogs 1905 to the Present* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), 119-20.

[105] A summary of his paper was printed in the *New York Times* under the headlines: "Children Read Mostly Bad Books" "Publisher Declares That Parents Hand Out Fiction Quite as Bad as Dime Novels." "Said to be Hurting Their Best Asset – Another Thinks College Men Should Be Employed as Salesmen." "Children Reading Mostly Bad Books," *New York Times* 16 May 1912, 10.

Mumford presented boys (and girls) as increasingly autonomous consumers who tended to buy cheap fiction with "their own pocket money." [106] He urged booksellers to learn about children's books, to make their stores inviting to children and parents, to advertise directly to children, and to stock classic titles.[107] The effects of Mumford's speech proved to be far-reaching. James West, director of the newly-formed Boy Scouts of America (1910), read the speech as a call to action.[108] West's concern about boys' reading focused on the negative effects of cheap books, which were in complete opposition to the character-building mission of the BSA.[109] West also was displeased that many of the "trashy" series were based on Boy Scout characters. Boy Scout series capitalized on the appeal of the Boy Scout without espousing the organization's values or depicting the Scouts accurately. "Boy Scout" used generically to indicate woodland adventures and run-ins with grizzly bears was decidedly not what the BSA wanted.[110]

In September, the BSA appointed Franklin Mathiews as Chief Librarian and tasked him with guiding boys to good, wholesome reading. Mathiews compiled a list of approved books for Boy Scouts.[111] The BSA also induced publisher Grosset & Dunlap to produce inexpensive reprints some of the "better boys' books."[112] He spoke to the ABA on the subject of "Books as

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[106] Interestingly, he suggested that if sellers shirked their duty to sell wholesome books, they would turn children not into book buyers "but book devourers, and on them the circulating libraries thrive." *Ibid.*

[107] *Ibid.* Like many before him, Mumford equated low cost with low quality, and he blamed adult intermediaries for allowing children access to bad books. It is certain that Mumford's concern about children's interest in cheap fiction was driven first and foremost by the threat of low prices; Penn Publishing Co. had several series in print at the time of this speech.

[108] West saw a summary of the speech in *The New York Times.* Children's Book Council, "A History of Book Week " http://www.cbcbooks.org/cbw/history.html.

[109] On the connection between character and boys' reading, see Puller, *Your Boy and His Training,* 206-26. Puller, a former Scoutmaster, asserts that the danger of cheap books is greater because they give the appearance of being wholesome, good books.

[110] M. Paul Holsinger, "A Bully Bunch of Books: Boy Scout Series Books, 1910-1930," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1989): 178-82.

[111] Mathiews was to select books "that are full of adventure and romance but are calculated to help as well as to thrill the boys." "Appoints a Book Scout.," *New York Times* 30 September 1912, 13. His list was reprinted extensively in the coming years. "Three Hundred Books Boys Like Best," *New York Times* 5 December 1915, BR496. The BSA also purchased *Boys' Life* magazine in 1912

[112] West states that the Every Boy's Library was created to address the "grave peril" of cheap juvenile literature that threatened boys' taste. While the Every Boy's Library surely brought added attention to the BSA from members and non-members alike, there is evidence to suggest that BSA publishing efforts were not profitable. David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, Ymca, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 155.

Merchandise and Something More."[113] Mathiews, a former Baptist minister, then went on the offensive against cheap fiction with Comstock-like enthusiasm. He delivered speeches to librarians in which he "flayed the distribution of such books among the younger generation of the country."[114] In 1914, Mathiews published an article entitled, "Blowing Out the Boy's Brains," in which he claimed series books left boys "crippled" and unfit for adult life. [115] Mathiews' choice of imagery is especially disturbing given that the article coincides with the early months of World War I. In keeping with the BSA's interest in a strong, masculine boyhood, Mathiews also advocated strong participation of fathers in boys' activities lest they become overly-influenced by mothers or social agencies.[116]

With the public freshly reminded of the problem, the BSA sponsored "Safety First Juvenile Book Week" from November 28 to December 4, 1915. Given the mission of the BSA, the logical emphasis was the promotion of better books for boys. The BSA asked newspapers, librarians, ministers, a myriad of women's organizations, PTAs, and others to participate. Mathiews suggested booksellers encourage parents to begin their holiday shopping early by buying the best books for their children. Reportedly, the week was celebrated to some degree in over three hundred cities and towns.[117] During this period, Mathiews clarified his attack against cheap juvenile books by claiming that it is not the elements of the story (*e.g.*, thrills, excitement, and "pep"), but the reckless abandon with which authors make use of these "combustibles," that

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[113] "The Beginnings of Children's Book Week," *Publishers' Weekly* 110, no. 16 (1926): 1592; Louise H. Seaman and Rebecca Lawrence Lowrie, "Notes on Children's Books," *The Publishers' Weekly* 98, no. 11 (1920): 555-58.

[114] "Father of Libraries," *The Washington Post,* 28 May 1914, 3.

[115] Franklin K. Mathiews, "Blowing out the Boy's Brains," *The Outlook*, 18 November 1914, 652. This article has been referenced extensively by librarians, series collectors, and scholars of children's literature. Though its title is provocative, the viewpoint is in keeping with *The Outlook*'s coverage of children's reading over the previous decade.

[116] Franklin Mathiews, "The Crying Need of A "Profession of Fatherhood," *New York Times,* 13 July 1913, X10.

[117] "Book Reviewing," *New York Times* 14 November 1915, BR442. One account in *The Washington Post* carries the headlines: "Book Exhibit For Young." "Public Library Takes Steps to Try to Eliminate 'Nickel Thrillers.'" "Book Exhibit for Young," *The Washington Post* 28 November1915, 19.

separates the good books from the vulgar, popular series selling in the tens of thousands.[118] Book Week events offered an opportunity to sensitize the public to the problem, and to promote their movement and BSA publications as its solution (See Figure 3-5).[119]

In 1916, the American Booksellers Association and the American Library Association joined the BSA to co-sponsor Good Book Week."[120] At this time, two new participants became actively involved in the planning and promotion of Book Week. Anne Carroll Moore, the Superintendent of Children's Works at the New York Public Library, spearheaded formal and aggressive efforts to engage libraries in Book Week programs.[121] Frederic G. Melcher, editor of *Publisher's Weekly*, encouraged publishers to utilize Book Week events to promote new books.[122] He also urged booksellers to participate in the Week as a means of extending the selling season and increasing sales of children's books. The Week's slogan, "Buy the Best Books for Your Children," suggests clearly that the purpose of the campaign was shifting to meet the commercial concerns of publishers and booksellers. With the addition of Melcher and Moore, the campaign

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[118] F. K. Mathews, "The Problem of Finding the Best Books for Children to Read -- Communications from Book Review Readers," *New York Times* 14 May 1916, BR206.

[119] Excerpts from advertisements describe the library as: an ideal Christmas gift for boys, modestly priced at 60 cents a volume, full of stories boys like best, and as "The most important step ever taken in the publication of Juvenile literature." "Advertisement -- Premium Offer," *The Youth's Companion* 89, no. 42 (1915): 551; "Advertisement -- Skann Sons & Co.," *The Washington Post* 10 December 1913, 7; "Advertisement - S. Kann Sons & Co.," *The Washington Post* 28 November 1915, R2.

[120] Southern Bureau, ""Good Book Week" For Memphis Youth," *Christian Science Monitor* 2 December 1916, 2; "Good Book Week," *The Youth's Companion* 90, no. 48 (1916): 690; ""Good Book Week"," *The Dial; a Semi - monthly Journal of Literary Criticism, Discussion, and Information* Vol. LXI., no 728. (1916): 341; "In the Libraries," *Christian Science Monitor* 22 November 1916, 10; "Inglorious Miltons," *New York Times* 15 October 1916, BR430; "Scouts to Observe "Good Books Week"," *The Atlanta Constitution* 3 December1916, 3.

[121] Libraries had a pre-existing relationship with the Boys Scouts. See "Book Exhibit for Young"; "In the Libraries"; Elizabeth Miss Manchester, "Relation of the Library to the Boy Scout and Camp Fire Girl Movement," *Library Journal* 39, no. 10 (1914): 752; "Movement to Give Boy Scouts Good Books Only," *Christian Science Monitor* 29 November 1915, 6.

[122] In 1912, Frederick G. Melcher spoke alongside Mumford at the ABA conference. He urged booksellers to educate themselves about their inventory and to address the book buyer with patience and knowledge. Melcher began his career in the book business as an errand boy for Estes and Lauriat bookstore in Boston, where he gained familiarity with the retail and library market. Interestingly, Estes and Lauriat published two series written by Stratemeyer at the turn of the century, precisely when Melcher worked there. Melcher's attentiveness to selling and to children's books carried through to the pages of *Publishers' Weekly* which he edited beginning in 1918. On Melcher's influence in the children's book field, see Frederic Gershom Melcher, *Frederic G. Melcher: Friendly Reminiscences of a Half Century among Books & Bookmen* (New York: Book Publishers' Bureau, 1945).

broadened in two significant ways. First, the Week's mission was extended to include both boys and girls. The volume of girls' series was sufficient for critics to take notice, raising concern that girls too were susceptible to the damaging effects of bad reading. Second, by necessity "good" books became less closely associated with BSA publications and expanded to include the "quality" books produced by other participating publishers. Endorsements from librarians, the Boy Scouts and other respected experts lent legitimacy to these publications.[123]

Following setbacks due to World War I, organizers established an annual Children's Book Week in 1919 under the slogan "More Books in the Home." Librarians and the Boy Scout leadership continued to be the most vocal objectors against juvenile series. In addition to Book Week activities, librarians continued to maintain separate juvenile book collections and update recommended reading lists; they also gained additional authority through their reviews of children's literature.[124] In 1923, Mathiews participated in the Clean Books League, an effort to censor books through new Congressional legislation.[125] In 1929, librarian Mary E. S. Root published, "Not to be Circulated," a list of series books that standard libraries were electing to remove from their shelves. Many of the series on Root's list are from Stratemeyer, including both *The Boys of Columbia High* and *The Girls of Central High.* [126] For the most part, however, library

[123] Franklin Hoyt, "Problems in the Production of Books for Children, with Special Reference to Some Wider Needs," *ALA Bulletin* 13 (1919), 285.
[124] New lists include: Hunt; Anne Carroll Moore, *Roads to Childhood: Views and Reviews of Children's Books* (New York: G.H. Doran, 1920); Anne Carroll Moore, *New Roads to Childhood* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923); Anne Carroll Moore, "Children's Books and Their Proper Selection," *Publishers' Weekly* 105, no. 21 (1924): 1690-94; Lewis Madison Terman and Margaret Lima, *Children's Reading; a Guide for Parents and Teachers* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1926). In 1918 *The Bookman* began publishing Anne Carroll Moore's reviews and commentary on children's books; they were then collected and reprinted in book form. Paul Allen, "Pleasing the Youthful Critics," *The Bookman; a Review of Books and Life* 74 (1931), 418. In 1924 Bertha Mahoney started *The Horn Book* a highly influential periodical on children's literature.
[125] On the Clean Books league, see "To Read Bad Books and Tell of Them," *New York Times* 9 March 1923, 17.
[126] Mary E.S. Root, "Not to Be Circulated," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 3 (1929), 528-29.

and school opposition to series became less about combating "bad books" and more about educating children (and parents) to choose good reading.[127]

Children's movie attendance also posed a significant worry for the publishing industry. One observer lamented,

> We must recognize that the distractions of the day, especially the automobile, the movies, and the home garden movement, have practically eliminated the family reading circle around the library lamp which was a source of keen enjoyment and the inspiration for the love of reading with so many of us.[128]

To be sure, the automobile lured away adults and teenagers in growing numbers. For the child under 14, however, the movie was quickly outpacing recreational reading for a number of reasons. As Historian David Nasaw observes, "[Children] not only saw the movies they wanted to see, but they also won for themselves a place to socialize and the right to consumer amusements, a truncated right perhaps, yet, nonetheless a right that the adults were bound to respect."[129]

Surveys indicated that movies were enormously more popular than other activities. In 1924, Omaha reported a combined participation of 3,500 children in organized clubs (*e.g.*, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and Girl Reserves). The 35 motion picture theaters in the city had "a total average daily attendance of more than 20,000."[130] A related survey of recreational habits of high school students (536 girls, 540 boys) found that 57.3% attended movies as their primary form of entertainment; 48% enjoyed leisure reading; 31% liked dancing; and more than 20% (predominantly girls) took pleasure in "unsupervised music."[131] Still another survey found that 80% of the school children below high school grades went to the movies at

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[127] Fannie M. Clark, "Teaching Children to Choose," *The English Journal* 9, no. 3 (1920): 135; V.M. Hillyer, "A Balanced Diet in Children's Reading," *Publishers' Weekly* 118, no. 17 (1930): 1963-65.
[128] "Problems in the Production of Books for Children," *Publishers' Weekly* 96, no. 5 (1919): 343-45.
[129] David Nasaw, "Children and Commercial Culture: Moving Pictures in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Small Worlds* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 14-25.
[130] T. Earl Sullenger, "One City's Program for Leisure Time," *Journal of Social Forces* 2, no. 5 (1924): 718-21. Though the 20,000 movie-goers were not all children, it is safe to assume that children and adolescents attended the movies in numbers at least comparable to their participation in supervised clubs.
[131] *Ibid.*, 720-721.

least three times a week.[132] Early child stars like Mary Pickford found favor with early moviegoers, and they likely held an especially strong appeal for the youngest members of the audience.[133]

A 1929 comprehensive study of children's interests notes that children still owned relatively few books despite efforts to impress upon them the pleasure to be found in reading (and possessing) books. By contrast, the researcher finds "the majority of the 10,052 children studied prefer to go through the 'magic door' into movieland rather than into bookland."[134] By 1930, movie-going was the dominant leisure activity for millions of Americans.

Not surprisingly, the publishing industry teamed up with various children's clubs because, unlike movie fans, their members were interested in nourishing activities like reading, especially if their leaders give them a "gentle shove" in the right direction.[135] In keeping with publishers' efforts to influence retailers, they suggested that booksellers might benefit from the possibilities of a "good book and good film mutually aiding each other." The following year the National Committee for Better Films worked with the Children's Book Week Committee to provide a list of films for Book Week events. [136] It is unlikely that these efforts drew the majority of children away from movies and toward "better books" any more than Children's Book Week stemmed the tide of juvenile series.

Building Character through Books: Assessing the Book Week Campaign

A review of *Publishers' Weekly* lends insight into the aims, strategies, and effects of Book Week in its first decade. Publishers stage-managed Book Week in an effort to ensure that

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[132] "Yale Releases a Series of Notable Historical Films," *Publishers' Weekly* 104, no. 14 (1923): 1225-27.
[133] See Thomas G. Aylesworth, *Hollywood Kids: Child Stars of the Silver Screen from 1903 to the Present*, 1st ed.(New York: Dutton, 1987), 10-71.
[134] Alice Miller Mitchell and Wieboldt Foundation Chicago., *Children and Movies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 1929), 91.
[135] Rowe Wright, "Red-Blooded Programs for Girls and Boys Based Upon Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 112, no. 16 (1927): 1465-68.
[136] Marion Humble, "Year 'Round Bookselling," *Publishers Weekly* 105, no. 21 (1924): 1710-12; Georges Moreau, "The Film, the Book, and the Book Trade," *Publishers' Weekly* 102, no. 4 (1922): 194-95; "Movies for Book Week," *Publishers' Weekly* 104, no. 16 (1923): 1368.

children developed good reading habits *and* the "bookstore habit." Cultivating children as consumers, they argued, would have the added effect of bringing adults into the store.[137] Though the aims of publishers and their Book Week allies were compatible, support for the selling aspect of the Week was paramount for producers and booksellers. To that end, they advocated borrowing books as a step toward purchasing books.[138] Publishers could afford to be overt in their push for added sales because, as they frequently reminded their partners, if more expensive books could not be sold profitably, they would be forced to cut quality children's books from their production lists.[139]

Publishers were equally direct in leveraging Book Week to motivate booksellers' merchandizing and retailing efforts. In a campaign akin to *St. Nicholas*' Advertising League, booksellers were encouraged to conduct contests for themed posters created by school children.[140] Some booksellers also began to aim their appeal to children directly using displays, events, and direct mail campaigns.[141] Additionally, taking a cue from department stores and series publishers, book displays, cover art and illustrations, took on new importance even for lower-priced books.

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[137] "Children's Book Week," *Publishers' Weekly* 98, no. 12 (1920): 608; Holland Hudson, "Selling Books for Children: Practical Hints Gathered from Specialists in This Field," *Publishers' Weekly* 112, no. 16 (1927): 1471-76; Dallas McKown, "Transferring a Habit: Popular Priced Books Are Selling the Year Round as the Result of a Practical, Four Year-Old Plan," *Publishers' Weekly* 115, no. 9 (1929): 982-83; Frederic Melcher, "The Child's Own Reading," *Publishers' Weekly* 102, no. 4 (1922): 179-81.

[138] For example, "no amount of books borrowed from libraries can take the place of the books with the child should own, and read and re-read until he makes them his own in spirit as well as in property." "Training the Child in Reading Habits," 102, no. 18 (1922): 1522.

[139] Hoyt, 284. See also, Louise Seaman, "The Attractive Note in Binding Children's Books," *Bookbinding Magazine* XIII (1928): 23-24; "School Book Prices," *Publishers' Weekly* 96, no. 4 (1919): 12.

[140] "Book Publicity as Children Would Plan It," *The Publishers' Weekly* 101, no. 7 (1920): 439.

[141] The use of catalogs and mailings to children is surprisingly aggressive. For example, *Publishers' Weekly* publicized the strategies of one Cleveland bookseller to record children's ages, family size, gender, and books purchased. Catalogs are then mailed to the children directly. The strategy was reportedly quite effective: ""It isn't possible for all the youngsters to get down to see the books, so they check the catalogs and the parents bring them to us to be filled. We try to carry a good representative number of the books listed, but if the book is out of stock, or we do not carry some particular item, we make every effort to get it by special order. Every person who came into the department for two or three weeks after the catalog had been sent out either had one, or asked if we had one to give away or one from which a selection of books might be made at the shop." Clara Anne Ford, "Publicity for the Children's Department," *The Publishers' Weekly* 110, no. 16 (1926): 1590-91. See also Gertrude Andrus, "Selling Children's Books 52 Weeks in the Year," *The Publishers' Weekly* 101, no. 20 (1922): 1401.

Publishers also exploited new distribution channels as book clubs for children expanded dramatically.[142]

In previous decades, the message of good books was transmitted primarily through the written word: articles in women's magazines, letters to the editor, child-rearing advice books. With Book Week, we see a shift toward advertising the idea of better reading. Just as the brightly-covered series book captured the attention of boys and girls, the Book Week poster conveyed a distinct impression to the public. Table 3-3 shows that Book Week organizers also were consistent in their purpose. They signaled a message boldly (More Books!), but softened its tone with specially-commissioned artwork. From 1919 through today, the Book Week poster has featured the work of premier children's illustrators.[143]

The commercial aspect of Book Week remained central. Producers were eager to persuade sellers that the children's book field offered selling opportunities on a year-round basis. They were equally concerned with bringing customers into stores, and ensuring that children's books were sold in greater numbers and with more consistency. Booksellers supported events to encourage book ownership and to extend the book-buying season.[144] Library exhibits and school contests strengthened the recognition of approved books and, in turn, facilitated sales. Book Week also encouraged specialization in children's book selling, and the creation of independent children's book stores and separate children's book departments.[145] Once "quality" publications

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[142] For example, the Literary Guild engaged in an expensive promotion of its Junior Literary Guild, employing a direct-mail campaign of 100,000 circulars and a $250,000 advertising budget. John William Tebbel, "Main Trends in Twentieth-Century Book Clubs," 407.

[143] Leonard S. Marcus and Children's Book Council (New York), *75 Years of Children's Book Week Posters: Celebrating Great Illustrators of American Children's Books* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1994).

[144] Hoyt. 283. On new attentiveness to children as consumers, see Neil McCullough Clark, "Knee-High Customer," *System* 27, no. (1915): 237-44.

[145] "Fitting a Children's Bookshop," *Publishers' Weekly* 96, no. 22 (1919): 1614; Veronica S. Hutchinson, "Building a Children's Book Department," 96, no. 14 (1919): 1057-58; "A New Children's Room," *Publishers' Weekly* 96, no. 10 (1919): 596.

were established in the field, the Week continued to offer an annual opportunity to stimulate sales. The Week is observed every year and grew tremendously in scale.[146]

Through Children's Book Week, adults also acknowledged children's entitlement to amusement, validated the commoditization of children's books, and helped to legitimate the practice of marketing directly to children. The success of the Book Week campaign also contributed significantly to the consolidation of the children's book field. As the commercial potential of children's books took hold, children's bookshops opened and selling to children became more specialized.[147]

With growing reliability in the market, publishers were inclined to expand their lists and children's book editors sought new authors and illustrators. Major publishing houses created children's book lists and employed newly hired children's book editors to head the office. Across the children's book field, women were perceived to have special insight into children's interests. All the children's editors at major houses were women. Children's departments opened opportunities for women in the industry, but proved somewhat limiting to their advancement in other publishing sectors.[148] However, as the next chapter will show, the influence of women in children's book publishing soon came under scrutiny.

Conclusion

In the late-Nineteenth Century, priceless childhood established a public division between children and adults. It also afforded many children a share of the rising standard of living, despite their own diminished economic productivity. In the early decades of the Twentieth Century,

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[146] The National Association of Book Publishers took over the management of CBW in 1920. They placed responsibility for its promotion in the hands of Marion Humble, a former librarian, and tasked her with integrating Book Week into an overall plan for year-round selling. See Marion Humble, "Year 'Round Bookselling"; Marion Humble, "Looking Forward: A 'Book Week' Message from the Executive Secretary of the National Association of Book Publishers," *Publishers' Weekly* 108, no. 16 (1925): 1389-90.

[147] "Children's Bookshop Moves," *The Publishers' Weekly* 104, no. 14 (1923): 1236; Hudson, "Selling Books for Children: Practical Hints Gathered from Specialists in This Field."

[148] For a detailed discussion of women in children's book publishing, librarianship, and bookselling see Jacalyn Eddy, *Bookwomen: Creating an Empire in Children's Book Publishing, 1919-1939*, Print Culture History in Modern America (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

"appropriate" consumption and recreation became closely associated with children's physical, mental, moral, and social well-being. Play became a necessity for children's proper growth and education. At the same time, attempts to regulate leisure time proliferated. These campaigns set certain parameters for recreation and advanced certain class and gender expectations. Moreover, organized recreational activities were not without cost, nor were the programs accessible to all children.

As this chapter details, this redefinition of American boyhood and girlhood carried over to children's recreational reading. My research of finds that between 1900 and 1930 both boys and girls became active consumers of cheap amusements. While late-nineteenth-century girls were known for reading their brothers' books, twentieth-century publishers sought to maximize their opportunities to profit by amusing boys and girls. In an increasingly competitive market, some publishers took another cue from dime novels by capitalizing the extraordinary potential for gender-specific, books (*e.g.*, intended for boys only *or* girls only). As publishers appealed to boys and girls with similar sets of stories, they tailored the marketing and packaging specifically to attract the attention (and pennies) of boys *or* girls. These new practices further strengthened what I term the "separate shelves" in the children's book field.

The Stratemeyer Syndicate emerged as the industry leader, adapting several common strategies from the legacy of dime novels. In particular, Stratemeyer's juvenile series capitalized on direct engagement with children as recreational readers and consumers. Stratemeyer also employed innovative strategies to control aspects of production, efficiently engage his audience, and balance the preferences of his child readers against the demands of would-be critics. Initially, Stratemeyer and the American public believed that boys were the principal consumers (and victims) of cheap fiction. Accordingly, the boy audience was a central focus and the regulation of boys' reading habits remained a priority. By 1930, however, girls' series were well-established and, as the next chapter of this dissertation will show, girl readers gained significant presence in the field.

Much to the dismay of many upstanding middle-class parents, boys' and girls' series fiction became enormously popular, and the unruly spending habits and poor taste of these child consumers were regarded as a significant threat to their "fitness." This resulted in new large-scale campaigns to control children's access to the market and to supervise the spending habits of boys and girls.

At the same time, many publishers still believed selling to children also meant selling to parents; this had the added reward of earning favor with adults through children. Through Children's Book Week, publishers were able to capitalize on the children's market by collaborating with concerned adults and emphasizing points of agreement. If reformers could create wholesome family-friendly amusements, it stood to reason that businesses could produce similar entertainment. By offering entertaining books that worked in partnership with the school curriculum, for instance, publishers could claim a profitable share of training children. Similarly, if children were conceived of as the future and focus of the nation, then the patriotic reading list provided by the BSA could only help to secure the social order.

By conforming to parental and societal standards, or at least giving the appearance of doing so, American publishers gained precious access to the protected middle-class child. As the next chapter will show, a new trend would fuse middle-class purposefulness with reading pleasures to create Career-Romance novels for girls, thus perpetuating the separate shelves for another generation.

Figure 3-1. New Series: Market Share by Audience

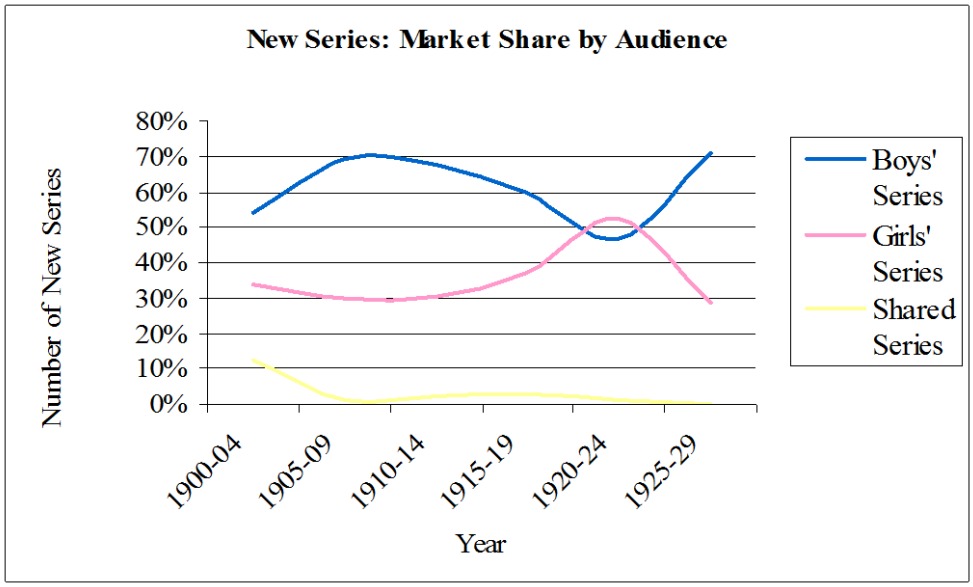

Figure 3-2. Stratemeyer Syndicate: Audience Distribution

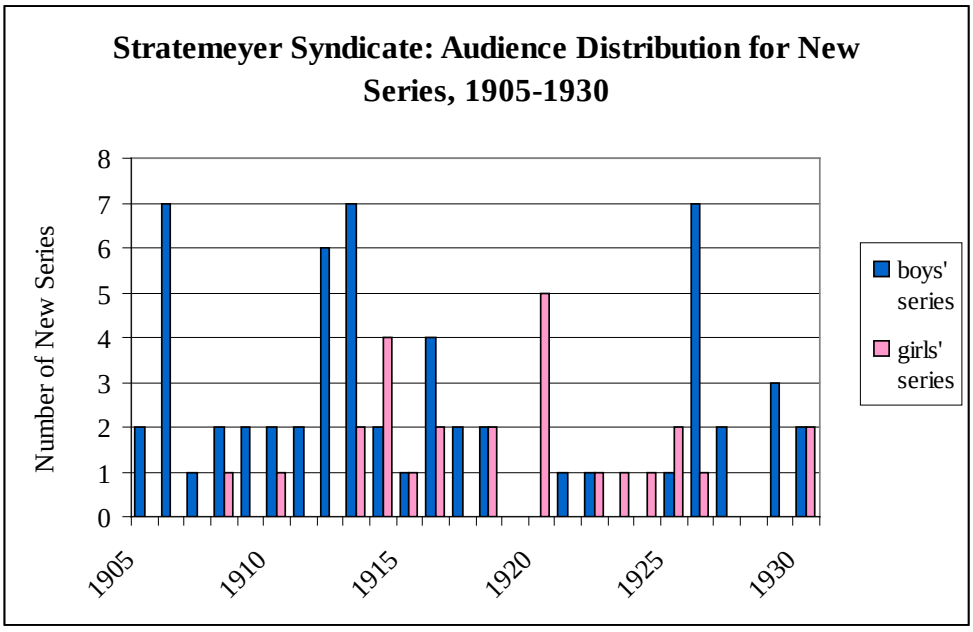

Figure 3-3. New Series: Distribution by Audience

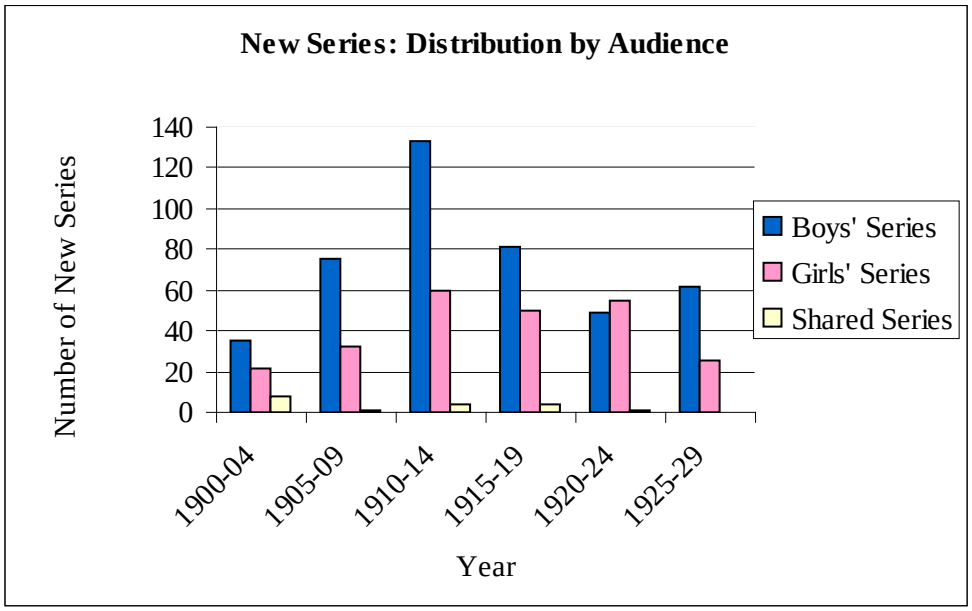

Table 3-1. Advertising Copy for *The Boys of Columbia High* and *The Girls of Central High*[149]

The Boys of Columbia High Graham B. Forbes	**The Girls of Central High** Gertrude W. Morrison
Never was there a cleaner, brighter, more manly boy than Frank Allen, the hero of this series of boys' tales, and never was there a better crowd of lads to associate with than the students of the School. All boys will read these stories with deep interest. The rivalry between the towns along the river was of the keenest, and plots and counterplots to win the championships, at baseball, at football, at boat racing, at track athletics, and at ice hockey, were without number. Any lad reading one volume of this series will surely want the others.	Here is a series full of the spirit of high school life of today. The girls are real flesh-and-blood characters, and we follow them with interest in school and out. There are many contested matches on track and field, and on the water, as well as doings in the classroom and on the school stage. There is plenty of fun and excitement, all clean, pure and wholesome.

[149] Advertising copy is quoted from the Grossett & Dunlap editions. These ads allowed people to purchase additional titles from the publisher at the price of forty cents per book postage paid. As expected, *BCH* is referenced exclusively as a boys' book, and *GCH* as a girls' series.

