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This study is a content analysis of six Hardy Boys mystery stories from the 1920s and 1930s in order to explore what characteristics and expressions of masculinity are communicated as appropriate, desirable, and admirable. The study concludes that in the books surveyed, women are few in number and male characters are largely at liberty to decide their actions without interference or limitation; that Frank and Joe Hardy reflect all of the hallmarks of "real boys" as defined in the early twentieth century; and that the stories endorse an older model of Victorian masculinity that was falling out of favor while rejecting the newer standards that were replacing them.

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“THAT’S JUST LIKE A BOY”: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MASCULINITIES IN
HARDY BOYS MYSTERY STORIES, 1927-1932

by
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Introduction

Detective stories are as interesting to boys [as they are to] grown folks. . .I prefer two boys, brothers, as heroes. . .The Keene Boys, the Scott Boys, the Hart Boys, the Bixby Boys, etc.

With these remarks in a 1927 letter, Edward Stratemeyer, an author of children's literature and founder of a publishing syndicate for juvenile stories, introduced a new series to publisher Grosset & Dunlap. Perpetually "looking for yet another new angle for series," Stratemeyer had thought to "fuse the tried-and-true, nineteenth-century adventure saga with an adolescent version of the newly popular detective mystery."¹ The result was a series following the adventures of "two bright-eyed boys," who readers meet on the first page of *The Tower Treasure* riding motorcycles and "speeding along a shore road in the sunshine of a morning in spring."² These are the Hardy boys, sixteen-year-old Frank Hardy and his fifteen-year-old brother, Joe. In each book, these sons of Fenton Hardy, a famous retired New York City detective working in private practice in the coastal city of Bayport, survive repeated encounters with dangerous villains and situations while in the process of successfully solving a baffling case.

While librarians, educators, child experts, and parents debated the moral ramifications of mass-produced children's series in a context of widespread changes to the American family, young boys eagerly read the new Hardy Boys stories. Stratemeyer's series had long been immensely popular with children, as revealed in a 1929 study that tracked reading habits of boys in junior high. According to the survey, the Stratemeyer

Syndicate's Tom Swift books were "second only to the Bible as the books most frequently read." When the same boys "were asked to list the novels they had read during the school year, the Tom Swift series topped the list, with the Rover Boys third."³ Despite the successes of other Stratemeyer books, the Hardy Boys mysteries "quickly became the Syndicate's most successful boys' series," with almost 116,000 books sold by mid-1929.⁴ The popularity of the Hardy boys has continued for eight decades and several generations of boys, and the brothers have become "household names." As one scholar has noted, the books "live on, despite dramatic upheavals in culture, technology, and society," although in some respects they have changed greatly since the first three volumes were published in 1927.⁵

The thousands of boys who read Hardy Boys mysteries learned about more than their heroes' latest adventure; rather, together with descriptions of near-misses, dangerous situations, mysterious people, and amusing hi-jinks, these books make arguments about which behaviors and attitudes are appropriate for men and boys and which are not. This study focuses on these depictions of masculinity and manhood, examining their foundation and significance within the context of early twentieth-century America.

Literature Review

Definitions of Masculinity

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “masculinity” as “the state or fact of being masculine; the assemblage of qualities regarded as characteristic of men; maleness, manliness.”⁶ While this definition may reflect common usage of the term, scholars view this straightforward yet unrevealing definition as inadequate. “There is a constantly recurring notion” within societies, asserts David D. Gilmore, “that real manhood is different from simply anatomical maleness, that it is not a natural condition that comes about spontaneously through biological maturation.” Rather, in societies at “all levels of sociocultural development,” masculinity is often viewed as “a precarious or artificial state that boys must win against powerful odds,” a problematic goal, and “a critical threshold that boys must pass through testing.”⁷ Likewise, R. W. Connell argues that “attempting to define masculinity as an object (a natural character type, a behavioural [sic] average, a norm)” is an unproductive enterprise; questions the extent to which “the term can be briefly defined at all”; and advocates that scholars instead “need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives.”⁸ Also alluding to the difficulty of defining masculinity, Rose Marie Hoffman states that “like most psychological constructs, masculinity and femininity are abstract concepts.” Despite this acknowledgement, she asserts, “for several decades researchers have been unsuccessful

in adequately measuring masculinity and femininity, which suggests that these constructs may be more elusive than most.”⁹

Some scholars have formulated and described different types of masculinities, particularly describing categories that they argue characterize modern, Western ideals. For example, the categories explained by Robert Brannon in 1976 have been widely quoted and labeled “our culture’s blueprint of manhood”:¹⁰

No Sissy Stuff: a stigma is attached to feminine characteristics.

The Big Wheel: men need success and status.

The Sturdy Oak: men should have toughness, confidence, and self-reliance.

Give ’Em Hell: men should have an aura of aggression, daring, and violence.¹¹

By comparison, Donald Lee Deardorff, coming from studies of literature, uses the term “masculine centers” to describe dominant ideals at any given time and groups those that have prevailed throughout American history into five central categories. The rugged individualist involves self-sufficient men “making meaning of their lives by physically mastering their environment.” The man of conquest operates “within a paradigm of conflict” and “achieves meaning by consistently defeating some ‘other.’” The hero is the “ultimate community man” who “inspire[s] other men because they represent the ultimate in the eyes of the people who look up to them.” The American dreamer is a “man who lives out the dominant paradigm of success of his time,” while finally the religious man demonstrates “Christian practice.”¹²

Most significantly, R. W. Connell has posited four types of masculinity, which operate as positions in a hierarchical relationship, not as definitions or examples of masculine traits. Hegemonic masculinities are “culturally honoured [sic], glorified and praised forms of masculinities.”¹³ They are the “currently accepted male ideal within a particular culture at a particular time. . .an ideal-type. . .[that] changes over time and

place as well as being subject to contestation within a particular culture.” According to Connell’s model, the number of men who fit within the hegemonic ideal is far smaller than the number of men within the other three types. Complicit masculinity includes men who “accept and participate in the system of hegemonic masculinity so as to (1) enjoy the material, physical and symbolic benefits of the subordination of women, (2) through fantasy experience the sense of hegemony and learn to take pleasure in it, and (3) avoid subordination.”¹⁴ By comparison, subordinated masculinities “encompass beliefs, values, behaviours [sic] and attitudes that fall outside the prevailing meaning of what it means to be masculine in a given society.”¹⁵ According to Connell, “a man in the subordinated position suffers that fate despite appearing to possess the physical attributes necessary to aspire to hegemony.” Finally, “marginalised [sic] men are those who cannot even aspire to hegemony, most often men of colour [sic] and men with disabilities.”¹⁶

Characteristics of masculinity that might be labeled as hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, or marginalized during a particular era change over time, and scholars have described the process by which this occurs and the ways in which men create and respond to the transformation. For example, David Rosen writes that “in each epoch, groups of men try to pass on a stable ‘masculinity’ that can encompass traditional roles, accommodate new experiences, ensure meaningful contribution to society, and insulate from the shock of change.” In attempting to develop and maintain masculine norms as an amalgamation of these varied circumstances, “men experience an abrasion between the concepts of privileged manhood that they inherit and try to satisfy and other experiences to which they try to fit their masculine ideals.” Rosen argues that men “try to create a new definition of masculinity” when they “experience abrasion between the masculine

ideal and the surrounding world, between a shifting sense of self and world and a restrictive or dysfunctional sense of role.” However, creating new definitions only complicates the situation, as “the concept of ‘masculinity’ multiplies and one concept contests another.”¹⁷ Deardorff explains that men find masculine standards to be “volatile” and “as potentially harmful as [they are] helpful.” Despite the illusion of its “supposed position of unquestioned power,” he writes, the prevailing code of masculinity, “in whatever society at whatever time in American history, has always achieved its position by suppressing many alternative codes that, though temporarily brought under its control, are always chipping away at its place atop the hierarchy of masculinities at work in the cultural matrix.” Moreover, masculinity remains in a “continual flux in which masculine codes collide and challenge each other,” and in which masculine centers “change in response to cultural shifts.”¹⁸

Descriptions of masculinity as characterized by conflict, tension, change, and above all diversity abound in the professional literature. As Rosen explains, contemporary scholars interested in the subject of masculinity “work against the totalized and totalizing notions of ‘male,’ ‘masculine,’ and ‘men.’” Even though “sex-difference categories operate in all societies and while the categories of male and female are nearly universal,” he writes, “the collective known as ‘men’ is not singular or simple.” Rather, researchers believe that “the forces constructing manhood are too diverse to allow singularity – from differences in biology within the group called men, to differences in sexuality, ethnicity, and class, to differences in the way men may be viewed by women and other men of likewise varying differences.” Rosen describes masculine norms as “unstable as well as variable culturally, subculturally, and personally.” For Rosen, a

“loosely related set of shared stereotypes and norms,” not a singular and “definitive masculine ideal,” exists. Rather than “producing conformity,” such collectively-defined standards and paradigms “produce stress in those expected to observe them.”¹⁹ Deardorff agrees, stating that “individual men simultaneously accept and reject masculine centers,” a circumstance he labels “ironic resistance, the fundamental characteristic of American masculinity.”²⁰ Finally, historian Michael S. Kimmel’s description of masculinity emphasizes relationships of power and resistance, topics that are widely underscored in the literature of masculinity studies. He argues that “masculinities are constructed in a field of power,” specifically,

1) the power of men over women; 2) the power of some men over other men. Men’s power over women is relatively straightforward. It is the aggregate power of men as a group to determine the distribution of rewards in society. Men’s power over other men concerns the distribution of those rewards among men be differential access to class, race, ethnic privileges, or privileges based on sexual orientation.²¹

For Kimmel, masculinity is primarily defined as a “fear of others dominating us, having power or control over us.” He writes that “throughout American history American men have been afraid that others will see us as less than manly, as weak, timid, frightened” and anxious of “not measuring up to some vaguely defined notions of what it means to be a man, afraid of failure.”²² Kimmel describes ways in which these personal concerns have influenced ways that groups of men have interacted with other men and with women; he asserts that “models of masculinity developed in the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were, in large part, efforts to set American masculinity against the identities of various ‘others.’”²³

In conclusion, Jeff Hearn summarizes current scholarly thought about definitions and characteristics of masculinity, underscoring the significance of plurality in all spheres of inquiry:

The construction of masculinities has been explored in many different arenas, including: global, regional, institutional, interactional and individual men's gendered performance and identity constructions. Masculinities do not exist in socio-economic vacuums but are constructed within specific institutional settings. They vary and change across time (history) and space (culture), within societies and through life courses and biographies. . .Recent work has emphasized multiple masculinities in terms of ways of being men and forms of men's structural, collective and individual practices, their interrelations, and complex interweavings of masculinities, powers, other social statuses and, indeed, violences. There has been a strong emphasis on the interconnections of gender with other social divisions, such as age, class, disability, ethnicity, nationality, occupation, racialisation [sic], religion and sexuality. . .Masculinities are placed in cooperative and conflictual relations with each other. . .Such relations are complicated by contradictions, ambiguities and paradoxes that persist intra-personally, inter-personally, collectively and structurally."²⁴

Ideas and Ideals of Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century America

While scholars, as described above, assert that ideal characteristics, standards, and norms of masculinity do not transcend historic and cultural contexts, historians working in masculinity studies explore definitions that exist at particular periods in history and in specific societies. The boys who read Hardy Boys mystery stories in the late 1920s and early 1930s were born during and after World War I; the series' creator, Edward Stratemeyer, and author, Leslie McFarlane, had witnessed and been affected by decades of upheaval regarding definitions of masculinity. In the introduction of his work *Creating the Modern Man* (2000), Tom Pendergast outlines the historiography of studies of masculinity during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, indicating that while

historians generally agree about the central narrative of this time period, scholarly debate continues about how to interpret the changes that took place.