Figure 3-4. Cover Images *The Boys of Columbia High* and *The Girls of Central High*

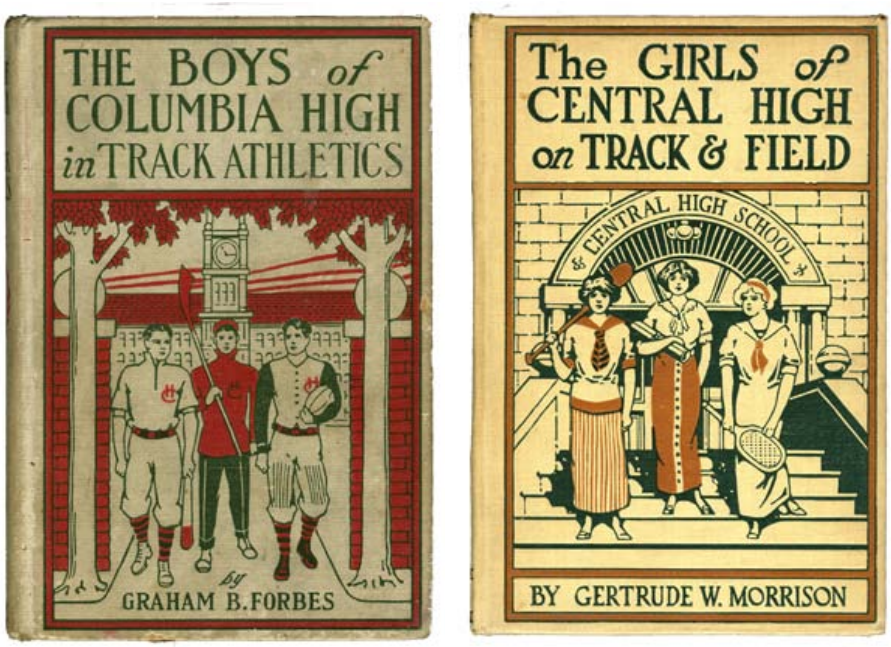

Table 3-2. Storylines from *The Boys of Columbia High* and *The Girls of Central High*[150]

The Boys of Columbia High Graham B. Forbes	**The Girls of Central High** Gertrude W. Morrison
The Boys of Columbia High; or, The All Around Rivals of the School (1911) In the initial volume of this series the reader was introduced to Frank Allen, Lanky Wallace, Paul Bird, Bones Shadduck, stout Buster Billings, Jack Comfort, and a great many other fellows who had to do with the life of the school, as well as with the sports which enlivened the vacation time of the pupils. Between the covers of "The Boys of Columbia High; or, The All Around Rivals of the School" are to be found a host of events such as might occur in any lively American town that is large enough to support a wideawake high school.	**The Girls of Central High; or, Rivals for All Honors** (1914) In the first volume of this series. . . Laura Belding was able to interest one of the wealthiest men of Centerport, Colonel Richard Swayne, in the girls' athletic association, then newly formed, so that he gave a large sum of money toward a proper athletic field and gymnasium building for their sole use.[151]
The Boys of Columbia High on the Diamond; or, Winning Out By Pluck (1911) As both Clifford and Bellport also had high schools with lofty pretensions, it can be easily understood that there was intense rivalry between the three river towns for supremacy in various sports. Although there may have been isolated instances of unfair advantage being taken of the teams from other towns, as a rule these contests of skill and endurance were fought fairly, and the defeated school was invariably cheered to the echo by the victor. Some of these lively hard-fought games will be found narrated in "The Boys of Columbia High on the Diamond; or, Winning Out by Pluck."	**The Girls of Central High on Lake Luna; or, The Crew That Won** (1914) In "The Girls of Central High on Lake Luna; or, The Crew That Won," the enthusiasm in sports among the girls of the five high schools reaches a high point. As the three cities in the league are all situated upon the beautiful lake named above, aquatic games hold a high place in the estimation of the rival associations of the league. Fun and sports fill this second volume.

[150] Descriptions for books 1-5: *The Boys of Columbia High in Winter Sports; or, Stirring Doings on Skates and Iceboats.* Description for book 6-8 were derived from the text. Description for book 1 from: *The Girls of Central High on Track and Field; or, The Champions of the School League.* Description for books 2-6 from: *The Girls of Central High Aiding the Red Cross; or, Amateur Theatricals for a Worthy Cause.* Description of book 7 is from the Grossett & Dunlap advertisement for the series. No teasers for 7 are given in the preceding book of the series; there was likely some uncertainty that it would continue as expenses rose over the course of WWI.

The Boys of Columbia High **Graham B. Forbes**	**The Girls of Central High** **Gertrude W. Morrison**
The Boys of Columbia High on the River; or, The Boat Race Plot That Failed (1911) Then later on, when the heat of summer rather put a damper on baseball, the cool river invited the boys who had red blood in their veins. Numerous were the fishing excursions taken, and swimming was a daily habit with many. There were other pleasures afforded by the Harrapin, as may be discovered by reading the third volume, "The Boys of Columbia High on the River; or, The Boat Race Plot that Failed."	**The Girls of Central High at Basketball; or, The Great Gymnasium Mystery** (1914) "The Girls of Central High at Basket Ball; Or, The Great Gymnasium Mystery," the third book, tells of several very exciting games in which the basket-ball team of Central High takes part, and the reader learns, as well, a good deal more about the individual characters of the girls themselves and of some very exciting adventures they have."
The Boys of Columbia High on the Gridiron; or, The Struggle For the Silver Cup (1911) When fall came of course nothing could be talked of but football, and it was only natural that fierce contests should be held between the three schools of the neighboring towns. You will find it all set down in the pages of "The Boys of Columbia High on the Gridiron; or, The Struggle for the Silver Cup;" and besides the battles on the football field there are numerous other events brought before the reader.	**The Girls of Central High on the Stage; or, The Play That Took the Prize** (1914) "The Girls of Central High on the Stage; Or, The Play That Took the Prize," the fourth volume in the series, is really Jess Morse's story, although Laura and their other close friends have much to do in the book and take part in the play which Jess wrote, and which was acted in the school auditorium. It was proved that Jess had considerable talent for play writing, and the professional production of her school play aided the girl and her mother over a most trying financial experience.
The Boys of Columbia High on the Ice; or, Out For the Hockey Championship (1911) Again did the Harrapin furnish enjoyment for the youth of Columbia, when the breath of Jack Frost covered its surface with a sheet of ice that was like glass. Here many delightful hours were passed in skating miles up the winding stream, or else engaged in winter sports of which the boys and girls of the town were unusually fond. That winter brought its rivalries in its train as well as the "good old summer time" can be understood from the title of the fifth volume of this series, "The Boys of Columbia High on the Ice; or, Out for the Hockey Championship."	**The Girls of Central High on Track and Field; or, The Champions of the School League** (1914) The fifth volume, "The Girls of Central High on Track and Field; Or, The Champions of the School League," is an all around athletic story in which rivalries for place in school athletics, excitement and interest of plot, and stories of character building are woven into a tale calculated to hold the attention of any reader interested in high school doings.

The Boys of Columbia High **Graham B. Forbes**	**The Girls of Central High** **Gertrude W. Morrison**
The Boys of Columbia High in Track Athletics; or, A Long Run That Won (1913) But even the most enthusiastic of lads eventually tire of skating, sledding and the bitter cold. Spring coming slowly, they yearn for other sports; and long before baseball can be indulged in the lure of the cinder track and long-distance running is apt to seize upon them. It did with Frank Allen and many of his schoolmates, at that time in their last year at the sear of learning presided over by Professor Tyson Parke. If you would like to know what wonderful things happened in the early days of that Spring all that is necessary for you to do is to read "The Boys of Columbia High in Track Athletics; or, A long Run that Won."	**The Girls of Central High in Camp; or, The Old Professor's Secret** (1915) During the summer previous to the opening of the present story in the series, these friends spent a most enjoyable time camping on Acorn Island, and the sixth tale, "The Girls of Central High in Camp; Or, The Professor's Secret," is as full of mystery, adventure, and fun as it can be. Since the end of the long vacation the Girls of Central High, as well as the boys who are their friends, had settled down to hard work both in studies and athletics."
The Boys of Columbia High in Winter Sports; or, Stirring Doings on Skates and Iceboats (1915) Frank Allen and some of his chums decided that it would be well for them to take a post-graduate course before entering college. Winter sports and mysteries fill this story.	**The Girls of Central High Aiding the Red Cross; or, Amateur Theatricals for a Worthy Cause** (1921) The girls get up an ice carnival also a play to aid Red Cross. There is also a great mystery in the story.
The Boys of Columbia High in Camp; or, The Rivalry of the Old School League (1920) The boys return home from college in time for "Old Home Week." There are many lively games of athletic competition, exciting events, and a queer sensation about the region of Frank's heart at the thought of Minnie Cuthbert - the prettiest girl in Columbia.	

Table 3-3. Early Book Week Posters

Year	Book Week Slogan	Illustrator
1919-23	More Books in the Home!	Jessie Willcox Smith
1924	More Books in the Home!	Jessie Willcox Smith [new illustration]
1925 & 1926	After all - there is nothing like A GOOD BOOK!	Jon O. Brubaker
1927 & 1928	Books. Romance. History. Travel.	N. C. Wyeth
1929	More Books in the Home!	Robert C. Gellert
1930	More Books in the Home!	Jessie Willcox Smith [1919 illustration]

CHAPTER FOUR

Young Adults:
Gender Distinctions in Boys' and Girls' Career Series, 1930-1960s

> A girl today can take care of herself pretty well, whether on horseback, in a canoe, or driving an automobile. She does things well, when she has a chance to do them at all, and the books that are written for her should give her even more confidence in her self-reliance.
>
> Girls Like Stories Which Have Lots of Action –
> Boys Are Not the Only Ones Who Look for Adventure in Books
> *Publishers' Weekly*, 1932 [1]

In 1932, Fjeril Hess contributed an article to *Publishers' Weekly*, an established trade journal for the American publishing industry. As editor of the official Girl Scouts' magazine, *American Girl*, Hess sought to provide a wide variety of exciting recreational reading for the organization's membership.[2] Despite a growing quantity of girls' books, Hess observed that the approach to the girl audience was not entirely satisfactory. In her view, girls' books lacked range and they were limiting when they should have been inspiring. She argued that girls needed books that made them think: "This could have happened to me, if I had the spunk to do as this boy or girl did, or if circumstances had made it possible for me to go on a ranch or on a voyage up in a plane."[3]

By the 1930s, gender-specific books intended for boys *or* girls (*i.e.*, separate shelves) were deeply rooted. As the preceding chapter details, during the early decades of the Twentieth Century the children's book field recognized girls more fully as a separate audience. In keeping

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[1] Fjeril Hess, "Girls Like Stories Which Have Lots of Action – Boys Are Not the Only Ones Who Look for Adventure in Books," *Publishers' Weekly*, 121, no. 13 (1932): 1478.

[2] Hess' efforts were intended to develop strong recreational reading options beyond her successes within the Girl Scouts publications. With a circulation of over 100,000, Fjeril Hess' *American Girl* was widely-read and highly-regarded. Prominent educator, activist, and author, Dorothy Canfield Fisher observed: "I know no other country where young girls have so excellent a magazine devoted to their own interests as our *American Girl;* no other magazine which brings to girls such fine poetry, such valuable articles on recreation, handicraft, outdoor living, and vocations. It is really something to be proud of that so intelligent a provision is made for girls of that age in the United States." Quoted in Katharine O. Wright, *Twenty-five Years of Girl Scouting, 1912-1937* (New York: Girl Scouts, 1937), 90.

[3] Hess, "Girls Like Stories Which Have Lots of Action."

with the widely-held association of gender and genre, boys' books typically featured adventures; girls' stories emphasized romance and friendship. Both the American public and publishers accepted and expected some boys' books and girls' books. Though this divide was especially prominent in juvenile series books, it was also channeled through the recreational reading suggestions of many child professionals (*e.g.,* Girl and Boy Scout leadership, child experts, librarians, teachers). More than just a classification of content, then, the separate shelves affixed a certain set of gender-specific needs and tastes to boys and girls.

Hess believed "the sex of the reader-to-be had little or nothing to do with the proper selection [of an appropriate book]."[4] At first glance, her choice to advocate for gender-specific reading material for girls appears to be a contradiction. However, Hess perceived boys' books and girls' books as a permanent fixture in the children's book field. Her concern was with the strict and limited association of particular content with a particular audience. Hess wanted girls to have what she perceived boys already had: reading options that were worthy of them. Based on this reasoning, she advocated for a greater recognition of the girl reader and her real needs: modern girls needed modern books.

This chapter examines the persistence of the gender distinction in the children's book field between 1930 and 1960. In the 1930s, middle-class values and gender distinctions remained a prominent part of the conceptualization of American childhood and adults granted children's personal preferences new authority. For the children's book field this meant satisfying (or appearing to satisfy) the tastes of individual readers and peer groups. In this context, the children's book field expanded the range of subjects addressed by children's books (*i.e.,* books for girl scouts, sports stories for the middle grades, young adult novels, etc.) while also parsing the child audience into narrower segments.

At the same time, the rise of modern adolescence infused childhood with gender-specific expectations as boys and girls were presented with more mature activities at an earlier age. My

[4] *Ibid.*

research demonstrates how accelerated adolescence also triggered new expectations for boys' books and girls' recreational reading. Rather than simply "build character," Hess, and other child-oriented professionals, advocated for boys' books and girls' books that were true-to-life based on the notion that these stories would develop the best qualities in boys and girls (*e.g.*, self-reliance, determination, confidence). They viewed recreational reading as a means to negotiate the perceived challenges of adolescence while offering boys and girls some preparation for their place in the adult world.

Fjeril Hess' call for more girls' books was met in abundance, including eleven girls' books Hess wrote herself. Scholars often focus on the well-known Stratemeyer series of this period, especially *Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew*. My research extends in a new direction to examine the evolution of the career fiction. Early career books were meant to give children information about adult responsibilities and the world of work in a manner appropriate to a child's age and experiences. These practical-but-pleasurable books fulfilled the middle-class interest of promoting white collar professions and, by extension, a stable family life. The books also took for granted that their readers were afforded the comforts of a middle-class childhood and its associated opportunities, aspirations, and expectations.

As the chapter will demonstrate, the adventurous true-to-life career stories advocated for by Hess and others conformed to an established gender divide in the world of work (*viz.*, girls as aspiring social workers and nurses, boys as future scientists and doctors). Moreover, even as girls' books emphasized women at work, they also featured relationships and marriage far more prominently than the counterparts written for boys. Most importantly, the perpetuation of separate shelves in career series ultimately worked to strengthen the gender distinction in the field as girls' books veered steadily away from the world of work and into the fantasy of youthful romance.

Valuing Childhood: The Affirmation of the Ideal Middle-Class Family

Between 1930 and 1960, the ideal American childhood gradually reoriented into a more implicitly middle-class and increasingly peer-oriented experience. At the same time, modern adolescence hastened the transition from childhood to adult life. These transformations in American childhood provided a catalyst for new forms of recreational reading intended to meet the perceived needs and interests of boys and girls as they prepared for adulthood.

Historians observe that in the 1920s and 1930s "old-style" family life marked by patriarchal authority gave way to a "companionate marriage" designed to ensure a mutually-fulfilling relationship. This new arrangement included access to birth control and divorce, and it was viewed as better suited for modern conditions.[5] Jackson Lears suggests that women at this time became "less responsible for instilling the voice of conscience than for promoting their family members' smooth integration into the larger society: Dad at work, kids at school and play."[6]

In this context, experts emphasized attentive parenting with a new concentration on the child's personality and emotional needs. Fathers and mothers were encouraged to be "pals" with their children.[7] At the same time, experts suggested that mothers were overly-emotional and overly-involved in their children's lives, but middle-class fathers were urged to have a higher level of engagement in domestic life.[8] Children were said to prefer a father who provided a comfortable lifestyle and treated them fairly; popular magazines portrayed fathers as nurturers

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[5] Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 113-124.

[6] Lears terms this a "managerial worldview." T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 189.

[7] See Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, Chapters 6 and 7. See also Julia Wrigley, "Do Young Children Need Intellectual Stimulation? Experts' Advice to Parents, 1900-1985," *History of Education Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1989): 41-75. For a summary of organized parent education activities, see Jean Carter, *Parents in Perplexity* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1938).

[8] See Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 2005), 231-94. See also, Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), ; Ann Hulbert, *Raising America: Experts, Parents, and a Century of Advice About Children* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003); Peter N. Stearns, *Anxious Parents: A History of Modern Childrearing in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

and active parents.[9] White, middle-class families showed a strong interest in applying the advice of experts to their own lives.[10] For example, enthusiasm for child-centered families is evident in the success of *Parents'* magazine, the only commercial magazine to see steadily rising circulation and advertising profits throughout the Depression.[11]

Middle-class Americans favored a higher degree of emotional control in both boys and girls.[12] At the same time, the middle class latched on to consumption as a means to express feelings. Across industries, children were invoked more frequently in advertising directed to adults. Images of "precious" children reminded parents of their duty to provide for their sons and daughters, as well as to prepare their children for adult responsibilities.[13] This idealized family became a standard element in advertising. For example, in 1937, the National Association of Manufacturers launched a billboard campaign proclaiming the wonders of American industry. One billboard featured an image of a "typical family" – two white, middle-class, smiling parents with two happy children, all well-dressed, out for a relaxing drive in the family car. It included the captions: "World's Highest Standard of Living" and "There's No Way Like the American

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[9] On fatherhood, see "Ideal Parent Is a 'Good Pal,' Children Declare in Survey," *The Washington Post*, 17 January 1940, 13; Eldred Myrtle Meyer, "Domineering Parent May Cause Dishonesty in Child," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 July 1930, A5. Steven Schlossman, "Perils of Popularization: The Founding Of 'Parents' Magazine'" *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 50, no. 4/5 (1985): 65-77.

[10] See Davis Allison and Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child-Rearing," *American Sociological Review* 11, no. 6 (1946): 698-710; Zena Smith Blau, "Exposure to Child-Rearing Experts: A Structural Interpretation of Class-Color Differences," *The American Journal of Sociology* 69, no. 6 (1964): 596-608; K. Alison Clarke-Stewart, "Popular Primers for Parents," *American Psychologist* 33, no. (1978): 359-69; Kathleen W. Jones, *Taming the Troublesome Child: American Families, Child Guidance, and the Limits of Psychiatric Authority* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[11] *Parents'* offers an interesting contrast with the concurrent popularity of the newly-founded *Esquire* magazine for men. *Esquire* commonly featured scathing criticism of modern women as "overly emotional," "gold digging," "annoying, invasive, and frankly intimidating, possibly sexually threatening" Peter N. Stearns and Mark Knapp, "Men and Romantic Love: Pinpointing a 20th-Century Change," *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 4 (1993): 778-80.

[12] Peter N. Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

[13] Cross, *The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture*. 158. See also Victoria Alexander, "The Image of Children in Magazine Advertisements from 1905 to 1990," *Communication Research* 21, no. 6 (1994): 191-93.

Way". The billboard was part of a large-scale campaign that placed 65,000 signs across the country in under two years. [14]

Historian Roland Marchand observes that advertisers incorporated and popularized selected ideas from child guidance (e.g., personality development, parental interventions, coaxing).[15] Marchand notes that limiting the number of children in images of the family indicated middle-class status and suggested the affluence associated with smaller, more "democratic" families.[16] Moreover, this lifestyle was described as essential not just for the healthy development of children, but for future political and social stability. As noted child expert, Sidonie Gruenberg, asserted, "Democracy begins at home. Living decently together is not merely for the family, with which we have concerned ourselves, but for all humanity."[17]

At the same time, the peer-orientation in American life was seeping into younger years as compulsory education placed children in close contact with their age-group for longer periods of time. Likewise, girls' and boys' organizations continued to channel hundreds of thousands of children to healthy outdoor activities, civic work, and a sense of adventure. Historians note that alongside the regulated and sanctioned activities adults provided for children (*i.e.*, school, clubs, community organizations, social welfare programs), peers organized their own popularity standards, friendships, and dating system.[18]

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[14] Katherine Hoffman, *Concepts of Identity: Historical and Contemporary Images and Portraits of Self and Family*, 1st ed. (New York: Westview Press, 1996), 320. This idealized family stands in stark contrast to the realities of 1930s America. In 1937, the National Association of Manufacturers billboards received noteworthy attention from documentary photographers Dorothea Lange, Margaret Bourke-White, Edwin Locke, and Walker Evans. All made compelling comment on the realities of poverty and discrimination. For example, Bourke-White's photograph for *Life* magazine juxtaposed this billboard with African American men, women, and children lined up at a relief center in Louisville, Kentucky.

[15] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Marchand argues that advertisements establish and reinforce "an integrative common language shared by an otherwise diverse audience." Marchand, xx.

[16] Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 192.

[17] Sidonie Gruenberg, *We, the Parents; Our Relationship to Our Children and to the World Today* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), xv.

[18] See especially, Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to*

In the 1930s the changing realities of girlhood challenged the outdated conception of girls as less active or capable than boys. For example, Girl Scouting was regarded as an established liberating movement for teen-age girls.[19] At this time, the Girl Scouts encouraged participation from younger girls, lowering recommendations from age ten to age seven. In 1937, the stated mission also was more explicitly inclusive: "Rich or poor, whatever her race or creed, Girl Scouting tries to bring to the American girl the opportunity to develop her aptitudes through recreation."[20]

Despite indications children's experiences might become more universal, social divisions among children remained largely intact. The reality of the Depression placed many children in reduced, even desperate, circumstances. In the early 1930s, one child in four attended high school in urban areas; enrollment dropped to one in seven in rural areas. On farms and in cities, many financially-stretched families relied on children to leave school or work part-time to supplement declining family incomes. The Depression also froze the flow of migration from rural areas to cities, exacerbating the tensions between adults and the younger generation with limited prospects for the future.[21]

Though some public agencies and parents intensified their commitment to child welfare, in many cases, it was not enough to relieve the struggles of newly- and chronically-poor children.[22] Discriminatory policies and practices also played a significant role in determining the

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Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Grace Palladino *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

[19] On girl's organizations, see Susan Miller, *Growing Girls: The Natural Origins of Girls' Organizations in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

[20] Under the guidance of National Headquarters, troops also extended across the nation, as did more than 950 Girl Scout camps. Wright, *Twenty-five Years of Girl Scouting*, 7.

[21] Kriste Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood: The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare*, 1912-46 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 140-144. Interestingly, the 4-H club maintained high levels of enrollment throughout the Depression due, at least in part, to the relatively low cost of participation and the opportunity to earn some money through its activities. Bruce Lee Melvin, John Nye Webb, and Carle Clark Zimmerman, *Rural Poor in the Great Depression; Three Studies* (New York: Arno Press, 1938; reprint, 1971), 111.

[22] See Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, Chapter 4. For examples, see "Chest Striving to Protect Children During Depression," *The Washington Post*, 14 October 1932, 16; "Must the Children Pay?,"

availability of aid and opportunities. White families received more public assistance to relieve financial pressures than did minority families. Educational exclusion persisted through a variety of practices (e.g., legal segregation, quotas, discriminatory enrollment requirements), despite the increase in compulsory education. Forced school closures and reduced classroom time deprived millions of children of a full education.[23] In this context, the "problem child" emerged in sharp contrast to the valued middle-class child. It was widely asserted that delinquency arose, at least in part, from an "inadequate background" (e.g., weak communities, dishonest peers, and bad parents). [24]

In the early-1940s, standard networks of child care collapsed as men and women entered military service and young mothers joined the workforce by choice or necessity. Even as public support for young families was wholly inadequate, mothers received little in the way of sympathy. The blame for "problem children" centered solidly on two targets: bad mothers and broken homes. Critics suggested that working mothers were guilty of neglecting their children. At

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Christian Science Monitor, 19 July 1934, 16; "Wide Child Distress Found in Survey," *New York Times*, 14 December 1931, 15.

[23] Adriana Lleras-Muney, "Were Compulsory Attendance and Child Labor Laws Effective? An Analysis from 1915 to 1939," *Journal of Law and Economics* 45, no. 2 (2002):401-35; Edward E. Redcay, "Pioneering in Negro Education," *The Journal of Negro Education* 6, no. 1 (1937): 38-53; Dwight Sanderson, *Research Memorandum on Rural Life in the Depression* (New York: Arno Press, 1937; Reprint, 1972).

[24] See Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, "Factors in the Commitment of Correctional School Girls in Wisconsin," *The American Journal of Sociology* 37, no. 2 (1931): 222-30; Du Pre Lumpkin, "Parental Conditions of Wisconsin Girl Delinquents," *American Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 2 (1932): 232-39; Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay, "Are Broken Homes a Causative Factor in Juvenile Delinquency?," *Social Forces* 10, no. 4 (1932): 514-24; Frederic Milton Thrasher, *The Gang; a Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago*, 2d rev. ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1936); Walter C. Reckless, "Juvenile Delinquency and Behavior Patterning," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 10, no. 8 (1937): 493-505; Chester C. Bennett, "Problem Children, Delinquency, and Treatment," *Review of Educational Research* 10, no. 5 (1940): 440-49; H. Barker Gordon, "Family Factors in the Ecology of Juvenile Delinquency," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 30, no. 5 (1940): 681-91. See also United States. Children's Bureau, *Juvenile Court Statistics* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1931). Juvenile court statistics show cases involving boys still outnumbered those involving girls, but the gap was narrowing, particularly among teenagers. The most frequent charges among girls were sexual misdemeanors and general unruliness. Boys, by contrast, were brought to court most commonly for stealing.

the same time, in the absence of fathers, some argued that mothers exerted too much influence and would hinder the psychological and emotional development of their children. [25]

As household incomes stabilized in the aftermath of World War II, large-scale land development moved some families to the isolation of the suburbs. Scholars note a renewed emphasis on marriage and family among middle-class women. With fathers away at work, new anxieties emerged about mothers. Once again, many middle-class Americans turned again to new experts, including the bestselling Dr. Benjamin Spock. Among other messages, Spock encouraged parents to meet children's need for attention, recognize their individuality, and ensure their healthy development by projecting proper gender roles.[26]

Historian Beth Bailey observes that the age of adolescence was drastically reduced during the post-war era. Boys and girls were brought together to practice the fundamentals of normative masculinity and femininity by mimicking adult activities. For example, Bailey notes:

> Thirteen-year-olds who did not yet date were called "late bloomers," and recommended dates were not just parent- or school-sponsored coed activities to encourage boys and girls to feel comfortable around each other. Instead, they were dances where twelve-year-old girls in their strapless formals were "meticulously padded out," and formal "sit-down" birthday dinners and dances for ten-year-olds and their dates.[27]

The combination of deferred adulthood and accelerated adolescence affirmed finer age gradations among children (*e.g.*, toddlers, children, sub-teens), with a relatively short period of childhood followed by a prolonged "tweenage." These mature activities placed expectations for children's futures more fully into the foreground. As the following section details, the new attentiveness to more social distinctions also carried through to beliefs about recreational reading as adults

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[25] See Scott Coltrane and Michele Adams, "The Social Construction of the Divorce "Problem": Morality, Child Victims, and the Politics of Gender," *Family Relations* 52, no. 4 (2003): 363. Blaming mothers for divorce and children's suffering has a long history. See especially, Olga L. Bridgman, "Problem Children, Delinquency, and Treatment," *Review of Educational Research* 13, no. 5 (1943): 448-57. See also, Walter C. Reckless, Dinitz Simon, and Ellen Murray, "Self Concept as an Insulator against Delinquency," *American Sociological Review* 21, no. 6 (1956): 744-46.

[26] Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, Chapters 9 and 10.

[27] Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat,* 48.

acknowledged more divisions among children and set about meeting each groups perceived needs and interests.

The Right Book for the Right Child: Dividing Audiences and Defining Preferences

The child-centered family encouraged greater consideration for children's individual preferences in the children's book field. However, the production and critical reception of children's books continued to rely on the beliefs and assumptions of adults with, at best, a limited understanding of boys' and girls' interests. Building on past precedent, adults expected boys and girls to have different reading preferences. They also continued to assign recreational reading with the dual, though sometimes conflicted, purpose of entertaining and educating the child reader.

Through the 1930s, the rhetoric of "balanced diets" and "healthy rations" remained fairly common in the children's book field. For example, in her 1935 article, "The Menace of the Series Book," Lucy Kinloch, a children's librarian and a faculty member of the Pratt Institute School of Library Science, describes the poor "intellectual appetite" of children who favor series books (*i.e.*, "ice cream") over healthy reading (*i.e.*, "spinach"). Kinloch champions the valiant efforts of parents, teachers, and children's librarians (*i.e.*, "literary doctors") who work together to cure children who have "overdosed" on "trash." Kinloch also objects at length to "the unnatural, pseudo-heroes of some Boy Scout stories, and perhaps worst of all for insidious influence, the overly-sentimental girls' school stories."[28]

The question of "cheap fiction," though still present among the professionals dedicated to "better books," largely faded to the background during the Depression. Instead, in keeping with changes in American childhood, more weight was given to putting children's individual needs and desires first. Modern education needed to be interesting and effortless; children needed more

[28] Lucy Kinloch, "The Menace of the Series Book," *Elementary English Review* 12, no. (1935): 9-11.

engaging and appealing material across a range of subjects.[29] Rather than dictate a prescribed list of books or impose a set curriculum, boys and girls needed to be offered a variety of reading choices.[30] Likewise, children's reading instruction had a new focus on fun over formality.[31] As one educator observed: "The teacher's business is to know books, to see that books are accessible to these red blooded youngsters, and to turn boys and girls loose to enjoy their opportunities."[32]

With the growing authority attributed to children's individuality, studies of recreational reading interests became preoccupied with how to predict what book would appeal to a specific child. This orientation was also motivated by the large-scale investigations into children's reading of the 1920s.[33] In particular, Terman and Lima's approach spawned numerous studies of children's reading "with special reference to individual differences caused by age, sex, intelligence, and special interests."[34] Researchers gave greater attention to mental ability, asserting strong contrasts between the higher-quality tastes of "bright children" relative to their

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[29] Arthur I. Gates, *Interest and Ability in Reading* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1930), 105.

[30] See for example, Jean Betzner and R. L. Lyman, "The Development of Reading Interests and Tastes," in *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report*, ed. National Society for the Study of Education. Committee on Curriculum-Making and Guy Montrose Whipple (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1937); Frank and America; "Let the Child Select His Own Reading Material," *Publishers' Weekly* 121, no. 13 (1932): 1481; Joan MacWillie, "The Christmas Books Children Pick Out," *Publishers' Weekly* 134, no. 23 (1938): 1572-73.

[31] For example, *Dick and Jane* readers were introduced in 1927. By the 1950s, an estimated 80% of American first-graders were taught to read using these books. See Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Growing up with Dick and Jane: Learning and Living the American Dream* (San Francisco: Collins Publishers San Francisco, 1996); Richard L. Mandel, "Children's Books: Mirrors of Social Development," *The Elementary School Journal* 64, no. 4 (1964): 190-99. See also, John Coles, "Making the Classic Curriculum Shudder," *Publishers' Weekly* 130, no. 9 (1936): 708-09.

[32] Bernice Beggs, "Individual Differences in Recreatory Reading," *School Executives Magazine,* 50 (August, 1931): 554.

[33] These studies vary in the degree of scientific analysis and subjective interpretation, but all purported to offer insight into the books children read and the subjects they found of interest. See Carleton Washburne and Mabel Vogel, *Winnetka Graded Book List* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1926). Washburne and Vogel collected the titles of 8,500 books read by children across the United States and compiled a list of the 700 titles reported by 25 or more children (omitting some considered "trashy" by a selected committee of librarians). See also Lewis Terman and Margaret Lima, *Children's Reading; a guide for parents and teachers* (New York: Appelton, 1926. Revised edition, 1931); American Library Association, et al.,*The Right Book for the Right Child; a graded buying list of children's books* (New York: John Day Co., 1933); Willis Uhl, *The Materials of Reading: Their Selection and Organization* (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1924).

[34] Terman and Lima, *Children's Reading*, vi. Terman and Lima collected data on the reading interests of two thousand children. Their study is referenced and summarized at length by subsequent research.

"duller" peers. Likewise, the recreational reading of children from working-class and immigrant backgrounds often is described as "lacking home training" and "lacking ambition."[35]

In 1933, *The Right Book for the Right Child: A Graded Buying List of Children's Books* correlated gender, age, and reading preferences. It notes:

> (F)airy stories begin to pay a decreasing part in children's reading from the age of nine or ten on, while the adventure element, particularly in boys' books, becomes more and more pronounced as one analyzes the books read by children of increasing age. Boys as they grow older read fewer and fewer books in which the principal character is a girl, while girls, as they increase in age, tend to read more and more books in which the principal character is a girl.[36]

The books included in *The Right Book for the Right Child* are listed by grade-level, with individual entries indicating the age and sex (as needed) of readers likely to find the book interesting. Books are classified as boys' or girls' if they are read and liked by at least twice the proportion of one sex as the other; all other books are considered of equal interest to boys and girls.[37]

In keeping with this recognition of divisions among child readers, several publishers adopted an innovative system of age-coding children's books on the jacket to facilitate matching books to the appropriate reader.[38] Likewise, the category of "young people" became too out-dated and too broad for the publishing industry. New age-defined advertising quickly swept the field. For example, Scribner's boasted to the trade: "Your Best Sellers for Young Customers" featuring

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[35] See especially, Beggs, "Individual Differences in Recreatory Reading"; May Lazar, "Reading Interests, Activities, and Opportunities of Bright, Average, and Dull Children" (Thesis, Ph.D. Teachers college, Columbia University, 1937).

[36] Association and others, *The Right Book for the Right Child,* xxv.

[37] *Ibid.*, 132, 137. Recommended reading lists also demonstrate a certain relaxation of standards when compared with their predecessors. Popular authors that had been included with reluctance now were rehabilitated, perhaps after reconsideration on the part of librarians, or perhaps because consistent popularity over five decades simply silenced their objections. Both Alcott and Twain receive favorable treatment in the leading guides, completely reversing the position taken by librarians in earlier periods. For example, the *Children's Catalog* of 1946 notes of *Huckleberry Finn:* "A combination of romance, realism, and humor, with a power in delineation of character only attainable by a great genius." *Children's Catalog*, (New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1946), 153.

[38] For example, publishers used "68" to indicate a book was intended for children ages 6-8. This helped the salesperson and avoided alienating buyers who might think a book "too old" or "too babyish." The coding also was intended to solve some problems arising from sales personnel who lacked knowledge of the children's market. See "Code on Juvenile Jackets," *Publishers Weekly* 130, no. 4 (1936): 250; "Codes for Juveniles," *Publishers Weekly* 130, no. 7 (1936): 494.

a picture book for "1-4 age readers."[39] In 1942 the *Herald Tribune* expanded its Spring Festival Awards from two categories (*e.g.*, younger readers and older readers) to three: children over 12, children under 12, and "picture-book age."[40]

As the investigation in children's recreational reading continued, children's preferences were commonly considered age- and gender-exclusive. Observers of children's reading habits noted that girls read their brothers' books, but boys rarely read a book for girls. They attributed this to the inferior quality of most girls' books, as well as the stigma attached to a boy's enjoyment of anything deemed too feminine.[41] Researchers also affirmed gender-specific preferences in children's reading interests. Boys expressed consistent interest in common themes: war, mechanical information, science, aviation, and sport. Likewise, girls indicated a partiality for books on: personal beauty, behavior and personality, relationships, and travel.[42]

To be sure, boys and girls also shared a common set of preferences for their recreational reading. For example, the children's librarian for the Los Angeles Public Library, Rosemary Livsey, noted strong overlap in her 1943 review for *The Horn Book*:

> "What I want to read," says any one of the boys and girls of today, "is a book about now!" And with the clear directness of youth they set their own standards for these stories. First they must be about boys and girls living, thinking, and solving their problems in the world today.[43]

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[39] "Scribner Spring Juveniles," *Publishers Weekly* 139, no. 16 (1941).

[40] May Lamberton Becker, "Three Prize Books for Children," *The Washington Post,* 11 May 1941, L12.

[41] See for example, Hubert Coryell, "When Boys Read the Books They Like: A Heretical Booklist," *Publishers' Weekly* 128, no. 16 (1935): 1463-65; Lucile Foster Fargo and American Library Association, *The Library in the School*, 1st ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1930); Josette Frank and Child Study Association of America, *What Books for Children? Guideposts for Parents*, Rev. ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, inc., 1941); B. Lamar Johnson, "Children's Reading Interests as Related to Sex and Grade in School," *The School Review* 40, no. 4 (1932): 257-72; Robert L. Thorndike and Florence Henry, "Differences in Reading Interests Related to Differences in Sex and Intelligence Level," *The Elementary School Journal* 40, no. 10 (1940): 751-63.

[42] See for example, "What Young People Want to Read About," *The Library Quarterly,* 10, no. 4 (October, 1940): 469-93. Whether the gender division is due to differences in the material boys and girls were offered or a statement about their expressed interests cannot be determined from these studies. What is clear is the continuity in the kinds of gender and genre associations reported over time.

[43] Rosemary Livsey, "Modern Career Stories for Girls," *The Horn Book* 19, no. 1 (1943): 50. *The Horn Book* is a highly respected magazine established in 1924 for the purpose of reviewing new children's literature and providing purchasing suggestions to book-buyers.

Livsey further suggested that children favored adventurous stories with "varied, natural, and spontaneous" characters, as well as "frankness, sincerity, and simplicity" in relationships. "Humor is an indispensable ingredient," she wrote. Livsey also proposed that boys and girls wanted stories about "the working world" which are "accurate and up-to-date."[44]

Despite commonalities, adults believed the wartime needs and interests of boys and girls varied widely according to age. For example, in 1943 *Publishers' Weekly* editor, Frederic Melcher, asserted that the book field needed to "build for the future" by giving "special attention to the very personal individual needs" of boys and girls from eleven to seventeen.[45] Across the children's book field, publishers responded with more picture books, books for children age eight to twelve, and a long list of informative books for teenagers.[46] By the 1950s, *Publishers' Weekly's* forecast of juvenile lists used several distinct categories, including: picture books; six to nine; eight to twelve; ten to fourteen; boys' stories twelve to sixteen; girls' stories twelve to sixteen; biographies; history, geography and anthropology; science; nature books; horse and dog stories.[47]

Separate boys' books and girls' books remained taken-for-granted and supported within the children's book field. More publishers believed that boys and girls wanted books that were suited to their specific tastes and age, and children's books became merchandise meant for specific buyers. Still, publishers did surprisingly little to get to know their audience. I find that formal market research was essentially non-existent in the children's book field throughout this period. The only significant exception was the *Junior Reviewers* program devised by Jean

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[44] Rosemary Livsey's commitment to children's recreational reading was strong. As a girl, she submitted prose to *St. Nicholas* magazine. Upon graduation the library school at the Los Angeles Public Library in 1921, Livsey worked in the children's department in Los Angeles. She was active in the Professional Training Committee of the American Library Association, Section for Library Work with Children. She later served as chair of the Awards Committee for the prestigious Newbery and Caldecott Medals. Livsey retired as head children's librarian for the Los Angeles Public Library in 1967.

[45] Frederic Melcher, "Build for the Future Now," *Publishers Weekly* 144, no. 7 (1943): 1587.

[46] Lena Barksdale, "A Parade of Picture Books," *Publishers Weekly* 146, no. 9 (1944): 704-08; May Lamberton Becker, "Sturdy Fare for the Teens," *Publishers Weekly* 146, no. 9 (1944): 714-18; Frances Chrystie, "Fall Books for Middle-Aged Children," *Publishers Weekly* 146, no. 9 (1944): 709-13.

[47] Mary Pfeiffer, "Some Highspots of the Spring Juvenile Lists," 159, no. 10 (1951): 1246-53. See also, Vernon Ives, "Teen Age: 15 to 50," *Publishers Weekly* 151, no. 17 (1947): 2194-97.

Poindexter Colby. The program began in 1942 as an off-shoot of an adult manuscript-testing service. By 1952, Colby employed one hundred and twenty reviewers, paying them 25¢ - 35¢ for each review. The resulting reports formed the basis for a subscription journal, a catalog of recommended books, and a mobile book fair. Colby also offered a manuscript testing service available to authors and publishers who "wanted to be sure of their wares before they were published."[48]

Career Books for Young Moderns

Changes in childhood and accelerated adolescence prompted new divisions in the children's market and assigned new purposes to recreational reading. One outcome of this was the advocacy for more gender-specific children's books to meet the perceived needs of young adults. Between 1930 and 1960, the gradual revelation of aspects of adult life was viewed as both necessary and helpful. In particular, career stories were designed to assist boys and girls as they navigated the perceived crises of their age while also preparing them for the realities of the adult world.[49] In this respect, career fiction marks something of a compromise merging the familiar plot devices from popular series sought by the child reader with the purposefulness demanded by adults.

As my research details, when the investment in preparing middle-class girls for careers gave way to accelerated adolescence and a renewed focus on marriage, the orientation of career series shifted from professions to romantic fantasy. By contrast, boys were identified as the primary market for new nonfiction series designed to appeal to their interest in information and to provide practical knowledge and skills for their future in the workplace.

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[48] Jean Poindexter Colby, *The Children's Book Field* (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1952), 231.
[49] On reading as preparation, see for example "The Adolescent in School" *The Library Quarterly*, 30, no. 1 (January, 1960): 24-6.

Drawn On Her Own Experience: Early Career Fiction by Author-Professionals

Several publishers began to test the market for juvenile career fiction in the 1930s. For example, Macmillan published *Sandra's Cellar* (1934), the story of a girl working in a bookshop to earn money for college. *Sandra's Cellar* was written by Fjeril Hess based on her own experience. Through the 1930s and 1940s, Hess remained dedicated to giving American girls the books she believed they deserved. In addition to her work on Girl Scouts' publications, she authored eleven books for girls, all published by Macmillan. Hess crafted these stories based on her own adventurous life experience including, teaching on a dude ranch in Nevada, social work in Prague, and war-time service in the Women's Army Corps. As expected, her work echoes the Girl Scouts' evolving emphasis on social service, international friendship, and self-sufficiency.[50]

Though interesting in itself, Hess' contribution to girls' books merits attention because she was part of a larger pattern in children's publishing. In past decades, child professionals (*e.g.*, children's librarians, teachers, social activists, boys' and girls' organizations) had largely worked to censor children's recreational reading (See Chapter 2) and they collaborated to promote "better books" for boys and girls (See Chapter 3). *Sandra's Cellar*, and other books like it, mark a new association between influential adults and publishers as more advocates for boys and girls also took up writing books for boys or girls.

Early career books imitate many of the standard elements and formulas of series fiction to lure in young readers. They also incorporate some realistic occupational guidance designed to appease adults. Specifically, publishers touted the stories as drawn from the author's real experiences in a profession, placing significant emphasis on a balance of adventure and

[50] Reviews of Hess' work suggest that overall her fiction was favorably received though limited by the necessity of balancing of imagination with fact-based stories. For example, the Kirkus review of *Sandra's Cellar* states: "A bookseller's book -- though most of them will feel it is too rosy spectacled a picture of that evasive game, running a bookshop. There is, however, the inspiration, the imagination, the ingenuity, the fun of it all, in this story of Sandra, who worked in a bookshop on part time, and found it an all time job. The author has drawn on her own experience, and has made a good vocational story of it, with a few hints that might not come amiss in the trade." *Sandra's Cellar* was also recognized by *The Horn Book*, several education and library journals, the Girl Scout Handbook, and as a suggested prompt for Book Week activities.

authenticity.[51] Though many librarians continued to favor practical, nonfiction career books, career fiction found some advocates if "their facts are reliable and the excitements in which they may abound belong to the job itself and are not put in to brighten the book for the reader."[52]

In keeping with changes in normative femininity, these books encouraged and expected girls to be active. The general trend toward presenting a more self-reliant girlhood appears to have been a welcome addition to the world of girls' books. As one critic noted:

> This year girls in books are hard at work. Whether their background is town or country they are aware of the problems of today and although they dream and hope and love clothes and romance as much as any girls in stories ever delighted in those joys of life, they spend most of their waking hours in good solid work. They no longer putter about, contended with "helping," but look squarely at the future as boys are supposed to do. Without sentimentality they seem to have decided that honest labor bears a lovely face. . . Today they want recognition of their abilities, not special dispensations because they are girls.[53]

Hess' call was being heard. Yet, the balance between the real world of work and the dream of romance was a delicate one. As the remainder of this chapter will show, though girls may have wanted recognition of their abilities, the differences between a boys' book and a girls' book remained significant and they directed boys and girls to very different destinations.

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[51] Other examples include: *Joan of the Journal* (Appleton 1930), *Young Phillips, Reporter* (Harcourt 1933), *Bob Gordon, Cub Reporter* (Doubleday/Junior Literary Guild 1935). The popular Stratemeyer Syndicate series also added elements of career fiction to some of their books. Most notably, several of the later *Ruth Fielding* titles chronicle Ruth's adventures running her own film company.

[52] May Lamberton Becker, *First Adventures in Reading; Introducing Children to Books* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1936), 188. Becker was book editor of the *Scholastic*'s high school magazine. By contrast, librarians tended to endorse nonfiction career books. On Journalism, for example, see American Library Association and others, *The Right Book for the Right Child; a Graded Buying List of Children's Books* (New York: John Day Co., 1933), 835. There is some indication that nonfiction books were also adopting a more stimulating and fun-oriented approach. For example, *What Do You Want to Be?: A Career Book for Boys* features a "psychologically sound career quiz" to help the reader identify his talents, as well as "exciting photographs of men at work." George H. Waltz, *What Do You Want to Be? A Book of Careers for Boys* (New York: H. Holt, 1939).

[53] "Girls in Books," *The Horn Book* 10 (1934): 370.

*Pleasurably Practical: The Dodd Mead Career Book*s

Two new arrivals to Dodd, Mead & Company set the first series of career books in motion.[54] In 1934, Dorothy Bryan left the junior books department of Doubleday-Doran where she began her career as an assistant to publishing pioneer, May Massee. Under Bryan's direction, the juvenile books department at Dodd, Mead created and instituted many of the new practices, including narrower age segmentation.[55] The second addition to Dodd, Mead was a boys' book, *Bob Flame, Ranger*, authored by Dorr G. Yeager, a Park Naturalist stationed in Yellowstone National Park. The story depicts the thrilling adventures of a first-year U.S. Ranger and his true-to-life experiences with forest fires, unruly campers, and encounters with bears. Dodd, Mead quickly added three new titles by Yeager: *Bob Flame, Rocky Mountain Ranger* (1935), *Bob Flame in Death Valley* (1937), and *Bob Flame among the Navajo* (1946).

Ranger Flame was surely a hero and a role-model. More importantly, Bryan saw the possibility of a new kind of juvenile series in these stories.[56] In 1936, she launched the *Dodd Mead Career Book* series for boys and girls. The dual-mission of the series was to entertain

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[54] Dodd, Mead & Company was well-established in the children's book field, but had not been especially active in the juvenile series market in recent decades. Dodd, Mead first published the best-selling *Elsie Dinsmore* books beginning in 1868, and more recently a 1914 "quality" edition of *Mother Goose* illustrated by future Book Week poster artist Jessie Wilcox Smith. By the 1930s, children's books represented roughly 20-25% of their business; they had a growing list of new juvenile titles as well as a sizeable backlist. Edward Dodd, *The First Hundred Years; a History of the House of Dodd, Mead, 1839-1939* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1939), 47.

[55] Together with Louise Seaman of Macmillan, May Massee set the standard for children's books in the 1920s and defined the path for women in commercial publishing. Bryan and others learned the profession under their guidance. As the children's book field expanded, this second generation took charge of newly-formed departments at Stokes, E.P. Dutton, Harper's, Coward-McCann, Little, Brown, and Longmans, Green. Bryan's tenure as director of Dodd, Mead's juvenile books would prove successful, and in 1958 she would be named the company's first female vice-president. On Seaman and Massee, see American Library Association, "The Viking Ship," *ALA Bulletin* 50, no. (1956): 493-97; Louise Seaman Bechtel and Virginia Haviland, *Books in Search of Children: Speeches and Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1969); Jacalyn Eddy, *Bookwomen: Creating an Empire in Children's Book Publishing, 1919-1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006). On Bryan's career, see especially Dodd; *Foremost Women in Communications; a Biographical Reference Work on Accomplished Women in Broadcasting, Publishing, Advertising, Public Relations, and Allied Professions*, (New York: Foremost Americans Pub. Corp., 1970).

[56] Dodd, Mead & Company acquired Yeager's publisher in 1934. On the acquisition, Dodd, *The First Hundred Years*, 41. In the 1930s, Dodd also established a reprint house (co-owned with Harpers; Harcourt, Brace; and Little, Brown) that gave them important leverage in the field.

readers while providing them with useful career information. Above all, Bryan wanted the series to be "pleasurably practical."[57]

The *Dodd Mead Career Book* series is comprised of both boys' books *and* girls' books. As a thematic series, the books are unified because they share a common subject rather than a consistent cast of characters (*e.g.,* Nancy Drew and friends). The books function as a series because they are packaged and marketed by the publisher as a cohesive collection. Each individual book employs the familiar tone, formula, and packaging of a boys' or girls' series book. Despite the unique, stand-alone qualities of each title, the books have significant similarities in theme and story. Books in the series all conformed to a standard format; later titles were marked with a special colophon (See Figure 4-1).[58] They also employed the standard juvenile series illustrated-cover, with advertising of other titles to stimulate further interest and sales (See Figure 4-2).

The Severe Four-Point Test

Bryan developed a new approach to production to ensure a pleasurably practical series. First, she actively publicized the fact that each book in the *Dodd Mead Career Book* series was required to "pass a severe four-point test before it can even be considered for publication." Interestingly, the test was much more than a publicity claim. Rather than rely on professional writers and fiction factories to craft the books as many other series producers did, Bryan requested manuscripts from people who "have lived the careers they write about." She required that authors have a thorough knowledge of their field, be able to write about it "enthusiastically and with understanding," and put their personal experiences "to the advantage of readers who want sound advice."

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[57] Dorothy Bryan, "Publishing Career Books to Help Form Careers," *Publishers Weekly* 136, no. 9 (1939): 641-42.

[58] Colophons are logos that appear in books. The use of this mark in *Dodd Mead Career Books* indicates that the book is part of the larger thematic series.

Bryan also specified that the careers offer "plenty of opportunities." The stories could not be unrealistic or overly-glamorized; they needed to be about attaining success through work and dedication. If a career merited attention, but the selected author-professional failed to meet the literary expectations, Bryan added a co-author to the project. Most importantly, Bryan made the purpose of the *Dodd Mead Career Book* series a central part of its framing: facing the title page of every book is an advertisement for "an interesting free booklet" describing book authors and this "severe four-point test."

The *Dodd Mead Career Book* series was a gamble. Bryan was well aware that the series carried the risk of alienating boys and girls with "sugar-coated pills," while also facing possible rejection from adults who believed juvenile series to be inherently too "commercial" and thus beyond redemption.[59] Moreover, juvenile series fiction depended upon an efficient production schedule that provided new titles at regular intervals and maintained the momentum of interest and sales. The new controls Bryan placed into the process could have easily bogged down the series.

In my research, I identified 125 career titles published by Dodd, Mead between 1936 and 1968 (37 boys' books and 88 girls' books).[60] Announcements for each book emphasize an exciting story, and they typically feature the professional credentials of the author. In reviews and in advertising, the audience is regularly described according to age (12-16) or by category ("older girls" or "older boys"). The annual children's book issues of in *Publishers' Weekly* consistently divide career books along the same lines.[61]

As its longevity suggests, the *Dodd Mead Career Book* series received a sufficiently favorable reception. I find that reviewers complimented the books as readable and informative, presenting characters with determination, confidence, and charm. The heroes and heroines earn

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[59] Bryan, "Publishing Career Books to Help Form Careers," 643.
[60] Appendix A details my identification and analysis of career books and reviews.
[61] For example, "Children's Books in Review," *Publishers Weekly* 130, no. 9 (1936): 714; "Publishers Promote Outstanding Titles," *Publishers Weekly* 134, no. 9 (1938): 685-707.

their success, face challenges, learn new skills, and gain a healthy pride for the work they do. The standard elements of romance and adventure kept the stories interesting. Bryan's commitment to professionals-as-authors set the series apart; it also lent a decidedly autobiographical streak to the books. This tone personalized what might have become a laundry list of tasks and skills. To be sure, not all of the books received enthusiastic endorsements. A few had weak narration, others were thin on plot. However, the criticism shows none of the animosity typically directed at series fiction. The stories are not dismissed as trash or cheap; at worst, they erred by being too technical. After decades of disapproval, a juvenile fiction series was greeted as "sympathetic and interesting," "first rate," and "authentic."[62]

Bryan's criteria earned the series high recommendations from vocational guidance professionals, who were persuaded that the educational intentions of the publishers and the professional credentials of the authors resulted in popular, but purposeful, series.[63] Many titles were recommended for libraries, parents, schools; several were endorsed by the Cardinal's Literature Committee for Catholic reading.[64] Reviews, promotions, and booksellers also commonly paired career fiction with nonfiction career books on the idea that fiction would satisfy the appetite *and* stimulate interest in more substantive books. By all accounts, the *Dodd Mead Career Book* series was a valuable addition to girls' and boys' recreational reading.

The early books set an impressive standard. For example, Emma Bugbee authored *Peggy Covers the News* (1934). At the time, Bugbee was one of two women reporters at *The New York Herald Tribune*. She expressed frustration at the absence of women in her profession and with being assigned human interest stories and the "woman's angle." *Peggy Covers the News* was

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[62] Quotations are from *Kirkus Reviews* of: Emma Bugbee, *Peggy Covers Washington* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1937); Dorothy Deming, *Penny Marsh, Public Health Nurse* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1938); Sara Waller Pennoyer, *Polly Tucker, Merchant* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1937).

[63] For example, Gertrude Forrester, *Occupational Literature; an Annotated Bibliography*, 1971 ed. (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1971).

[64] The Cardinal's List included several recommendations for juveniles. Bryan was in charge of the Cardinal's Literature Committee for several years, which likely accounts for the consistent notice of Dodd Mead Career Books. In addition to the value of being selected, the lists were published in the *New York Times* and gave the books some favorable, free publicity.

designed to stimulate interest in journalism and to realistically present some of the difficulties and rewards of the career. Reviewers praised Bugbee for "writing in fictional terms which are yet not too rosy for reality."[65]

The *Dodd Mead Career Book* series sold modestly. Still, *Peggy* was an important financial success, triggering important advance orders and reorders of subsequent Career Books.[66] As this series was launched, Dorothy Bryan also served as Director of the Juvenile Program Committee for the *New York Times* Book Fair; the series likely received some early and important exposure at the Fair. The favorable reception of early titles provided Bryan with a sufficient pool of new books to keep the series going. For especially successful titles, she arranged for follow-up books chronicling the further adventures of a character in his or her profession. Bugbee's *Peggy* merited a total of five books in the series, dramatizing her entrance into the field and her reporting in Washington and London.[67] However, the majority of characters and careers were only granted a single title. As Figure 4-3 illustrates, early *Dodd Mead Career Book*s were divided fairly evenly between boys' books and girls' books. During the war and after, the series shifted to favor girls.

Gender at Work: Comparing Two Dodd Mead Career Books

Two titles typical of this series illustrate the persistent differences in the content of boys' and girls' career books. As the title suggests, E. Evalyn Grumbine's *Patsy Breaks into Advertising* (1939) details Patsy's initial interest in advertising and her adventures as she enters

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[65] Ellen Lewis Buell, review of *Peggy Covers the News,* by Emma Bugbee, *New York Times Book Review*, 6 December 1936, BR14. Bugbee covered the women's suffrage campaign, Eleanor Roosevelt, and fourteen Republican and Democratic conventions. In her fifty-five-year career, Bugbee actively campaigned for opportunities for female journalists, and she founded the Newspaper Women's Club of New York. For her position on women in journalism, see Emma Bugbee, "Journalism," in *An Outline of Careers for Women: A Practical Guide to Achievement*, ed. Doris Elsa Fleischman (Garden City: Doubleday, 1928).

[66] *Peggy* sold between 15 and 20 thousand copies in its first year, prompting Bryan to order initial printings of 5,000 copies each for the 3 new Career Books in 1937. "Career Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 132, no. 17 (1937): 1648.

[67] For a summary of Bugbee's career, see Maurine Beasley. "Bugbee, Emma"; http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-03025.html; American National Biography Online Feb. 2000.

the world of work. Likewise, Daniel Melcher's *Young Mr. Stone: Book Publisher* (1939) depicts Bob's entrance into the world of publishing and bookselling.[68] In keeping with the severe four-point test, both authors were established in their professions and could write from their own experience Grumbine began as advertising director of *Child Life* magazine in 1925. As a leading authority advertising to children, she wrote extensively on the practices of selling to and through children.[69] As son of *Publishers' Weekly* editor, Frederic Melcher, Daniel Melcher had spent his life in the world of publishing. By 1939, he had worked in a wide range of publishing jobs including: publicity assistant, editorial and sales, direct mail and advertising manager, and production manager.[70]

As Table 4-1 demonstrates, the books show an adherence to normative masculinity and femininity in the framing of each career path. Bob Stone prevents his elders on the PTA and the Board of Education from making a terrible and costly mistake in the ordering of books for the local school. In standing up to authorities and correcting them based on knowledgeable research, Bob earns a place as a peer on the book selection committee. By contrast, Patsy has the confidence and drive to pursue an advertising career, but her first forays into the field are accidental and her potential is defined in a way that is explicitly non-threatening. Patsy uses her powers of persuasion to secure the needed advertising for the school paper. Furthermore, women, it is suggested, have a talent for advertising to other women simply by virtue of being women. Not surprisingly, Patsy's great success is an exciting position at *Mother and Child* magazine.

As 4- 2 illustrates, the stories share remarkable similarities suggesting a common formula or template for the series, much like the Stratemeyer series discussed in the previous chapter (*viz.*,

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[68] E. Evalyn Grumbine, *Patsy Breaks into Advertising* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1939); Daniel Melcher, *Young Mr. Stone, Book Publisher* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1939).

[69] Grumbine also knew something about selling books. In 1937, Grumbine wrote a *Publishers Weekly* article entitled, "Merchandising Juvenile Books in Department Stores." Her 1938 book, *Reaching Juvenile Markets: How to Advertise, Sell, and Merchandise through Boys and Girls,* aspired to help professionals to engage children more effectively and more ethically.

[70] On Melcher, see Wayne A. Wiegand, *Supplement to the Dictionary of American Library Biography* (Englewood, Co: Libraries Unlimited, 1990), 75-78. To his credit, Melcher subsequently created the idea and technology behind *Books In Print,* a now-essential tool in publishing, bookselling, and libraries.

Boys of Columbia High and *Girls of Central High*). The important difference lies in the conclusions which feature a marriage proposal (for Patsy) vs. the pursuit of a marriage proposal (by Bob Stone's love interest, Barbara Phillips). The emphasis on romance for girls is a critical part of the girls' book, while romance figures in the background of the boys' book. While Patsy and Bob shared some common aspirations and values, their expectations for the future, the professions they entered, the reasons for their interest, and the accomplishments they achieved, were portrayed as markedly different.

In keeping with the trend toward girls' books, *Patsy Breaks into Advertising* was sufficient for both publisher and author to agree upon two follow-up books, *Patsy Succeeds in Advertising* (1944) and *Patsy's Mexican Adventure* (1953). *Young Mr. Stone* had no follow-up titles (See Figure 4-3).

Help Wanted: Female

Gender distinctions in the *Dodd Mead Career Book* series are also evident in the distribution of careers across boys' books and girls' books. Outside of the Journalism and Communications field, the vast majority of occupations were divided according to decidedly gendered lines. As Figure 4-4 illustrates, girls' books featured nursing, fashion, social service work, teaching, and librarianship. By contrast, boys' books depicted aviation and science careers, along with a handful of law enforcement officers and forest rangers. This distribution is not especially surprising in light of the vocational guidance and career expectations of the time.[71] Additionally, the *Dodd Mead Career Book* series of World War II era immediately took up "timely" military occupations. In keeping with the established gender distinction, several girls'

[71] For gender patterns in vocational guidance, see especially Kathryn A. Haebich, *Vocations in Biography and Fiction; an Annotated List of Books for Young People* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1962); Harry Dexter Kitson and Mary Rebecca Lingenfelter, *Vocations for Boys* (New York: Harcourt, 1942); Mary Rebecca Lingenfelter and Harry Dexter Kitson, *Vocations for Girls*, Rev. ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1951); Louise Moore, *Occupations for Girls and Women. Selected References, July 1943-June 1948*, Women's Bureau Publication 229. (Washington, D. C.: Govt. Print. Off., 1949); Willa Norris, *Occupational Information in the Elementary School*, Professional Guidance Series (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1963).

books detail wartime nursing, the women's reserves, and a Home Economist turned Army Dietician; while boys were offered careers of Naval Officers and a Research Chemist.[72]

Nursing was by far the heavy favorite for girls' books (See Figure 4-4). This is explained in part by the 15 titles by Dorothy Deming, Director of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, as well as the extensive attention in popular nursing series, such as *Sue Barton* (Little, Brown, 1936-1952, 7 titles) and *Cherry Ames* (Grosset & Dunlap, 1943-1968, 23 titles).[73] My research finds nursing was the prominent or exclusive focus of at least 11 different series and 125 unique titles. The majority of these began with World War II and carried on through the early 1960s.

Honest Appraisals of Glamorous Professions: Career Romances for Young Moderns

The relative success Dodd Mead's girls' titles also brought more publishers into the career fiction business. In 1939, another of the second generation of children's editors, Helen Hoke, set up the children's department at Messner. During the 1940s, she established the highly-successful *Julian Messner Shelf of Biographies*. This nonfiction series was well received and benefited from the interest in realism and history during the war years. Hoke also tested the market for career fiction, as well as stories of "social significance" which depicted contemporary

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[72] Editor of *Publishers' Weekly*, Frederic Melcher, called the entire field to take responsibility for publishing books that served boys' and girls' unique needs during wartime, just as the industry was doing in the adult market. Career fiction adapted to meet that perceived need. For example, Dorothy Deming, *Ginger Lee, War Nurse* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1942); Edward Everett Hazlett, *"Rig for Depth Charges!" The Career of a Young Naval Officer on Submarine Duty* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1945); Helen Hull Jacobs, *"By Your Leave, Sir"; the Story of a Wave* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1943); Arthur Webster Kenney and Stephen C. Kenney, *Charles Hampton, Research Chemist* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1942); May Worthington, *Sally, Army Dietitian* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1944). See also, Frederic Melcher, "Broadening Children's Reading," *Publishers Weekly* 142, no. 9 (1942): 655; Frederic Melcher, "Children's Reading in the Crisis," *Publishers Weekly* 141, no. 16 (1942).

[73] As of 1954, Little, Brown had sold a respectable 310,000 copies of the *Sue Barton* books. "Tips for the Bookseller," *Publishers Weekly* 165, no. 12 (1954). On the popular *Cherry Ames* series, see Sally Parry, "'You Are Needed, Desperately Needed!': Cherry Ames in World War 2," in *Nancy Drew and Company: Culture, Gender, and Girls' Series*, ed. Sherrie A Inness (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State Popular Press, 1997): 129-44.

problems in a realistic light.[74] In 1946, Messner committed to a career fiction series under the direction of Gertrude Blumenthal.[75]

I identified 88 titles in the *Career Romances for Young Moderns* series. As Figure 4-5 indicates, the series built momentum in the late-1940s. New titles were published with regularity in the 1950s and 1960s.[76] Interestingly, the publisher claims the need for the series came to their attention because a mail-order promotion to schools showed that "girls are tremendously interested in finding in the library authentic vocational information attractively presented."[77] *Career Romances for Young Moderns* share a common theme, appearance and cover, but each features a different set of characters and a new career.

Career Romances for Young Moderns were directed exclusively toward girls aged 12-16; no boys' books were produced for this series. The series borrows heavily from the production practices set out by Dodd Mead: "There is in each one, in addition to romance and adventure, a great deal of helpful, authentic information, since the author of each story has been chosen for her knowledge of the field as well as her ability to write a good story which girls will accept."[78] The careers depicted are consistent with the established gender-divide (See Figure 4-6).

Career Romances departed from the Dodd Mead model in important ways. The careers covered are comparable with Dodd's series, but Blumenthal emphasized from the outset that the

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[74] See Muriel Fuller, "Helen Hoke of Julian Messner Inc.," *Publishers Weekly* 146, no. 9 (1944): 762-63; Helen Hoke, Leo Lerman, and Evelyn Hamilton, "The Problem Book," *Publishers Weekly* 140, no. 6 (1941): 1550-55. See also, Julia L. Mickenberg, *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapter 5.

[75] Blumenthal began her career at Macmillan with Louise Seaman. She became editor at Messner and later was promoted to Vice President at Simon & Schuster. See *Foremost Women in Communications; a Biographical Reference Work on Accomplished Women in Broadcasting, Publishing, Advertising, Public Relations, and Allied Professions*; "Gertrude Blumenthal, Publisher and Editor to Messner, Is Dead," *New York Times*, 31 December 1971, 23.

[76] I suspect the gap in the mid-1960s may be due to a paper shortage and industry-wide production problems in 1965, followed by a brief shift to the education market. An infusion of federal funding created significantly high demand for informational books. It is very likely that Messner focused on series more appropriate to the school library during that time.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] "A Survey Report of Publishers' Plans for This Fall's Children's Books," *Publishers Weekly* 150, no. 9 (1946): 1000-40.

focus would be on more glamorous careers (*e.g.,* ballet dancer, publicity girl, radio singer). Accordingly, there are fewer titles on practical occupations, like nursing, and more titles on new and exciting careers in aviation (*e.g.,* stewardesses). While some of authors had expertise in their fields, their credentials were not an integral part of the marketing or packaging of the series. Though the emphasis on career information was fairly strong, especially in the early titles, Blumenthal described the books rather cryptically as "love stories, only incidentally though quite definitely."[79]

Like *Dodd Mead Career Book*s, several of Messner's *Career Romances for Young Moderns* were offered as Junior Literary Guild selections. This indicates an anticipated market of a sufficient scale; it also suggests that the trend toward young adult romances was widely-accepted. During their peak, Dodd Mead and Messner career series were joined by more than 100 (series and non-series) career romances from publishers as diverse as Macmillan, Houghton Mifflin, and Westminster. Along with more career romances, publishers also developed an abundance of social instruction and advice books for teenagers.[80] These may have started as a well-intended effort, but the imperative to avoid "social errors" soon bordered on paranoia.[81] Likewise, with the breakout success of 21-year-old Maureen Daly's first novel, *Seventeenth Summer*, the "young adult" romance novel remained exceptionally popular through the early 1950s. The trend gained further momentum in 1956 when Messner published Grace Metalious's adult novel *Peyton Place,* the leading fiction bestseller of its time. A 1959 sequel *Return to*

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[79] *Ibid.*

[80] Like romance novels, these guidance manuals had precursors in adult market, see Mary McComb, "Rate Your Date: Young Women and the Commodification of Depression Era Courtship," in *Delinquents and Debutantes: Twentieth-Century American Girls' Cultures*, ed. Sherrie A Inness(New York: New York University Press, 1998), 40-60.

[81] *Facts of Life and Love for Teen-Agers* (1950) sold 2.3 million copies. Alice Hackett, *70 Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1965* (New York: R.R. Bowker, Co, 1967), 75. It is one of dozens, including Betty Betz and Anne Clark, *Your Manners Are Showing; the Handbook of Teen-Age Know-How* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1946); Sheila John Daly, *Personality Plus!* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1946); Norton Hughes Jonathan, *Guide Book for the Young Man About Town; the Way to More Popularity and Personality for Modern Young Men* (Philadelphia: J.C. Winston Co., 1948); Frances Bruce Strain, *Teen Days: A Book for Boys and Girls* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1946).

Peyton Place added to the firm's success and it prompted more publishers to offer more romance novels for teens through the 1960s.[82]

Career fiction titles for boys dropped off precipitously, as career fiction increasingly favored girls' books (See Figure 4-3). A few publishers stepped in to fill the void with new titles. These career stories returned to many of the fields already covered, but tended to feature the more exceptional, exciting careers. For example, Macrae-Smith offered the story of a boy who works his way up from "platter changer" at the local radio station to a nation-wide broadcasting job.[83] Likewise, as Messner added new Romances for Young Moderns (*i.e., Prima Ballerina* and *The Right Job for Judith*), they also published new sports stories and biographies to their highly-regarded biography and nonfiction series. These titles were directed primarily at boys (*i.e., The Jim Thorpe Story: America's Greatest Athlete* and *Adventures with Reptiles: The Story of Ross Allen*).[84] For the most part, however, publishers reverted to nonfiction books to convey occupational information to boys.