A variety of circumstances greatly influenced men's experiences at the turn of the twentieth century and collectively-held standards of masculinity. According to Michael Kimmel, American men perceived that manhood was being threatened from multiple angles.²⁵ Everywhere, he writes, "cultural critics observed masculinity to be in crisis."²⁶ The changing status of American women was viewed as the foremost problem facing men. Many of these women embraced styles of fashion, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations that dramatically changed traditional ideas about femininity. Described as the New Woman, women of the early twentieth century have been described as "that fast-talking, cigarette-smoking libertine known as the flapper – an exciting and passionate sexual and gender nonconformist."²⁷ Many New Women also disdained marriage, and as "avowed feminists" they pushed for political rights, educational opportunities, and economic autonomy.²⁸ Increasingly, men encountered these New Women in environments that had traditionally been the domain of men, and the passage of the eighteenth amendment in 1920, granting women the right to vote, accelerated the trend of women working outside of the home, attending colleges and universities, and participating in other areas of the public sphere.²⁹ While men recognized the encroachment of women into their traditional domains, they simultaneously became increasingly aware that women had also "taken over the 'making of men'" because they controlled church, school, and home, the three institutions primarily responsible for childhood socialization.³⁰ In short, writes Michael Kimmel, "everywhere men looked, there were women."³¹

Additional related circumstances further influenced men and masculinity. Perhaps most significantly was the rise of corporate capitalism in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The workplace increasingly became an “unreliable proving ground” for men, and this tenuous employment situation worsened considerably during the economic depression of the 1930s as men faced widespread unemployment.³² Moreover, Pendergast asserts that corporate capitalism “was the driving force in the transformation of American social, economic, and cultural life.” Specifically, he writes

that by the turn of the century the U. S. economy had shifted from a system based on small capitalist shops to a system based on large-scale corporate enterprises, and the focus of these enterprises had shifted from increasing production (though this was still of vital importance) to encouraging consumption; that the movement of people to larger cities broke down small-town affiliations and encouraged identification with national rather than local culture; and that mass media such as magazines (and, later, radio and television) rose to prominence as a result of such changes.³³

In America’s growing cities, argues Kevin White in *The First Sexual Revolution* (1993), “a mass production economy that focused on consumption replaced an earlier entrepreneurial society of small businessmen and farmers with a ‘new middle class’ of bureaucrats and managers that in its growing leisure time embraced an ethic of therapeutic release and pleasure.” Moreover, a “leisure world that was geared towards youth and vitality emerged as amusements grew up in the cities to cater to the demands of young people.”³⁴ City dwellers enjoyed increasingly sexualized environments such as movie theaters and dance halls, and overall many of the “old strictures and controls over sexual behavior were breaking down.”³⁵ Moreover, working class leisure activities and behaviors began to “break more openly with genteel traditions” through the increasing popularity of dime novels, fraternal lodges, boxing, and football among middle-class

men.³⁶ All told, these and other cultural transformations “were the changes that produced a New Woman, and, one might speculate, could have produced a ‘New Man.’”³⁷

The image of masculinity falling out of favor at the turn of the twentieth century was a definition of appropriate male behavior reflective of the “Victorian system of morality that was dominant among the middle class of American society up to around 1912.” According to Kevin White, Victorians valued hard work, “self-reliance, sobriety, self-sacrifice, thriftiness, and rugged individualism” and “believed that gratification could be delayed: they therefore railed at self-indulgence, leisure, effete-ness, and the exotic. Temperance and self-control marked the lives of the best people.”³⁸ Stated another way, nineteenth-century Victorians prized “morals, manners, integrity, duty, [and] work.”³⁹ White argues that “above all else, nineteenth-century American men were expected to acquire ‘character,’” an ideal that in turn was achieved through the development of morals. According to White, “men of character controlled their primitive urges” and “followed a single standard of purity for themselves as well as for women.”⁴⁰ Indeed, a “public insistence on male purity and continence” was the “lynchpin of the Victorian system of morality.”⁴¹

Victorian men could achieve character, morals, and masculinity by embodying one of two related ideals. First, the “Self-Made Man” or “Masculine Achiever” was an ideal that demanded “decisiveness and effort”:

A man must not rely on anyone else. The breadwinner and provider must not cry. He must control and suppress his emotions. He must be tough and disciplined, autonomous and independent. . . . By accomplishing as much, men acquired the respect of their peers but, more importantly, they satisfied an “inner-directed” and religious compulsion to do what they believed to be right and moral.⁴²

Second, White describes the “Christian Gentlemen” ideal, which emphasized “generosity and empathy as the basis for action,” honorable and moral behavior, duty, hard work, integrity, and a demeanor that was “dignified and self-controlled, asexual and commanding, quiet and sober.” Far from being a rejection of the Masculine Achiever or Self-Made Man ideal, the Christian Gentleman ideal “involved a reaction to the excesses of the marketplace that must be tempered.”⁴³

While the Victorian middle class exalted the cultivation of character in the form of the Masculine Achiever and Christian Gentlemen, men in the working class adhered to a vastly different conception of masculinity, one labeled “Underworld Primitivism” by White. The “antithesis to the lofty ideals of the Christian Gentleman,” working-class masculinity largely “rejected repression and suppression of desires and abandoned respect for women in a flurry of aggressiveness associated with a violent homosocial culture.” Specifically, White argues that boxing was a significant component of underworld masculinity, writing that “with its ethos of braggadoccio, masculine prowess, and violent defense of honor, it fitted perfectly into the underworld male culture” and “fused into the underworld as one vice among many – prostitution, drinking, gambling.” While many middle-class men participated in this culture to some extent, it remained well beyond the boundaries of Victorian respectability and morals.⁴⁴

Between 1910 and 1930, the rise of corporate capitalism and the accompanying societal changes discussed above radically altered definitions, standards, and ideals of masculinity. White asserts that “self-control, discipline, delayed gratification, and self-sacrifice, ideal qualities in an economy geared towards production, seemed less appropriate in the late nineteenth century world of the national marketplace and of large

bureaucratic corporations that undermined the small businessmen and farmers who had held sway in high Victorian America.”⁴⁵ Specifically, “the mass production of goods created a culture of abundance, plenty, and consumption that gave renewed importance to leisure,” while the “leisure world of youth that grew up in the cities gave young Americans a milieu in which to spend money they had not previously possessed in such quantities.” The Victorians’ “culture of character” – emphasizing self-control, discipline, respectability, sturdiness, and permanence as hallmarks of masculinity – was replaced by a “culture of personality” that emphasized youth, sex appeal, and an attractive physical appearance. “‘Physical attraction’ was indeed seen as being synonymous with muscularity,” writes Kevin White, “and he who lacked muscles was lacking in manhood.”⁴⁶

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the Victorians’ Self-Made Man/Masculine Achiever and Christian Gentlemen were replaced by two new models of masculinity and masculine behavior. First, the male flapper was a descendant of the Christian Gentleman, albeit adapted to suit the culture of personality and “accompany the New Woman.” This type was “coy, sensitive, [and] gentle”; “ultimately responsible” despite expressing “irresponsibility and unwillingness to commit to a relationship”; “capable of violence, not in defense of women, but rather against them”; and interested in sexual exploration.⁴⁷ Second, the tramp Bohemian “celebrated overt irresponsibility and violence against women in a blatant glorification of the Victorian underworld styles of masculinity.”⁴⁸ This model encouraged aggressive behavior, and White argues that “violence was, if not exactly glorified, then presented as a frequent part of interaction between men and women” as never before in an ideology that was “read and digested by

young Americans, especially those of the middle class.” In other words, the “system that had long been designed to protect women broke down” in the face of new definitions of masculinity.⁴⁹ Through the male flapper and tramp Bohemian, American men in the early twentieth century saw “youthful male heterosexual expression celebrated and glorified and equated with the attainment of manliness”; simultaneously, “they also saw purity denigrated as ‘neurosis’ and even ‘psychosis.’”⁵⁰ Finally, “effeminacy of any kind” was viewed suspiciously, and “fear of effeminacy was diffused into a vilification of homosexuality in the literature of the youth culture.”⁵¹

As ideals of manhood transformed at the turn of the twentieth century, so too did ideas about the appropriate behavior of boys. In her study of American boyhood between 1890 and 1940, Julia Grant writes that “early childhood came to be seen as a critical period for the development of masculine character and gender identity.”⁵² Specifically, “little boys – once thought to be exempt from the demands of masculinity – were recast as men in the making, placing their behaviors, characteristics, and temperaments under a microscope for manifestations of gender deviations.”⁵³ Boys who were nervous, sickly and timid as well as overly obedient and “overly dependent on their mothers” were labeled as sissies; moreover, “effeminacy in little boys was often viewed as a precursor to homosexuality.”⁵⁴ By comparison, “the ‘real’ or ‘regular’ boy was the standard against which little boys were measured” and was characterized as being a “boisterous, mischievous, and pugilistic” prankster and adventurer.⁵⁵ In short, writes Grant, “the ‘bad boy’ of the Victorian storybook was resurrected as a ‘regular’ or ‘real’ boy by the turn of the century.”⁵⁶ Additionally, writes Grant, “perhaps the quintessential characteristic by which parents measured the masculinity of their sons was in terms of physical strength

and the ability to ‘take their own part’ and defend themselves from attack.” For Victorians, “displaying courage in the face of evil was not the same as engaging in common boyhood scraps, which were widely viewed in the early nineteenth century as a manifestation of the lack of self-control deemed essential to manliness.” However, by the late nineteenth century, “boys’ fights were increasingly accepted as a ‘means to manliness’ rather than as a barrier to it.” Importantly, while “nineteenth-century advice writers emphasized the need to fight the good fight in matters of honor or principle, by the twentieth century holding one’s own in a fight, regardless of the reason, became emblematic of masculinity.”⁵⁷ Finally, Grant notes that social reformers at the turn of the twentieth century increasingly recognized peer groups as essential to developing appropriately masculine boys and “transforming sissies into real boys.” Like fathers – who were viewed as important models of appropriately masculine behaviors and activities – peers were seen as playing a “central role in ameliorating the potentially deleterious effects of mothers, female teachers, and even civilization itself, in the development of boys’ masculinity.”⁵⁸

Studies of the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories

In sharp contrast to the extensive scholarship analyzing Nancy Drew mysteries, very little has been written about the Hardy Boys series. Examinations of the stories generally focus on the world within the texts and describe components such as characters and plot development. Moreover, scholars who have examined the detective stories generally consider them collectively and monolithically across the Hardy Boys’ eighty-

year history, even though they are divided into several distinct series: the *Hardy Boys Mystery Stories* that were published by Grosset & Dunlap and comprised of the original thirty-eight volumes (published 1927-1959; revised 1959-1973) and twenty-eight additional volumes (published 1960-1979 and 2005-present); a second series of 132 books published by Simon & Schuster between 1979 and 2005, also under the series title *Hardy Boys Mystery Stories*; and several later “series, spin-offs, and revivals” such as *Hardy Boys Casefiles*, *The Hardy Boys: The Clues Brothers*, and *The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers*.⁵⁹ Scholars emphasize basic components shared by all of these series and trace broad developments between early and later volumes; however, they devote little attention to ways in which Hardy Boys mysteries reflect, challenge, and interact with the complex and changing historical contexts in which they were written.

Several studies of Hardy Boys stories have been included within histories of the corporation that created them. Like Nancy Drew, Tom Swift, and the Bobbsey Twins, Frank and Joe Hardy were the brainchild of Edward Stratemeyer (1862-1930), a writer who managed a New York literary syndicate that bore his name. As Deidre Johnson has examined, Stratemeyer enjoyed a prolific writing career and experimented with several genres of juvenile fiction for more than twenty years before establishing his publishing syndicate around 1905, a venture scholars have described as a “production factory for [children’s] series books.” The assembly-line approach to each story began with Stratemeyer himself “draft[ing] two- to three-page outlines” that summarized the “plot, subplot, characters, and major incidents.” These documents were passed along to one of the many hired writers on the Stratemeyer payroll; it was these writers who composed full-length manuscripts based upon the outlines they had been given. While numerous

writers often contributed books to a given series, each series was published under a single pseudonym that attempted to mask Syndicate production methods. All Hardy Boys mysteries have been published under the pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon, although Canadian writer Leslie McFarlane authored the first sixteen books of the original series and several other authors wrote later volumes.⁶⁰ Series writers “received a flat sum for each book – no royalties – and signed a contract agreeing not to use the pseudonyms for their own material or even to acknowledge their connections to them.” Johnson writes that “the reward for satisfactory work was the opportunity to write more books for the Syndicate.”⁶¹

Stratemeyer’s production methods proved to be tremendously successful, as he created eighty-two original series, primarily composed of new stories, between 1906 and his death in 1930. Although “some series were short-lived and not all received new volumes annually, the Syndicate kept between nineteen and thirty-two series in progress each year from 1910 through 1930 and averaged thirty-one new titles each year.”⁶² As a result of such prolific production, “in 1926, 98 percent of kids in an Illinois survey named a Stratemeyer character as their favorite, and, until 1940, the Syndicate produced about half of the most popular juvenile series books in America.” A Depression-era article published in *Fortune* magazine summarized the magnitude of the Syndicate’s influence, proclaiming, “As oil had its Rockefeller, literature had its Stratemeyer.”⁶³

Recurring patterns in the Hardy Boys stories reflect the prescribed and standard production formula that created them. Numerous scholars have noted that certain plot components have remained virtually unchanged throughout the series’ entire history.⁶⁴ In his work *Rascals at Large; or, The Clue in the Old Nostalgia* (1971), Arthur Prager

identified a four-part formula in Hardy Boys mysteries. Scholars Deidre Johnson and Carol Billman have noted that some stories deviate from Prager's model; however, they agree that it does effectively summarize the plot in the majority of books:

First, Fenton Hardy 'hands down' a case. (Alternatively, his sons spot a suspicious character in Bayport.) Second, there is the fortuitous coincidence: the Hardys overhear suspicious plotting or spy a potential criminal in a compromising position. Third, trouble develops when the boys follow the trail left by the evildoers. Typically, dirty tricks are enacted against the young detectives, and sometimes these pranks are intentionally deadly...Fourth, there is the final chapter. Having tumbled into their foes' clutches, the Hardys are miraculously rescued at the eleventh hour. In the meantime, the villains have confessed everything.⁶⁵

One of the "most common climactic moments" in each Hardy Boys book occurs as Frank and Joe unearth the treasure they have been seeking, an accomplishment that usually occurs just before they are captured by the villains.⁶⁶ The final part of the story, argues Johnson, includes a "triple triumph: moral victory, with wrongdoers punished for their misdeeds and property or other items restored to their rightful owners; emotional gratification, with friends, family, and former victims gratefully and enthusiastically praising the boys' talents; and financial acknowledgement, usually in the form of a monetary reward."⁶⁷ Finally, Billman notes that the plot of each Hardy Boys stories is also characterized by multiple mysteries unfolding simultaneously. "What keeps readers guessing," she writes, "is not so much the outcome of each as the interconnection that will inevitably tie together the disparate threads."⁶⁸ Considering the Hardy Boys mysteries collectively, Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman have remarked that Frank and Joe "share the same mythological energy and fate as Sisyphus – once they come out on top at the end of each book, they are fated to go back to ground zero in the next tale and do what they do all over again."⁶⁹

Interwoven throughout the basic plot formula are other trademarks of the Hardy Boys series. For example, Frank and Joe enjoy a great deal of “mobility via fast, modern technology.”⁷⁰ While Frank and Joe often first uncover a mystery in their hometown of Bayport, their access to various modes of transportation enables them to investigate clues and pursue villains far beyond the city limits. As a result, even though the Hardy boys reside in the city, their “world is often an outdoor one filled with caves, islands, cliffs, and forests.”⁷¹ Billman argues that such environments are “archetypal secret places.” In particular, “islands have long been part of boys’ adventure fiction, in part because they are by their very nature set off from the rest of civilization and are often terra incognita, the equivalent of the untamed frontier in western adventure stories.”⁷² Additionally, scholars have noted that Stratemeyer developed mystery series late in his career; these new series, the Hardy Boys included, contained several elements that characterized the dime novels and children’s series he had created earlier, including “perpetual travel and excitement, helping others, confrontations with villainous types, [and] tangible success.”⁷³ At the same time, the primacy of detection that was new to mystery stories like the Hardy Boys added new components such as “fast-paced investigative action and disguises, ciphers to be puzzled out, rude thugs to be put in their places, crime kits, secret messages, and passwords.”⁷⁴

Scholars’ analysis of the characters of Frank and Joe indicate that, to an extent, many see them as interchangeable and undifferentiated. For example, they are often described as a single entity possessing a lengthy and impressive list of skills. As Kismaric and Heiferman note, “they are sharpshooters, expert drivers and divers; they ride horses, ice fish, and pilot airplanes. They’re good auto mechanics who have mastered Latin, sign

language, and various secret codes.”⁷⁵ However, scholars also note that important characteristics also distinguish the two brothers. On one hand, Frank is the “logical thinker” who “has most of the ideas and acts as the master planner and leader.” By comparison, Joe is described as “hotheaded, impetuous,” and “impulsive.” As a result, Joe is “most likely to take chances, so he’s the one most likely to be bopped on the head or to unwittingly lead someone else into danger.” Despite being characterized individually as extraordinarily capable, argues Kismaric and Heiferman, “neither Frank nor Joe needs to be perfect as an individual, because together, as a team, *they* [emphasis original] are perfect.”⁷⁶

Scholars have also asserted that several components of Hardy Boys mysteries underscore Frank and Joe’s professionalism and skill. First, Fenton Hardy usually leads his sons to a mystery before leaving town, therefore allowing them to solve the case without his assistance. This “peripheral presence,” argues Carol Billman, sets the tone of each book by reminding potential clients and readers that his sons “are not just playing at being private eyes: they are working on their father’s important cases.”⁷⁷ Additionally, even though the Hardy boys and their friends are high school students, they “tackle grown-up crimes” that require them to “fight serious criminal opposition – with their fists, with weapons, with investigative know-how.”⁷⁸ Billman also argues that the criminals’ names are not insignificant: in addition to “identify[ing] the bearers irrefutably as the evildoers,” they also, she suggests, strengthen the implication that the Hardy boys solve “tough, big-league” cases.⁷⁹ Finally, Frank and Joe always “receive substantial monetary rewards for their detective work.”⁸⁰ Taken together, these elements present

Frank and Joe Hardy as professionals who are beginning successful careers as detectives; despite being teenagers, these boys are far from being amateurs.

As the series' central characters, Frank and Joe Hardy have received the most attention from scholars. However, in each mystery the brothers are supported and assisted by a cast of family and friends. Scholars have remarked on the relative absence of parents Fenton and Laura Hardy; as a result, they seem to have concentrated on the gang of friends that participate in the Hardy boys' escapades. The brothers' friends include the tough and muscular Biff Hooper; Phil Cohen, who is described as an "artistic brainiac" and a "diminutive, black-haired Jewish boy"; and "dark-haired, olive-skinned" Tony Prito, who was born in Italy and whose struggles with English cause amusement among the others.⁸¹ Finally, Chet Morton is a "chubby, happy-go-lucky, funny kid bursting with entrepreneurial zeal" who scholars agree is the most important of the Hardy boys' friends. Scholars also consistently view Chet as "the feminine foil for the Hardy Boys" because he is often "the worrier, the food provider, [and] the boy who feels fear and alerts readers to danger."⁸² As Billman notes, Chet's role as a feminine character is important because women and girls "play a decidedly minor role in the Hardy Boys mysteries." She writes that "the only identifiable function served by females is that of rewarder: they are among the first to heap praise on the Hardys' sleuthing at the end of most volumes."⁸³ While Joe expresses an interest in Chet Morton's sister, Iola, and Frank expresses affection for Callie Shaw, the Hardy boys "are not particularly interested in romance" and neither relationship progresses or develops.⁸⁴ As a Grosset & Dunlap publicity advertisement stated in the 1930s, the Hardy boys "think girls are all right – *in their place!*"⁸⁵ In sum, the Hardy brothers' world is populated with teenagers who enjoy, to a

large extent, freedom from adult intrusion; it is also a predominantly male world where women have only minor, largely supportive, roles.

Finally, several scholars have described a multi-dimensional masculinity that is portrayed in the Hardy Boys series. On one hand, Frank, Joe, and their friends have been characterized as “men’s men” who are “adept at boxing and jujitsu” and “ready to sign on for adventure and, when necessary, to play rough.” Unrestricted by authority and “untroubled by women,” Frank and Joe are “free to be action heroes, never in doubt about their ability to perform.”⁸⁶ On other hand, such physical prowess is moderated. As Kismaric and Heiferman observe, “even in the midst of tumult, the Hardy Boys always remain polite young gentlemen.” They and their friends “may get knocked around or razzed by all sorts of unsophisticated hayseeds. . .but they don’t come to blows or lose their composure.”⁸⁷ Frank and Joe’s ability to defend themselves is not characterized by power; rather, “they understand the superiority of strategy over brute strength. It’s the scientifically planned trajectory of a well-placed punch that knocks out the bad guys.”⁸⁸

After describing the components discussed above, scholars of the Hardy boys have tried to explain the longevity and popularity of the series. For example, Marilyn S. Greenwald argues that “a good part of the reason for the exceptional popularity of the series was Leslie McFarlane.” She writes that Stratemeyer’s aim was to “create a boys’ adventure series driven by plot turns and action; any distinctive personalities or character idiosyncrasies would be secondary.” Instead,

Les created characters who were often quirky, sly, and certainly far from wooden – characters young readers could identify with because of their sense of humor, resourcefulness, and, at times, irreverence. . .Further, McFarlane believed that Hardy Boys readers were up to literary challenges: he routinely used words like ‘ostensible,’ ‘ambling,’ and ‘propounded’ (‘jawbreakers,’ as he once called them). He had confidence that his readers were smart enough to understand them – or

curious enough to look up their meaning, patting themselves on the back for doing so. He also inserted occasional allusions to the work of Shakespeare and Dickens. At his own initiative, Les subtly and stealthily transformed some standard stereotypical characters. . .In short, Les respected his adolescent audience and refused to write down to them.⁸⁹

Greenwald's assessment is different from others who dismiss the poor and simplistic writing of the series.

By comparison, other scholars have emphasized that the action and adventures found in Hardy Boys mysteries are the reason for the series' persistent popularity. Carol Billman argues that "a whirlwind mixture of mystery and adventure" made the Hardy boys popular, as indicated by an advertisement at the back of an early volume that asked readers, "Have You Ever Thought Why You Get So Much Fun Out of Reading the Hardy Boys Stories?" Billman argues that the supplied answer "does indeed pinpoint the books' basic attraction":

It's probably because the Hardy Boys, Joe and Frank, are fellows like yourselves. They like action, plenty of it. They are as full of curiosity as a couple of bloodhounds. And just leave a mystery around and they'll be in it before you can say 'Sherlock Holmes!' . . .It's because they can drive a car and pilot a speedboat and are at home in the great outdoors and keep their heads in an emergency (and an emergency is always just around the corner).⁹⁰

Billman underscores the paradoxical message of this advertisement. On one hand, Frank and Joe are described as average and ordinary boys, "fellows like yourselves." On the other hand, the mention of their skills and adventures alludes to their ability to "perform wondrous feats of detection," which does not reflect the experiences of regular boys.⁹¹ As Kismaric and Heiferman point out, Frank and Joe's surname is not inconsequential: the boys "always bounce back. . .because they *are* [emphasis original] hardy boys, luckier and more clever than anyone around them."⁹² These authors also argue that Frank and Joe "thrive as heroic characters for boys because they continually live on the edge." They

“affirm their loyalties, believe in their own invulnerability and unwavering moral strength, and act out their version of masculinity in a timeless, endless loop of thrilling excitements.” The brothers do not undertake these adventures purely for amusement; rather, Kismaric and Heiferman assert, they act to “protect their family, friends, and hometown of Bayport from whatever threatens their way of life.” As a result, these scholars argue that the Hardy boys resemble nineteenth-century frontiersmen who were “ever on the alert for danger.”⁹³

Kismaric and Heiferman also argue that “what made the Hardy Boys so cool, and keeps them so popular today, is not only who they are and what they stand for, but what they aren’t.” Unlike many adolescent readers of the mystery stories, Frank and Joe are never constrained by “petty chores, curfews, or the short leash of meager allowances.” Even though Frank is described as an honor student at Bayport High, classes, studying, and homework “barely intrude” upon the brothers’ work and adventures as detectives.⁹⁴ Additionally, adults, most noticeably parents Fenton and Laura Hardy, are relatively minor characters. Mr. and Mrs. Hardy do not restrict or monitor their sons’ activities, enforce rules, or pressure the boys about their future plans for college and careers. As Billman argues, Laura Hardy “might as well be absent from the scene, for she is a shadowy figure who emerges only to smile proudly after her boys have cracked a case.” The boys’ father “provides the fodder for their sleuthing appetites – and then he conveniently leaves town,” enabling them to solve the ensuing mystery on their own.⁹⁵ Despite Frank and Joe’s freedom from the rules of authority figures and adults, the boys are always upstanding and well-behaved. The mysteries “reinforce the values adults believe they should pass along to their kids,” and Kismaric and Heiferman argue that

their ability to accomplish this “without fanfare, hysterics, or heavy-handed moralizing” is what they “do best.” The Hardy boys’ “values are clear, strong, and unshakable.” They never “need to be asked to take on responsibility” because they are “the first to volunteer.” Moreover, the brothers “take risks and roll with the punches, work hard, and have clear goals, and they never, ever give up. And for that they’re always rewarded.” Finally, they “also make it clear that violence in thought, words, and action has no place in life and that it’s important to be compassionate and to give people a chance.”⁹⁶

Methodology

This study is a content analysis of Hardy Boys mystery stories from the 1920s and 1930s in order to answer the research question: what characteristics and expressions of masculinity are communicated as desirable and admirable.

Content analysis is the “study of communication content,” and in this study the communications being considered are the texts of Hardy Boy mysteries. Ole Holsti defines content analysis as a “multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communication serves as the basis of inference.”⁹⁷ Earl Babbie concurs, writing that content analysis is “particularly well suited to the study of communications and to answering the classic question of communications research: ‘Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?’”⁹⁸ The data collected from the stories is analyzed both in terms of manifest content – the “visible, surface content” or “concrete terms contained in a communication” – and latent content, or the “underlying meaning” of communication.⁹⁹ However, emphasis is placed on coding latent content, as interpreting passages from the texts is central to comprehensively answering the research question.

Procedure

The first step in this study is to define masculinity. As explored above, scholars struggle to concisely define masculinity, and overwhelmingly they describe it as a collection of multiple complex and problematic processes characterized by difference and change. As stated previously, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines masculinity as “the assemblage of qualities regarded as characteristic of men; maleness, manliness.”¹⁰⁰ This description may be inadequate when considering masculinity as a comprehensive concept; however, it is useful for assessing particular texts written within a specific society at a specific time, which is the central goal of this study.