Career and information trends also were extended to the youngest readers. For example, the American Toy Fair of 1948 reflected a new career orientation: "Toys as a means of determining aptitudes and building careers for America's record crop of 23,500,000 children born since 1940 will set the keynote for the fair."[85] Likewise, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard's *When I Grow Up* series answers all the questions little girls have about becoming a nurse; for boys, they present a fascinating look at the career of a pilot. Gendered material also is prominent in the how-to books. For example, for ages six to ten, Abingdon-Cokesbury offered *Tools for Andy*, and

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[82] As of 1967, *Peyton Place* was still the top bestseller in fiction with 9.9 million copies sold, surpassing *Gone with the Wind* (6.9 million), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (6.3 million), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (5.3 million), and *The Catcher in the Rye* (4.9 million). *Return to Peyton Place* sold 4.4 million, an unusually high figure for a sequel. Hackett, *70 Years of Best Sellers*, 12.

[83] Edward Ford, *Don Marshall, Announcer* (Philadelphia: Macrae-Smith, 1946). Ford penned several additional titles for Macrae including: *Larry Scott of the* Sun (1945), *Bob Lane, News Cameraman* (1947), and *Jeff Roberts, Railroader* (1948).

[84] As librarian and "author for teen-agers," Emma Patterson, observed, boys held a "virtual monopoly" over sports stories. She also notes that despite the tendency to "preach" fair play, the sports novel is genre most often stolen from libraries. Emma Patterson, "The Junior Novels and How They Grew," *The English Journal*, 45, no. 7 (October 1956), 383.

[85] Gordon.

Greenberg published *A Child's Book of Sewing* "backed by a heavy promotion campaign" which features a photograph of a smiling girl and the caption "Every Little Girl Loves to Sew. . . So-o-o give her *Child's Book of Sewing* by Jane Chapman. Only $1.50" [86] In 1962, Doubleday even attempted a nursing-career series for girls aged ten to twelve.

It also is noteworthy that gender distinctions among older boys and girls became rigid in the magazine sector, particularly as the junior-high and high-school age brackets gained new attention. In 1937, *Scholastic* created a new magazine, *Junior Scholastic.* In 1941, *Parents'* magazine launched, *Calling All Girls*, a magazine for girls and "sub-debs" (average age 13).[87] Likewise, teenage girls became a full-fledged market. In 1944, *Seventeen* magazine sold 400,000 copies of its first issue in just six days; by 1949 it claimed a readership of over 3 million.[88] This recognition of teenage audiences was accompanied by a pattern of accelerated adolescence that pushed the expectation and onset of dating and romance to a younger age.[89] Market researchers publicized teenagers as willing and able consumers who were interested in a distinct teen culture *and* who were looking ahead to the commodities of adulthood.[90]

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[86] "Some Leading Juvenile Books to Be Published This Fall," *Publishers Weekly* 160, no. 4 (1951): 312-53. Sherrie Inness details interesting similarities in juvenile cookbooks. Sherrie A Inness, ""The Enchantment of Mixing Spoons": Cooking Lessons for Girls and Boys," in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. Sherrie A Inness (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 119-38.

[87] Kelly Schrum, ""Teena Means Business": Teenage Girls' Culture And "Seventeen" Magazine, 1944-1950," in *Delinquents and Debutantes: Twentieth-Century American Girls' Cultures*, ed. Sherrie A Inness (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 139.

[88] Schrum, "Some Wore Bobby Sox: The Emergence of Teenage Girls' Culture, 1920-1960," 35. While magazines threatened to lure away valuable book-buyers, they also further alerted publishers to the enormous potential of market segmentation and more specialized reading. On age-segmentation of girls, see also, Daniel Thomas Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Daniel Thomas Cook and Susan B. Kaiser, "Betwixt and Be Tween: Age Ambiguity and the Sexualization of the Female Consuming Subject," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 4, no. 2 (2004): 203-27.

[89] On the rise of teenagers as a market, see Bailey; Fass; Palladino; Schrum; Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998); Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Random House, 1994); Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[90] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 315-320.

Adventures in Information: Landmark Books

While girls were offered career fiction and romance, the widely-held belief that boys liked information brought a flood of nonfiction books in the late-1940s, and the demand for nonfiction series surged with the *Landmark Books* series from Random House. Launched in 1950 with a focus on American history and heritage, the initial ten titles sold over 350,000 copies in a year. The series promised steady sales as schools, libraries, and parents welcomed these "good books by good writers and artists, good subjects, good sellers."[91] By 1956, *Landmark Books* exceeded their promise, producing 97 titles and selling over 6 million copies.[92]

In keeping with the changes in American childhood, this series reflected the now-standard belief that learning had to be fun. If boys and girls were going to accept the invitation to study, publishers needed to provide books with vibrant illustrations and photographs, brilliant covers, and gripping descriptions. Frederic Melcher welcomed this new development: "These are not just "series"; they are more than that. To the credit of their planners many of them are good enough for any adult to read. The authors have taken pains with their tasks, the illustrators are selected from among the best."[93]

Landmark Books captured the attention of the children's book field and they responded vigorously. Unlike the juvenile fiction series of the Stratemeyer Syndicate and others, *Publishers' Weekly* made a concerted effort to promote and track new additions to these nonfiction series. By 1954, however, the sheer number of titles published in this format was overwhelming. Instead of including new additions to series in their discussion of forthcoming titles, *Publishers' Weekly* included a new checklist accounting for all new titles in familiar and newly-created series.

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[91] "Landmark Books: A New Juvenile Series That Is Making History," *Publishers Weekly* 160, no. 17 (1951): 1686-87; "Random House Advances Date of New Landmark Series," *Publishers Weekly* 161, no. 10 (1952): 1194. Other publishers put out similar fiction and non-fiction series. For example, Prentice-Hall's *Little Sports Library*, Grosset & Dunlap's *Illustrated Junior Library*, Doubleday's *Young Modern's* series, Lantern Press's *Teen Age Library*, the *Houghton Mifflin Nursery Series*, and Simon & Schuster's overwhelmingly successful *Golden Books*.

[92] Louise Bonino, "The Landmark Story," *Publishers Weekly* 170, no. 5 (1956): 460-62.

[93] Frederic Melcher, "There Are Series and Series," *Publishers Weekly* 163, no. 11 (1953): 1303.

To give some indication of the degree to which publishers committed to this new form, I analyzed patterns in thematic series in print between 1954 and 1962. I identified 66 publishers that produced books for 229 unique series during this period alone (See Table 4-3). Interestingly, with more publishers producing more series, and with greater variety in the kinds of series produced, the problem of the series book became less a question of quality and more an issue of quantity. Libraries and schools that purchased initial titles in nonfiction and biography series quickly found their shelves filling up with volume after volume. Some of these series found strong supporters as informative resources that stimulated children's interest in learning. Still, as the titles became redundant and the series overlapped, many of the nonfiction series began to lose credibility.[94]

Fact vs. Fiction: Career Series and the Perpetuation of Separate Shelves

As this chapter details, with the affirmation of the ideal middle-class family, a new degree of authority was granted to boys' and girls' reading interests. Likewise, the recognition of age distinctions and peer culture identified discreet groups of boys and girls. Beginning in the 1930s, social scientists and child professionals turned more attention to identifying books that would appeal to specific children. However, the efforts to find "the right book for the right child" were guided by very limited inquiries into children's actual reading preferences and adults continued to rely upon past precedent. In doing so, they also perpetuated the notion that boys and girls had separate reading needs and tastes. As American publishers recognized new age distinctions they also invested in this new range of uniquely-valued child readers.

Though "girls with any imagination or taste for literature" often read *boys' books* without giving it a second thought, Fjeril Hess and others found this was not a satisfying resolution to the

[94] Even at the "popular price" of $1 each, it is hard to imagine all twelve volumes of Harper's *Young America's Aviation Library* were necessary. Overexpansion and overproduction led to significant turnover in these new series. It also meant advertising and promotional budgets were needed for both new and established series. For example, the Popular Mechanics Press spent $20,000 in a fall newspaper campaign to promote its *There's Adventure* series of science-career books for boys.

problem of girls' reading.[95] Hess was reluctant to accept the notion that sex differences determined reading preferences. Nevertheless, in 1932, the separate shelves were firmly established and gender-specific reading appeared an unchanging and unchangeable reality of the children's book field. Accordingly, Hess urged publishers to produce more girls' books that offered readers the opportunity for personal identification with a "real" story. For their part, Hess and other professional women wrote stories for girls in the 1930s and early-1940s. Though they kept the gender distinction intact within the children's book field, these career books were intended to invite and welcome modern (white, middle-class) girls into the world of work. Likewise, boys' career fiction and nonfiction were designed to prepare (white, middle-class) boys for future professions.

Career series also illustrate some of the unintended consequences of the continued commitment to gender-specific children's books. While Hess and other author-professionals sought to inspire girls to value self-reliance, the post-war era career series took a new direction with an emphasis on glamour and romance. At the same time, publishers developed numerous nonfiction series books designed to meet the practical needs of boys (and girls) as they prepared for adulthood. Across the book field, publishers continued to trade on the idea that boys wanted "adventure and information," while girls developed an appetite for romance that "should not be discouraged."[96] While it remained true that girls could read boys' books if the subject interested them, young adult romance novels intended exclusively for girls provided an abundance of reading for which they were the "correct" audience. By the 1960s, this pattern of audience segmentation – as well the crucial distinctions applied to girls' and boys' books – was taken-for-granted and thoroughly entrenched.

The final chapter of this dissertation revisits the children's book field between 1930 and the 1960s as children's active participation as primary consumers became expected. My research

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[95] *Ibid.*

[96] Muriel Fuller and Bertha Gunterman, "Romance Is Needed," *Publishers Weekly* 128, no. 16 (1935): 1462; "New Books for Teen Age," *Publishers Weekly* 128, no. 9 (1935): 622.

details how the emphasis on cultivating good reading tastes shifted to a more commercially-driven concern with preparing boys and girls to make more (and better) buying decisions. It also lends new insights into how publishers sought to cultivate habitual, loyal book-buying through book celebrations and book clubs as the field faced new competition for children's attention and their spending money.

Figure 4-1. Distribution of the *Dodd Mead Career Book* Series

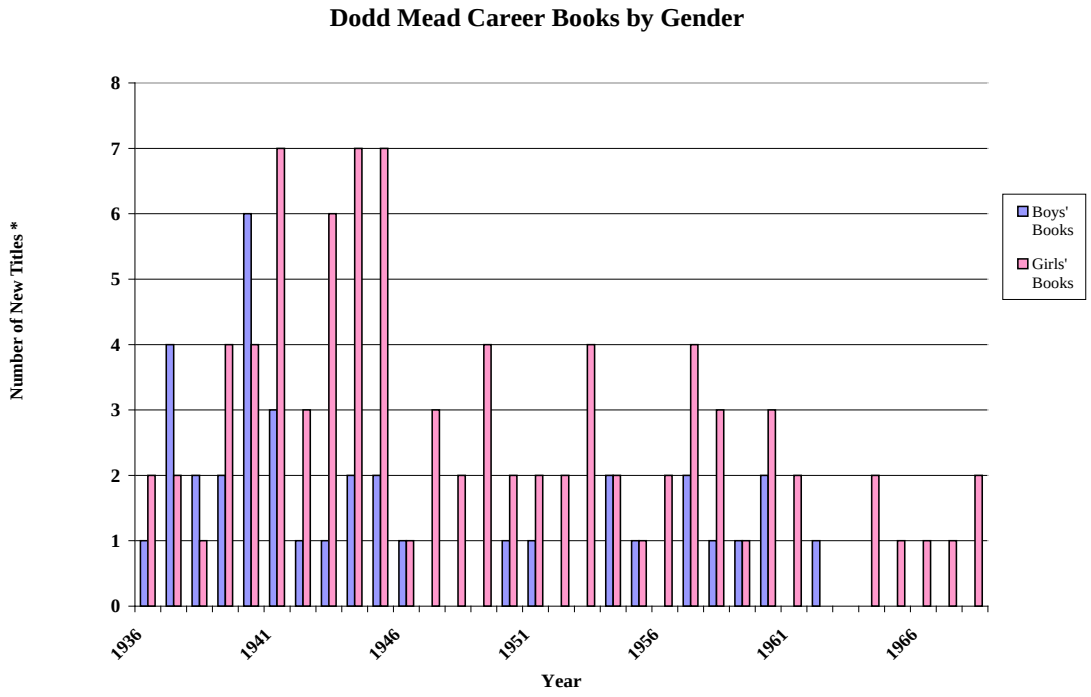


Figure 4-2. Distribution of the Dodd Mead Career Book Series by Occupation

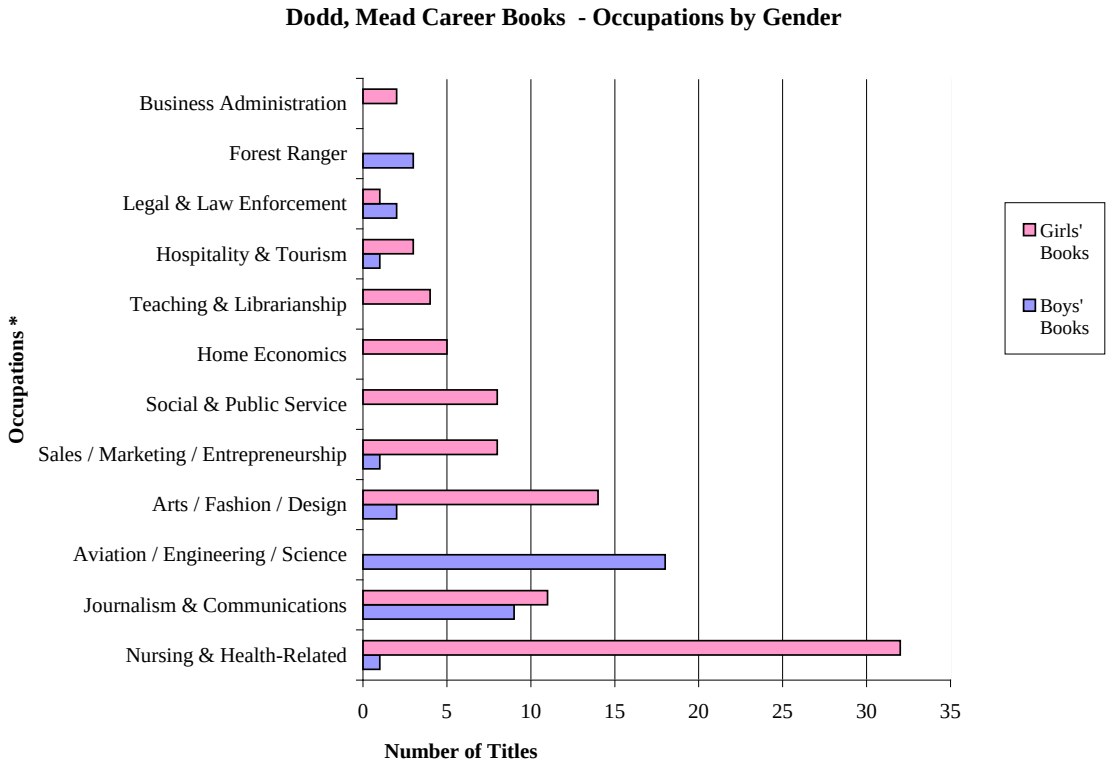


Figure 4-3. Career Series Books for Girls

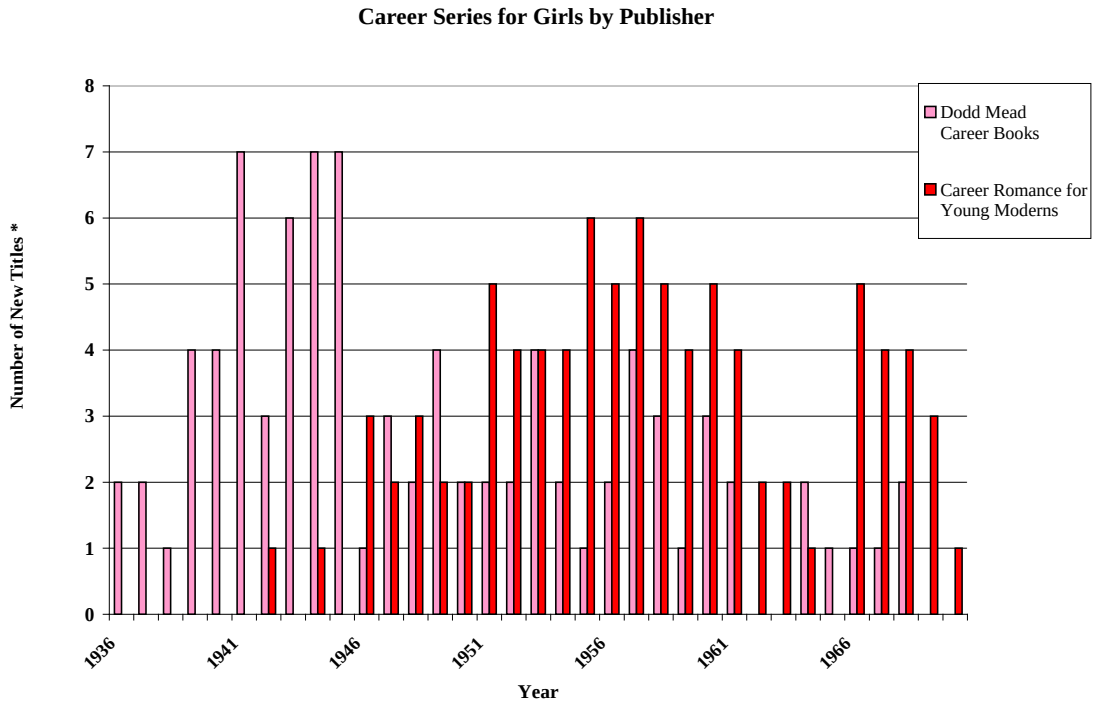
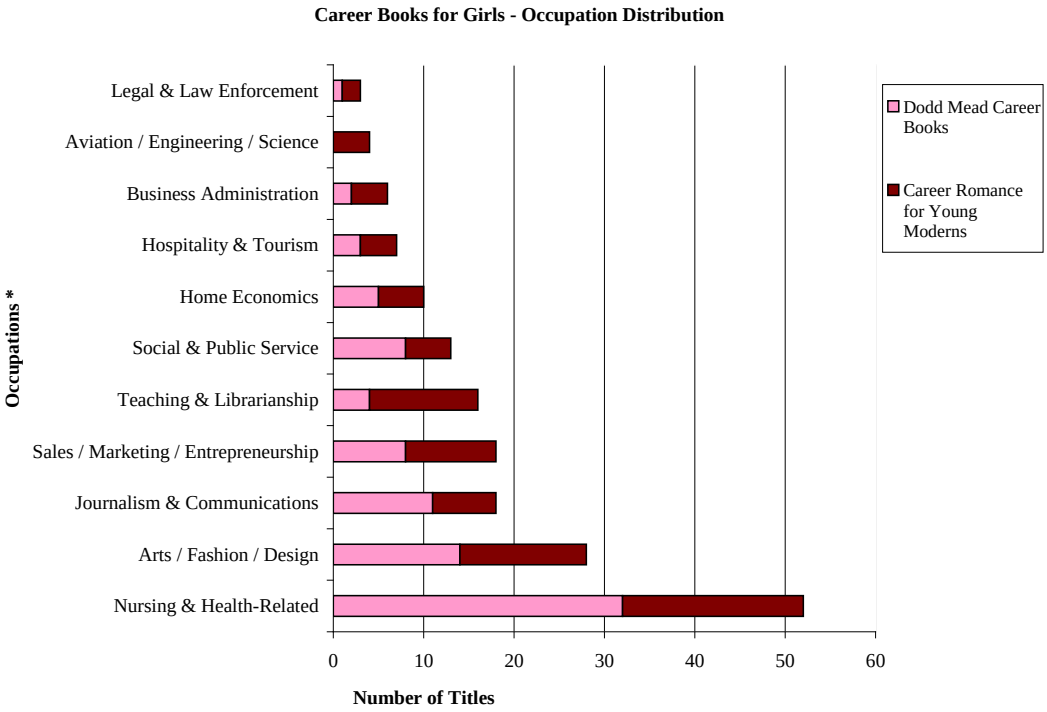


Figure 4-4. Occupations in Girls' Career Series Books



CHAPTER FIVE

Appealing to Young Readers: Boys and Girls as Valuable Customers in the Children's Book Field

> Selling you what they make is the business men's job. Buying is yours.
> How well can you do your job?
>
> *Johnny Get Your Money's Worth (and Jane, too!)*
> Ruth Brindze, 1938[1]

In the 1930s, children's participation in the commercial sphere was expanding. Despite the Depression, children's preferences gained new authority as a more commodity-centered childhood emerged. It was widely accepted that American children might wield significant influence over adult spending; boys and girls also held new promise and new responsibilities as primary consumers. As well-known consumer advocate, Ruth Brindze, observed in her popular consumer education textbook, buying had become a job for Johnny (and Jane, too!).

This chapter examines the evolution of children as consumers and customers between 1930 and the 1960s. It begins with the direct involvement of boys and girls in buying and selling activities. The continued validation of children as a valuable market during the Depression positioned boys and girls as a focal point in the commercial sphere; it also contributed to the affirmation of the ideal middle-class family who aspired to provide their children with more comforts. However, the expansion of children's participation in the commercial sphere was neither seamless nor instantaneous. The American public expressed strong reservations about consumption, and, in turn, channeled these anxieties into their beliefs about child consumers. In

[1] Ruth Brindze, *Johnny Get Your Money's Worth (and Jane, too!)*, (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1938), 11.

this context, adults took more formal steps to initiate their children in the commercial sphere while also teaching them the value and proper use of money.

Greater recognition of boys and girls as buyers also meant changes for American producers. As Brindze observed, "selling is the business men's job" and that increasingly meant selling to children. In the children's book field of the 1930s, publishers of juvenile series held a distinct advantage because their books were relatively inexpensive and they had established practices for marketing directly to boys and girls. Moreover, adults had proven to be relatively lackluster buyers for "better books;" appealing to boys and girls as the primary consumers offered an increasingly important way to secure sales.

I examine patterns in *Publishers' Weekly* to capture a sense of this transformation in the children's book field. As commercial considerations overshadowed the commitment to "better books," collaborations with librarians and teachers continued, but American publishers focused their attention on booksellers as the essential link to potential customers. Throughout the Depression and World War II, *Publishers' Weekly* urged sellers to remain committed to children's books. More importantly, in keeping with the changes in middle-class childhood, publishers encouraged an emphasis on the child's preferences and advocated for boys' and girls' autonomy as consumers.

In the post-war era, boys and girls held significant purchasing power and influence. I detail the continued efforts to educate the child consumer as belief in gender-specific and peer-centered preferences expanded. At the same time, faced with growing competition from other forms of entertainment, publishers sought to establish more direct channels to reach children as book-buyers and affirm their consumer autonomy. Publishers also worked to translate prevailing beliefs about children's interests into new specialized products and promotions, specifically teenage book clubs and new book festivals.

Valued Child Consumers, 1930-1945

The growth in children's commodities in the early decades of the Twentieth Century was checked to some extent by demographic changes. As Table 5-1 indicates, children age 5 to 14 represented 20% of the population in 1930, but dropped significantly until the post-war baby boom. Nevertheless, even through the Depression, middle-class parents appear to have been receptive to the long list of necessary commodities and activities prescribed for good child-rearing.[2] This section describes how changing expectations about boys and girls as consumers further strengthened their influence while also making them a focal point for consumer education.

Valued Children in the Commercial Sphere

In 1932, sociologist Robert Lynd observed: "Never before has so much of 'living' been bought, or have children carried money so generally, or have consumers' goods been so sedulously differentiated to evoke the desires of individuals of special ages and sexes."[3] Advertisers appealed to boys and girls with a wide array of promotional trinkets, story books, clubs, games, and contests. Likewise, Disney films initiated children into a world of characters which, in turn, were licensed to manufacturers to stimulate the consumption of an extraordinary variety of goods.[4]

Alongside new commodities, the relationship between children and commodities took on new meaning. Prior to the 1930s, experts advised parents to help their children suppress envy. Now toys and amusements were suggested as an easy solution for everything from sibling rivalry

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[2] See Thomas A. Stapleford, "Market Visions: Expenditure Surveys, Market Research, and Economic Planning in the New Deal," *Journal of American History* 94, no. 2 (2007): 41-44. Scholars note an extraordinary consistency in consumer culture well into the 1930s, in spite of the widespread hardship of the Depression. See Gary Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Peter N. Stearns, "Consumerism and Childhood: New Targets for American Emotions," in *An Emotional History of the United States*, ed. Peter N. Stearns and Jan Lewis (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

[3] Robert S. Lynd, "Family Members as Consumers," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 160, (1932): 90.

[4] See Lisa Jacobson, *Raising Consumers: Children and the American Mass Market in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), Chapter Six. On early Disney promotions, see Daniel Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: the Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 104-05.

to feelings of unhappiness, exclusion, and disappointment.[5] Parents were encouraged to buy children what they wanted.

Historian Daniel Cook observes a sharp intensification of direct advertising to children as the market shifted from a mother-oriented perspective to the child's own viewpoint. He argues that this new "pediocularity" worked through the market to favor children as consumers, while disrupting parental authority.[6] While many adults held a precarious position in the commercial sphere as the financial pressures of the Depression diminished their ability to buy, children were presented as active shoppers. For example a 1936 *New York Times* article observed:

> Toy shops are already swarming with youngsters eager to try out the season's new playthings, some of the children shouting with delight at things they like in hopes that Santa Claus will overhear, others – with a more experienced technique – boldly putting in a bid for this or that.[7]

The passivity associated with priceless childhood was quickly being replaced by a new level of assertiveness. Child consumers were gaining significant new presence in the commercial sphere.

Despite the economic hardships of the Depression, ample evidence also indicates that parents were encouraged to supply children with an allowance at an earlier age. Children were believed to have little natural restraint, and they were prone to spending every penny they had. Still, experts advised parents that boys and girls needed to learn to "make their own mistakes." Parents were instructed to take a more laissez-faire stance toward their children's choices, as excessive scrutiny or supervision would undermine the child's learning. Allowances were expected to teach boys and girls the value of money (e.g., earning, spending, saving, thrift, and charity), while also serving the higher purpose of conveying values, creating a sense of

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[5] Susan J. Matt, "Children's Envy and the Emergence of the Modern Consumer Ethic, 1890-1930," *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 2 (2002): 283-302; Matt, *Keeping up with the Joneses: Envy in American Consumer Society, 1890-1930* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).
[6] Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood*, Chapter Four.
[7] "New Things in the City Shops," *New York Times*, 29 November 1936, D9.

responsibility, and strengthening children's participation in family life.[8] A little wasted money now was an investment in the future, they claimed, because "a five-year-old who spends her nickels for candy will some day be buying for a family."[9]

Experts suggested playing store at home to allow children to imitate adult activities as practice for later life. Interestingly, the creative aspects of playing store (e.g., imaginative scenarios, hand-made "money" and props) were reduced as experts increasingly advised the use of manufactured accessories (e.g., a toy pushcart with "imitation goodies," toy cash registers, pretend money). By the 1940s, ready-made items for playing store were strongly recommended for the 6- to 8-year-old child to "add realism and satisfaction" to their play.[10]

Consumer Citizenship

Child consumers showed unique promise in the 1930s, but they also raised new concerns. Beginning in the 1930s, prominent children's organizations developed activities to intentionally or tangentially foster ties between consumption and citizenship. One lasting example is the highly-publicized annual fundraising campaigns for children's clubs. Girl Scout troops commonly earned money for activities by selling services and through organized events (*e.g.*, child care, sewing, garden parties, pancake breakfasts, and cookie parades). Girl Scout cookie sales and Camp Fire Girls donut drives were essential to funding their summer camps, and they quickly became national events.[11]

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[8] For example, Motier Fisher, "Are Allowances Really Practical?," *Parents'*, April 1937, 24; Sidonie Gruenberg and Benjamin Charles Gruenberg, *Parents, Children, and Money; Learning to Spend, Save, and Earn* (The Viking Press, 1933).

[9] For example, Jessie V. Coles, *The Consumer-Buyer and the Market* (London: Chapman & Hall, limited, 1938). Eldred Myrtle Meyer, "Let Child Buy Own Candy; Even a Four-Year-Old Can Manage Pennies," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 July 1936, D6; "Woman Who Burdens Husband with Clothes Bills Was the Little Girl Who Squandered Money on Candy or Ice Cream, Expert Learns," *The Washington Post*, 6 August 1935, 9.

[10] Jacobson, *Raising Consumers*, 27. See also, Dr. Ernest Osborne, "Playing Store Still Appeals," *The Washington Post*, 21 November 1948, S18.

[11] "Camp Fire Girls Plan Do-Nut Drive," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 22 February 1931, 5A; "Mayor Buys 48 Cookies to Aid Girl Scout Drive," *New York Times*, 29 October 1935, 18; "Camp Fire Girls Break Record in Selling 18,522 Dozen Do-Nuts," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 17 February 1939, 17; "Cookie Sale a Success," *New York Times*, 23 November 1942, 20; "Doughnut Sale Will Aid Camp Fire Program,"

During World War II, children also were mobilized on the home-front as citizen consumers. They collected scrap materials, bought victory war bonds, and "made do" with rations. In 1941, the two million Boy Scouts of America worked in cooperation with the Office of Price Administration to distribute the "consumers' pledge," a commitment to abide by rationing and fixed prices. Likewise, the 850,000 Girl Scouts pledged voluntary service which amounted to over fifteen million hours of war work. Among the "good deeds" contributed by Girl Scouts were: collecting donations for military and war relief agencies, salvaging resources, providing child care, tending victory gardens, and selling war bonds and stamps.[12]

Interestingly, the engagement of children as salespeople was well received even in the aftermath of the child protection and child labor laws in the early-twentieth century. A middle-class child selling war bonds or cookies carried a legitimacy that a working-class child selling newspapers or manual labor never had.[13] Fundraisers were led by trusted organizations. The events built upon the underlying premise of "learning by doing," offering children what were viewed as practical skills and experience in a seemingly protected situation. Likewise, they affirmed good citizenship and character-building. Nonetheless, these activities put children in the position of being salespeople and citizens within a unique – and uniquely competitive – atmosphere. A child's enthusiastic participation showed dedication to the group/nation because

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Chicago Daily Tribune, 8 November 1953, I6 ; "Scout Goal Is Million Box Sale," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 26 August 1956, E7.

[12] William M. Tuttle, *"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Funds for these organizations also were raised by membership drives and by business leaders who sought contributions. See for example, "Boy and Girl Scouts Serve Community in Many Ways," *The Washington Post*, 2 November 1942, 1; "Boy Scout Services," *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 May 1942, 20; "12 Million Americans Sign Consumer Pledge," *The Washington Post*, 3 November 1943, 11; "Brighter Side Found to 'Wild' Youth Picture," *The Washington Post*, 15 August 1943, M13; "Brooklyn Scouts Will Aid," *New York Times*, 11 April 1943, 44; "Seek Consumer Pledge to Shun Black Markets," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 September 1943, 10; "Hour-Check Presented by Girl Scouts," *The Washington Post*, 14 March 1944, 7.

[13] Other than one early critic who suggested that the Boy Scouts were creating "Little Babbitts" because commercial endeavors corrupted the mission of the organization to engage "real boys," I found no indication that adults had any objections to children's fundraising activities.

increased sales benefited the organization/country (as well as the manufacturers who sponsored the fundraisers and sold thousands of dollars worth of products).[14]

The Anxieties of Consumption

In 1927, the best-selling book, *Your Money's Worth; a Study in the Waste of the Consumer's Dollar*, argued that American consumers were steeped in deceptive advertising, dangerous products, and irresponsible buying habits. Women's publications and home economics experts called attention to consumer problems for decades. Authors Chase and Schlink described the consumer struggle as a *universal* problem: "It affects every man, woman, and child in the country. We are all Alices in a Wonderland of conflicting claims, bright promises, fancy packages, soaring words, and almost impenetrable ignorance."[15] This characterization effectively removed consumer problems from the province of women and paved the way for broader recognition of the issues.

The American public of the 1930s was in the midst of a rapidly escalating consumer movement. Americans read countless best-selling exposés which painted a vivid picture of senseless food fads, drug adulteration, medical quackery, and wasteful spending.[16] The image of the unscrupulous businessman callously manipulating a mother's concern for her child featured prominently as evidence of how deeply troubling the activities of the commercial world had become.[17]

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[14] This interpretation of children fundraising as a kind of protected competition fits with Paula Fass' discussion of competition and conformity on college campuses. Paula S. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 125-30.

[15] Stuart Chase and Frederick John Schlink, *Your Money's Worth; a Study in the Waste of the Consumer's Dollar* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 2.

[16] For example, T. Swann Harding, *The Popular Practice of Fraud* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1935); Arthur Kallet and F. J. Schlink, *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs; Dangers in Everyday Foods, Drugs, and Cosmetics* (New York: The Vanguard press, 1932); Ruth deForest Lamb and Royal S. Copeland, *American Chamber of Horrors; the Truth About Food and Drugs* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1936); Bissell Barbour Palmer, *Paying through the Teeth* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1935); Rachel Lynn Palmer and Isadore Meyer Alpher, *40,000,000 Guinea Pig Children* (New York: The Vanguard press, 1937).

[17] Chase and Schlink receive thorough attention in: Stephen R. Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York: Morrow, 1984), Chapter Four; Charles McGovern,

Consumers responded to the exploitative practices of manufacturers, advertisers, and unethical "experts," by mobilizing public pressure, and they achieved significant new regulations designed to curtail industry misdeeds. The consumer movement of the 1930s brought about greater standardization of products, descriptive labeling, quality standards, and new codes for truth in advertising and business ethics. Retailers also went to new lengths to satisfy consumers' standards, including improved training of sales personnel and the establishment of new test laboratories to verify the quality of merchandise.[18]

At the same time, it was generally acknowledged that an uninformed, easily-misled, American public was complicit in its own downfall: consumers bought the lie, over and over again. To remedy this problem, new consumer guides were published to help consumer to buy wisely. Commonly written by women, these handbooks built upon the foundations of home economics and domestic science; they featured no-nonsense strategies for making informed purchases.[19]

Educating the Child Consumer

American schools took a direct role in training young consumers through formal consumer education.[20] Early consumer education was introduced into the curriculum through established topics and standard Home Economics texts. For example, *Textile Fabrics* (1928)

Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), Chapter Five.

[18] See Kenneth Dameron, "The Consumer Movement," *Harvard Business Review* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1939): 271-89.

[19] For example, Ruth Brindze, *How to Spend Money; Everybody's Practical Guide to Buying* (New York: The Vanguard press, 1935); Ruth Brindze, *Stretching Your Dollar in Wartime* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1942); Christine McGaffey Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (New York: The Business Bourse, 1929); Margaret G. Reid, *Consumers and the Market* (New York: F.S. Crofts & Co., 1938).

[20] See Hanor A. Webb, "The High School Science Library for 1938-39," *Peabody Journal of Education* 17, no. 3 (1939): 178-97. My analysis of consumer education textbooks is based on books recommended in "The High School Science Library," published by *Peabody Journal of Education*. From 1925-1944, this annual list was compiled by the editor of *Current Science*, offering some assurance that they were selected using a consistent standard.

becomes *Textile Problems for the Consumer* (1935).[21] Likewise, standard courses in business, home economics, and economics used "scientific" approaches to teach "consumer intelligence."[22] Initially, course adoption in secondary schools was uneven due to concern over potential objections from local businesses, as well as lack of curricula and teacher preparation.[23] By 1939, however, classes were available to over 6.5 million students attending 25,000 secondary schools.

My review of the consumer education curriculum also finds that children were taught to be critical consumers, not critics of consumption. Frequently, textbooks simply taught children how to identify quality consumer goods (e.g., clothing, food, drugs, cosmetics, etc.), as in the case of *Test it Yourself! Chemistry experiments with consumer applications*.[24] Most texts warn that modern advertising may be misleading, but they also quickly defend it as an informative and valuable resource for consumers. They caution children to be skeptical of companies seeking to build familiarity with them, but tell boys and girls to take control of their own purchasing

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[21] See Carrie Alberta Lyford, "The Science and Art of Home Making," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 67, (September, 1916): 40-46; Agnes Fay Morgan, "The Value of Certain Home-Economics Courses as a Means of General Education," *The School Review* 35, no. 7 (1927): 518-29.

[22] J. Murray Lee, "The Curriculum in the Social Studies," *Review of Educational Research* 11, no. 4 (1941): 429-45; "The Objectives of Economic Efficiency," in *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy*, ed. Educational Policies Commission (Washington: Educational Policies Commission, National Education Association of the United States, 1938); Ray G. Price and Harold M. Benson, "The Purposes of Business Education," *The School Review* 49, no. 1 (1941): 42-47; Stevenson and Walker, "Consumer Education in the Home-Economics Curriculum," *The School Review* 50, no. 8 (1942): 584-86. On the origins of consumer education classes, see also "A Family Life Program," *The American Journal of Nursing* 46, no. 1 (1946): 6-10; Edna Salt, "Functional Mathematics in the Second Grade," *Educational Research Bulletin* 21, no. 8 (1942): 217-46; Anselm L. Strauss, "The Development and Transformation of Monetary Meanings in the Child," *American Sociological Review* 17, no. 3 (1952): 275-86; Strauss, "The Development of Conceptions of Rules in Children," Child Development 25, no. 3 (1954): 193-208.

[23] Ailsie M. Stevenson and Pauline S. Walker, "Consumer Education in the Home-Economics Curriculum"; S. P. Unzicker, "What Are the Fads and Frills in the Junior High School Curriculum?," *The School Review* 41, no. 9 (1933): 657-59.

[24] Lawrence F. Tuleen, Willard L. Muehl, and George Sherman Porter, *Test It Yourself! Chemistry Experiments with Consumer Applications* (Chicago: Scott, 1941). See also, Kay Austin, *What Do You Want for a $1.98: Guide to Intelligent Shopping* (New York: Carrick and Evans, 1938); Margaret Dana, *Behind the Label; a Guide to Intelligent Buying* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1938); Mabel Barbara Trilling, Ennis Kingman Eberhart, and Florence Williams Nicholas, *When You Buy* (Chicago: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1939); Helen Woodward, *It's an Art* (New York: Harcourt, 1938). These books received mixed reviews. Some found them to be "a valuable weapon in the fight for consumer's rights" Others suggested they were too difficult, dull, and "academic" for the average reader. Peggy Lamson, "Review," *Boston Transcript*, 10 December 1938; "Review," *New Republic*, 23 November 1938.

decisions by rigorously investigating all available products.[25] By shifting responsibility to the child consumer's knowledge and abilities, the curriculum could reinforce the idea that consumer training was in their interest and simultaneously focus on the merits of business. The curriculum encouraged thoughtful buying decisions and comparative shopping, but rarely called into question the idea of commercial products as necessities.

By the 1940s, consumer education courses had four standard features: personal finance, critical evaluation of products and advertising, informed decision-making, and an overview of consumer protection measures. In the classroom, model stores now offered a formal introduction into basic salesmanship practices and good "buymanship." Consumer education naturalized the idea of children as consumers and challenged them to have more frequent and standardized buying experiences. However, the degree to which schools prepared boys (and girls) for this new "job" is debatable.

Advertisers promoted a growing variety of household goods to children directly through the public school system. For example, in 1937 the Wheat Flour Institute offered a half million book covers illustrating the value of wheat products.[26] Ironically, as children needed to become skillful buyers who could make good decisions, it is quite possible that they were wrapping their consumer education textbooks with advertisements.[27] Critics argued that these games instructed children to favor brands by sponsoring companies. Surveys conducted during this period suggest

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[25] Henry Harap, "Survey of Twenty-Eight Courses in Consumption," *The School Review* 43, no. 7 (1935): 497-507; Henry Harap, "Seventy-One Courses in Consumption," *The School Review* 46, no. 8 (1938): 577-96.

[26] For details about the consumer movement and advertising in schools during this period, see especially L. Stole Inger and Rebecca Livesay, "Consumer Activism, Commercialism, and Curriculum Choices: Advertising in Schools in the 1930s," *The Journal of American Culture* 30, no. 1 (2007): 68-80. The school book cover example is described in "Book Covers as Ad Medium," *New York Times*, 25 August 1937, 26.

[27] Schools also cooperated with local banks to teach children financial responsibility. One bank introduced a "Teen Age Loan Fund" that allowed qualified teenagers to borrow money (without parental permission). See especially, Jacobson, *Raising Consumers*, Chapter 2. In some cases school accounts amounted to a substantial sum of money. For example, the Los Angeles City and County School Savings Association reported 63,381 active accounts with an average of $24.48 per student. A total of more than $2.5 million. "School Children's Savings Accounts Growing Fatter," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 November 1937, A14.

their concerns were well-founded: children commonly requested brand-names they learned about in the classroom.[28]

Ruth Brindze's *Johnny Get Your Money's Worth* and other texts of the period also demonstrate the growing gender gap. It was widely believed that boys and girls had different needs, interests, and value as consumers. Boys and girls also received some variation in their consumer education because exposure depended to some extent on the location of the course in the curriculum. A study of 206 schools finds that the average enrollment in consumer education was 27 girls and 16 boys, but was approximately equal when the courses are offered through departments *other than home economics.*[29]

The Most Important Customer: Reorienting the Children's Book Field

The Depression effectively ended the practice of equating standards of "quality" with price in the children's book field. At the same time, middle class acceptance of consumer culture and commercial amusements reoriented the market toward a much more open approach to children's entertainment. In this context, the distinction between "cheap" and "quality" recreational reading diminished further and popular fiction became an established fixture across the children's book field. This section briefly details the shift in the children's book field toward a more overtly commercial approach that affirmed the value of the child consumer.

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[28] See for example, L.P. Guest, "The Genesis of Brand Awareness," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 26, no. 6 (1942): 800-08. Cultivating brand recognition and brand loyalty was a primary selling-point to encourage companies to contribute materials for model-stores.

[29] Thomas H. Briggs, "Consumer Education in 1946-47," *NASSP Bulletin* 31, no. 147 (1947): 137-39; Harl R. Douglass, "The Modern High-School Curriculum," *The School Review* 63, no. 1 (1955): 16-24; Otis Lipstreu, "Consumer Education: Modern Style," *The School Review* 57, no. 2 (1949): 101-03; James E. Mendenhall and C. Maurice Wieting, "Consumer Education through the Curriculum," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 11, no. 7 (1938): 398-404; Joseph M. O'Leary, "The Teaching of Economics in Public High Schools," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 54, no. 3 (1940): 502-18; Albert I. Oliver, "Basic Goals for a Small High School: Theory and Practice," *The School Review* 58, no. 8 (1950): 458-67; John B. Thomas, "Consumer Buying in California Secondary Schools," *The School Review* 46, no. 3 (1938): 191-95.

Buy Me a Ruth Fielding: Selling Books Through and To Children

In keeping with the expanding role of the child consumer, boys and girls were developing a "more experienced technique" in acquiring their recreational reading. For example, in 1935, librarian Lucy Kinloch described the following scenario:

> A girl in the fifth grade was a poor reader. The principal of her school talked with her mother, and suggested the girl join the public library. They went to the cheery children's room, and the children's librarian, already aware of the case from the school principal, took down book after book, suited to the child's reading ability, left her to browse, left books out on the table, all in vain. The child was bored by it all. "I don't want these books," she whined finally, "Mother, take me downtown and buy me a Ruth Fielding."[30]

A little girl *whining* for a series book demonstrates a significant moment. Rather than hide her desires for a popular Stratemeyer series book, the little girl expects her mother to permit her to read a series book and even expects her mother to take her to the shop to make the purchase. She stubbornly rebuffs any attempts to offer her "quality" books, and she openly asserts her reading taste. And, unlike the "better books" that filled library shelves, a *Ruth Fielding* could not be borrowed, it had to be bought.[31]

Though children's books accounted for 14.5 percent of all books manufactured, the majority of these were cheap fifty-cent books.[32] Chief among these strong-selling, inexpensive books were boys' and girls' series fiction. Sales statistics for the six-week Christmas season of 1933 indicate that Macy's sold 6,000 copies of ten *Nancy Drew* titles, and 3,750 copies of fifteen *Bomba* titles; Macy's expected to sell at minimum 50,000 fifty-cent series books.[33] Along with strong retail sales, many juvenile series were bolstered by a strong mail order business.[34] In 1937,

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[30] Lucy Kinloch, "The Menace of the Series Book," *Elementary English Review*, 12 (1935): 11.

[31] On children's buying and borrowing habits, see for example Fargo and Association; Harold Brainerd Hersey, *Pulpwood Editor: The Fabulous World of the Thriller Magazines Revealed by a Veteran Editor and Publisher* (New York,: Frederick A. Stokes company, 1937); Marion Webb, "Children's Reading Tastes: A City Survey of Present Trends," *Publishers' Weekly* 121, no. 13 (1932): 1469-71.

[32] Tebbel, *Between Covers,* 301.

[33] "For It Was Indeed He," April 1934.

[34] Statistics on the sale of juvenile series are limited, but revealing. In 1931, more than 22 million children's books were sold (14.5% of all books produced); estimates indicate that the majority of these were series books. *Harper's* magazine reported: "(T)hese serials whose names and numbers are as endless as the sands

Grosset & Dunlap reported total sales of its leading Stratemeyer series to date: *Tom Swift* – 6,566,646 copies; *Bobbsey Twins* – 5,619,129 copies; *Rover Boys* – 2,421,909 copies. Several other series sold "well over a million, but a little shy of the two million mark."[35]

Successful girls' series continued to drive the market to value girls as a separate audience (See Figure 5-1). *Nancy Drew* quickly out-paced the *Hardy Boys* with nearly twice the sales.[36] Still, the shift to favoring the girl audience for series books is not explained fully by a *Nancy Drew* effect. As Figure 5-2 indicates, the Syndicate added girls' books in greater numbers, but remained committed to popular boys' series. Their output favored new girls' series, but it remained relatively balanced between boys' and girls' titles.[37] Thus, the increase in market share for girls' series surely gained momentum from *Nancy Drew*, but it also speaks to the growing recognition of girls and teenagers across the book field.

To be sure, the Depression did take its toll on juvenile series. The number of new titles declined significantly, as leading producers like the Stratemeyer Syndicate found continued success through a greater investment distributed over fewer series (See Figure 5-2).[38] At the same time, the Syndicate also extended the reach of their characters, most notably through the *Nancy Drew* movies, games, and toy tie-ins featuring the *Bobbsey Twins*.[39] The success of *Ruth*

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of the sea make up seven per cent of the total sales of the average book store." Mail order sales were even more impressive. Publisher Cupples and Leon stimulated sales of over one million series books simply by offering a free illustrated catalog on the back covers of their current series. Zelda Popkin, "The Finer Things of Life," *Haper's Magazine*, April 1932, 606. See also Edna Yost, "The Fifty Cent Juveniles," *Publishers' Weekly* 121, no. 25 (1932): 2405-08.

[35] George Terry Dunlap, *The Fleeting Years, a Memoir* (New York: Priv. print., 1937). 192-93. Ironically, though Stratemeyer's series accounted for a sizeable portion of Grosset & Dunlap's profits, and played an essential part in seeing them through the weak sales of the Depression, Dunlap mistakenly refers to the *Rover Boys* author as "Allen Winfield." Dunlap, 151.

[36] Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *The Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew & the Hardy Boys* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 27.

[37] My research finds that the Stratemeyer Syndicate produced 377 new titles between 1930 and 1970. Nearly 40% of these titles were for just 4 series For several low-production years, the Syndicate only added titles to its most popular series, *Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys*, and *Honey Bunch.*

[38] For details on the fate of specific series, see Melanie Rehak, *Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2005).

[39] On the significance of *Nancy Drew*, see Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate: Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, and the Million Dollar Fiction Factory* (New York: Ungar, 1986); Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992); Ilana Nash,

Fielding, Nancy Drew, Dana Girls, Honey Bunch, Bobbsey Twins, and dozens of other girls' series was gaining important attention from publishers who were more inclined to satisfy individual preferences and who could not afford to ignore a potentially-lucrative portion of the market.[40]

From "Quality" to Quantity

Some children's books present unique potential because they become bestsellers over time. These "modern classics" sell to successive generations in a way that most adult fiction and nonfiction books did not. For example, *Tom Sawyer, Black Beauty, The Call of the Wild, Pollyanna, Huckleberry Finn, Treasure Island, Five Little Peppers and How They Grew, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,* and *Tarzan of the Apes* had sold at least one million copies each by the 1930s.[41] These popular children's books, as well as favorite juvenile series, focused the children's book field on sales volume as an important marker of success.

At the same time, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, children's publishing was in the midst of a self-proclaimed "Golden Age."[42] More editors, writers, and illustrators specialized exclusively in the children's market, and they offered a growing variety of modern, attractive books. Likewise, many established beliefs and practices continued in the children's book field. To strengthen the market for "more and better" books, nation-wide observance of Children's Book Week was a prominent annual event on the community calendars. And, in addition to the Newbery Medal, the American Library Association and Frederic Melcher established the

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American Sweethearts: Teenage Girls in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[40] Even Lucy Kinloch revised her position about romantic girls' school stories. In 1937, she published *A World within a School* for girls aged 12 and over. It is described as: "An English-school story, exceptionally well done, in which the 'crush' stage of girl relationships is handled with unusual feeling and insight." It is unlikely that she viewed her book as a source of "insidious influence." Dorothy Lerner Gordon, *All Children Listen* (New York: G. W. Stewart, 1942). Story summary quoted from: Gordon, 401.

[41] "Fall Juvenile Lists Promise Good Sales," *Publishers' Weekly* 119, no. 26 (1931): 2961, 2965.

[42] See Sybille A. Jagusch, *Stepping Away from Tradition: Children's Books of the Twenties and Thirties* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1988); Ruth Viguers, "The Golden Age: 1920-1950," in *A Critical History of Children's Literature; a Survey of Children's Books in English from Earliest Times to the Present,* ed. Cornelia Meigs (New York: Macmillan, 1953), 427-603.

Caldecott Medal, awarded to the artist of the most distinguished picture book published each year.[43]

Though there is strong continuity in the field, in the 1930s it became clear that these approaches would not ensure a stable and profitable market for children's books. As the Depression shook confidence in the children's market, a wave of downsizing took hold. Publishing houses cut children's titles, and major houses closed their children's departments. The Scholastic-St. Nicholas Corporation consolidated five publications for high school students into a single magazine, as it struggled to meet operating costs.[44]

The Depression placed newly-created children's departments in jeopardy, and it shook the confidence of booksellers. Although "quality" producers had catered effectively to priceless children and middle-class families, "better books" paled in comparison to the volume sales of juvenile series. Even the highest award for a children's book failed to generate consistently strong sales. Of the eight Newbery Medal winners of the 1920s, only four had sold 100,000 copies by the 1960s.[45] Still, whether they liked it or not, publishers and booksellers could not afford "better books" that did not show better profits.

In the 1930s, Macmillan claimed "the largest list of *quality* juvenile books in the world," including three recent Newbery Medal winners.[46] Under the leadership of children's editor, Louise Seaman, they were instrumental in setting professional standards and consolidating the

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[43] Children's Book Council, "A History of Book Week" http://www.cbcbooks.org/cbw/history.html; Irene Smith, *A History of the Newbery and Caldecott Medals* (New York: Viking Press, 1957).

[44] On publishing during the Depression, see John Tebbel, *Between Covers: The Rise and Transformation of Book Publishing in America* (New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1987). See also, Jack Lippert et al., *Scholastic, A Publishing Adventure* (New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1979), Chapter 5.

[45] To identify sales levels for children's books, I consulted Alice Payne Hackett, *70 Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1965* R. R. Bowker Co; Jean Spealman Kujoth, *Best-Selling Children's Books* (Metuchen, NJ.: Scarecrow Press, 1973).

[46] Muriel Fuller, "Doris S. Patee: Tenth in a Series of Articles on Children's Book Editors," *Publishers' Weekly* 130, no. 9 (1936): 710-11. Emphasis in original. Macmillan's Newbery winners were: *The Trumpeter of Krakow* (1929), *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* (1930), and *The Cat Who Went to Heaven* (1931).

children's book field.[47] If any publisher could claim to offer "a balanced reading ration for growing boys and girls," it was Macmillan. Yet, as Figure 5-3 illustrates, by 1933 Macmillan was beginning to take a much more commercial approach.

Macmillan's *Boys' and Girls' Own Libraries* represent "the best children's books," and they also demonstrate the imperative to sell more books. For the bookseller, the *Boys' and Girls' Own Libraries* represented "a chance to sell groups of books instead of one book" and to "BUILD VOLUME SALES!"[48] The promotion came with "'Good News for Boys and Girls,' a big eight-page illustrated *circular*," as well as a sales plan and *merchandising suggestions* "to help booksellers make larger sales and reach new customers!"[49]

For this campaign, Macmillan also adopted the well-worn strategy of packaging books as sets to create the expectation that a growing boy or girl required 3 healthy "rations" of books (at a list price of over $20 for each library). The four selected libraries conformed to the prevailing age- and gender- distinctions of the period, and they assigned specific recreational reading according to prescribed tastes (*e.g.,* two stages of shared interests, followed by gendered preferences for ages eleven to fifteen).

Dealers demanded "popularly priced" editions that sold quickly.[50] In turn, publishers began to produce "better books" in more affordable editions with the hope that lower prices would lead to stronger sales. At the same time, the publishing industry began to abandon traditional book categories (*i.e.*, fiction, nonfiction, history, etc.) and adopted market-defined

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[47] On Louise Seaman and Macmillan, see especially Louise Seaman Bechtel and Virginia Haviland, *Books in Search of Children; Speeches and Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1969); Jacalyn Eddy, *Bookwomen: Creating an Empire in Children's Book Publishing, 1919-1939*, Print Culture History in Modern America (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Rowe Wright, "Women in Publishing: Louise Seaman," *Publishers' Weekly* 114, no. 4 (1928): 318-21.

[48] "Boys' and Girls' Own Libraries: A Ready-Made Sales Campaign for Summer." All emphasis in original.

[49] *Ibid.* All emphasis in original.

[50] See "Booksellers Talk About Fall Problems," *Publishers' Weekly* 118, no. 9 (1930): 803-04; "Merchandising Popular Lines," *Publishers' Weekly* 118, no. 9 (1930): 812-15; "The Ten-Cent Juvenile: Does the Increasing Popularity of Very Cheap Children's Books Indicate the Opening of a New Market?," *Publishers' Weekly* 126, no. 19 (1934): 1744-45.

divisions (*i.e.*, mysteries, games and puzzles, picture books, war books, etc.).[51] To boost sales, publishers of all reputations pushed new books with tie-ins to toys, hobbies, and novelties.[52] For example, Young Books, Inc. produced a series of dolls based on the idea that encouraging children to collect would, in turn, fuel the sale of children's books.[53]

For younger children, the 1930s brought a burst of new popular characters that were aggressively licensed out to a wide array of products. For example, Disney invented *The Mickey Mouse Waddle Book*, a hybrid toy-book for younger children that had "magical appeal."[54] With this early success, Disney was in an especially good position to cultivate the children's market and many publishers would benefit along the way. For example, Grosset & Dunlap sold 200,000 copies of its edition of *Snow White* and 250,000 copies of *Pinocchio*.[55]

Publishers' Weekly *and the Valuing of the Child Consumer*

For their part, stores developed more elaborate events, including model airplane contests and woodcraft competitions for older boys.[56] They also held doll-related events including a

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[51] Michael Korda, *Making the List: A Cultural History of the American Bestseller, 1900-1999: As Seen through the Annual Bestseller Lists of Publishers Weekly* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2001), 59.

[52] "Increasing the Market for Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 117, no. 19 (1930).

[53] "Girls collect these much as boys collect stamps, and absorb from them in painless fashion knowledge of what the rest of the world looks like, and a desire to know more." Kay Austin, *What Do You Want for a $1.98: Guide to Intelligent Shopping* (New York: Carrick and Evans, 1938). 153. See also, "Many Girls Collect Dolls Like Stamps," *The Christian Science Monitor* 15 December 1938, 3. See also, Anne Carroll Moore, *The Choice of a Hobby: Unique Descriptive List of Books Offering Inspiration and Guidance to Hobby Riders and Hobby Hunters; a Springboard for Personal Adventure* (Chicago: F.E. Compton, 1934), Alice Fox Pitts, "Book Display Has Hobbies as Its Theme," *The Washington Post* 11 November 1934, S10; Louise Seaman, "Hobbies and Their Part in the Reading of Children," *New York Times* 11 November 1934, BR 10.

[54] Toy-books were not a new idea, but their rediscovery placed strong emphasis on the commercial and merchandising opportunities they present. Bookbinding Magazine, "'Waddle Book' Embodies Contrivance Bound to Boost Sales of Juveniles," *Bookbinding Magazine* XX (1934): 62. One bookseller observed: "Perhaps it would be near the truth to say that there are three things most children have in common: stamp collecting, cartoons, and Mickey Mouse." Brandon. See "Books and Toys," *Publishers' Weekly* 119, no. 17 (1931): 2127; Rosalie Vrylina Halsey and Children's Special Collection., *Forgotten Books of the American Nursery; a History of the Development of the American Story-Book* (Boston: C.E. Goodspeed & Co., 1911); Helen Mammett Owen, "Children's Books in a Toy Department," *Publishers' Weekly* 128, no. 20 (1935): 1817-19.

[55] "Juveniles from Movies Selling for Christmas," *Publishers Weekly* 136, no. 24 (1939): 2142-43; "Novelty Juveniles Find Ready Market," *Publishers Weekly* 142, no. 22 (1942): 2182-85.

[56] For example, Edwin Hamilton, "Marketing the Hobby Book," *Publishers Weekly* 126, no. 16 (1934): 1459-62; Minna Miller Hamilton, "Hobby Books for Children and Adults," *Publishers Weekly* 135, no. 17

"Doll's Convention" to promote the Newbery Medal winner, *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years*.[57] Still, it is not surprising then that booksellers remained unconvinced of the year-round sales potential of many children's books.[58] Further problems arose because bestsellers and popular series sold book after book without expensive and time-consuming promotions. Book Week events required effort and planning, and the actual profit from these cooperative efforts was uneven at best. Many retailers found that partnerships with libraries and schools benefited their stores more in theory than in practice.[59]

Booksellers complained that the pressure to satisfy the demands of both adults and children *prior to the purchase* complicated matters: the child had to request the book; the adult-buyer had to approve the selection; the seller had to have the right book available. To keep booksellers invested in children's books, *Publishers' Weekly* suggested that booksellers capitalize on the parent-child relationship in a new way:

> Children often use a little psychology on their parents. They just can't seem to make a decision between two books. It works nine times out of ten. They get both. Or perhaps they are spending their own allowance. Funny how they seldom have quite enough. Mother to the rescue, or perhaps an adoring aunt. Aunts never fail.[60]

(1939): 1592-93; J.H. Reed, "Children's Department Develops a Side-Line," *Publishers Weekly* 125, no. 15 (1934): 1440-42.

[57] *Hitty* is the "memoir" of a doll that has adventures traveling around the world; it was based upon an actual doll that took on celebrity-like status in the marketing and publicity of the book. Rachel Field and Dorothy Pulis Lathrop, *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1929). See also, "Ancient Doll," *The Washington Post*, 23 April 1933, 8; "Convention of Dolls Opens, 'Delegates' from Every Land Present" *Los Angeles Times*, 18 November 1930, A1; "Dolls Convene for Book Week," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 1930, A1; "Hitty, Noted Doll, at Central Library," *The Washington Post*, 4 June 1933, SP20. Interestingly, *Hitty* was well-recieved in part because she was a truly *American* doll. Earlier in the year, Field published a story about a French doll a "quality" children's magazine. The doll did not get a book deal. Rachel Field, "The Little French Doll," *The Youth's Companion* 103, no. 7 (1929): 416.

[58] Beulah Canterbury, "Year-Round Promotion for Juveniles: This Shop Has Found Numerous Ways of Actively Merchandising Children's Books.," *Publishers' Weekly* 128, no. 2 (1935), 87.

[59] For example, the director of the Hobby Horse Book Shop lists a string of common complaints: "the schools are not doing a very good job of producing future book customers"; the curriculum is out-of-date and ignores children's tastes; not enough schools have "modern and up-to-date library service"; few teachers "are acquainted with the new books and so very few who have that spark that engenders enthusiasm." Coles, *The Consumer-Buyer and the Market.*

[60] Louise Brandon, "Children as Customers: The Bookshop which Captures the Personal Interest of the Children is Building for the Future" *The Publishers' Weekly* 126, no.8 (1934), 585.

Though children had growing influence over purchases, the authority of adults did not disappear overnight. In the interim, publishers and booksellers saw opportunities to leverage manipulation into sales. It is easy to see why some publishers and booksellers began to believe manipulation was a valid tool.[61] *Publishers' Weekly* also reminded the bookseller that today's children were tomorrow's adults; boys and girls mattered as a crucial investment in future book-buyers.[62]

The balance in the marriage between "better books" and commercial interests was shifting in very significant ways, particularly as publishers placed new emphasis on cultivating a sustained, year-round, demand for children's books. The Book Week Committee dispensed with the "More Books in the Home!" slogan favored in past years. Instead, the Week was designed as an opportunity to promote good books, good citizenship, international good will, and all-around good feeling. The themes associated reading with progress, optimism, and sharing through the Depression (*e.g.*, "Young America's Book Parade – 1932").

Children's Book Week also began to change as it grew in scale and outgrew the relatively semi-formal partnerships of its early years. In 1934, it was placed under the direction of R.R. Bowker Company and Frederic Melcher, editor of *Publishers' Weekly*. The Boy Scouts and Franklin Mathiews remained involved in defining the Week and its theme, as did children's librarians like Anne Carroll Moore. Nonetheless, a growing number of children's book editors, authors and illustrators had a vested interest in boosting sales.[63]

My research finds that news coverage of Book Week commonly presents a united, but clearly two-sided, mission. Experts and educators speak to the careful selection of books, the

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[61] For additional examples of children as active, manipulative consumers, see Emanuel Lyons, *2800 Retailing Ideas; Successful Methods Used in Nearly Every Retailing Activity, for Progressive Stores of Every Size and Line* (Pittstown, NJ: E. Lyons, 1937), Chapter 10.

[62] For example, "He should be made to feel welcome, and if, through our efforts, he finds enjoyment in his excursions and in the books we recommend to him, he is destined to become a life-long customer. Is it not only wisdom to court him while he is still young?" Louise Brandon, "Children as Customers."

[63] With the publication of several volumes of children's stories edited by Mathiews and Moore, they too had reason to promote (more sales of) their books. Mathiews put out an annual collection of selected stories. For example, Franklin Mathiews, ed. *The Boy Scouts Year Book of Fun in Fiction* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1938); Franklin Mathiews, ed. *The Boy Scouts Year Book of Wild-Animal Stories* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1940); Franklin K Mathiews, ed. *The Boy Scouts Book of Campfire Stories* (New York D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936).

importance of healthy reading to democracy, the companionship and entertainment brought by the best books. In the next sentence, a representative from the local bookseller remarks upon the enthusiasm the public has shown the attractive new editions and the growing list of titles for the younger generation to enjoy.[64]

Publishers Weekly created a Spring Children's Book issue to publicize new titles to the trade. Posters and displays featured prize-winning books (and other titles). In 1936, the *New York Times* launched its first National Book Fair at Rockefeller Center, where thousands viewed book-related exhibits and attended forums by publishers, editors, authors and reviewers. The following spring, the New York *Herald Tribune* announced a Children's Spring Book Festival to take place in May. The aim was to strengthen the market for children's books by encouraging more publication, distribution, and selling efforts year-round, with a greater emphasis on reading as recreation.[65] To honor "best of the best," the *Herald Tribune* also created two Festival Awards to recognize the best spring books and to encourage year-round selling.[66] Following the model set by Book Week, the Fair and Festival emphasized cooperation and participation between sellers, schools, and libraries, but the purpose of each event also was to stimulate more book-buying.

At the same time, Frederic Melcher wrote several editorials for *Publishers' Weekly* in the 1930s and 1940s in which he begins to commit the children's book field more fully to building the autonomy of the child consumer. Interestingly, Melcher adopts the rhetoric of valued childhood to associate book buying and "personal ownership" with a happy childhood. He also suggests that fathers must take a greater role in selecting their children's books, in keeping with

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[64] For example, "Governors Proclaim Book Week," *Publishers' Weekly* 134, no. 20 (1938): 1747; B. Hooper, "Children's Book Week," *The Washington Post* 14 November 1937; "More Selections for Juveniles Crown Children's Book Week," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 November 1937.

[65] "Book Fair Viewed by 35,000 in Week," *New York Times* 12 November 1936, 25; "*Herald Tribune* Spring Festival Plans Indicate Big Week," *Publishers Weekly* 141, no. 16 (1932): 1476-77; Frederic Melcher, "Making National Campaigns Work," *Publishers' Weekly* 135, no. 17 (1939): 1575.

[66] "Books and Authors," *New York Times*, 14 February 1937, 106.

the endorsement of greater male intervention in child-rearing.[67] Most importantly, Melcher insists repeatedly that boys and girls were the best judge of their own preferences and that they could choose wisely for themselves.[68]

As Melcher observed in 1938, satisfied boy and girls were "the most important customers" a publisher and a shop could have: "It is the children's desire to be read books or to read more of a kind of book they like which turns current publishing ventures into valuable publishing property."[69] Consumer choice also created a halo of legitimacy for more direct promotions to children, and it offered new opportunities to encourage children to buy whatever they liked.[70] *Publishers' Weekly* urged booksellers to make a concerted effort to know their customer. Sellers were encouraged to learn the tastes of individual children, the habits of different age groups, and to develop personal relationships that could be built into reliable sales opportunities.[71]

During the war, picture books and pop-ups substituted for toys, and publishers announced that demand for juvenile books of all kinds were at record levels.[72] And, as Figure 5-4 indicates, through the 1940s, *Little Golden Books* made inexpensive books the driving force across publishing because "no matter how rigidly the family budget is controlled, [parents] do not mind

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[67] For specific examples, see Frederic Melcher, "A Dozen Years of Improvement," *Publishers' Weekly* 130, no. 16 (1936): 1581; Frederic Melcher, "Gains for Children's Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 130, no. 9 (1936): 697; Frederic Melcher, "The Trade's Duty to the Children," *Publishers' Weekly* 132, no. 17 (1937): 1643; Frederic Melcher, "Consumer Interest in Children's Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 134, no. 9 (1938): 567; Frederic Melcher, "They Do Know Good Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 134, no. 17 (1938): 1503; Frederic Melcher, "Men Wanted?," *Publishers' Weekly* 136, no. 1 (1939): 7; Frederic Melcher, "Fathers Take Note," *The Publishers' Weekly* 137, no. 16 (1940): 1557.