In this study, *Hardy Boys Mystery Stories* refers to texts written by Leslie McFarlane under the pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon; the series is comprised of thirty-eight original volumes published between 1927 and 1959 and revised from 1959 to 1973 as well as twenty-eight additional volumes published between 1960 and 1979 and from 2005 to the present. From this group, six books from the late 1920s and early 1930s were selected, as patterns of representations and depictions unique to some books could be observed and measured in this quantity of books. Listed chronologically by publication date, the six mysteries analyzed in this study are:

The Tower Treasure (1927)

The House on the Cliff (1927)

The Secret of the Old Mill (1927)

The Mystery of Cabin Island (1929)

What Happened at Midnight (1931)

While the Clock Ticked (1932)

A synopsis of the plot of each story can be found in the Appendix.

After each book was read, references to descriptions and judgments of appropriate displays of masculinity were recorded. Particular attention was paid to statements made by characters about what men and boys should do or are expected to do; descriptions of male characters' behaviors, attitudes, appearance, and personalities; specific use of words indicating what is considered "normal" or characteristic of men and boys in general; the number of male and female characters in each mystery; and the role and importance of male and female characters. In analyzing the collected data, categories emerged that allowed observations to be grouped. From there, conclusions were drawn about representations of masculinity in Hardy Boys stories and the significance of those depictions within the context of the 1920s and 1930s.

Findings

The Hardy boys live in an environment almost exclusively populated by men.

The Hardy boys are supported by a recurring cast of characters who appear in most if not all of the six stories. This ensemble includes their parents, Fenton and Laura Hardy; Aunt Gertrude; chums Tony Prito, Biff Hooper, Chet Morton, Jerry Gilroy, Perry Robinson, and Phil Cohen; friends and romantic interests Iola Morton and Callie Shaw; and members of the Bayport police department, specifically Chief Collig, Detective Smuff, and Constable Con Riley. Of these sixteen major characters, five are women.

Additionally, in each story Frank and Joe meet new victims of crime who need their help and pursue new criminals who are intent on causing mischief and harm to their own benefit. In the process of bringing the villains to justice, the brothers encounter and sometimes receive valuable assistance from other residents of Bayport; these minor characters generally appear briefly and in only one story. The table below lists these additional characters by book and demonstrates that the Hardy boys interact with very few women. Of the characters listed below, one hundred and five are male and ten are female, excluding those major characters who are victimized in a particular story.

Book	Criminal(s)	Victim(s)	Other Characters
<i>The Tower Treasure</i>	John "Red" Jackley	Chet Morton; Hurd Applegate; Adelia Applegate; Harold Morley; Henry Robinson	Four male farmers; Ike Harrity; Henry J. Brown; Lem Billers; Mrs. Robinson; Tessie Robinson; Paula Robinson; Male company manager; Kauffman; Rocco
<i>The House on the Cliff</i>	Ganny Snackley; Three smugglers; "Jones"/Yates; Redhead Blount; A man and a woman; Li Chang; Three crewmen	Felix Polucca; Fenton Hardy	Bill Kane; Mabel Kane; Sam Bates; Six police officers
<i>The Secret of the Old Mill</i>	Paul Blum; Markel; Uncle Dock; Kurt; Burgess; "Woman in black"; Man at the train; Two unidentified men	Frank Hardy; Joe Hardy; Male garage owner; Male steamboat ticket officer; Pollie Shaw	Mr. Moss; Male bank cashier; Mr. McBane; Carl Stummer; Lester; Male fisherman; Male rug buyer; Mr. Wilkins; Five police officers
<i>The Mystery of Cabin Island</i>	Hanleigh; Ike Nash; Tad Carson	Elroy Jefferson	John Sparewell; Amos Grice
<i>What Happened at Midnight</i>	Chris; Four men; New York man; Taffy Marr	Joe Hardy	Mr. Tibbett; Four Crabb Corner boys; Male farmer; Roadhouse man; Cousin Hattie; Male ticket agent; Elevator man; Keith and Hallett; Male waiter; Telephone girl; Mr. Blythe; Mr. Melvin; Male restaurant owner; Mr. Arnheim; Manson;

Book	Criminal(s)	Victim(s)	Other Characters
<i>What Happened at Midnight</i> (continued)			Male pilot
<i>While the Clock Ticked</i>	Indian Tom; Zeke Peters; Jensen; Amos Wandy	Raymond Dalrymple; Hurd Applegate	Ten police officers; Jason Purdy; Sid Balpert

Female characters do not restrict or distract the Hardy boys.

As demonstrated above, Hardy Boys mysteries contain relatively few female characters. Moreover, the amount of time Frank and Joe spend in environments considered to be the domains of women is limited. Out having adventures around Bayport, Barmet Bay, and the surrounding countryside, the Hardy brothers spend very little time at home, under the watchful eye of their mother. They also spend almost no time in school or at church, although passing references to both settings can be found in several of the six stories surveyed. In *House on the Cliff*, the Hardy boys go to church services, although beyond the statement of their attendance there is no description of what transpires. Each book except *What Happened at Midnight* and *While the Clock Ticked* mentions Frank and Joe going to school, studying, and taking exams, although these activities are passing references that hardly get in the way of their detective pursuits. Like readers of Hardy Boys mysteries, Frank and Joe cannot completely escape home, church, and school. While the minimal time they spend in these environments serves to keep the focus of each story almost wholly on the mystery at hand, Frank and Joe's freedom from such institutions keeps them largely beyond the influence of women,

who in the 1920s directed the raising of boys through their control within the home and at schools and churches.

The women with whom Frank and Joe do interact place few restrictions or demands on them or on any other male character in the Hardy Boys series. For example, readers learn in *The Tower Treasure* that Laura Hardy “seldom asked questions about her husband’s work, being of a gentle nature that instinctively shrank from any discussion of crime”; despite her reticence around her husband, however, “it frequently distressed her that Mr. Hardy’s occupation should be one that meant terms of imprisonment for those whom his cunning and cleverness had brought to justice.”¹⁰¹ While the narrator informs readers of Mrs. Hardy’s fear and trepidation, she rarely shares these feelings with her husband and sons. Even when she does express angst or concern about their safety, she does not prevent Fenton, Frank, or Joe from pursuing their investigations. In *The Secret of the Old Mill*, Frank and Joe are anxious to discover more information about the mill and its suspicious inhabitants. Replying to Frank’s suggestion that they return soon, Joe asks, “How can we get out to-night? Mother won’t let us go. She’ll be afraid we’ll get hurt.” Frank answers, “I hate to do anything underhand, but it’s our only chance [to investigate].”¹⁰² The boys are aware of their mother’s concern, but ultimately this realization does not stop them from deciding that duplicity is justified because they are helping others and from going to the mill when they want. In *The House on the Cliff*, the boys discuss their plans to revisit the mysterious home in front of their mother, who is predictably troubled:

“Let’s go up to the Polucca place and find out.”
 But Mrs. Hardy interposed. Her lips were firm.
 “Promise me you won’t go alone.”
 “Why not, mother? We can look after ourselves.”

“If anything has happened to your father, I don’t want you to run the same risk.”

“But we *must* go up there and look the place over again.”

“Get some of the boys to go with you.”

“I guess it would be safer,” agreed Joe. “We can round up a bunch of the fellows and go up there to to-morrow morning. We’ll search that place from top to bottom this time.”

Mrs. Hardy gave her consent to this plan.¹⁰³

Here, Frank and Joe must modify their original plan; however, again Mrs. Hardy does not prevent or forbid her sons from doing something risky and potentially dangerous.

Like Laura Hardy, chums Callie Shaw and Iola Morton never get in the way of Frank and Joe’s detective activities. Additionally, Callie and Iola are significant as the Hardy brothers’ romantic interests. Joe pays special attention to Iola, although he is hardly effusive in his praise:

Iola, a plump, dark girl, was a sister of Chet Morton and had achieved the honor of being about the only girl Joe Hardy had ever conceded to be anything but an unmitigated nuisance.

Joe, who was shy in the presence of girls, professed a lofty scorn for all members of the other sex, particularly those of high school age, but had once grudgingly admitted that Iola Morton was “all right, for a girl.” This, from him, was high praise.¹⁰⁴

Readers learn about Frank’s affection for Callie in *The Secret of the Old Mill*:

Callie, a dark-haired, brown-eyed miss with a quick, vivacious manner, was one of the prettiest girls attending Bayport high school. She was Frank’s favorite of all the girls in the city, and each morning he glanced over at her desk and never failed to receive a bright and fleeting smile that somehow made the dusty classroom seem a trifle less drab and monotonous, and when she was not there it always seemed that the day had gotten away to a bad start.¹⁰⁵

Frank’s fondness for Callie leaves him vulnerable to changes in her behavior, and one day when she does not “return Frank’s glance with her usual smile,” he is greatly worried by the apparent rejection. He first “rack[s] his brains trying to recollect what he could have done that might have offended” her, a thought “the average boy under such

circumstances” would have. Next, Frank wonders if Callie questions his manhood and finds it lacking: “perhaps she had heard of how he had been fooled by the stranger yesterday” in unknowingly accepting counterfeit money, and perhaps “she felt contempt for him because he had been so easily outwitted.” However, Frank dismisses this hypothesis just as quickly as he develops it, reasoning that “it was not like Callie to be angry about anything unless there was a good reason for her displeasure.”¹⁰⁶ Despite Frank’s recognition of Callie’s positive attributes and concern for her opinion of him, he, like Joe, seems to be derisively amused by other girls his age, as evidenced in *The Mystery of Cabin Island*:

“Drat that Chet,” muttered Frank, after the girls had gone on down the street. “Why can’t he keep quiet? He’ll be making me out a hero if he keeps up. I didn’t want anything said about that affair.”

“Well, only two girls know about it now,” returned Joe, comfortingly.

“Only two girls!” snorted Frank. “He might as well have published it in the newspaper.”

Nevertheless he was inwardly pleased by Callie’s evident concern over his narrow escape and by her admiration of the way he had acquitted himself in the emergency.¹⁰⁷

The Hardy boys’ interest in the girls marks them as heterosexual. However, Frank and Joe frame their feelings for Callie and Iola relative to their criticism and disapproval of girls in general. Iola and Callie may be “all right,” but the brothers see girls as only getting in the way of their important detective work. Indeed, Callie and Iola may have won favor with the Hardy boys partly because they don’t interfere or require special consideration and assistance. Certainly Frank and Joe never allow their interest in the girls to distract them from the mystery at hand. Moreover, both boys are generally awkward, embarrassed, and at a loss of how to act around Callie and Iola. As a result of their focus on being detectives and their unease around girls, Frank and Joe’s behavior

towards them is completely non-sexual and neither couple goes on dates or engages in any type of romantic or sexual activity.

Aunt Gertrude is a formidable female character.

Frank and Joe's Aunt Gertrude is the most formidable of the female characters in Hardy Boys mysteries. Her personality is summarized in *What Happened at Midnight*:

Aunt Gertrude was one of the pepperiest and most dictatorial old women who ever visited a quiet household. She was a rawboned female of sixty-five, tall and commanding, with a determined jaw, an acid tongue and an eye that could quell a traffic cop. She was as authoritative as a prison guard, bossed everything and everybody within reach, and had a lofty contempt for men in general and boys in particular.¹⁰⁸

While she appears to be unmarried and childless, little else about Aunt Gertrude's life is revealed. Although far from being a sexy, young New Woman of the 1920s, she does seem to have feminist tendencies. When Frank and Joe unearth clues in *While the Clock Ticked*, Aunt Gertrude wants to receive credit for assisting them, declaring: "It's always the way. . .A woman never gets any credit for brains. I've helped you boys on two or three mysteries already, but do I get any credit? I do not."¹⁰⁹ Aunt Gertrude's beliefs in the abilities of women are matched by her contempt for men, as it is noted that "too many of [her] contacts with young men and boys had been disagreeable, and she had predicted hanging for at least three-quarters of the younger generation."¹¹⁰

Presented to readers in this way, Aunt Gertrude becomes a caricature, someone not to be taken entirely seriously. She does often provide information that proves instrumental in leading her nephews to new clues, but her sense of importance is

presented as laughably exaggerated when the story's narrator makes it clear that Frank and Joe deserve the credit for piecing together evidence, facing dangerous circumstances, and bringing criminals to justice. For example, in *What Happened at Midnight*, Aunt Gertrude is highly anxious about Joe's mysterious disappearance. However, "in spite of all her bluster and assurance, Aunt Gertrude had remarkably few suggestions to offer. Everything she mentioned had already been done. Grudgingly, she was obliged to admit that Frank had acquitted himself very well in his efforts to locate Joe."¹¹ When Frank does bring Joe home safely, Aunt Gertrude attempts to claim recognition for her contribution because the fair-haired man who rudely knocked into her at the train station turns out to be involved in her nephew's kidnapping:

"I knew it!" she exclaimed emphatically. "The fair-haired man, eh? I knew it all along. Didn't I tell you he looked like just the sort of fellow who might have kidnapped Joe? Didn't I tell you?"...