[68] Frederic Melcher, "High Standards in Selling Children's Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 138, no. 17 (1940): 1659.

[69] Melcher, "Consumer Interest in Children's Books."

[70] For example, Willard A. Heaps, "On the Joys of Owning Books and Their Companionship," *New York Times* 10 November 1940, 102; H.W. Hurt, "Boy Scouts Go after Individual Reader," *Publishers' Weekly* 136, no. 9 (1939); William Howell Wells, "Harness up the Ads," *Publishers' Weekly* 119, no. 23 (1931): 2698-99.

[71] Constance Mitchell, "Enlisting Community Support," *Publishers' Weekly* 117, no. 17 (1930): 2231-32; D.S. Patee, "Book Interviews with Children," *Publishers' Weekly* 117, no. 26 (1930): 3133-34; Mary Teeter, "The Unlimited Market: Teachers, Librarians and Booksellers Can Work Together to Create an Interest in Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 126, no. 8 (1934): 581-84; Helen Trager, "Concerning the Juvenile Market," *Publishers Weekly* 140, no. 16 (1941): 1559-62.

[72] "The Demand for Juveniles Far Exceeds the Supply," *Publishers Weekly* 145, no. 18 (1943): 1671-76; "Large Orders and Limited Supply Is Juvenile Situation," *Publishers Weekly* 146, no. 13 (1944): 1209-16.

plunking down a quarter for a book."[73] Despite this growth, as children's publishers struggled with the wartime production problems and limited resources, they also had to re-make their case to booksellers and book-buyers that children's books were uniquely valuable and book ownership was "an essential right."[74] *Publishers' Weekly* rallied the field to make the world better by selling more books, especially to new parents. Melcher remained consistent and careful in his language: "The personal possession means an advancement of opportunity. Thousands of parents are making sure of this opportunity for their children."[75] Likewise, Children's Book Week favored messages and images that conveyed dependability, reassurance, and purpose while underscoring the value of books (*e.g.*, "Forward with Books – 1942"). [76]

Little Alices in a Wonderland of Consumption: Children as Valuable Customers

Through World War II, adults remained important gatekeepers for their children's access to recreational reading, and parents were held responsible for upholding middle-class standards in their selection and purchase of children's books. By the 1940s, the balance in the children's book field was tipping firmly toward treating boys and girls as the primary customer. As the remainder of this chapter will show, boys and girls received more, and more direct, attention from publishers as their growing allowances and consumer autonomy made them increasingly valuable customers.

Child Consumers in the Post-War Era: Earned Allowances and the Family Budget

The centrality of commodities and consumption in childhood only intensified under what Lizabeth Cohen terms the Consumer's Republic (*e.g.*, "an economy, culture, and politics built

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[73] The Executive Vice President for Simon & Schuster goes on to characterize *Little Golden Books* as part pacifier, part educational instrument, part gift. Albert Leventhal, "The Children's Book in the Mass Market," *Publishers Weekly* 164, no. 21 (1953): 2107.

[74] Agnes De Lima, "Children's Reading in Wartime," *Publishers Weekly* 141, no. 16 (1942): 1484-86; Frederic Melcher, "Books in The "Must" Column," *Publishers Weekly* 142, no. 17 (1942): 1741; "Problems of Children's Bookmaking in 1942," *Publishers Weekly* 142, no. 1 (1942): 44, 46.

[75] Frederic Melcher, "To the New Generation," *Publishers Weekly* 146, no. 9 (1944): 693.

[76] Leonard S. Marcus and Children's Book Council (New York), *75 Years of Children's Book Week Posters: Celebrating Great Illustrators of American Children's Books* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1994); Frederic Melcher, " A Council on Children's Books," *Publishers' Weekly* 3 March 1945. See also, Robin Gottlieb, *Publishing Children's Books in America, 1919-1976: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Children's Book Council, 1978), Introduction.

around the promises of mass consumption").[77] As the young families of the post-war era created a children's market of unprecedented scale, middle-class parents were expected to provide an array of commodities deemed absolutely essential to a happy, healthy childhood. The baby boom offered ample opportunities for producers to leverage enthusiasm for "living the good life" into higher levels of household consumption, as achieving an ever-higher standard of living became a driving aspiration.[78]

As the Consumer's Republic rose, children gained more access to more money at an earlier age. Spending became an expected and assumed part of their lifestyle. For example, a 1951 textbook, *Consumer Living*, states its purpose is to teach America's young people to make the most of "the unprecedented opportunities for good living" afforded by the "free and energetic economic system we have."[79] In keeping with children's growing budgets and recreational options, this text dedicates substantial attention to entertainment spending with an emphasis on "profitable pleasure" (e.g., activities that improve health, intellect, personal growth, social skills, and creativity). Not surprisingly, advertisers and their clients were again at the heart of the curriculum; one in five corporations claimed to be sponsoring material for school use.[80]

My research finds that children were commonly described as little money managers. While parents were cautioned against bribing their children, it became more commonplace for parents to pay children in exchange for doing household chores.[81] Leading behavior psychologist,

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[77] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 11.

[78] One survey of 1950s households found 40% had small children, and that these families were responsible for 45% of total spending. Richard H. Ostheimer, "Who Buys What? "Life's" Study of Consumer Expenditures," *Journal of Marketing* 22, no. 3 (1958): 260-72.

[79] Fred T. Wilhelms, *Consumer Living; Written for the Consumer Education Study, National Association of Secondary-School Principals* (New York: Gregg Pub. Co., 1951). See especially, Part II, "Getting Your Time's Worth in Recreation," 45-88.

[80] L. Stole Inger and Rebecca Livesay, "Consumer Activisim, Commercialism, and Curriculum Choices: Advertising in Schools in the 1930s" *The Journal of American Culture* 30, no.1 (2007): 76. Inger and Livesay report that by the 1990s, corporate sponsorsed materials reached over 8 million students on a daily basis through Channel One television. This represents nearly 40% of all 12- to 17-year-olds. Inger and Livesay, 68.

[81] Sheila Daly John, "Teen Budget Takes Some Calculations," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 February 1952, C1; Gladys Bevans, "Bribery of Children," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 August 1948, B5. See also Elizabeth

Henry Link, argued that without such training children grew up with a "gimme gimme psychology" rather than a work ethic. Others urged parents to make their children earn their allowances so they would not grow up expecting "hand-outs" (e.g., pensions, health benefits) without having earned them.[82]

Criminologists began interpreting juvenile delinquency as a response to deprivation, a rejection of middle-class standards of success, and a desire to fit in with peers. Children who lacked a sense of love and attention from parents were viewed as more prone to stealing, as were those from female-headed households. Likewise, children with an "underdeveloped sense of property rights" or and inadequate allowance were more likely to be wasteful or to steal from others. Envy of other children's possessions also was cited as a common reason for petty theft among boys and girls.[83]

While the motivation for earned allowances varied, the practice gained considerable attention. For example, a 1951 Gallup poll found that though 73% of parents polled had not received an allowance as a child, 85% believed it was appropriate to give 12-year-olds an allowance. Of these respondents, 78% believed the allowance should be earned in exchange for work around the house.[84] In keeping with prevailing age and gender expectations, parents started children's allowances early, and they guided them through successive stages of responsibility.

Blanchard, "An Allowance Teaches Child Value of Money," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 August 1949, A8; Eleanor Miller, "Child Should Be Taught Wisdom of Budgeting," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 January 1950, A11; "Tips on Allowances for Children Given," *New York Times*, 23 September 1957, 24; Marcia Winn, "Use Allowance Plan to Teach Spending," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 December 1957, B7.

[82] See George Gallup, "Give the Small Fry Allowances, but for Chores Done, Say Elders," *The Washington Post*, 29 September 1951, B3; Harry C. Link, "An Allowance Weakens Personality," *The Washington Post*, 2 January 1952, 9; "'Make Your Child Earn Allowance'," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 March 1949, 4.

[83] "9 School Girls Held on Charges of Shoplifting," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 December 1949, A8; "Delinquency Rates Linked to Community Standards," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 March 1950, 8; "Child Learns Honesty by Example," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 22 January 1952, A1; "Girl, 13, Picked up Looting Closed Store," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, 24 November 1955, 35; "Son Steals Despite Allowance," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, 16 August 1956, 53; "Stealing: Common Problem," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, 12 August 1958, B4; "Reasons Why Child Steals--and the Cures," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 September 1951, A7; "Why Does He Steal?," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 August 1958, I40.

[84] George Gallup and George Horace Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1997* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1998).

Under this model, a child who earned pennies at the age of six would learn the value of saving and spending wisely. Over time, he would achieve progressively-greater authority over his finances and, as an adolescent, he could manage his money well enough to treat his favorite girl to a movie and a soda. Likewise, a well-trained little girl would grow up to buy her own clothes (with advice from her mother), and keep a savings account (with her father making her deposits at the bank).[85]

My research finds that training children to spend according to a budget was presented as an effective way to alleviate generational tensions. Rather than leave themselves open to random (and repeated) demands for money, parents could provide children with a routine allowance and nothing more. This was especially popular advice for dealing with teenagers. Money was viewed as critical to the adolescent's struggle for independence, and allowances permitted them a safe way to show defiance, undermine authority, and meet peer expectations.[86]

Parents also were advised to discuss the family income candidly with their children to help them understand the basis for setting their allowance and to make them feel "part of a team." The rationale being if children understood the family finances and participated in the family economy, they would show consideration and learn good values (e.g., satisfaction with their share, ability to make good spending and saving decisions, care with their possessions, less selfishness, better citizenship, and a more compassionate and charitable attitude toward the less fortunate).[87]

Yet, revealing the family budget had the unintended consequence of giving children power and an opportunity to negotiate. For example, one reporter recounts: "Not long ago our

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[85] Joan Beck, "A Guide to Teens' Allowances; Youth Spending Is 10 Billion Dollar Item to Business," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 September 1958, C5.

[86] See Feldman, *The Family in a Money World*. It was believed that deprivation made children overvalue money, feel insecure, and disconnect them from peers. By contrast, relative wealth gave children a harmful sense of superiority, entitlement, and pressure to achieve; it also created a tendency for parents to express affection through possessions and to overindulge out of guilt.

[87] For example, "Responsibility of Budget Belongs to Entire Family," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 5 January 1958, H2.

teen-age daughter, Peggy, listened to a family budget conference. Like everyone, we were confronted with higher prices and with the need to stretch our money. . . Finally she said in an apologetic way: 'I hate to mention it, Mother, but I have inflation, too. My allowance won't last beyond Thursday."[88]

Gendered Spending, Peers, and Purchasing Power

While many aspects of the evolution of child consumers between 1930 and 1960 were shared, it merits attention that formal and informal consumer education carried age-and gender-specific directives. Parents were advised to have mothers guide daughters and fathers guide sons, by engaging in a little "foolish masculine [or feminine] spending" together. The rationale was simple: "Strengthening the identification of the adolescent with the parent of the same sex not only fosters the emancipation process but helps prepare the boy and girl for their roles and responsibilities for marriage."[89] In short, parents encouraged their sons to take more control over money. This differentiation set the stage for an adult world in which women centered their lives and goals on relationships and domestic life, while men maintained a greater degree of independence and a stronger career-orientation.

Evidence on the use of allowance money is scant, but suggests that boys and girls had different experiences and expectations. Girls were being trained in consumerism as preparation for their future roles as wife and mother. Boys, by contrast, were granted more freedom in their purchasing decisions and more money to spend. For example, in 1954, *Scholastic* magazine's Institute of Student Opinion surveyed 5455 junior and senior high school students. They found that the average teenage boy had $10 a week to spend while girls had just $6. They also found that both boys and girls tended to save some of their allowance.

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[88] Sheila Daly, "Parents View Teen-Agers; It's Not Flattering," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 May 1949, J5; Sarah Sheilds Pfeiffer, "An Allowance Helped Peggy Gain Wisdom and Self-Control," *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 October 1948, 9.

[89] Frances Lomas Feldman, *The Family in a Money World* (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1957).

Boys were more likely than girls to have part-time jobs to earn their spending money. They also were encouraged to be ambitious in their career goals, to begin earning an income early in life, and to understand family finances. It was accepted that boys needed more money because dating involved "going somewhere" and boys were expected to pay. Likewise, girls were less likely to be encouraged to have part-time jobs because parents, boyfriends, and husbands would provide for their support and entertainment.[90]

With finer age divisions and sharper gender distinctions in place, producers capitalized on children's relative value and their peer relationships. As teenagers spent their allowances and earnings on entertainment and fashion, market researchers began investigating consumer interests and preferences with emphasis on pinpointing the precise interests of narrower groups.[91] Most notably, middle-class boys remained at the forefront of children's overall place in the market, but appeals to girls were increasingly prevalent in the adolescent age-group. The teenage girl, with her clique of friends, her urge to spend, and her sophisticated tastes became a much publicized consumer well into the 1960s – and for good reason. She was a "pampered purchaser"; she bought a new lipstick every month; she daydreamed about marriage; she was catered to by specialized publications like *Seventeen* magazine, a veteran in the field of teen media.[92]

The Hard Sell

As middle-class children expressed growing entitlement to consumer goods and activities, the increasingly-discriminating child consumer became a perennial source of complaint for producers. Successful advertising professionals specializing in the children's market noted

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[90] Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 58-62. A few experts encouraged educating both sexes equally to support themselves, both as a practical strategy and to strengthen their development of self-confidence, self-esteem, and maturity.

[91] Jessie Bernard, "Teen-Age Culture: An Overview," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 338 (1961): 1-12. 167. Dorothy Barclay, "The between-Agers: 11 to 14," *New York Times*, 24 February 1957, 213.

[92] Though much of the scholarship on this period details the extraordinary attention given to adolescent girls, it is important to note that the boy consumer remained highly coveted. For example, the Boy Scouts continued to put advertisers in touch with the "future leaders of America" through their magazine and activities. For example, Philip Dougherty, "It's a Boy's Life," *New York Times*, 1973; William Freeman, "Teen-Age Girls Big Spenders," *New York Times*, 10 August 1960, 48.

that boys and girls were rejecting the "hard sell." Evidence suggests that as the children's market expanded, it was more expensive to attract children's attention, and there was less likelihood that interest would be sustained.[93]

Despite the expense of promotions and the high cost of failure, the sheer size of the children's market ensured continued attention from producers. Though the certainty of some tried-and-true methods faded as competition intensified in the children's market, advertisers and retailers continued to successfully promote the idea that every holiday held shopping potential. For example, Halloween received new attention as a profitable holiday with hour-long children's shows offering a new venue for television advertising. As one costume manufacturer put it: "We have to get to the children so that they will be absolutely screaming for our line."[94]

More importantly, the preferences of boys and girls could not be dismissed because it was widely believed that when children made demands for specific products their parents frequently gave in. Companies sought to get their brand name in children's hands in the form of miniature products designed just for them. Thus, while teenagers routinely took control of their own spending, children leveraged more informal control over money at an earlier age. American children aged 2 to 12 were believed to have strong influence in how one of every seven consumer dollars would be spent. Advertisers and marketers noted children's effectiveness as a pressure on

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[93] For example, Cornelius Vanderbilt Wood, a Disneyland planner, designed several more amusement parks across the country, including Freedomland U.S.A., located in the Bronx. Freedomland declared itself a new form of family entertainment center which concentrated on education. Despite a $750,000 promotional campaign for the park's opening in 1960, the interest in amusements themed around Chicago's Great Fire and the San Francisco earthquake waned quickly. The park closed four years later. Robert Alden, "Campaign Aims to Sell History," *New York Times*, 19 June 1960, F10. Wood's other parks, Magic Mountain (Colorado, 1957-1960) and Pleasure Island (Wakefield, Mass., 1959-1969), met a similar fate.

[94] Robert Alden, "Toys Pushing Brand Names," *New York Times*, 3 August 1960, 36; Peter Bart, "A Case of Who's Boss at Home," *New York Times*, 29 July 1963, 29; Peter Bart, "Scaring up Halloween Sales," *New York Times*, 17 October 1963, 48; "Cash Registers Ring Festively," *New York Times*, 13 February 1960, 24.

parents' spending, and they vigorously supported children pestering and manipulating parents into purchases.[95]

The strength of the children's radio and television audience also changed the child consumer. Studies over the course of this period also note a substantial decline in recreational reading as sports, radio-listening, movies, and other activities gained popularity.[96] Respondents in the *People and Books* study of 1945 reported that they spent 8% of their time reading books, compared with: 11% reading magazines, 11% at the movies, 21% reading newspapers, and 49% listening to the radio.[97] At the same time, it was becoming taken-for-granted that children controlled their recreational choices at an earlier age, and they permitted less participation from adults.[98] In the postwar era, the children's book field faced growing competition from comic books and television.

By 1960, nine out of every ten American homes had a television. Marketers welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate toys to younger viewers, while using print ads to target parents interested in the educational aspects of toys. Clearly, this further severed the child consumer from parents. The move to television also triggered a new wave of consumer research on younger children. For example, advertising agencies specializing in the children's market found boys and girls were more responsive to male announcers in commercials, and they responded favorably to

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[95] The idea of children as an economic force gained significant attention in the press and across industries. For an example of the standard media treatment, see "A New $10-Billion Power: The U.S. Teen-Age Consumer," *Life*, August 1959, 78-87.

[96] Inez Mauck and Esther Swenson, "A Study of Children's Recreational Reading," *The Elementary School Journal*, 50, no. 3 (November, 1949): 144-50.

[97] Henry C. Link and Harry Arthur Hopf, *People and Books, a Study of Reading and Book-Buying Habits* (New York: Book Manufacturers' Institute, 1946), 113.

[98] New guides to children's reading were designed to address the needs of children up to junior high school; it was presumed that by age thirteen, parents had far less influence over book selection. For example, Nancy Larrick, *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading: For Parents of Pre-School and Elementary School Boys and Girls* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958).

product endorsements by celebrities. Children also enjoyed participating in ads (e.g., sing-alongs, drawing pictures, ads that changed color or had a scent.)[99]

Appealing to Young Readers

With the rise of the Consumer's Republic, *Publishers' Weekly's* Frederic Melcher underscored that appealing to boys and girls as readers and consumers would allow publishers and booksellers valuable opportunities to measure interests, stimulate sales, and leverage peer relationships. Boys and girls "seize upon with eager interest the books coming fresh from the press," Melcher claimed, and they generate "invaluable word-of-mouth recommendation which only the children themselves can give."[100] To help stimulate sales, publishers created opportunities to publicize and promote their products directly to boys and girls. The following section briefly details the large-scale public events and book clubs which helped to expand and further commercialize the children's book field in the face of growing competition.

Teen Age Book Club

In the aftermath of WWII, the entire book market split into a hardcover business catering to the bookstores and book clubs, and mass-market publishing focused on other outlets.[101] As John Tebbel observes: "[T]here was a gap between the bookstores and readers' needs, and increasingly that gap was filled by the clubs."[102] It is difficult to overstate the importance clubs had in children's market during this period. Figures for the American Book Publishers Council indicate that while trade sales remained relatively flat, sales of juvenile book club editions

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[99] For example, Philip Dougherty, "Views of Children," *New York Times*, 3 April 1974, 69; Sal Nuccio, "Campaigns Aimed at Children," *New York Times*, 13 July 1964, 40. On radio clubs, see Jacobson, *Raising Consumers*.

[100] Frederic Melcher, "Creating Classics," *Publishers Weekly* 149, no. 17 (1946): 2289.

[101] Korda, *Making the List*, 76-77. See also, "Increasing Juvenile Sales in Bookstores," *Publishers Weekly* 166, no. 4 (1954): 371; "S & S Ships 2,700,000 Little Golden Books," *Publishers Weekly* 144, no. 5 (1943): 330-31.

[102] John William Tebbel, "Main Trends in Twentieth-Century Book Clubs," in *American Literary Publishing Houses, 1900-1980*, ed. Peter Dzwonkoski (Detroit, Mich.: Gale Research Co., 1986), 414.

skyrocketed from 37 million in 1929 to 95 million in 1954.[103] Though some children's clubs were founded prior to World War II, most established a significant presence in the market in the mid-1940s.

In 1946, the Young Peoples Division of the Literary Guild launched a separate book club for high-school aged boys and girls because "youngsters of that age tend to scorn anything with the word 'junior' on it and are demanding books like the ones their parents are reading."[104] They faced stiff competition from the Teen Age Book Club, sponsored by Pocket Books and Scholastic.[105] Scholastic subsequently developed four additional clubs to divide the children's market by age.[106] In the coming decades, Scholastic's highly successful program of children's paperbacks for home and classroom also encouraged more publishers to experiment with inexpensive formats to sell directly to junior-high and high-school aged students.[107]

My research identified 17 commercially-sponsored book clubs for children in 1960; each with offerings for specific age groups and interests. Clubs were marketed via direct mailings to schools and teachers or via mail order catalog. These strategies effectively made the school operate as a store, but the school-based book club did more than just put books in easy reach of the child consumer. It also significantly displaced both the retail bookseller and the library.

Some publishers also sponsored "non-commercial public relations programs" which visited dozens of city schools across the country to promote books. For example, the Scholastic Magazine Book Bazaar visited hundreds of junior high and high schools with exhibits,

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[103] Hackett, *70 Years of Best Sellers*, 5.
[104] "Literary Guild Announces Book Club for Teen Age," *Publishers Weekly* 150, no. 9 (1946): 1043-44.
[105] Ann Durell, "Production and Distribution of Pocket Books and Paperbacks for Young People," *Bookbird* X (1972): 5-9; Milton Meltzer and Authors Guild Bulletin, "Expanding Market Seen for Children's Paperbacks," (1973): 15-18; "Teen Age Book Club Names First Five Selections," *Publishers Weekly* 150, no. 9 (1946): 1044.
[106] Judith S. Duke, *Children's Books and Magazines: A Market Study*, Communications Library (White Plains, NY: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1979). Duke notes that in 1979 Scholastic distributed 80 million paperbacks a year to 80% of elementary schools and 50% of high schools.
[107] "Children's Classics Are Returning after an Absence of Three Years," *Publishers Weekly* 150, no. 17 (1946): 2458-66. See also, "Currents in the Trade: News and Comment on the Trends of the Week," *Publishers Weekly* 153, no. 17 (1948): 1785-89; "The Expanding Market for Juveniles," *Publishers Weekly* 160, no. 4 (1951): 360.

entertainment, and author appearances. The Bazaar gave the sponsoring organizations (*e.g.*, teachers, PTA, student clubs, etc.) a percentage of total sales. Gilbert E. Goodman, executive secretary of the American Booksellers Association, indicated support for the program: "It is both good citizenship and good business for booksellers to want to do their part to insure Bazaars' success."[108] However, cooperation with Book Bazaars was not in the long-term interest of the local retailer who still had to compete with Scholastic's book clubs.

The remaining advantage held by smaller booksellers was regular contact with the consumer, if they could get buyers into the store. One *Publishers' Weekly* survey found: "[Booksellers] actively seek to acquire more children as customers, either by subtle suggestions to parents, or by going directly to the schools and asking the authorities to allow teachers to bring children into the stores in groups."[109] Along with field-trip shopping excursions, smaller shops emphasized improvements in the buying experience, child-prompted impulse buying, treating children like grown-ups, gift certificates, and child-controlled charge accounts. They began planning for the Christmas selling season in August. They appealed to teenagers as independent buyers, and they sold to children according to their individual tastes.[110]

Fairs and Festivals: Selling Books by Celebrating Books

As Children's Book Week became a "national institution," the events surrounding it grew in scale.[111] As part of the Book Week celebration, the New York Boys' and Girls' Book Fair became an annual event. Annual Fairs also were launched across the country as the popularity of large-scale celebrations peaked through the 1950s. Typically, the Fairs were co-sponsored by the Children's Book Council and a major newspaper, and they were organized cooperatively by the

[108] "Scholastic Book Bazaars Enter Second Year," *Publishers Weekly* 160, no. 17 (1951): 1724-25.
[109] "Selling Books to Children," *Publishers Weekly* 176, no. 7 (1959): 104-07.
[110] Martha Bruggeman, "The Art of Selling to the Individual," *Publishers Weekly* 189, no. 8 (1966): 176-79; "Doubleday-NYU Seminar in Retail Management," *Publishers Weekly* 177, no. 11 (1960): 28-34; "Selling Books to Children."
[111] In 1944, the Association of Children's Book Editors took responsibility for the Children's Book Week campaign. The ACBE founded the Children's Book Council (CBC) to administer Book Week and to serve as a year-round promotion center. Publishers also invested in sponsoring events to promote books directly to children.

leading editors and publishing houses in the children's book field, with varying degrees of input from libraries and schools.[112]

Book Fairs offered an opportunity to display thousands of books, alongside exciting entertainment (*e.g.*, dramatic presentations of popular stories, ballet performances, and quiz programs). The Fairs were well-attended by the public and drew the leading figures in the field; they also received regular coverage and participation from national broadcasters. Major newspapers offered separate sections dedicated to children's books, giving publishers access to millions of readers.[113] The celebrations depart from the Book Week tradition of small-scale events at the local bookshop and enthusiastic, but low-key, book displays at the library or school. Book Fairs were designed as a valuable contribution to the publicity and sales effort.[114] Over the years, the Fairs specialized in more attention-grabbing exhibits to draw in the crowds.[115]

By the late-1940s and 1950s, many publishers clearly felt stiff competition for children's attention and for their spending money. As Viking Press president, Harold Guinzberg, remarked in 1948:

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[112] Lucy Tompkins, " National Children's Book Week - a Report," *Publishers Weekly* 164, no. 24 (1953); Lucy Tompkins, "Children's Book Council Co-Sponsors 1956 Book Fairs in Ten Areas," *Publishers Weekly* 170, no. 5 (1956). Annual fairs were produced in Washington D.C. (1949), Chicago (1953), Cleveland (1953), Little Rock (1954), San Antonio (1954), Baltimore (1955), Philadelphia (1955), Grand Rapids (1956), Honolulu (1956), Minneapolis (1956), Detroit (1956), Orlando (1957), Boston (1960). The Fair in Hampton, Virginia (1956), emphasized outreach to rural communities.

[113] The *Herald Tribune* paints an enthusiastic picture of the segment of the children's market that reads their children's issue: "Their high incomes are only part of the story. . . they *spend*, buy more of everything (books, too) because they're not only more active, do more things, go more places, but are mentally alert as well." "Herald Tribune Book Review," *Publishers Weekly* 160, no. 4 (1951). *The Chicago Sunday Tribune* boasted its weekly *Junior Bookshelf* was the "principle guide to juvenile reading and book buying for hundreds of thousands of families in Chicago and the midwest." "The *Junior Bookshelf*," *Publishers Weekly* 161, no. 9 (1952).

[114] One account of New York's festivities even mentions a young girl's spontaneous announcement that she intended to "do something to make money so I can buy some books." "Children Approve Second Book Fair," *New York Times*, Nov 21 1948. With newspapers as major sponsors of the Fairs, the annual coverage is always enthusiastic. It also offers a fair indication of what the priorities of the event were in a given year.

[115] Among the more noteworthy: the 5-foot boa constrictor to tie-in with *The First Book of Snakes*, as well as a sing-a-long session by folk singers Michael and Peggy Seeger and "an uninhibited audience." Matt McDade, "Mother, Son -- Both Authors -- Prove to Visitors at Post Book Fair Life with Boa Can Be Fun," *The Washington Post*, 19 November 1953, 17.

> In a world in which the movies, radio and television and the comic strip compete for children's spare time and are all too accessible, nothing could be more useful than to give them a chance to examine first hand the creative work in word and picture which the best imaginative talents of our time have produced for them.[116]

Viking Press had won five of the previous ten Newbery Medals, including the award for 1948. Guinzberg knew his publications were considered the best of the best; what he needed was for children to know it, too. Yet, even at the largest book event of the year children were demanding more television.

In one minor foray into market research, the New York Fair used an Election Day balloting-machine to poll teenagers (grades 7-12) about their reading (and buying) habits. Volunteers from the League of Women Voters facilitated the event, and teenagers reportedly lined up waiting to cast their votes.[117] The results informed the children's book field that most teenagers did not choose a book because they liked the pictures, and they preferred mysteries and adventure stories. They learned that nearly 80% used their own money to buy books, and recommendations from friends were the greatest influence in reading selection. The vast majority of teenagers wanted more books dramatized on television, but they also were more *unlikely* to read a book if they had seen it presented on TV. Fair organizers also collected a list of over 2000 stories that children wanted adapted for television.[118]

Although Book Week tried to associate the idea of books with curiosity and exhilaration (*e.g.,* "Reading is Fun – 1952" and "I Like Books! – 1962"), publishers ultimately had to appeal to the demands of their audience with more TV tie-ins and brand-name characters.[119] Merchandizing intensified in the 1950s and 1960s as publishers recognized the extraordinary book sales generated by brand names such as, Shirley Temple, Disney movies, Charlie Brown,

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[116] "22,000 at Opening of Child Book Fair," *New York Times*, 20 November 1948, 11.
[117] Lillian Bellison, "22,300 Children Attend Book Fair," *New York Times*, 16 November 1950, 27.
[118] Dorothy McFadden, "Showmanship at Children's Book Fairs," *Publishers Weekly* 160, no. 4 (1951): 300-05; "Teen-Agers Vote Their Book Choices," *New York Times* 20 November 1950, 23.
[119] Marcus and Children's Book Council (New York). For example, in 1966, Harper & Row printed an additional 50,000 copies of *Stuart Little* in anticipation of the sales demand generated by an estimated 20 million viewers of a color TV production on NBC. "Children's Books," *Publishers Weekly* 189, no. 8 (1966): 167.

Dr. Seuss, Madeline, Babar and others. By 1954, the Character Merchandising Division of Walt Disney Productions reported licensing agreements with 53 companies, among them 5 publishers (Whitman, Simon & Schuster, Grosset & Dunlap, Dell, and D.C. Heath Textbooks). In 1955, the Davy Crockett craze alone would result in the sale of one million copies of Grosset & Dunlap's *The Picture Story of Davy Crockett* and 600,000 of their *The Davy Crockett Coloring Book.*[120] Publishers also began to make books for already-popular dolls like Ginny, in hopes of sure sales to a pre-existing market of doll-loving little girls.[121]

At the same time, as Book Fairs emphasized book-buying, they also shifted the field away from some of the traditional "quality" issues and away from libraries. Even the newly-created National Library Week failed to keep the message of "better books" above commercial interests. Instead, bookshops used it as an opportunity to advertise the value of book ownership and encouraged everyone to celebrate the week by visiting the store for some exciting new titles. Visiting the public library was added almost as an afterthought. More significantly, while sellers had a clear purpose, the message of libraries was scattered between fostering good reading habits, securing democracy, encouraging citizens to take responsibility, strengthening community relations, helping people lead satisfying and interesting lives. In 1959 alone, the week-organizers included three (or more) slogans: "For a Better-Read, Better-Informed America"; "Books Make a Home"; "Wake Up and Read."[122]

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[120] Hackett, *70 Years of Best Sellers,* 71. See also, Mrs. T.M. Floyd, "Appealing Direct to the Child," *Publishers Weekly* 136, no. 27 (1939): 2322-23; "New Bookstore Items Launched at the 56th American Toy Fair," *Publishers Weekly* 175, no. 12 (1959): 16-20; "News and Trends of the Week," *Publishers Weekly* 165, no. 12 (1954): 1397-98; "Toys as Sidelines for Impulse Buying," *Publishers Weekly* 169, no. 12 (1956): 1494; "Winter Television Shows Should Spur Sales of Juveniles," *Publishers Weekly* 172, no. 18 (1957): 12-18.

[121] "Retailing: 7,000,000 Ginny Dolls Have Been Sold," *Publishers Weekly* 174, no. 4 (1958): 148.

[122] If the library element of National Library Week was something of an after-thought, it also offered a useful opportunity for the industry to present a good face to the public. For example, The Walt Disney Company produced and aired three TV public service announcements endorsing National Library Week. "Latest Plans for National Library Week," *Publishers Weekly* 175, no. 10 (1959).

Boys and Girls as Valuable Customers

Between 1930 and the 1960s, children continued to be recognized as a cherished and protected group, but valued childhood recognized boys and girls as unique individuals who merited more specific forms of attention and an array of tailor-made products. As the middle-class invested in consumption, the image of a happy, well-dressed, well-fed child was projected as part of a lifestyle for middle-class parents that they could literally buy into.[123] In this context, children's social and economic value took on new significance. Despite the widespread economic hardship of the Depression, the middle class placed greater emphasis on children's consumer activities than ever before. Buying, ownership, and money became central to the lives of middle-class boys and girls. In turn, producers leveraged children to encourage stability, dependability, and durability in the market.

At the same time, the American public voiced new concerns about the child consumer, and adults went to new lengths to prepare children for more direct participation in consumer culture. As their sheltered position gave way in the 1930s, boys and girls were immersed in the Wonderland of consumption. However, the promise of consumption also carried a deep anxiety about boys' and girls' abilities to manage money and to make good buying decisions. In part, this distress is in keeping with the longstanding belief that children had inherently poor taste, unruly buying habits, and a vulnerability to cheap amusements. With the expanding consumer movement of the 1930s, adults made a concerted effort to prepare boys and girls to be educated consumers. Once again, they imitated adult models and past practices to give boys and girls the skills they needed to be responsible buyers.