"If I hadn't come here for this visit, Joe would never have been found," declared Aunt Gertrude complacently. "I told you it wouldn't take me long, once I put on my thinking-cap. And if I had been with you at the cave, those kidnappers wouldn't have gotten off so lightly, either. That's just like a boy. Away you go, after I practically told you where to find him, and you'd never think of asking me to go along with you. Oh no!"¹²

Here, the significance of Aunt Gertrude's story about the incident at the train station, which did provide Frank with valuable information, is diminished as she uses hindsight to overstate her ability to connect clues and rewrite her role in solving the mystery.

Clearly, Aunt Gertrude is a very different woman from the relaxed and accommodating Laura Hardy. Mrs. Hardy places almost no demands on her sons regarding their behavior at home; in contrast, Aunt Gertrude requires behavior in which there is no room for the messiness that sometimes results from Frank and Joe's detective activities. For example, in *While the Clock Ticked*, the Hardy brothers arrive home late

for lunch after visiting Mr. Dalrymple to learn more about his troubling situation. Aunt Gertrude is less than pleased with this behavior, and is not restrained in giving Frank and Joe her opinion:

“Aren’t we going to get any lunch?” asked Frank.

“Luncheon!” shrieked their aunt. “You come in here at this hour of the afternoon and have the nerve – the supreme, unadulterated nerve – to ask me for luncheon! Do you think this is a restaurant? You’ll wait for dinner, so you will, and be very grateful to get *that*.”

The boys could not resist the temptation to tease their aunt.

“What if we’re hungry?” asked Joe.

“I don’t care if you’re starving to death, you’ll get no lunch here, so make up your minds to that. Why on earth you boys can’t learn to come home at a decent, respectable hour and eat your regular meals like decent, respectable people.”¹¹³

Aunt Gertrude is similarly distressed and indignant when her nephews return home late one night, their clothes torn and dirty. “I do my best,” she wailed. “I do my level best to keep you two looking like gentlemen, and this is the result. It’s no use. Why you haven’t driven your poor mother to her grave with worry is more than I can understand. Where *have* you been this night? And what *have* you been doing? Answer me this instant.”¹¹⁴ Getting ready for bed after this discussion, Frank and Joe comment on their aunt’s lecture, stating “When it comes to bawling a fellow out, Aunt Gertrude is just about the most thorough and painstaking person that ever lived. Boy, how she did sail into us!”¹¹⁵ Aunt Gertrude exhibits behavior unimaginable to Laura Hardy, who readers never see reprimanding Frank and Joe. Moreover, unlike Aunt Gertrude, readers know that Frank and Joe are late and disheveled because they had been captured by dangerous river thieves. In the context of Frank and Joe facing threats in the course of their important work solving mysteries and helping others, Aunt Gertrude’s concern for absolute promptness and tidiness seem inconsequential and absurd.

In response to Aunt Gertrude's imposing and domineering personality, the usually confident and capable Hardy boys become meek and submissive, traits they do not exhibit at any other time in the stories. As stated in *What Happened at Midnight*, "when [Aunt Gertrude] visited the Hardy home, her two nephews suddenly became paragons of meekness and good behavior, for woe betide the luckless lad who fell into her bad graces!"¹¹⁶ Driving his aunt home from the train station, Frank is subjected to her heated monologue. "To all this tirade Frank merely replied, 'Yes, Aunt Gertrude,' or 'You're quite right, Aunt Gertrude,' or 'I'll try to do better, Aunt Gertrude,' very meekly, and kept his eyes glued on the road while he tried to keep his mind on his driving."¹¹⁷ Additionally, Aunt Gertrude's behavior towards Frank and Joe reflects that she "could never reconcile herself to the idea that the boys were growing up and persisted in treating them as though they were still infants, or, as Joe expressed it, 'as if we were half-witted.'"¹¹⁸ Such opinions of her nephews seem misplaced given their accomplishments as detectives and their demonstrated ability to analyze evidence and take care of themselves.

Despite Aunt Gertrude's often off-putting personality and confrontational relationship with her nephews, she is ultimately presented as one of Frank and Joe's many friends and supporters. As stated in *What Happened at Midnight*,

Underneath this rough and formidable exterior was a very kindly heart, and the boys had long since learned that Aunt Gertrude's bark was worse than her bite. Strangers either fled from the bossy old lady in terror or hastened to do her bidding in fear and trembling, but the Hardy boys knew by now that her constant stream of violent chatter was not quite as terrible as it seemed.¹¹⁹

Moreover, while the Hardy brothers receive praise and admiration from their parents, friends, and residents of Bayport, Aunt Gertrude works to ensure that her nephews

remain appropriately humble about their accomplishments. “Aunt Gertrude can knock the conceit out of us when we think we’ve done something big,” the boys observe.¹²⁰ In another conversation between them, Joe comments, “We’ll show Aunt Gertrude that we’re not quite as dumb as she thinks we are.” Frank disagrees with this assessment, stating, “Oh, she doesn’t think we’re dumb. It’s just her way. She thinks it’s her duty to take the wind out of our sails every once in a while in case we get too conceited.”¹²¹ Finally, as is the case with other female characters in Hardy Boys mysteries, Frank and Joe are ultimately able to escape even Aunt Gertrude’s demands and lectures. In *While the Clock Ticked*, the boys are quick to leave their house in the morning: “immediately after breakfast, which was hastily consumed to the accompaniment of a running fire of criticism from Aunt Gertrude, the boys made their escape from the house and went downtown to Bayport Police Station.”¹²²

Criminals in each story model inappropriate masculine behavior.

The villains of each story are the means by which the disreputable and seedy underworld is brought into contact with the middle-class lifestyle of Frank, Joe, and their associates. In addition to their illegal and harmful actions, these men are characterized as dangerous because they lack proper restraint; exhibit reckless, wild, unpredictable, and violent behavior; and have little respect for the safety of others. For example, the fair-haired criminal in *What Happened at Midnight* is described as a “brute” capable of “brutish” behavior.¹²³ Criminals in other stories are described as dangerously desperate, as when Laura Hardy responds to her husband’s advice not to worry, “But I *do* worry.

They're desperate men. They'll stop at nothing."¹²⁴ Likewise, Frank and Joe are fearful about their fate after they have been captured by river thieves in *While the Clock Ticked*:

“Couldn't leave them behind. We'd have been caught. Throw 'em overboard now if you like, for all I care,” [says one of the thieves]

The Hardy boys felt a chill of horror at these words. They knew they had fallen into the hands of desperate men who would not hesitate to get rid of them, if it would aid their flight.¹²⁵

These criminals are capable of inflicting extreme violence.

Moreover, even when they are not protecting themselves from capture and punishment, criminals in Hardy Boys mysteries behave aggressively towards those around them; those who unknowingly and accidentally get in their way in the course of going about their business may face aggression from these rude and unmannered men. No one in Bayport is safe, as Aunt Gertrude experiences in *What Happened at Midnight*:

And then, just as she was about to step onto the train –

“What should happen but a big fair-haired man stepped right in front of me to speak to two other men who were standing on the coach steps. They shouldn't have been there in the first place. But the big lummoxes stood blocking up the steps and I was just going to give them a piece of my mind, I can tell you, when this clumsy ox of a fair-haired man pushed me aside, as calm as you please, and started talking to his friends. . . Why, the man almost knocked me down. I might have fallen over and broken my arm. But that isn't all. I said to him: ‘Who do you think you're pushing around?’ just like any other lady would have said, and what do you think he answered?”

“Didn't he apologize?”

“Apologize! I should say not.”¹²⁶

Significantly, criminals do not even have regard for the safety of women, and they have no problem being disrespectful, boorish, and forceful towards them.

Finally, criminals' reckless behavior is often also exhibited through their wild and irresponsible misuse of new technology. In *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, Frank, Joe, and their chums are startled during an excursion into Barmet Bay in their ice boats:

“Look at that ice-boat!” [Chet] exclaimed. “Must be a crazy man steering it.”

Away in the distance they could see a large craft, twisting and turning in an erratic fashion. It would speed in a straight course for a hundred yards or so, then it would commence to zigzag crazily, at times veering over until the sail was almost level with the ice.

“He’ll break his mast or his rudder,” opined Frank. “Then he won’t be smart, when he finds himself stranded about three miles from town. A chap who will handle a boat like that doesn’t deserve to have one.”

However, the other craft seemed to be standing up under the senseless strain being imposed on it. It was a larger boat than that of the Hardy boys, and it was able to withstand mishandling that would have wrecked a smaller craft.¹²⁷

Frank and Joe soon determine who the “crazy man” at the helm of the ice boat is:

Frank mentally checked over the various ice-boats he had seen on the bay and thought he recognized the approaching boat as belonging to Tad Carson and Ike Nash, two young men of unsavory repute in the city. They were loud-mouthed, insolent fellows who had never been known to do a day’s work, and it was a mystery how they had managed to raise sufficient money to buy the ice-boat in which they were now amusing themselves.¹²⁸

Similarly, in *The Tower Treasure*, Frank and Joe are nearly hit by an out of control driver. “What idiot is driving like that on this kind of road?” Frank exclaims after the near miss. “He’ll run us down! The idiot!” replies Joe.¹²⁹ Following this incident, the reckless driver also runs over Callie Shaw’s parcel, again indicating a disregard for the safety of women. These examples provide lessons about the appropriate acquisition and consumption of modern technologies such as cars and boats. Far from being items that anyone can own, luxurious commodities should only be purchased by those have proved their worthiness through hard work. Among those who have honestly earned the required money, consumption ought to remain a privilege enjoyed only by those who demonstrate responsible, self-controlled, and disciplined behavior.

Fenton Hardy models appropriate masculine behavior for his sons.

In many of six of the books surveyed, Fenton Hardy is largely absent from much of the story. In *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, Frank and Joe spend the winter holidays away from their parents on Cabin Island, while in *While the Clock Ticked* Mr. and Mrs. Hardy are camping in Maine and return to Bayport only after their sons have solved the mystery. Finally, in *The Tower Treasure*, *The House on the Cliff*, and *What Happened at Midnight*, Fenton leaves Bayport to investigate cases on which he is working. However, despite these lengthy separations from his sons, Fenton remains an involved and supportive father. In *The House on the Cliff*, it is noted that Fenton Hardy “was never too busy to talk to his sons,” a sentiment echoed in *The Tower Treasure*: “Although he was a busy man, Mr. Hardy was not the type of father who maintains an air of aloofness from his family, the result being that he was on as good terms with his boys as though he was an older brother.”¹³⁰

Many of the conversations between Fenton Hardy and his sons focus on deciphering clues and investigating cases; however, Fenton also encourages Frank and Joe’s involvement in activities that help cultivate a masculine personality. For example, in *The House on the Cliff*, Frank and Joe return home from a boating expedition with their friends:

Frank thereupon told their father about the two motorboats in Barmet Bay, about the chase and the resulting explosion. He modestly underestimated their own part in the rescue of the victim of the wreck, but Fenton Hardy nodded his head in satisfaction as the story went on.

“Good work! Good work!” he muttered. “You saved the fellow’s life anyway.”¹³¹

While not indifferent to his sons' safety, Fenton does not express any dismay or concern about the possible risks they faced during the chase and explosion; moreover, far from advocating that they avoid such situations in the future, Fenton's supportive response encourages Frank and Joe to continue behaving bravely and selflessly. Fenton is similarly supportive of Frank and Joe's interests in outdoor and physical activities, as demonstrated in *The Mystery of Cabin Island* when the boys return from Barmet Bay and report to their father they have been out in the ice boat. "Good, healthy sport," replies Fenton.¹³²

Furthermore, Fenton Hardy demonstrates that he takes his responsibilities towards his wife and children seriously. As discussed above, female characters place almost no limits on the behaviors of men in Hardy Boys mysteries; however, while pursuing his detective work unhindered, Fenton Hardy does not disregard the physical safety and emotional well-being of his family. Upon receiving a vague and mysterious note from Mr. Hardy, who departed Bayport to investigate a case in *The House on the Cliff*, Laura Hardy comments upon her husband's usual behavior whenever traveling out of town:

Your father has an arrangement with me that he would always put a secret sign beneath his signature any time he had occasion to write to me like this. He was always afraid of people forging his name to letters and notes like this and perhaps getting papers or information that they shouldn't. So we arranged this sign that he would always put beneath his name.¹³³

The absence of the secret sign worries Laura, Frank, and Joe. Several days later, Fenton is still missing without a word, a highly unusual circumstance:

There had been no word from him. Never, in all his years of detective work, had he vanished from home so completely and for such a length of time. He was an intensely considerate man and his first thought was always for his wife and boys. Occasionally it was necessary for him to leave home suddenly on trips that would keep him away for some length of time, sometimes it seemed wiser to keep the knowledge of his whereabouts to himself. But he always managed to communicate with Mrs. Hardy to assure her of his safety.¹³⁴

Fenton's considerate attention to informing his wife of his safety does not prevent him from traveling out of town to pursue evidence and solve cases. Rather, he can still maintain his detective practice while remaining committed to fulfilling his duties towards his wife and sons. Simultaneously, the arrangement of the secret sign indicates the seriousness with which Fenton considers his obligations to his work, the victims he is trying to help, and perhaps Bayport's citizens more broadly, as the system protects information from criminals who might use it for corrupt, unscrupulous, and harmful purposes. Significantly, while these and other interactions between Fenton and Laura Hardy can be described as considerate, thoughtful, and even loving, they are also lacking in public sexual expression.

Finally, Fenton proves himself to be an honorable man committed to justice and honesty, even when that dedication comes at a personal cost. In *The House on the Cliff*, Frank and Joe discover that their father has been captured by Ganny Snackley and his gang of drug smugglers. Hiding in a secret room, they secretly observe Snackley threatening their father with starvation and dehydration unless he signs a note swearing not to turn over the evidence he has gathered against them to federal agents. In the face of personal discomfort, Fenton Hardy remains adamant:

“What is to prevent me from signing that paper and then going back on my word?” asked Fenton Hardy curiously.

“We know you too well, Hardy. We know that if you signed that promise you would keep it.”

“Exactly. And that is why I won't sign it. I wouldn't be doing my duty if I agreed to any scheme that would protect you.”¹³⁵

In response, Snackley raises the stakes in hopes of changing Mr. Hardy's mind:

“How about your family? Are you doing your duty to them by being so obstinate?”

There was silence for awhile. Then Fenton Hardy answered slowly:

“They would rather know that I died doing my duty than have me come back to them as a protector of smugglers and criminals.”

“You have a very high sense of duty indeed,” sneered Snackley. “But perhaps you’ll think better of it after awhile.”¹³⁶

For Snackley, there exists a limit to everyone’s personal sense of duty and honesty, which can be compromised and sacrificed when the costs become too uncomfortable. By comparison, Fenton demonstrates to his sons that moral behavior and duty ought not to be abandoned when personally convenient, especially when justice is at stake.

The Hardy boys are regular boys who are members of an active and capable peer group.

Throughout the six mysteries surveyed, Frank and Joe Hardy are presented as real boys. In *The House on the Cliff*, the brothers are described as “typical, healthy American lads of high school age.”¹³⁷ Similarly, in *The Secret of the Old Mill*, the boys are introduced as “healthy, normal American boys of high school age.”¹³⁸ The adjectives used in these descriptions are significant as indicators that these characters exhibit what are considered to be model characteristics and behaviors that other boys do possess and should emulate.

Moreover, Frank and Joe spend far more time within the culture of their peers than they do among their parents, particularly their mother. Even while investigating a mystery by themselves, as brothers Frank and Joe still form a small peer group. Within this group, the brothers are reliant upon themselves and each other. As stated in *What Happened at Midnight*, “much of the success that had attended the Hardy boys in solving the mysteries they encountered had been due to their ability to make instant decisions and to act swiftly.”¹³⁹ Faced with dangerous situations in which each moment matters, Frank

and Joe must make choices without waiting to consult with others. The boys demonstrate this tough decisiveness and independence even in situations where imminent danger does not exist. For example, in *What Happened at Midnight*, Frank and Joe follow a suspect to New York City. After their money is stolen, they must get creative in order to obtain food, lodging, and means of getting home. They decide against calling their mother for help, and Laura Hardy is dismayed when her sons finally return:

“You foolish lads!” sighed Mrs. Hardy. “All you had to do was send me a collect telegram and I would have sent the money to you by wire.”

“We didn’t like to do that,” said Frank. “We got ourselves into the fix, so it was up to us to get ourselves out of it.”¹⁴⁰

Thus, even when assistance is readily available and the Hardy boys, not facing a crisis or immediately threatening situation, have time to evaluate their options, they prefer to rely on their own problem-solving skills.

Frequently in all six books, Frank and Joe’s peer group is much larger than just the two of them, including friends Tony Prito, Biff Hooper, Chet Morton, Jerry Gilroy, Perry Robinson, and Phil Cohen. Just as Frank and Joe are fiercely independent, so too does their group of friends prefer to rely on their own capabilities. This is most clearly visible in *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, where most of the story takes place in an isolated environment removed from Bayport:

Cabin Island, in Cabin Cove, was a lonely spot, even more desolate now that the bay was locked in ice. It was seldom visited, even in the summer months, because it was an inhospitable place, with high cliffs rising almost directly from the water, with only a few landing places that were difficult of access. . .The cabin was deserted now, and to the boys’ knowledge no one had lived there for the past five years, either in summer or winter.¹⁴¹

The boys receive permission from Elroy Jefferson to spend their winter holiday at his cabin; they are the only people on the island, and their isolation is heightened by rough terrain and severe winter storms.

Cabin Island was located in a lonely cove, and, as it was some distance away from Bayport, few ice-boats ever ventured so far down the bay. However, this isolation did not mar the holiday. On the contrary, as Joe expressed it, they could easily imagine that they were having their outing in the remote Canadian wilderness, instead of but a few miles from their own homes. . . .To get down to the ice-boats they had to break trail in real Northern fashion.¹⁴²

Far from being troubled by their remoteness or concerned that circumstances might arise that they will not be able to handle, the friends are delighted to be on their own.

While this group of friends is often preoccupied with assisting the Hardy brothers with another mystery and helping each other out of treacherous situations, the chums still have time for fun and jokes. For example, when the new automat opens in Bayport, the boys head over to see it: “Frank and Joe Hardy, with Biff Hooper, Jerry Gilroy, Tony Prito and Perry Robinson made up the delegation. Laughing and jostling, with the usual horseplay common to lads of their age, they went to the automat and watched with interest as Chet demonstrated the operation of the machines.”¹⁴³ In *The Secret of the Old Mill*, the Hardy boys and their friends spend a weekend afternoon in the countryside outside of Bayport. They were “decorous enough while they were in the city limits, but once they struck the dusty country roads their natural activity asserted itself and they wrestled and tripped one another, ran impromptu races, picked berries by the roadside and laughed and shouted without a care in the world.”¹⁴⁴ By being loud, boisterous, and lively, the boys are demonstrating what is considered to be boys’ “natural” inclination, which manners dictate should be tamed and restricted in the city environment. The hijinks continue when Chet ties the other boys’ clothes in knots while they’re finishing a

swim in the river; the chums repay his trickery by throwing his socks in a tree, tossing his boots into a field, and tying his necktie into knots.¹⁴⁵ Such practical jokes among the friends are good-natured and playful rather than mean-spirited or dangerous.

All of the boys in Frank and Joe's group of friends are skillful with new transportation technologies, whether they are motorcycles, cars, or boats. The Hardy brothers' exceptional abilities as drivers are noted in each story. For example, hastily pursuing kidnappers in *The House on the Cliff*, "the motorcycles roared along at top speed. Both the Hardy boys were skilful drivers."¹⁴⁶ Rather than being reckless with their motorcycles and putting others at risk, Frank and Joe remain disciplined and in control. Friend Tony Prito "was of a mechanical turn of mind and could never see an engine of any kind without investigating its most intricate machinery."¹⁴⁷ Like Frank and Joe, Tony can also think quickly when at the helm of a vehicle. Leading the boys along the cliffs in Barmet Bay, "there were currents. . .that demanded skilful navigation, but Tony brought the *Napoli* through them easily." With that threat past them, the boys find themselves in a maze of jagged rocks; "only Tony's quick eye" saved them from running aground on the piercing boulders and his "steermanship was marvelous."¹⁴⁸ Even Chet Morton demonstrates expertise with technology. In *What Happened at Midnight*, readers learn that he "was a skillful driver, and as he let the roadster out to the limit, he saw that he was gradually overtaking the big touring car ahead."¹⁴⁹ More interested in food and jokes than mysteries and often fearful in frightening situations, Chet is seen as perhaps the least masculine of Frank and Joe's friends. However, when masculinity is measured as competency with technology, Chet passes the test.

Additionally, Frank, Joe, and their friends are physically active and skillful at a variety of outdoor activities. For example, while spending their vacation at Cabin Island, the boys fill their days with boating, skiing, fishing, skating, and exploring the island on snowshoes when they are not looking for clues. These boys have endless stamina and are able to go from one activity to the next for days on end without expressing exhaustion or fatigue. For example, Frank and Joe rescue a drowning man in *The House on the Cliff*. After struggling to get the man into their boat, “the boys rowed until the muscles of their arms were aching, but at last they drew near the shore.” Then, “between them, they carried the unconscious man up the rocky shore toward the farmhouse. . . although their burden was heavy they managed to carry the still figure, limp and motionless, across the field.”¹⁵⁰ Even when the boys cannot exercise outside, they find ways to remain active indoors, as evidenced in *The Secret of the Old Mill*:

Phil and Tony were late [for the hike], and the other boys put in the time by exercising in the Hardy boys’ well equipped gymnasium, to which purpose the barn had been converted. Biff Hooper practised [sic] left hooks and uppercuts with desperate intensity and battered the punching bag until it hummed; Chet almost broke his neck attempting some complicated maneuvers on the parallel bars that were meant as an imitation of a circus bareback rider; Jerry contemplated his lunch and wondered if it were too soon after breakfast for a piece of pie.¹⁵¹

The boys in the Hardy brothers’ group of friends share characteristics of being physically active and capable of mastering a variety of activities and situations. Participation in the group encourages and pushes each boy to remain as physically strong and tough as possible.

Finally, Frank, Joe, and their chums are always prepared to defend themselves and each other in a fight. While the Hardy boys are overpowered and captured by criminals in each story, their ability to hold their own, is alluded to in all six of the

mysteries surveyed. For example, when Joe is kidnapped in *What Happened at Midnight*, Frank tries to determine who could have taken him. “Joe’s a fighter,” Frank points out. “It would take at least three or four of those chaps, or a grown man, to handle him.”¹⁵² Frank’s own strength is suggested when he declares “something will happen if I can get hold of the birds who have Joe!” with “a grim look about his mouth that boded no good for his enemies.”¹⁵³ After finding their father in a secret room in *The House on the Cliff*, the brothers face imminent discovery by the smugglers who kidnapped him. Joe remarks that “if those fellows come back let’s fight for it.” Frank readily agrees, stating “you bet we’ll fight” in “a voice that meant a great deal.”¹⁵⁴

Moreover, the Hardy brothers’ ability to defend themselves is strengthened by help from their friends. Upon setting out to locate their father in *The House on the Cliff*, the boys are worried about Fenton Hardy; however, Frank and Joe “had every confidence in their companions. Chet and Biff, they knew, would not be as easily frightened on this occasion, and as for Phil and Tony, they were noted at school for their fearless, at times even reckless, dispositions.”¹⁵⁵ Unlike the uncontrolled behavior of criminals, explored above, the reckless dispositions of the Hardy boys’ chums never endanger others; rather, the friends express unruliness through practical jokes on each other and scraps with other boys from school. They also utilize their fearlessness when helping Frank and Joe by accompanying them into dangerous situations and when defending each other from antagonistic opponents. In several instances, Frank, Joe, and their chums find themselves in a showdown when they have been threatened or insulted. For example, in *What Happened at Midnight*, Joe accidentally bumps into a man at the automat, prompting him to become angry:

“Sorry,” laughed Joe, not realizing that the fellow would regard the matter as anything more than an accident.

The surly man grabbed Joe by the collar.

“What do you mean?” he growled. “What’s the idea of bumping into me like that?”

Joe tried to wriggle free but he could not break the fellow’s grasp.

“I didn’t mean to bump into you. Let go of my collar!”

“I’ve a good mind to kick you out into the street. Fine state of affairs when a man can’t come into an automat without being trampled on by a pack of rough-necks. You kids think you own the earth.” The man shook Joe violently.

The other boys looked serious. This was going too far.

Frank Hardy stepped forward.

“It was an accident,” he said quietly. “He has apologized. I’d advise you to let him go.”

The blond man sneered.

“You *advise* me, eh? Any more advice from you and I’ll give you the thrashing you deserve.”

Jerry Gilroy, Chet Morton, Tony Prito and Perry Robinson promptly stepped forward.

“Oh, you will, will you?” they chorused.

Their meaning was plain. If the blond man tried to thrash Frank, he would have to deal with the others as well. Even the farm boys were beginning to side with the High School lads. They all sensed that the blond man was an intruder.¹⁵⁶

Unfortunately, Joe knocks into the same man a short time later in front of the jewelry store, leading to a further altercation:

The big man’s face was dark with rage. He plunged after Joe but could not catch him.

“I’ll teach you!” he snarled. He swung a vicious blow at the boy but Joe was too quick for him again. However, Joe Hardy was not disposed to run away from anyone and he astonished the stranger by standing up to him.

“If it’s a fight you’re looking for,” flared Joe, now thoroughly angry, “you’re certainly going to have it.”

He raised his fists, fully prepared to enter into combat with the big man, when Frank seized his arm.

“Let me handle this!” Frank turned to the angry stranger. “Just lay a finger on him,” he invited, “just touch him and see what will happen.”

The big man hesitated. He realized that he was on a public street and that already the little disturbance was attracting attention.

“Looking for trouble?” asked Frank coolly.

The man stepped back. Then he turned and strode toward the car. “Clumsy brat!” he flung back over his shoulder.

He scrambled into the car, slammed the door viciously, and drove off down the street.