Teaching Johnny (and Jane) to be good consumers facilitated more frequent and direct contact between children and the market. As buying became a job, boys and girls became more active shoppers and, in turn, the target of more direct promotions. Rather than deter consumption,

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[123] See Victoria Alexander, "The Image of Children in Magazine Advertisements from 1905 to 1990," *Communication Research* 21, no. 6 (1994); Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

consumer education and market research helped to ensure that, though sharply-scrutinized, consumption remained firmly established and favored throughout this period.

In the children's book field, the economic conditions of the Depression, and the diminished anxiety over recreation, effectively eliminated the relevance of the distinction between "cheap" and "quality" publications seen in previous decades. Likewise, parents continued to be gatekeepers of children's reading, but their influence was clearly slipping. In this context, publishers urged booksellers to capitalize on the opportunity to leverage the child's influence over adults. As boys and girls gained more access and control over money in the post-war era, the valued middle-class boy and girl translated more broadly into a valuable customer in the market. Building on existing foundations of adult book clubs and Children's Book Week, publishers sought greater access to children, and they made efforts to know and satisfy their demands. The days of American publishers producing books to meet the demands of adults had given way to a new era of appealing directly and specifically to young readers.

Table 5-1. Population of U.S. Children Age 5-14[124]

Year	Number of Children (in millions)	Percentage of Total Population
1930	24.6	20.0%
1940	22.4	17.0%
1950	24.3	16.1%
1960	35.4	19.8%
1970	40.7	20.1%

[124] *No. HS-3. Population by Age: 1900 to 2002.* U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003. http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-03.pdf

Figure 5-1. New Juvenile Series Titles by Gender, 1930-1970

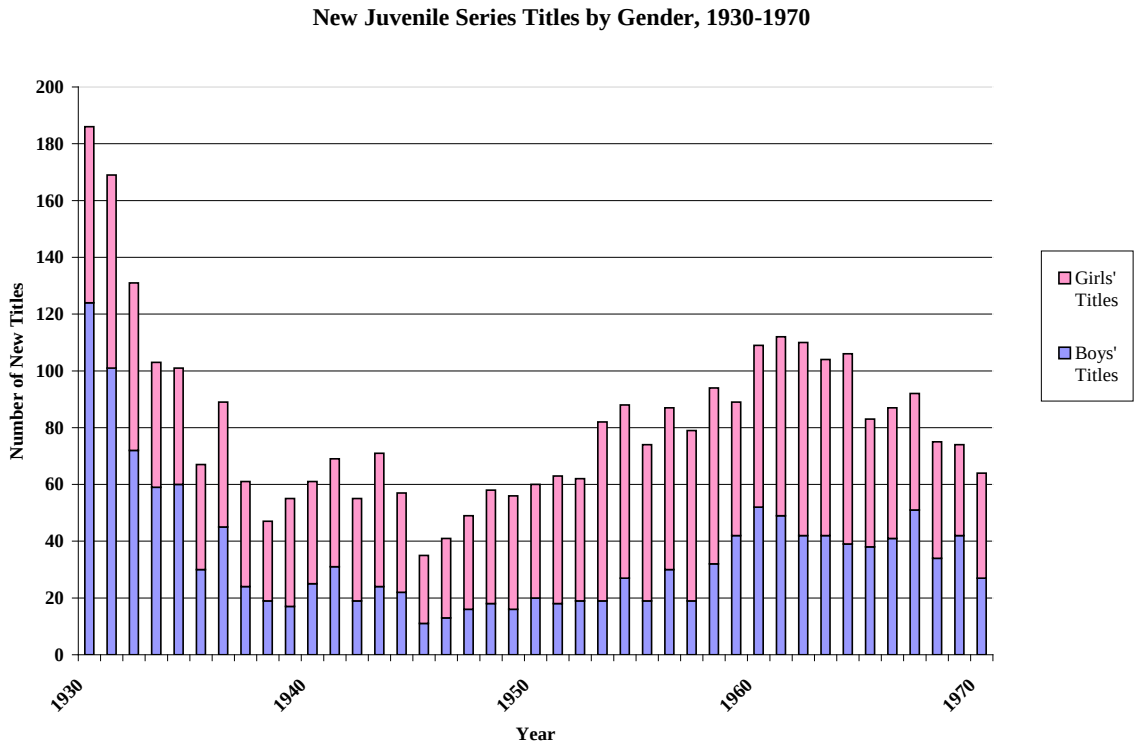


Figure 5-2. Stratemeyer New Titles by Gender, 1930-1970

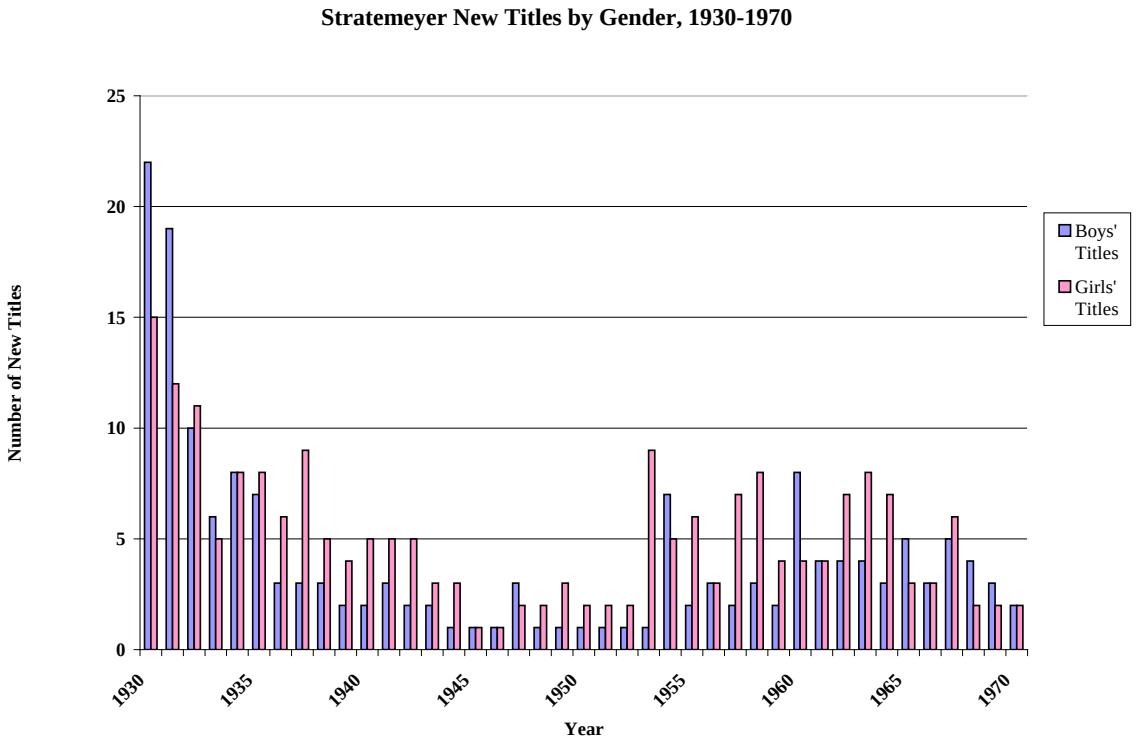
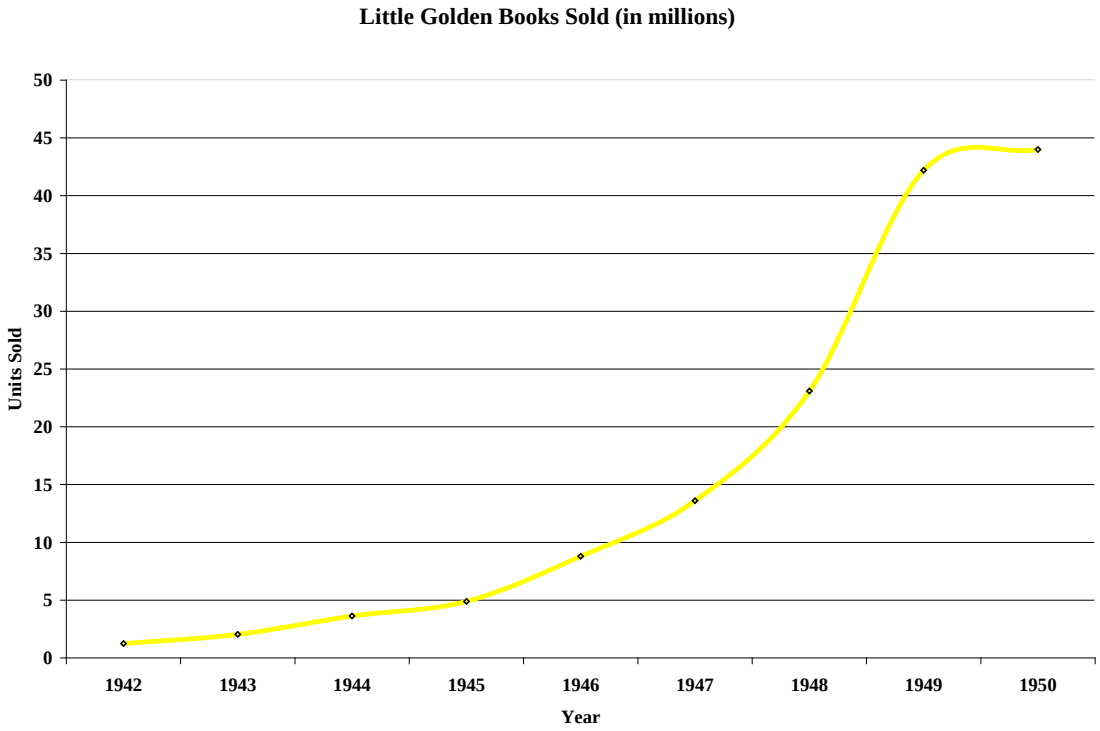


Figure 5-3. Little Golden Books Sold (in Millions), 1942-1950



CONCLUSION

The Continuing Relevance of Separate Shelves

> Can children's books be relevant if they continue to end with "and they were married and lived happily ever after"? Little girls should not have to read over and over that to be happy is to be married. Little boys should not have to read over and over that upon them will fall the lifetime burden of supporting a family. . .
>
> "Trends in the Publishing of Children's Books"
> Ann Durrell, *Illinois Libraries*, 1971[1]

As Editor and Director of Children's Books for E.P. Dutton & Company, Ann Durrell questioned whether books were becoming irrelevant in children's lives. She observed that American children of 1971 were changing because media exposed people to "other roles and other identities."[2] Durrell also suggested that a kind of "recycling process" might be occurring: editors published books which, in turn, were reviewed and bought by librarians, while children were left out of the process altogether.[3] Finally, she noted that in a society with "the practically instantaneous transmittal of information through audio *and* visual media," the book could be rendered obsolete during the 1970s.[4]

Durrell's comments were informed by her time. Specifically, she cited the examples of Civil Rights, anti-war protests, and the Women's Liberation Movement as forces of social change that editors must recognize as they worked to produce relevant children's books. As the above quotation suggests, Durrell objected to the limitations of normative femininity and masculinity presented in girls' books and boys' books (*i.e.*, romance and passivity for girls; wage-earning and responsibility for boys). She suggested that a relevant children's book would entail a greater

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[1] Ann Durrell, "Trends in the Publishing of Children's Books," *Illinois Libraries* 53, no. 1 (March 1971): 194. Durrell had a long and successful career in children's publishing with Dutton. A fiction award for middle grade books was named in her honor. She also co-edited (with Marilyn Sachs) *The Big Book for Peace* (Dutton, 1990) which was awarded the Jane Addams Book Award from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Julia Mickenberg and Philip Nel, *Tales for Little Rebels: A Collection of Radical Children's Literature* (NY: New York University Press, 2008), 257.
[2] *Ibid.*, 192.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.* Emphasis original.

degree of gender-neutrality: "Roles should not be assigned 'male' and 'female' but rather 'person.' I expect that children's books will reflect this new relevance."[5]

This dissertation has examined the emergence and persistence of the gender distinction in the children's book field through the 1960s. It chronicles market identification, definition, and segmentation. Rooted in the "circus atmosphere" of antebellum publishing, adults gradually came to view boys and girls as a distinct audience in need of separate amusements. American publishers and the public applied and adapted gendered reading preferences to the children's market based upon the belief that boys and girls – like men and women – had (or should have had) distinct reading interests, habits, and tastes. As more entertaining reading for children emerged, categorizing some books in this fashion provided influential adults (*e.g.*, publishers, booksellers, reviewers, critics, child-oriented professionals, and parents) with a means to organize, create, and interpret children's books.

The emergence of boys' dime novels in late-nineteenth-century introduced the practice of catering to the perceived interests of a gendered audience (*i.e.*, adventures for boys, romance and friendship for girls). It is important to note, however, that the adoption of gender-specific recreational reading intended for boys *or* girls was neither instantaneous nor universal. Dime novel and juvenile series producers enjoyed longstanding, high-volume sales to an eager audience of boys (and girls). They also had to contend with the obstacle of adult opposition. Concurrently, some publishers and their allies worked to build a market for "quality" children's books suitable for boys *and* girls. As they created books designed to meet the perceived needs, anxieties, and aspirations ascribed to middle-class childhood, the field organized to recommend and promote books with library, school, and the middle-class parent in mind.

With the expansion of children's recreational reading in the early decades of the Twentieth Century, the success of gendered series fiction further strengthened the presence of gender-specific books in the children's market. At the same time, "quality" standards were not

[5] *Ibid.*, 194.

providing a reliable source of promotion and profit; by the 1930s these claims were largely displaced in favor of a focus on quantity sales.[6] Additionally, as the child consumer gained greater authority and autonomy over the course of the Twentieth Century, more publishers adopted practices designed to appeal directly and specifically to the perceived needs of subsets of children.

With the narrower segmentation of the market, explicitly by age and reading ability, implicitly by class and race, the gender distinction remained prevalent in the practices of the children's book field as it consolidated over the course of the Twentieth Century. Influential women advocated for girls, and many, like Fjeril Hess, were backed by new gender-segregated children's organizations (*e.g.*, Girls Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and the like). This investment in meeting girls' perceived needs led to calls for more girls' books. Moreover, the acceptance that the boys' shelf was "here to stay" repositioned the separate shelves as a matter of gender exclusion and gender equity.

More than a simple system of classification, the *separate shelves* of the children's book field demonstrate the propagation of specific beliefs and values through the creation and dissemination of books. Specifically, they bind notions about normative femininity and masculinity to children's recreational reading from the preoccupation with self-restraint of the Victorian era to self-reliance of the Twentieth Century to the self-esteem concerns of today.

The early attention granted to boys by the children's book field, as well as the twentieth-century shift to adolescent girls, recognized and realized new opportunities in the market. As boys and girls experienced growing autonomy in the consumer economy and an increasingly peer-centered childhood, producers addressed a growing population of boys and girls directly. In the interim, this practice of approaching boys and girls affirmed and validated them as consumers

[6] For example, a 1968 *Publishers' Weekly* editorial noted the abundance and varying quality of series, but concluded: "On balance, though, many series titles are among the most readable and welcome products in the book business. The bookseller, no less than the librarian, does well to examine the titles. It is no simple matter to find one's way in the jungle growth of the series; but there are treasures to be found in it." "Series Books – Treasures in the Jungle?" *Publishers' Weekly* 193, no. 9 (1968): 142.

who were entitled to entertainment. By the mid-Twentieth Century, children commonly selected their own books, and, in turn, boys and girls cemented the *separate shelves* through their own purchases.

The trends Durrell observed in 1971 indicate the value of children's books – and the values that they espoused – was under significant revision. Her comments suggest that the field might recognize diversity in the children's market and, perhaps, dismiss *separate shelves* in favor of gender-neutral children's books. Durrell also indicates that editors and adults (*e.g.,* librarians, parents) might engage with children more directly in the production and selection process in order to take reader-interests more fully into account.

In this conclusion, I return to the pages of *Publishers' Weekly* and other records of the children's book field to assess Durrell's predictions and the continued relevance of *separate shelves*. How does today's children's book field negotiate gender and other social distinctions? What roles do adults and children play in production and consumption process? Finally, how has the persistence of the gender distinction privileged a certain range of media content and market segments, and what possibilities for change might there be? I follow this discussion with a brief discussion of the continuing evolution of the child consumer. As boys and girls are now fully engaged as consumers and the subject of extensive market research, their direct participation in the market gives them growing influence over the perpetuation of *separate shelves*.

Diversity and Gender-Neutrality in the Children's Book Field

The reasons that the gender distinction persists in today's children's book field are, in part, the same reasons that kept *separate shelves* in place over the past century. First, producers continue to embrace the notion that *boys' books* and *girls' books* meet the unique needs of boys and girls. By relying on this classification, publishers, editors, marketers, advertisers, and retailers believe they can identify "marketable" books, and, in turn, plan successful strategies that result in sales. Second, the practice of employing gender distinctions in audience definition and market

segmentation is so pervasive that *boys' books* and *girls' books* are simply taken-for-granted and convenient. Finally, many consumers – adult and child alike – continue to support, buy, and read gender-specific books. The *separate shelves* have a continued utility and seemingly-natural inevitability in the field. At the same time, a greater recognition of the need for diversity and equity has had only limited success.

Challenging the White World of Children's Recreational Reading

For decades, minority authors, teachers, librarians, parents and publishers and their allies battled the negative images in children's books both by removing negative depictions and producing true histories. Under the direction of Ernestine Rose, the 135th Street Branch Library in Harlem established a substantial collection of African American works beginning in 1920.[7] However, the 135th Street Branch was the exception and the relative progress in large population centers was challenged by the prevailing indifference and widespread discrimination in librarianship, education, and publishing.

Through the Twentieth Century, African American writers had limited opportunities to publish children's books and their work rarely appeared on recommended reading lists or selection guides used by schools and libraries.[8] In 1938, librarian Augusta Baker established new criteria for the selection of children's books, but she and other progressive librarians struggled to

[7] Rose, a white woman, was chosen to administer the Harlem branch because of her experience working with immigrant library patrons on the Lower East Side. In her tenure between 1920 and 1942, she gained substantial support for the library collection, building its reputation, and collaborating with community leaders. Rose also built upon these accomplishments to fight racial prejudice and promote racial pride through the American Library Association. See Betty Jenkins, "A White Librarian in Black Harlem," *The Library Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (1990): 216-31. Most African American librarians trained during this period were destined for positions at college libraries, and the spread of public library service for minorities was very limited. Integration of public library service was not under serious discussion in the ALA until the mid-1950s. See Rosemary Ruhig Du Mont, "Race in American Librarianship: Attitudes of the Library Profession," *The Journal of Library History* 21, no. 3 (1986): 488-509.

[8] See Nancy Tolson, "Making Books Available: The Role of Early Libraries, Librarians, and Booksellers in the Promotion of African American Children's Literature," *African American Review* 32, no. 1, Children's and Young-Adult Literature Issue, (1998): 11.

find books with positive images and themes.[9] In 1941, Charlemae Rollins published *We Build Together*, a bibliography of recommended books. This list had thirty books it supported without reservations, as well as a long list of books that failed to meet the standard. Though this list grew to nearly 200 by 1948, and Rollins expressed optimism about the improvements.[10]

Rollins' positive outlook was premature. Children's recreational reading continued to propagate negative images of racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities through children's textbooks, periodicals, and storybooks.[11] Among these, the White middle-class America of the juvenile series proved especially assertive in its portrayal of racial superiority and its affirmation racial prejudice. The use of dialect in popular series (*viz., Rover Boys*, *Tom Swift*, *Bobbsey Twins*, *Bunny Brown, Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew*) remained commonplace through the 1940s, as did the practice of depicting African American characters in inferior social positions and occupational status. Literary Scholar Paul Deane observes: "so secure were authors and publishers of series that children would recognize Negroes by their jobs that they often did not bother identifying the race."[12]

Racial prejudice in juvenile series was accompanied by a degree of xenophobia and imperialism. J. Frederick MacDonald's study of the image of the "foreigner" in series found that Anglo-Saxon characters were consistently portrayed in a favorable light while foreigners were

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[9] *Ibid.*, 13.

[10] Charlemae Rollins, "Promoting Racial Understanding Through Books," *Negro American Literature Forum* 2, no. 4 (1968): 71.

[11] A review of early studies on race and children's literature is ed. Jean Dresden Grambs, *Black Image: Education Copes with Color* (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1972). See also Donnarae MacCann, *White Supremacy in Children's Literature: Characterizations of African Americans, 1830-1900* (New York: Garland, 1998); Bernice Pescosolido, Elizabeth Grauerholz, and Melissa Milkie, "Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in U.S. Children's Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late-Twentieth Century," *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 3 (1997): 443-464.

[12] Paul Deane, "The Persistence of Uncle Tom: An Examination of the Image of the Negro in Children's Fiction Series," *The Journal of Negro Education* 37, no. 2 (1968): 142. Barbara Moran and Susan Steinfirst reviewed the cosmetic changes to mysteries for boys and mysteries for girls. See also "Why Johnny (and Jane) Read Whodunits in Series," *School Library Journal* 31, no. 7 (1945): 113-17; Sol Cohen, "Minority Stereotypes in Children's Literature: The Bobbsey Twins 1904-1960," *Educational Forum*, November 1969, 119-25; Peter Soderbergh, "Bibliographic Essay: The Negro in Juvenile Series Books, 1899-1930," *The Journal of Negro History*, 58, no. 2 (1973): 179-86.

presented with negative attributes (*i.e.*, ignorant, criminal, lazy, ugly, un-American).[13] MacDonald observed that series present inter-racial relationships as uncivilized while Whiteness is associated with virtue and achievement.[14]

During the 1950s and 1960s, several popular series were revised to appeal to a new generation of readers. For example, several titles from the Stratemeyer Syndicates's *Bobbsey Twins* series were rewritten first with cosmetic revisions and again with changes to plot and narrative structure. Most significantly, the Stratemeyer Syndicate stated that the changes eliminated "material considered denigrating to any minority group."[15] In some cases, these revisions removed dialect or stereotypes. In others, it meant writing out minority characters entirely. Deane's study of nearly 300 series books found that minority characters had disappeared even from stories set in locations with a high concentration of minorities. Deane also found a growing trend toward homogeneity in new series: African American characters appeared in only 4% of the books he studied and variations in race and class were generally absent.[16]

The outlook for nonfiction and textbooks was no better. In his 1965 keynote address to the American Textbook Publishers Institute, Civil Rights Leader Whitney Young, Jr., asserted that it is the publishing industry's responsibility to print "what people ought to know, not just what will sell," and he called upon them "to reflect an inclusive, not an exclusive, society."[17] However, the prospect for change in textbooks was grim. *Publishers' Weekly* characterized the conference as a "sparring match" in which "civil rights people and the educators tended to look at

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[13] J. Frederick MacDonald, "'The Foreigner' in Juvenile Series Fiction, 1900-1945," *Journal of Popular Culture* 8, no. 3 (1974): 535.
[14] *Ibid.*, 535-36.
[15] Laura Lee Hope [pseud.], "Introduction," in *The Bobbsey Twins; or Merry Days Indoors and Out* (1904; reprint. New York: Simon & Schuster, Wanderer Books, 1979). Quoted in Dierdre Johnson, "Keeping Modern Amid Changing Times: The Bobbsey Twins – 1904, 1950, 1961" *Book Research Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1990): 31.
[16] Paul Deane, "Black Characters in Children's Fiction Series Since 1968," *The Journal of Negro Education* 58, no. 2 (1989): 153-62.
[17] "Textbook, Civil Rights and the Education of the American Negro," *Publishers' Weekly* 187, no. 19 (May 10, 1965): 27.

the publishers as foot-draggers and defenders of the *status quo* in education."[18] By contrast, the publishers "went heavily on the defensive," pointing to the gradual changes they were making and the unwillingness of schools to purchase updated books.[19]

Publishers' reluctance to make substantive change is suspect given the booming sales of children's nonfiction books such as the *Landmark Books* series discussed in Chapter Five. Moreover, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act channeled money to schools and libraries as part the President Johnson's War on Poverty policies. Specifically, the Act's mission was to meet the needs of underprivileged and disadvantaged children by offering equitable opportunities in children's education.[20] This created a temporary high demand for children's books and established a market for more diverse children's books.[21]

Discussions of race in the pages of *Publishers' Weekly* present a conflicted industry. In 1969 *Publisher's Weekly* surveyed 42 publishing firms on the question of "whether books dealing with race relations are gaining interest in bookstores as well as libraries." The majority indicated that there was interest, but several expressed some degree of hesitation to comment on this relatively new area. The success or failure of "race relations" books appears to have hinged on whether minorities and racially-mixed areas showed strong sales – presumably because white readers would not have an interest in this subject.[22]

Augusta Baker, then coordinator of the Office of Children's Services, New York Public Library commented in *Publishers' Weekly*: "One of my pet irritations today is the whole idea that the great interest and upsurge in books about black people has just come along. 1937 and 1938

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[18] *Ibid.*, 26.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] This act was later expanded to include the Bilingual Act (Title VII), the Women's Educational Equity Act (Title IX), and the Improvement of Educational Opportunities for Indian Students Act (Title X). See Janet Thomas and Kevin Brady, "The Elementary and Secondary Education Act at 40: Equity, Accountability, and the Evolving Federal Role in Public Education," *Review of Research in Education* 29, Special Issue on the Elementary Education Act at 40: Reviews of Research, Policy Implementation, Critical Perspectives, and Reflections (2005): 51-67.
[21] A reduction in federal funds in the 1970s and again in the 1980s deferred financial incentives publishers may have had to diversify textbooks, but the influx of over a billion dollars of ESEA money to school districts suggests that there was a strong textbook and school library market available in 1965.
[22] "Currents," *Publishers' Weekly* 196, no. 2 (1969): 93-94.

were the years when the interest in this whole subject was born."[23] Baker's criticism of the industry was well-founded. *Publishers' Weekly* generally characterized publishers as "tardy" about producing "black books" and lamenting the difficulties of getting "black books in the hands of black people."[24]

Although race became a more popular subject in the children's book field in the 1970s, it tended "to be treated in a routinized rather than in an original and meaningful fashion."[25] For example, in 1971 *Publishers' Weekly* printed an article entitled, "Book Publishing: A Racist Club?" which suggested that the reasons for racism in the industry included: exploiting minorities for profits, delays in minority recruiting, editorial bias, tokenism, and empty promises from "The Man."[26] Of the 80+ publishers that were members of the Children's Book Council, only one house had a minority editor as head of their department.[27] In a subsequent issue, *Publishers' Weekly* printed a letter to the editor in response to this article. Edward E. Booher, Group Vice-President, Books and Education Services, McGraw- Hill, Inc., concluded: "No one in his right mind could deny that more can be done in book publishing for and with the minorities. It just seems to me, however, that exaggeration and breastbeating won't help us get there."[28]

The work of The Council on Interracial Books for Children (*est.* 1965) to combat racism and sexism in children's literature had some effect. The Council called upon the industry to production books on minority themes, employ minority writers and illustrators, contribute to minority communities, and aid minority publishing houses.[29] However, progress was hard-fought and slow. Through the 1980s, The Council on Interracial Books for Children operated a resource

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[23] "Guidelines for Black Books: An Open Letter to Juvenile Editors," *Publishers Weekly* 196, no. 2 (1969): 131-32.
[24] See, for example, "Better Late than Never: Books about the Urban Crisis," *Publishers' Weekly* 198, no. 2 (1970): 125.
[25] "Children's Books: Off the Plateau," *Publishers' Weekly* 197, no.8 (1970): 132.
[26] "Book Publishing: A Racist Club?," *Publishers' Weekly* 199, no. 5 (1971): 40-44.
[27] *Ibid.*, 40. The Children's Books Council is the industry's trade organization and, for several decades, was the organizing sponsor of Children's Book Week.
[28] "Minorities in Publishing: Breastbeating," *Publishers' Weekly* 199, no. 8 (1971): 69.
[29] On the Council, see especially Beryle Banfield "Commitment to Change: The Council on Interracial Books for Children and the World of Children's Books," *African American Review* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 17-22.

center and published guides to assist parents and teachers in counteracting racist and sexist attitudes presented in children's books. However, the trend toward publishing and recognizing more minority authors emerged slowly.

Today, independent and specialty publishers (*viz.*, Lee & Low, Just Us Books, Third World Press, The Feminist Press, etc.) produce a growing number of books. Likewise, the American Library Association also created the Coretta Scott King Award (*est.* 1969) given to African American authors and illustrators and the Pura Belpré Award (*est.* 1996) given to Latino/a writers and illustrators. Yet, diversity in the children's book field remains limited, and recent incidents of "whitewashing" young adult books (*i.e.*, depicting characters of color as white or light-skinned on book jackets) suggests that racism and white privilege continue to be a problem in the industry.[30]

Challenging the Separate Shelves

The rise of the Women's Movement offered the potential for a direct challenge to the *separate shelves.* A 1970 *Publishers' Weekly* survey of 38 children's editors asked: "In what ways is the growing women's liberation movement affecting your editorial considerations?" The responses reported were mixed and revealing:

> One distinguished editor, saying her policies were not affected by the "movement," remarked, "I find it hard to believe this is a serious question." Two others turned the topic around, saying they wished there were "a few more men" in the children's book field.[31]

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[30] For example, Bloomsbury Kids USA "whitewashed" both *Liar* by Justine Larbalestier (2009) and *Magic Under Glass* by Jaclyn Dolamore (2010). The publisher described these incidents as "mistakes," further suggesting that the industry does not fully perceive the balance of privileges and disadvantages it participates in creating. This lack of acknowledgement is in keeping with Peggy McIntosh's discussion in "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" (1988) reprinted in *Privilege: A Reader*, ed. Michael Kimmel and Abby Ferber (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 147-160. For a concise assessment of trends in the industry, see Joel Taxel and Holly Ward, "Publishing Children's Literature at the Dawn of the 21st Century," *The New Advocate* 13, no. 1 (2000): 51-59.

[31] "Currents" *Publishers' Weekly* 198, no. 2 (1970): 76.

By contrast, Lothrop's editor said the current discussions in the movement "have made us more aware of the subtle denigration of the feminine role in much fiction for all age groups. . ."[32] Marijean Corrigan of Whitman noted that her house produced mostly boys' books for the purpose of interesting them in reading "with the assumption that girls will read the books, too."[33] Whitman's editor, Caroline Rubin, stated, "Why should the girls have to tag along – let's give them something for themselves. In other words, equal reading opportunity."[34] Interestingly, Holt's editors claimed "Girls' romances are dying out because girls resent being pushed into the 'date for the senior prom' syndrome.' At the same time, 'boys in stories are often forced into false male roles.'"[35]

While *separate shelves* have not given way to gender-neutrality in the young adult market, there are some signs of change in the children's book field. The Council on Interracial Books for Children had lasting influence on the field. Their "10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism" has become a standard reference.[36] Similarly, Frances Ann Day's "Evaluating for Bias" educates adults and children about recognizing stereotypes, tokenism, authenticity, disparities in roles and achievements, loaded words to help them select books "from a pluralistic perspective."[37]

A content analysis of roles and activities in Caldecott Medal Award picture books found a decrease in sex-role stereotyping and (as Durrell predicted) an increase in gender-neutral representations. [38] Although male characters continued to be depicted as more active and in more

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[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] Reprinted in ed. Daphne Muse, *The New Press Guide to Multicultural Resources for Young Readers* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 17-18.
[37] Frances Ann Day, *Latina and Latino voices in Literature: Lives and Works*, updated and expanded edition, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), xvii-xx. See also Joan Blaska, "Images and Encounters Profile: A Checklist to Review Books for Inclusion and Depiction of Persons with Disabilities," in *Using Children's Literature to Learn about Disabilities and Illness* (Moorhead, MN: Practical Press, 1996), 51-54.
[38] Ann Allen, Daniel Allen, and Gary Sigler, "Changes in Sex-Role Stereotyping in Caldecott Medal Award Picture Books, 1938-1988," *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 7, no. 2 (1993): 67-73.

diverse occupations than females, this trend suggests that there is some erosion in the production of gender-specific material and less adherence to preeminent forms of masculinity and femininity.[39] At the same time, the relative absence of strong female characters and the continued emphasis on white, middle-class heroes perpetuates a limited range of possibilities within the pages of children's recreational reading. The move to gender neutrality in lieu of publishing children's books that feature strong and central female protagonists may reduce sexism without fully addressing gender fairness.

The continued prevalence of romances for girls also merits deeper consideration. As Linda Christian-Smith documented in her study of teen romances, romance represents: a market relationship, heterosexual practice, management of sexuality, a transformative experience, masculine domination and the subordination of women, learning how to relate to men, and a personal experience.[40] She found that early romance fiction (1942-59) presented the adolescent heroine as focused on beauty. These novels depicted chaste dates with a charming boyfriend; their relationship is based upon affection, guided by his views and her informal influence.[41] In the second period (1963-79), romance becomes a more complicated and conflicted proposition marked by struggles for power and control. Heroines are more assertive, but they are also faced with more intense pressures over sexuality.[42] In the third period (1980-82), romances returned to the more harmonious and chaste relationship with a relatively compliant heroine.[43]

My research into children's recreational reading finds that girls' romances thrived through the end of the Twentieth Century. As the market for boys' series waned, the production of girls' books rose dramatically, accounting for a staggering 71.9% of all new series books by

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[39] *Ibid.*
[40] Linda Christian-Smith, *Becoming a Woman Through Romance* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 17-18. For details on romance and young readers, see also ed. Linda Christian-Smith, *Texts of Desire: Essays on Fiction, Femininity and Schooling* (Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1993). For a concise review of theories about romance in fiction, see Joanne Hollows, "Reading Romantic Fiction," in *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 68-88.
[41] *Ibid.*, 16.
[42] *Ibid.*, 17.
[43] *Ibid.*

the 1980s (See Figure 6-1). The combination of measurable success with girls' books and the concerted effort to lure boys to computer and video games again led producers to commit greater resources to new girls' series. And, with the success of *Twilight*, the commitment to girls' series appears to be a strong trend for several years to come.[44]

Blurring Boundaries: Age, Gender, and Children's Books in the Wake of Harry Potter

Of all the changes in the children's book field in recent decades none can match the singular force that is *Harry Potter*. The *Harry Potter* series made a relatively quiet entrance in the U.S. book market. In January 1998, *Publishers' Weekly* noted that J.K. Rawlinson [sic] was the gold medal winner in the Smarties Book Prize (9-11 age group), an award for the best work of fiction for children by a British author.[45] In February 1998, the forthcoming *Harry Potter and the School of Magic* [sic] was listed among the Fall titles from Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine.[46] Building on favorable U.S. reviews and healthy U.K. sales, the series made its debut on the *New York Times* best-seller list during the week of Christmas 1998.