“Nice, gentle sort of fellow, isn’t he?” said Joe, slowly.¹⁵⁷

Despite facing a much larger opponent, Joe does not hesitate to defend himself from the stranger’s attack and is prepared to escalate the confrontation into “combat.” Joe’s dexterous dodging of thrown punches signals to readers that he is a capable fighter, and it might be argued that Joe’s strong demonstration of skill and audacity at the onset helps convince his adversary that he would face a challenging opponent in Joe, even though he is only a boy, and that he should therefore reconsider fighting him. While Joe seems prepared to brawl with the man by himself, Frank and all of the brothers’ friends are ready to help defend him, and only the stranger’s reluctance to face a large group of boys and fear of causing a scene in the street prevents hostility from turning to violence.

Frank and Joe Hardy work hard and behave with integrity, discipline, and etiquette.

While the Hardy boys can be boisterous, playful, and forceful when necessary, those behaviors are also matched by honorable conduct. For example, Frank and Joe behave respectfully towards everyone around them. For example, in *While the Clock Ticked* the brothers are pressured from their friends to reveal information about their current mystery. Despite the trust they place in their chums, who have been invaluable in solving previous cases, the Frank and Joe “refused to admit anything” because “they were under promise of secrecy to Mr. Dalrymple. ‘Just a matter of business,’ they explained.”¹⁵⁸ For the Hardy brothers, honoring their promise and respecting Mr. Dalrymple’s desire for privacy should not be compromised for the sake of gossip, even among trusted friends. Frank and Joe similarly hold their tongue when not doing so

would be considered impolite. When Joe returns safely home and tells the story of his kidnapping in *What Happened at Midnight*, Aunt Gertrude tries to claim credit for figuring out who was responsible:

“I knew it!” she exclaimed emphatically. “The fair-haired man, eh? I knew it all along. Didn’t I tell you he looked like just the sort of fellow who might have kidnapped Joe? Didn’t I tell you?”

Frank remembered nothing of the kind, but he was too polite to say so.¹⁵⁹

Frank and Joe extend similar courtesy even to strangers. Hitchhiking their way back to Bayport from New York City, the brothers earn their lunch by washing dishes at a roadside restaurant. Responding to comments made by the portly restaurant owner about his recently declining appetite, “the Hardy boys felt that if their new friend ever suffered a return to his old appetite he would eat up all the profits of his lunch counter, but they were too polite to say so.”¹⁶⁰ Finally, sometimes Frank and Joe even demonstrate respect for the very criminals who have threatened them and their clients with harm. In *While the Clock Ticked*, the Hardy boys discover that Amos Wandy is responsible for the threatening letters Raymond Dalrymple has been receiving. Even though Wandy comes close to killing Frank and Joe in the process of achieving his revenge, the boys and Dalrymple sympathize with and forgive his actions. “Take good care of poor Wandy,” Dalrymple instructs the authorities taking him into custody.¹⁶¹ Joe is similarly kind after hearing Amos’s story. “Poor old chap,” he remarks with compassion and forgiveness.¹⁶²

Furthermore, while the Hardy boys receive sizeable financial rewards and much praise from their parents, friends, and residents of Bayport, they demonstrate the responsible and appropriate way of handling both. At the end of some of the stories, Frank and Joe use some of their reward money to treat their friends, who have provided invaluable assistance in solving the mystery. Rather than only using the money to

purchase things for themselves, the Hardy brothers demonstrate generosity towards others. The books also hint that the boys deposit the remainder of the money in the bank. After saving enough funds, they decide to spend their money on new transportation technology such as motorcycles, a car, and a motorboat.¹⁶³ Frank and Joe do not conspicuously consume the luxuries that are available in the city, nor do they expect others to provide money for the things they want. Rather, the Hardy brothers earn their money by working hard as detectives; through careful and disciplined management of their money, they then save enough to purchase selected items that, while providing personal fun and entertainment, facilitate the Hardy boys' ability to continue solving mysteries and helping others. Moreover, despite accumulating reward money, Frank and Joe do not consume commodities when thriftiness, self-reliance, and their own hard work would suffice. For example, the ice boat that takes the boys and their chums to Cabin Island was "homemade," a "craft that represented several weeks' hard work." Despite being homemade, "the ice-boat was staunch and stoutly built and as it sped over the gleaming surface the boys were justifiably proud of their handiwork"¹⁶⁴ Frank and Joe likewise handle praise in a responsible and reserved manner. Far from boasting, focusing on their own successes, or becoming arrogant, the Hardy brothers are always self-effacing about their accomplishments. As stated in *The Tower Treasure*, "Frank and Joe did not let the adulation turn their heads."¹⁶⁵ For example, while spending time on Cabin Island, Frank, Joe, and their friends are enlisted by a local grocer to hunt foxes that have been attacking his chickens. The boys return victorious, but Frank is quick to downplay their hunting skills. "We were just lucky enough to catch them at home," he explains.¹⁶⁶ Similarly Frank underscores the way in which his expert handling of the ice boat

prevented an accident. “You’re too modest,” responds Callie quickly. “[Chet] told us all about it. I think you deserve a lot of credit, Frank.”¹⁶⁷ While the Hardy boys are always successful in their efforts to solve a mystery, they spend less time savoring their victories and publicizing their heroics and more time focusing on the next challenges and hard work they will face.

Finally, while, as demonstrated above, the Hardy boys are often willing and able to stand up for themselves in a fight, they also turn the other cheek to antagonism when appropriate. For example, in *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, Frank and Joe are angry when Ike Nash and Tad Carson almost crash into their ice boat. A fight almost ensues until Frank’s cooler head prevails. “Let’s go,” he advises “They’re in a bad humor. It wasn’t our fault. I think we were lucky to escape so easily. If our boat had been smashed they would have just laughed at us.”¹⁶⁸ Frank’s encouragement to leave the scene is not an admission of wrongdoing; rather, he is content knowing that his friends are blameless without making Ike and Tad admit to it as well. Additionally, while New York City investigating Joe’s kidnapping, the brothers are eating lunch in a restaurant when a drunk man demands that they move from his usual table. Rather than responding with angry words and fists, Frank decides that “nothing would be gained by getting into an argument with the fat man, so he returned quietly to his meal. The boys did not look up.”¹⁶⁹ When the confrontation continues to escalate, Frank chooses to leave the restaurant. “It doesn’t matter,” he says to the waiter. “We’re not afraid of this fellow, but we’ll leave, just to save trouble. Come on, Joe.”¹⁷⁰ These actions do not suggest that the Hardy boys cannot defend themselves; rather, they indicate the brothers’ realization that some conflicts are best resolved by politely walking away.

Conclusion and Further Research

In their study of Hardy Boys mysteries, scholars Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman argue that Frank and Joe “act out their version of masculinity in a timeless, endless loop of thrilling excitements.”¹⁷¹ However, when early volumes from the series are examined within the context of early twentieth-century America, they are seen to reflect and address concerns about men, boys, and masculinity specific to that time period and society.

First, Hardy Boys mysteries react to concerns about the encroachment of women into public spheres formerly dominated by men and the feminization of boys at the hands of women at home, school, and church. The setting of the stories is a fantasy environment where women are few in number and male characters are largely at liberty to decide their actions without interference or limitation.

Second, Hardy Boys stories describe Frank and Joe as regular, real, normal, and typical. As discussed above, this language was utilized on book jacket covers to appeal to potential readers, enticing them to purchase additional volumes in the series by suggesting that they were similar to Frank and Joe Hardy. More significantly, however, these words reflect the language being used by experts in child psychology during the 1920s, shorthand labels for indicating which boys exhibited healthy masculine traits and therefore “stood a good chance of developing into ‘normal’ men.”¹⁷² Frank and Joe reflect all of the hallmarks of real boys: they are not dependent on their mother for help;

they are heterosexual; they are members of a peer group, whether it is just the two brothers or their larger group of chums; they can be boisterous and playful, participating in the practical jokes and hi-jinks; they are physically strong and skillful in a variety of outdoor activities and sports; and they are able to defend themselves and hold their own in a fight. In the 1920s, these behaviors and traits were seen as natural to boys and characteristics of healthy male children; as real boys, the Hardy boys pass the tests of boyhood masculinity.

Third, while Hardy Boys mysteries reflect and support the standards of normal boyhood that were valued and popular in the 1920s, in other ways the stories endorse an older model of Victorian masculinity that was falling out of favor and reject the newer standards that were replacing them. As detective stories in which the main characters are primarily concerned with solving mysteries and bringing criminals to justice, the books introduce readers to elements of the underworld. The villains in each story exhibit masculine traits that were being embraced in middle-class America at the time; however, in the world of the Hardy boys, such aggressive, violent, and unpredictable behavior is presented as harmful and dangerous, if not illegal, immoral, and punishable. While underworld primitivism gained middle-class respectability as its characteristics defined the new models of the male flapper and tramp Bohemian, it is soundly rejected as appropriate masculinity in the Hardy Boys series.

Frank and Joe, as well as their father and friends, further demonstrate the unsuitability of underworld primitivism and its manifestations in the male flapper and tramp Bohemian by embracing Victorian models of masculinity. Many of the adjectives used to characterize this standard describe the behavior and personality of the Hardy

brothers, Fenton Hardy, and their friends: disciplined, hard working, autonomous and self-reliant, generous, sympathetic, honorable, and decisive. These men always act with integrity, manners, and a strong sense of duty and responsibility toward others. At the end of each story, this model of masculinity is rewarded with success and achievement as well as extensive praise and admiration from residents of Bayport.

Moreover, Frank and Joe firmly reject the idea, promoted in the 1920s through the models of the male flapper and tramp Bohemian, that being sexually eager, skilled, and experienced with women is an important component of masculinity. The lack of sexual relationships between men and women certainly reflects that Hardy Boys mysteries were considered children's fiction and were read by young boys. However, this circumstance also serves to reject the sexualized culture of the 1920s in which sexually explicit material was available to high school boys about the age of Frank, Joe, and their chums. Instead, these male characters champion a "public insistence on male purity and continence," which was the "lynchpin of the Victorian system of morality" and therefore consistent with their display of Victorian manners, morals, and standards of masculinity.¹⁷³ Like their father, and unlike the newer models of masculinity in the 1920s, Frank and Joe do not behave sexually with Callie Shaw and Iola Morton. While this behavior may have sparked concerns that the boys could be homosexual, a condition that was vilified at the time, Frank and Joe allay these fears by paying special attention to the physical attributes and sweet dispositions of the girls.

In sum, as detective stories, Hardy Boys mysteries by definition focus on Frank and Joe's efforts to determine who is responsible for a crime. As a result, the seedy, immoral, and violent criminal world becomes the driving force behind these stories:

criminals bring mystery to Bayport and keep Frank and Joe on their trail through a series of threats, dangers, and near-misses. The adventure, action, and excitement resulting from the Hardy brothers' pursuit of criminals are significant reasons why, as discussed above, these stories were so popular among boys. Despite the centrality of underworld primitivism to the stories, however, Hardy Boys mysteries actually disapprove of the model of masculinity it advocates as well as the models (male flapper and tramp Bohemian) that evolved from it. Underneath Frank and Joe's constant interactions with criminals, the stories promote and encourage a traditional Victorian model of masculinity that was considered outdated in the 1920s and 1930s.

Because the scholarship examining Hardy Boys mysteries is relatively small and focused on the series across its eighty year history, there is much room for further study of these stories. For example, how did the stories reflect and respond to the Great Depression? What is the significance of the types of cases Frank and Joe solved given the economic context of the 1920s and 1930s, and why was smuggling a crime that was often reused? Additionally, future studies might focus more specifically on chums Phil Cohen, who is Jewish, and Tony Prito, who is Italian. How were these characters portrayed in an era of intense anti-immigrant sentiment distinguished by the National Origins Act of 1924, which established annual quotas aimed at limiting the number of immigrants from southeastern Europe, and a revived Klu Klux Klan, which targeted Catholics and Jews in addition to African Americans? Additionally, while this study has explored depictions of masculinity within Hardy Boys stories, it does not consider how readers of these stories interpreted these messages. Specifically, to what extent did boys in different ethnic, religious, and racial groups living in different geographic areas of the country learn

lessons about masculinity from Frank and Joe? Finally, while many studies of the Hardy boys emphasize similarities across the series' eighty year history, a comparative study of subtle changes in the portrayal of appropriate masculine behavior would reveal how the stories continued to engage and reflect the changing contexts in which they were written, specifically how they navigated evolving definitions and standards of masculinity.