Time Magazine featured the series in a 1999 cover story, noting: "The exploits of a young wizard have enchanted *kids and adults alike* and brought a new kind of magic to children's literature."[47] By 2000, publishers of novels for the adult market complained that promising new releases failed to make their expected appearances on the *New York Times* list. Meanwhile, three *Harry Potter* titles were fixtures on the 15-slot list, with a fourth title looming on the horizon. The *New York Times Book Review* took action, announcing the launch of a separate children's best-seller list to "clear some room." This offered some relief to the adult market, but it transferred the

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[44] See most recently, Calvin Reid "Fat Vampires, Sexy Werewolves and the Future of Teen Reading" *Publishers' Weekly* April 7, 2010. http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/42743-fat-vampires-sexy-werewolves-and-the-future-of-teen-reading.html

[45] Julia Eccleshare, "Letter from London," *Publishers' Weekly* 245, no. 2 (1998): 25.

[46] Shannon Maughan, "Sneak Previews: Fall 1998 Children's Books" *Publishers' Weekly* 245, no. 7 (February 16, 1998): 186.

[47] Paul Gray, "Wild About Harry," *Time Magazine* 20 September 1999, 1-6.

Potter problem squarely onto the new children's list. In 2004, the *Book Review* ceased tracking individual series titles in favor of listing sales for the series as a whole.

For this dissertation, *Harry Potter* suggests two trends. First, boy-centered media continues to hold the potential for "universal appeal," offering a male-driven story that is read by boys and girls alike. By contrast, girl-focused entertainment typically tends to draw a more gender-exclusive audience. In keeping with *separate shelves*, this pattern is accompanied by a perpetuation of conventional, if somewhat complicated, conceptions of boyhood and girlhood rooted in white privilege and middle-class advantages. Moreover, the consolidation and commercialization of children's media place significant limits on the flexibility of children's publishing, while the continued success of new and established series (*e.g., Gossip Girl, Twilight, Lord of the Rings, Nancy Drew*) continues to affirm the *separate shelves* as a taken-for-granted part of today's children's book field.

Second, the blurring of age segmentation in the children's book field marks a critical shift in the children's book field. Well into the 1990s, advertisements in the pages of *Publisher's Weekly* continued to designate an intended age in descriptions of new books.[48] Although publishers were increasingly critical of the practice of overtly identifying age designations on book jackets, many continued the practice because they believed buyers (*e.g.,* booksellers, customers, librarians, reviewers, and salespeople) wanted the labels, but they also acknowledged that the practice was arbitrary and reading levels varied.[49] One major children's publisher stopped the practice "except in cases where age and reading levels are not obvious to the potential buyer."[50] Publishers also observed that the content in "teen-age fiction" (age 12 to 16) was

[48] See, for example, "Fun For All! Dodd, Mead Books for boys and girls" *Publishers' Weekly* 190, no. 2 (1966): 30-31; "Dutton Books for children and young people," *Ibid.,* 32-33
[49] "Currents" *Publishers' Weekly* 192, no. 2 (1967):115.
[50] *Ibid.*

becoming more sophisticated and that younger children were reading teen fiction at an earlier age.[51]

From the 1970s on, age designations were also increasingly seen as a limiting factor to the children's and young adult books that might be enjoyed by readers of any age.[52] While age divisions remain intact in the field, the expansion of the potential readership of children's books to include adults means a wider audience and the potential for enormous profits. The phenomenal success of *Harry Potter* further sensitized the industry to this opportunity and the line between young adult books and adult books is blurring.

It also merits attention that the *Harry Potter* series was consistently on the American Library Association's list of "most challenged books." This indicates that while librarians have come to celebrate Banned Books Week, some members of the public expressed strong disapproval for the series. Nevertheless, *Harry Potter*'s American publisher, Scholastic continues to be a leading producer, licenser, and marketer of children's educational materials and entertainment properties. They also continue to operate the largest book fair in the country. This, along with the countless book and movie release parties and related events, clearly suggest that the reach of moral authorities is relatively limited in light of the enormous popularity (and sales) of the series.

A New Crop of Customers: American Children as Consumers and Book-Buyers

Through the Twentieth Century, educating child consumers was as much about reforming unruly behavior as it was indoctrination into "appropriate" habits. However, the growing expectation of consumption worked to reorient American childhood as baby boomers raised their own children in an increasingly commercial environment. By the close of the Twentieth Century, children were commonly addressed as powerful primary markets, as well as influencers and

[51] "Currents" *Publishers' Weekly* 193, no. 9 (1968): 91-92.
[52] Jean Mercier, "Breaking Down the Age Barriers Around Young Adult Books" *Publishers' Weekly* 205, no. 8 (1974): 74-76.

future adults. At the same time, with a multi-billion dollar budget and very particular tastes, selling to boys and girls has become a very serious business.[53]

Children's powerful role as consumers is evidenced by the size of the current children's market: U.S. children aged 4 to 12 spend more than $23 billion a year and directly influence $188 billion of parents' spending.[54] In her 2001 book *Designing for Children: Marketing Design that Speaks to Kids*, designer Catharine Fishel wrote:

> What makes a kid want to have a specific pair of sneakers? What makes them eat a certain breakfast cereal? What makes them need a particular toy? Children's products are being marketed directly to children more than ever before, and access to the Web, television, and all the media that fills our world, offers product designers and producers numerous venues to reach this hungry market.[55]

Marketing directly to children is now a universally accepted practice. Advertising saturates children's television programming on the major networks, as well as the several cable channels dedicated exclusively to the child audience. Market research firms and advertising agencies specialize in targeting children. Merchandising and licensing agreements are integral components of any commercial children's product.

As this section will detail, children's consumer education is both more informal and more pervasive. It also is more likely to be corporate-sponsored. While conveying good values remains a stated goal, the values advanced by consumer education have changed. Both parental advice and school curricula retain age gradations to define various stages of training and activity, but overt gender distinctions in consumer education are no longer considered appropriate. The idea that girls are naturally less inclined or capable of managing money is largely a thing of the past. Consumer education also shows some signs of being more inclusive in teaching money skills to

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[53] See especially, Barrie Gunter and Furnham, *Children as Consumers: A Psychological Analysis of the Young People's Market* (London: Routledge, 1998); James McNeal, "Taping the Three Kids' Markets," *American Demographics* 20, no. 4 (1998): 36; James McNeal, *Children as Consumers: Insights and Implications* (New York: Macmillan, 1987); James McNeal, *Kids as Customers: A Handbook of Marketing to Children* (1992); James U. McNeal, *The Kids Market: Myths and Realities* (Ithaca, NY: Paramount Market, 1999); Juliet Schor, *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture* (New York: Scribner, 2004).

[54] McNeal, *The Kids Market.*

[55] Catharine Fishel, *Designing for Children: Marketing Design that Speaks to Kids* (Gloucester, MA: Rockport Publishers, 2001), 10.

all children. However while consumer education is more outwardly egalitarian, all children are not valued equally in the market.

Middle-class Privilege and the Education of Child Consumers

Today's consumer education resources presume a middle-class perspective. Parents are offered a spate of new books featuring familiar topics (e.g., spending, saving, and earning), but there is no perceived need to convince parents that they should buy for their children. It is assumed that parents are already sold on the idea that children need and want things. Consuming is a natural part of childhood, particularly as children's sections of department/discount stores and the child-exclusive specialty stores (*e.g.*, Baby Gap, Build-A-Bear Workshops, Toys "R" Us) are ubiquitous. However, as middle-class boys and girls are valuable customers, children without the means to consume slide to the margins of the market.

The strategies suggested to parents often reveal a commercial-oriented solution. For example, on its Money-Savvy Moms pages, the Disney Family website expresses empathy for parents struggling to raise responsible children with good money values. Their suggestions to moms reflect a decidedly different interest. In one article on "Raising Money-Smart Kids" the site suggests that parents make saving for a Disneyworld vacation a "family goal" and use saving and budgeting for the trip as a teaching tool.[56] To be sure, some promotion of Disney is to be expected on a Disney website, but binding classic consumer education so tightly with commercial interests converts what might be helpful advice into little more than a thinly-veiled sales pitch.

The child consumer's place is secured by presenting money as a routine part of childhood. Allowances continue to be the primary tool to teach saving and spending. Boys and girls are no longer expected to merely handle or use money as they grow up, they are encouraged to earn it and manage it. However, as the child consumer gained greater command in the market, there are indications that some adults believe childhood is too commercialized. To counteract

[56] Laura Rowley, "Raising Money-Smart Kids" http://family.go.com/hot-topics/article-585068-money-smart-kids-t/.

these concerns, children's consumption is commonly described as "empowering."[57] As one handbook observes: "A businesslike allowance, given in a businesslike way, teaches the best possible lessons about money."[58] Parents can even give their teen "a real sense of financial independence" with a prepaid Mastercard Allow Card, designed to teach them responsibility and money management skills, while giving parents (and companies) a new way to monitor children's spending.[59] The goal is to help kids become "savvy" consumers.[60]

The role of parents is complicated further by a distinctly competitive streak fostered between parent and child. While some how-to guides carry on the tradition of small-scale money-making projects (e.g., lemonade stands, paper routes, and babysitting), these are often quaint stepping-stones toward building a small business. The savvy child consumer is the new entrepreneur.[61] This new emphasis on investing and "personal finance" has been accompanied by a steady decline in thrift, charity, and critical consumption.[62]

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[57] Daniel Cook, "The Disempowering Empowerment of Children's Consumer 'Choice,'" *Society and Business Review* 2, no. 1 (2007): 37.

[58] Grace W. Weinstein, *Children and Money: A Parents' Guide*, Rev. ed. (New York: New American Library, 1985), 75.

[59] http://www.allowcard.com/

[60] For example, Gregory K. Brough, *Daddybank: How to Teach Your Child to Handle Money & Avoid Its Pitfall: A Parent's Guide* (Orem, UT: Candlelight Media Group, 2002); Nathan Dungan, *Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child's Atm* (New York: Wiley, 2003); Alan Feigenbaum and Gibora Feigenbaum, *A Parent's Guide to Money: Raising Financially Savvy Children* (Los Angeles: Parent's Guide Press, 2002); David Owen, *The First National Bank of Dad: The Best Way to Teach Kids About Money* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003).

[61] Bonnie Drew and Noel Drew, *Kid Biz: Year Round Money-Making Projects for Young Entrepreneurs* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1990); Bonnie Drew and Noel Drew, *Fast Cash for Kids: 101 Money-Making Projects for Young Entrepreneurs* (Hawthorne, NJ: Career Press, 1991); Meish Goldish and Karen E. Pellaton, *Kids & Co.* (New York: Scholastic, 2002); Emmanuel Modu, *The Lemonade Stand: A Guide to Encouraging the Entrepreneur in Your Child* (Holbrook, MA: Bob Adams, 1991). A sharp contrast to this trend is the considerable attention children's financial responsibilities have drawn from religious and evangelical organizations. Faith-based financial education for children merits a more detailed consideration than can be presented here. For a sample of texts using the Bible as a teaching tool, see Ron Blue and Judy Blue, *Money Matters for Parents and Their Kids* (Pomona, CA: Focus on the Family, 1988); Larry Burkett and Rick Osborne, *Financial Parenting* (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Pub., 1996); Malcolm MacGregor, *Training Your Children to Handle Money* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1980); Craig Parshall and Janet Parshall, "The Money Trap: Guiding Your Child to Reject Materialism," in Traveling a Pilgrim's Path: Preparing Your Child to Navigate the Journey of Faith (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003).

[62] For example, *Kids, Parents & Money: Teaching Personal Finance from Piggybank to Prom* dedicates 2 *pages* to charitable giving and 3 *chapters* to stocks, bonds, and securities.

While some schools continue to teach consumer issues, often using updated simulation games, the general trend is toward less practical economics in the curriculum.[63] More importantly, schools are playing an ever-growing role in the serious business of branding and corporate sponsorship.[64] Similarly, activity books and games teach young children the standard lessons about money in ways that are intended to engage their interest.[65] Many government agencies, banks, and non-profit organizations sponsor educational materials designed to teach children about money and good spending habits at an early age.[66] For teens, this information is heavily-oriented toward investments, making money, and career planning. These, too, are sponsored by commercial and other interests (e.g., financial services companies, the Department of Defense, etc.).[67]

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[63] The National Council on Economic Education survey finds that as of 2007 only 17 states require a course in economics as a high school graduation requirement; only 7 states require a course in personal finance. National Council on Economic Education, *Economic, Personal Finance & Entrepreneurship Education in Our Nation's Schools in 2007: A Report Card* (2007), 3.

[64] For detailed accounts of corporations in the classroom, see Deron Boyles, *The Corporate Assault on Youth: Commercialism, Exploitation, and the End of Innocence*, Adolescent Cultures, School & Society (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Henry A. Giroux, *Stealing Innocence: Youth, Corporate Power, and the Politics of Culture*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Alfie Kohn and Patrick Shannon, *Education, Inc.: Turning Learning into a Business*, Rev. ed. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002); Murray Milner, *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: American Teenagers, Schools, and the Culture of Consumption* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[65] For example, Adriane G. Berg and Arthur Berg Bochner, *The Totally Awesome Money Book for Kids (and Their Parents)* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1993); Diane Mayr, *The Everything Kids' Money Book: From Saving to Spending to Investing-- Learn All About Money!* (Holbrook, Mass.: Adams Media Corp., 2000); Jamie Kyle McGillian and Ian Phillips, *The Kids' Money Book: Earning, Saving, Spending, Investing, Donating* (New York: Sterling Pub., 2003).

[66] For examples of money-oriented games, see Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, *Peanuts and Crackerjacks: Economics of Pro Team Sports* available from http://www.bos.frb.org/peanuts/indexnosound.htm; University of Missouri-St.Louis Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Education, *Wise Pockets World: A Great Place for Kids, Parents, and Teachers to Learn About Managing Money* available from http://www.umsl.edu/~wpockets/index.html; Federal Trade Commission, *You Are Here* available from http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/youarehere/pages/htmlsite/index.html; The Department of the Treasury Bureau of Engraving and Printing, *Catch a Counterfeit* available from http://www.moneyfactory.gov/newmoney/main.cfm/learning/counterfeit. In the 1990s, online games also were particularly popular as tie-ins with financial education and training books, but many of them have been abandoned. I visited 30 websites suggested by 4 parent's guides; 14 of the sites no longer exist.

[67] For example, Merrill Lynch created a comic book series on money matters featuring "Savin' Dave and the Compounders." See also, ING Direct's "Planet Orange," U.S. Small Business Administration, *Teen Business Link* available from http://www.sba.gov/teens/; Inc. Coloumbia Management Distributors, *Young Investor* available from http://www.younginvestor.com/kids/; United States Department of Defense, *My Future* available from http://myfuture.com/t2_money.html; Northwestern Mutual Foundation and the National Council on Economic Education, *The Mint* available from http://www.themint.org/index.html;

Researching the Hungry Reader

Marketing professor, James McNeal, observed: "In some ways, children are like flowers sowing themselves. All merchants have to do is nurture the seeds that drift their way, and they will have a steadily blooming crop of new customers."[68] But nurturing a crop of customers requires careful and focused attention. In the children's book field, new strategies for reaching child consumers build upon familiar models. The relocation of more children's activities to the internet and wireless technologies also presents the opportunity for them to be monitored as they consume. The following two examples demonstrate how partnerships between producers and consumers allow corporations to gather information about children's interests and media use at school and at home.

In 2005 Random House took steps to observe children's reading habits through classrooms and cell phones. They invested in American Reading Company (ARC), a company that provided individualized reading programs to students in pre-K through high school. ARC's "100 Book Challenge" uses specialized coding systems "to classify books by their level of difficulty" in order to allow "students in a single classroom to have a personalized reading experience based upon their own aptitude."[69]

According to ARC's VP of Marketing and sales, Clay Gillespie, Random House's financial stake in the company did not affect their autonomy because Random House was an "interested on-looker from the sidelines."[70] President of Random House Ventures LLC, Richard Sarnoff, explained that their interest in ARC was "not a vehicle for Random House titles in any form," but a means to successfully bring U.S. children up to standard reading levels.[71] Sarnoff

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Federal Reserve Bank Of San Francisco, *Fed Chairman Game* available from http://www.frbsf.org/education/activities/chairman/index.html.

[68] McNeal, *The Kids Market,* 66.

[69] "Random House Invests in Future Readers" http://www.thebookstandard.com/bookstandard/news/publisher/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000863147 (Accessed 2005).

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *Ibid.*

characterized this investment and a recent deal with a content-delivery system for cell phones as "discrete investments" designed to "engage the future generations of readers."[72]

Similarly, Disney sells roughly 250 million children's books each year and in September 2009 took a significant step to position itself within the e-book market.[73] With the launch of Disney Digital Books (DDB), Disney offers "an online library of 500 titles, ranging from early childhood classics, such as *Cinderella* and *Pinnochio* to teen favorites like *Hannah Montana* and *High School Musical.*"[74] DDB charges a subscription ($79.95/year for a family of up to three children or $8.95/month). In return children have several interactive options: browsing Disney titles on their own (by reading level), reading the story or having it read by computer, and "'Story-Builder,' which deletes words from the text and invites the child to insert their own."[75] Jeanne Mosure (Senior Vice President, Group Publisher, Disney Publishing Worldwide) stated DDB emerged out of their direct relationship with consumers: "We know who our customer is and have a vast database of information. Market testing is how we develop everything at Disney. For this, it was reaching out to Moms, talking to kids."[76]

"Kids Are Different Today": The Possibilities for Gender Fairness

As George Lipsitz observed: "For all of their triviality and frivolity, the messages of popular culture circulate in a network of production and reception that is quite serious. At their worst, they perform the dirty work of the economy and the state. At their best, they retain memories of the past and contain hopes for the future that rebuke the injustices and inequities of the present."[77] The concept of *boys' books* and *girls' books* marks an early introduction and

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[72] *Ibid.*
[73] "Disney's Digital Future," *Publishing Perspectives* 17 December 2009. http://publishingperspectives.com/?p=9290 (Accessed 2009)
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] *Ibid.*
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990): 20.

longstanding example of gendered children's entertainment. By the 1970s, the *separate shelves* were a fully established and expected part of the children's book field.

With the astronomical sales of paperback romance series, and the success of series like *Goosebumps* and *Harry Potter*, the juvenile series market became the domain of books intended exclusively for girls or considered of interest to any child reader. In the decades that followed, publishers continued to tie some recreational reading to notions of normative femininity and masculinity with a decided emphasis on white protagonists. Even as some called for greater gender neutrality, the idea of wholly dismissing gender-specific recreational reading shows little sign of gaining traction within the American children's book field.

Today, gender distinctions in children's culture are also evident across media industries, and it is standard practice to appeal to boys and girls with some separate television programming, movies, video games, and music. From superheroes to princesses, and from baseball cards to boy bands, the fundamental differences between *boy culture* and *girl culture* have become easily identifiable, widely accepted, and seemingly timeless in the world of children's entertainment.

Despite the increased awareness of sexism in children's literature, popular culture continues to project images of boys as active, independent, immature, and adventurous. By contrast, girls are presented as passive, dependent, mature, and pretty. Recent studies show how young readers define masculinity and femininity through their engagement with texts and how they use texts to constitute their identities.[78] They suggest that recreational reading and engagement with other forms of media are a part of how children come to understand, value, and construct a sense of gender. One ethnographic study found that girls as young as eight want to be

[78] See Angela McRobbie, "Jackie Magazine: Romantic Individualism and the Teenage Girl," *Feminism and Youth Culture*, second edition (New York: Routledge, 2000), 67-117); Dawn Curie, *Girl Talk: Adolescent Magazines and Their Readers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Meredith Rogers Cherland, *Private Practices: Girls Reading Fiction and Constructing Identity* (Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis, Inc., 1994); Pam Gilbert and Sandra Taylor, *Fashioning the Feminine* (North Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1991); Margaret Finders, *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 1997).

like *Barbie* dolls because "She gets lots of stuff. If I was like Barbie, I could get stuff at the mall, too."[79]

In recent decades, the convergence of an increasingly commercialized culture with an increasingly privileged childhood creates greater complexities for children and adults. Today, children are viewed by producers as a hungry market that wants products and needs toys. In shopping malls and supermarkets, children are offered endless aisles of appealing merchandise placed conveniently within the grasp of little hands. While parents seek to use money to cultivate their children's sense of family membership and social participation, children direct their new purchasing power toward a stronger peer-orientation and an investment in popularity. Recent criticism describes in detail the commercialization of children's lives.[80] And, though it is expected that children will consume with autonomy and entitlement, some adults express anxiety about boys and girls being hurried, over-extended, and overly-mature.[81]

Children's media also are perpetually charged with having too large a role in boys' and girl's lives. Many adults express concern that the quality is too low, while the potential influence is exceptionally high. The versions of femininity and masculinity presented in children's culture also continue to trouble many adults, particularly when romance shifts to promiscuity and action-adventures feature graphic violence. Each year new publications cast blame and propose strategies to "rescue our sons and daughters" from the latest media distortions and marketing schemes.[82]

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[79] Linda Wason-Ellam, "If Only I Was Like Barbie," *Language Arts* 74, no. 6 (1997): 436.

[80] For example, Dan S. Acuff and Robert H. Reiher, *Kidnapped: How Irresponsible Marketers Are Stealing the Minds of Your Children* (Chicago: Dearborn Trade Pub., 2005); Benjamin R. Barber, *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007); Susan E. Linn, *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood* (New York: New Press, 2004).

[81] For example, David Elkind, *The Hurried Child: Growing up Too Fast Too Soon*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Pub., 2001).

[82] For example, see David Haugen, *Is Media Violence a Problem?* (Detroit: Greenhaven Press, Thomson/Gale, 2007); Lawrence Kutner and Cheryl Olson *Grand Theft Childhood: The Surprising Truth About Violent Video Games and What Parents Can Do.* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).

At the same time, marketers and producers seek ever-earlier access to cultivate brand recognition and loyalty. They also have new techniques to research children's interests and buying habits, including following boys and girls around shopping malls and observing them in their homes.[83] Advertisers and marketers identify peers, promotions, and impulse-buying as highly influential factors in children's consumer behavior. Accordingly, producers have created new, specialized offerings designed to capitalize on friendships and narrower subsets of children. These practices frequently assume and affirm perceived class, racial, gender, and age divisions between children, while further diminishing adult authority. Invoking gender distinctions has proven to be an effective way to leverage children's sense of autonomy from adults and to capitalize on their internalization of lessons about femininity and masculinity.

Durrell concludes her discussion of trends in children's publishing with the following: "(B)ooks are worth fighting for, if it comes to a fight. But we should be sure that the cause is worthy, and that we are fighting for the best."[84] To be sure, the prospect of gender-neutrality in children's books appears limited after more than a century of gender-specific recreational reading. In the end, however, the chapters of this dissertation demonstrate that *separate shelves* depend upon and reinforce beliefs about gender, childhood, and culture. The persistence of the gender distinction also depends upon the practices of influential adults, many of whom make seemingly-small decisions that add up. For decades, critics have called for more and better books. What remains unrealized is an effective collaboration between producers and consumers to bring the possibility of greater gender fairness within reach.

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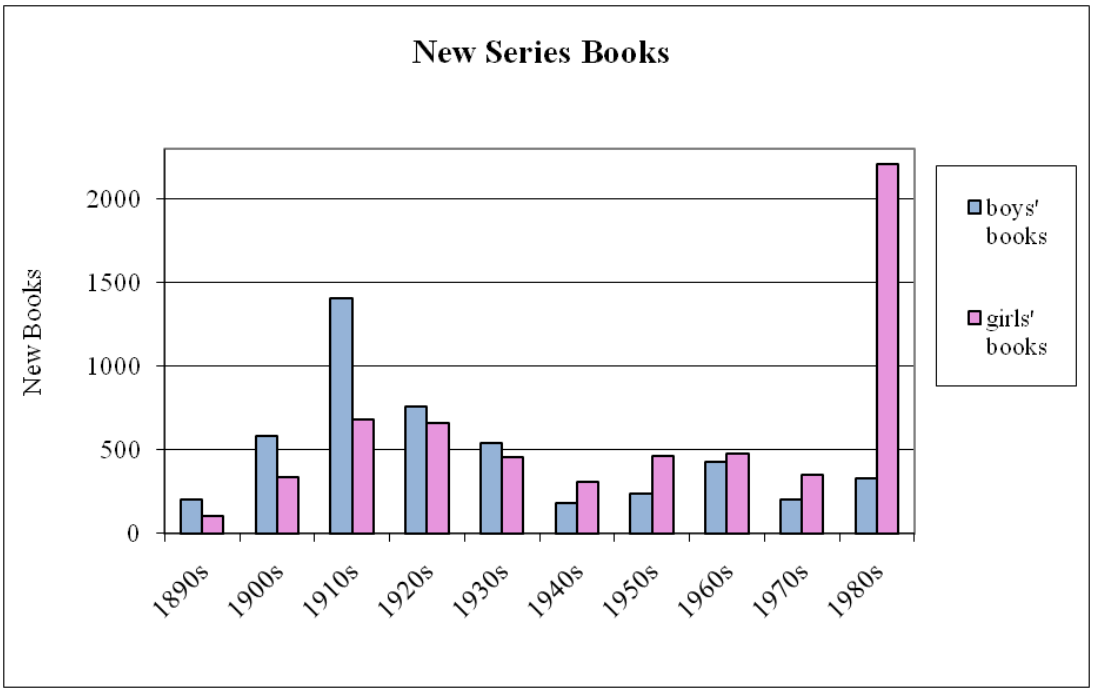
[83] For descriptions, see Dan S. Acuff and Robert H. Reiher, *What Kids Buy and Why: The Psychology of Marketing to Kids* (New York: Free Press, 1997); Gene Del Vecchio, *Creating Ever-Cool: A Marketer's Guide to a Kid's Heart* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Pub. Co., 1997); Catharine M. Fishel, *Designing for Children: Marketing Design That Speaks to Kids* (Gloucester, MA: Rockport, 2001); Martin Lindström, Patricia B. Seybold, and Millward Brown (Firm). *Brandchild: Remarkable Insights into the Minds of Today's Global Kids and Their Relationships with Brands*, Rev. pbk. ed. (Sterling, Va.: Kogan Page, 2004); Janine Lopiano-Misdom and Joanne De Luca, *Street Trends: How Today's Youth Cultures Are Creating Tomorrow's Mainstream* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1997); Anne Sutherland and Beth Thompson, *Kidfluence: Why Kids Today Mean Business* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2001); Peter Zollo, *Wise up to Teens: Insights into Marketing and Advertising to Teenagers*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: New Strategist Publications, 1999).

[84] Durrell, "Trends in the Publishing of Children's Books," 195.

Figure 6-1. New Series Books, 1890-1989



Data Sources for Juvenile Fiction and Nonfiction Series, 1835-1990

I base my analysis of juvenile series fiction upon a data set of 2,324 series made up of 14,271 books. This data set represents the most complete and accurate list possible. The titles are drawn primarily from six major bibliographies.[1] Though series books sold millions of copies, they were a cheaply-produced and highly-controversial form. Current library-holdings are substantial, but represent only a fraction of titles produced. Many series now are collectibles, but for the series that did not have lasting appeal, the records are limited.

Defining "Boy's Books" and "Girls' Books"

Series were designated as boys' series if they appeared in Hudson's bibliography of boys' books. Series were designated as girls' series if they appeared in the University of Minnesota list, unless they were subsequently identified as "tots" books. These bibliographies were designed as companion volumes and use comparable criteria for defining series. Series found in the remaining bibliographies were designated boys' or girls' following the established standard. In most cases the intended audience was obvious. Titles addressing "young folks" were categorized based upon the gender of the lead character. Series designed for "tots" and those intended for a mixed audience (boys and girls) were designated as "shared series."

Distribution of Series Data by Gender

Intended Audience	Series	Titles
Girls	1065	7207
Boys	881	5210
Shared	378	1854

[1] University of Minnesota. Children's Literature Research Collections, *Girls Series Books: A Checklist of Titles Published 1840-1991* (Minneapolis, MN: Children's Literature Research Collections, University of Minnesota Libraries, 1992); Harry K. Hudson, *A Bibliography of Hard-Cover, Series Type Boys' Books*, Revised edition. ed.(Tampa, FL: Hudson, 1977); Judith K. Rosenberg, *Young People's Literature in Series: Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Publishers' Series, 1973-1975* (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1977); Judith K. Rosenberg and C. Allen Nichols, *Young People's Books in Series: Fiction and Non-Fiction, 1975-1991*(Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1992); Judith K. Rosenberg and Kenyon C. Rosenberg, *Young People's Literature in Series: Fiction; an Annotated Bibliographical Guide* (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1972); Philip H. Young, *Children's Fiction Series: A Bibliography, 1850-1950* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Series may be defined by consistent characters, locations, or themes. They may also be defined intentionally by the author, or packaged subsequently by publishers as a thematic series. New series are included even if only one title was printed provided that subsequent titles were advertised. These series were retained for consistency because they indicate the intention to launch a complete series. Individual book titles were included if they have a publication date and are believed to have been printed. All titles are included under their first known publication date. The majority of the data covers 1900-1990.

Duplication

Direct verification of series and titles is not feasible, but every effort was made to ensure that duplicates across and within each source have been eliminated. I relied on annotations in the bibliographies to determine if series was new or a duplicate. As publishers frequently reissued titles under slightly changed names, as part of a new "library," or in revised editions, some titles may reappear as part of a new series.

Analysis

My analysis of juvenile series fiction takes into account production at the series level and at the level of individual books. The decision to launch a series indicates a commitment to several books and, by extension, offers a gauge of publisher investment in specific market segment. Likewise, an additional book title to a series demonstrates a producer's continued interest in particular audience. It also provides some measurement of audience interest in a given series because new titles were added to series that exhibited past success.

For each chapter, I read several titles to better contextualize the changes in the form over time. I also examined series held by special collections at several universities, including the extensive collection held by Duke University. Collectors' guides were used as supplementary references, particularly for images of series book dust jackets. The recent scholarly literature on

Stratemeyer series provided insight into the critical elements of the series market and the inner workings of the most famous and successful series producer.

Career Series Subset

My discussion of Career Series centers on Dodd Mead Career Books and Messner's Career Romances for Young Moderns. I also identified career fiction (not in series) from 37 other publishers, and several nonfiction career series, which I used as a basis for general comparison. Career Series offer useful insights into production precisely because they are designated by publisher, rather than character-driven. No complete list of the titles included in these series is available.

The bibliographies of juvenile series listed above frequently omit these titles because they do not conform to the more narrowly-defined view of series fiction (*e.g.*, focus on a single character or location). Additionally, like other types of series, many of these books are relatively scarce owing to the limited holdings of libraries. To identify career books, I consulted several reference books on vocational guidance.[2] I also collected titles in the series and details of their publication history from OCLC records, *Publishers' Weekly* and other advertisements, newspapers, and the Dodd, Mead Manuscript Collection held by the University of Indiana.

Each title was verified as intended for a juvenile audience. Occupational focus, plot details, and reception were identified through a combination of library records and published reviews. I read several books from each series. These were selected based on chance, not career or audience, because many of the books are no longer available. To assess the reception of career

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[2] Gertrude Forrester, *Occupational Literature; an Annotated Bibliography*, 1971 ed.(New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1971); Kathryn A. Haebich, *Vocations in Biography and Fiction; an Annotated List of Books for Young People*(Chicago: American Library Association, 1962); Harry Dexter Kitson and Mary Rebecca Lingenfelter, *Vocations for Boys*(New York: Harcourt, 1942); Mary Rebecca Lingenfelter, Marie Alice Hanson, and American Library Association., *Vocations in Fiction; an Annotated Bibliography*, 2d ed.(Chicago: American Library Association, 1938); Mary Rebecca Lingenfelter and Harry Dexter Kitson, *Vocations for Girls*(New York: Harcourt, 1939); Louise Moore, *Occupations for Girls and Women. Selected References, July 1943-June 1948*, Women's Bureau Publication 229.(Washington, D. C.: Govt. Print. Off., 1949); Willa Norris, *Occupational Information in the Elementary School*, Professional Guidance Series(Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1963).

books, I collected over 200 reviews from: *Kirkus Reviews*, reviews, library and professional journals, newspapers and magazines. Not all titles are reviewed in each publication, but most titles were reviewed at least once. I also collected announcements and advertisements to track the promotion of the series and its titles.

The occupational categories are adapted from the current Standard Occupational Classifications of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Some similar categories are combined or renamed slightly for clarity. Although Home Economics no longer exists as a separate occupation, it is included because it is as appropriate classification for books of the 1930-1970 era. In books with more than one possible category, I used the primary focus of the book (for example, Supervisor of Nurses is classified as nursing, not administration).

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