Notes

- ¹ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *The Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 16-18.
- ² Franklin W. Dixon. *The Tower Treasure*, *The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1927; facsimile reprint, Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 1991), 1.
- ³ Quoted in Karen Plunkett-Powell, *The Nancy Drew Scrapbook: Sixty Years of America's Favorite Teenage Sleuth* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 18.
- ⁴ Karen Plunkett-Powell, *The Nancy Drew Scrapbook*, 17; Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 20. It was the commercial success of the Hardy Boys mysteries that inspired Stratemeyer to create a detective series for girls,
- ⁵ Marilyn S. Greenwald, *The Secret of the Hardy Boys: Leslie McFarlane and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), xii.
- ⁶ "masculinity, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. December 2000. Oxford University Press. 1 April 2008 <<http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/cgi/entry/00302769>>.
- ⁷ David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 11.
- ⁸ R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, second edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2005), 71.
- ⁹ Rose Marie Hoffman, "The Measurement of Masculinity and Femininity: Historical Perspective and Implications for Counseling," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 79 (Fall 2001): 472.
- ¹⁰ Connell, *Masculinities* 70.
- ¹¹ Linda Brannon, *Gender: Psychological Perspectives*, second edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 176.
- ¹² Donald Lee Deardorff, *Hero and Anti-Hero in the American Football Novel: Changing Conceptions of Masculinity from the Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 16-20.
- ¹³ Torres, in Michael Flood, Michael, Judith Kegan Gardiner, Bob Pease, and Keith Pringle, *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 589-590.
- ¹⁴ Levy, in Michael Flood, Michael, Judith Kegan Gardiner, Bob Pease, and Keith Pringle, *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 253-254.
- ¹⁵ Torres, in *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities*, 589-590.
- ¹⁶ Levy, in *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities*, 253-254.
- ¹⁷ David Rosen, *The Changing Fictions of Masculinity* (Urbana, Illinois, and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), xii-xiv.
- ¹⁸ Donald Lee Deardorff, *Hero and Anti-Hero in the American Football Novel*, 2.
- ¹⁹ David Rosen, *The Changing Fictions of Masculinity*, xii-xiv.
- ²⁰ Donald Lee Deardorff, *Hero and Anti-Hero in the American Football Novel*, 20-21.
- ²¹ Michael S. Kimmel, *The History of Men: Essays on the History of American and British Masculinities* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 6-7.
- ²² Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 7.
- ²³ Michael S. Kimmel, *The History of Men*, xi.
- ²⁴ Jeff Hearn, in Michael Flood, Michael, Judith Kegan Gardiner, Bob Pease, and Keith Pringle, *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 391-393.
- ²⁵ Other scholars have repeated this emphasis on conflict and crisis. See Athena Devlin, *Between Profits and Primitivism*, 1-2 and 12; Sylvia D. Hoffert, *A History of Gender in America: Essays, Documents, and Articles* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 283-285.
- ²⁶ Michael S. Kimmel, *The History of Men*, 10.

- ²⁷ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 197.
- ²⁸ Michael S. Kimmel, "Men's Responses to Feminism at the Turn of the Century," *Gender and Society* 1:3 (September 1987), 265.
- ²⁹ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 197.
- ³⁰ Michael S. Kimmel, *The History of Men*, 9-10.
- ³¹ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 197.
- ³² Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 192-194.
- ³³ Tom Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900-1950* (Columbia, Missouri, and London: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 16.
- ³⁴ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America*, American Social Experience Series (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 2.
- ³⁵ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 13-14.
- ³⁶ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 10-11.
- ³⁷ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 2.
- ³⁸ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 2.
- ³⁹ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 180.
- ⁴⁰ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 3.
- ⁴¹ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 4.
- ⁴² Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 2.
- ⁴³ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 3, 16, and 180.
- ⁴⁴ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 7-8.
- ⁴⁵ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 9.
- ⁴⁶ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 32-34.
- ⁴⁷ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 36 and 44.
- ⁴⁸ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 36.
- ⁴⁹ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 54.
- ⁵⁰ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 59-60.
- ⁵¹ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 67.
- ⁵² Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy: Gender, Childhood, and Masculinity, 1890-1940," *Journal of Social History* 37:4 (Summer 2004): 832.
- ⁵³ Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy," 830.
- ⁵⁴ Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy," 829-830 and 836.
- ⁵⁵ Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy," 830 and 833.
- ⁵⁶ Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy," 831.
- ⁵⁷ Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy," 843.
- ⁵⁸ Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy," 835 and 838.
- ⁵⁹ Several listings of all Hardy Boys books and series have been compiled. The information included here has been collected by Benjamin Lefebvre, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of English and Film Studies at University of Alberta and a Research Associate at the Centre for Research in Young People's Texts and Cultures (CRYTC). See Benjamin Lefebvre, "Room of Ben's Own: The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew Archive," <<http://roomofbensown.net/hbnd>> (1 November 2007).
- ⁶⁰ Marilyn S. Greenwald, *The Secret of the Hardy Boys*, xi.
- ⁶¹ Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, Twayne United States Authors Series. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 6.
- ⁶² Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 6. Productivity and output did not diminish after his death: the Syndicate published more than 480 books under the management of Stratemeyer's daughters, and almost 300 additional titles were released when the Syndicate was later purchased by the publishing company Simon & Schuster.
- ⁶³ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *The Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 15.
- ⁶⁴ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate: Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, and the Million Dollar Fiction Factory* (New York: The Ungar Publishing Company, 1986), 82-83.
- ⁶⁵ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 88. See also Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 143.
- ⁶⁶ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 90.
- ⁶⁷ Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 143.

- ⁶⁸ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 88.
- ⁶⁹ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 56.
- ⁷⁰ Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 142.
- ⁷¹ Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 143.
- ⁷² Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 90.
- ⁷³ Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 141.
- ⁷⁴ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 82-83.
- ⁷⁵ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 38.
- ⁷⁶ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 36-40.
- ⁷⁷ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 92.
- ⁷⁸ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 87.
- ⁷⁹ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 88.
- ⁸⁰ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 87.
- ⁸¹ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 89.
- ⁸² Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 86-87.
- ⁸³ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 86-87.
- ⁸⁴ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 90.
- ⁸⁵ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 87.
- ⁸⁶ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 36.
- ⁸⁷ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 71.
- ⁸⁸ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 36-38.
- ⁸⁹ Marilyn S. Greenwald, *The Secret of the Hardy Boys*, xii-xiii.
- ⁹⁰ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 89.
- ⁹¹ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 96.
- ⁹² Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 8.
- ⁹³ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 46.
- ⁹⁴ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 32, 98.
- ⁹⁵ Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 92.
- ⁹⁶ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *The Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 98.
- ⁹⁷ Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969), 2.
- ⁹⁸ Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, tenth edition (Belmont, California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2004), 315.
- ⁹⁹ Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 319.
- ¹⁰⁰ "masculinity, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. December 2000. Oxford University Press. 1 April 2008 <<http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/cgi/entry/00302769>>.
- ¹⁰¹ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Tower Treasure*, 141-142.
- ¹⁰² Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, *The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories*, (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1927; facsimile reprint, Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 1991), 169.
- ¹⁰³ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, *The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1927; facsimile reprint, Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 1991), 90-91.
- ¹⁰⁴ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Tower Treasure*, 174.
- ¹⁰⁵ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 25.
- ¹⁰⁶ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 25-27.
- ¹⁰⁷ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, *The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1929; facsimile reprint, Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 1999), 28.
- ¹⁰⁸ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, *The Hardy Boys Stories* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1931; facsimile reprint, Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 2000), 58.
- ¹⁰⁹ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, *The Hardy Boys Stories* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1932; facsimile reprint, Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 2000), 35.
- ¹¹⁰ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 110.
- ¹¹¹ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 66.
- ¹¹² Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 100.
- ¹¹³ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 129.

- ¹¹⁴ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 147.
- ¹¹⁵ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 148.
- ¹¹⁶ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 58.
- ¹¹⁷ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 62.
- ¹¹⁸ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 21.
- ¹¹⁹ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 58.
- ¹²⁰ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 212.
- ¹²¹ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 36.
- ¹²² Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 148.
- ¹²³ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 69-70.
- ¹²⁴ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 165.
- ¹²⁵ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 139.
- ¹²⁶ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 67-68.
- ¹²⁷ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 14.
- ¹²⁸ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 15.
- ¹²⁹ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Tower Treasure*, 6-7.
- ¹³⁰ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 52; Franklin W. Dixon, *The Tower Treasure*, 33.
- ¹³¹ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 53.
- ¹³² Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 22.
- ¹³³ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 78-79.
- ¹³⁴ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 81.
- ¹³⁵ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 160.
- ¹³⁶ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 160.
- ¹³⁷ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 2.
- ¹³⁸ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 4.
- ¹³⁹ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 115.
- ¹⁴⁰ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 163.
- ¹⁴¹ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 6.
- ¹⁴² Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 74.
- ¹⁴³ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 2.
- ¹⁴⁴ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 38.
- ¹⁴⁵ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 38-41.
- ¹⁴⁶ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 65.
- ¹⁴⁷ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 116.
- ¹⁴⁸ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 118-119.
- ¹⁴⁹ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 31.
- ¹⁵⁰ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 43.
- ¹⁵¹ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 37-38.
- ¹⁵² Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 22.
- ¹⁵³ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 43.
- ¹⁵⁴ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 165.
- ¹⁵⁵ Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*, 93.
- ¹⁵⁶ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 6-7.
- ¹⁵⁷ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 14.
- ¹⁵⁸ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 87.
- ¹⁵⁹ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 100.
- ¹⁶⁰ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 157.
- ¹⁶¹ Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 193.
- ¹⁶² Franklin W. Dixon, *While the Clock Ticked*, 195.
- ¹⁶³ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 20-21; Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, 20.
- ¹⁶⁴ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 2.
- ¹⁶⁵ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Tower Treasure*, 208.
- ¹⁶⁶ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 131.
- ¹⁶⁷ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 27.

- ¹⁶⁸ Franklin W. Dixon, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, 20.
- ¹⁶⁹ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 126.
- ¹⁷⁰ Franklin W. Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 128.
- ¹⁷¹ Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, *Mysterious Case of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys*, 46.
- ¹⁷² Julia Grant, "A 'Real Boy' and not a Sissy," 830.
- ¹⁷³ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, 4.

Appendix: Plot Synopses

The Tower Treasure (1927):

A series of events leads the Hardy boys to their first mystery: they are almost hit by a reckless driver while riding their motorcycles, Chet Morton informs them that his roadster has been stolen, and Ike Harrity reports that someone attempted to hold-up his steamboat office. Later, Frank and Joe learn that the Tower Mansion, home of elderly siblings Hurd and Adelia Applegate, has been robbed. Henry Robinson, the caretaker of Tower Mansion and father of the boys' friend Perry, is accused of the crime. With help from their father, the Hardy boys determine that notorious criminal John "Red" Jackley is responsible for all of the crimes and clear Robinson of any wrongdoing.

The House on the Cliff (1927):

Frank, Joe, and their friends explore the Polucca house during a motorcycle ride. The home of a miser who had been murdered, the house sits high on a cliff overlooking Barmet Bay and is supposedly haunted. The boys are frightened away from the house by bloodcurdling shrieks and by a discovery that motorcycle repair tools have been mysteriously stolen. During their return to Bayport, Frank and Joe witness a boat chase that ends when the pursued driver is shot and his boat is set on fire. These two events lead the Hardy boys to a mystery involving Ganny Snackley, a notorious international drug smuggler. With help from their father, the police, and friend Tony Prito, Frank and Joe

apprehend Snackley, who had murdered his relative Polucca, created a system of hidden chambers and stairs linking the cliff to the bay, and used the house as a base for smuggling operations.

The Secret of the Old Mill (1927):

A large amount of counterfeit money begins circulating in Bayport, and the victims who are duped out of their money include Frank and Joe, their mother, and many other Bayport residents. During a Saturday ride on their motorcycles, Frank, Joe, and their friends visit an old mill that is now being operated by three men and a boy. The Hardy boys are suspicious of these men and obtain evidence that they are managing the counterfeiting ring from the mill. With help from their father, the Bayport police, and Secret Service detectives, the Hardy boys apprehend the criminals.

The Mystery of Cabin Island (1929):

Joined by their friends Biff Hooper and Chet Morton, Frank and Joe Hardy obtain permission from Elroy Jefferson to use his cottage on Cabin Island during the Christmas holiday. Jefferson also gives the boys the authority to guard the property from Hanleigh, a trespasser who wants to buy the island and visits it with help from Ike Nash and Tad Carson. Frank, Joe, and their friends learn that Jefferson's stamp collection had been stolen several years ago, presumably by his servant, Sparewell. They discover that Hanleigh is Sparewell's nephew and recover the missing collection in the chimney of the cabin's fireplace.

What Happened at Midnight (1931):

Joe Hardy is kidnapped during a party at Chet Morton's home; with help from their friends, Frank finds his brother hidden in one of the caves along Barmet Bay. Joe identifies Chris, a diamond smuggler, as one of his abductors. Chris kidnapped Joe thinking the boy had seen the smuggled diamonds he was carrying when the two bumped into each other in front of the jewelry store. While tracking Chris to New York City, Frank and Joe meet Keith and Hallett, two Secret Service men in the Department of Justice who are looking for notorious diamond smuggler Taffy Marr. Frank and Joe determine that Marr, using a disguise, is working as a clerk at Mr. Arnheim's jewelry store in Bayport. Cooperating with Keith and Hallett, the Hardy boys capture Taffy Marr and his associates along the shore of Barmet Bay.

While the Clock Ticked (1932):

While Fenton and Laura Hardy are camping in Maine, Frank and Joe solve a series of mysteries that involve the Purdy Estate. Owner and wealthy banker Raymond Dalrymple has been receiving death threats in a sealed secret room and wants to know who is leaving the messages, why he is being threatened, and how those responsible are gaining access to the room. The Hardy boys discover that Amos Wandy, an inventor, is behind the messages: because the banker refused to lend him money, Wandy blamed Dalrymple for his ruin and sought revenge. One of Wandy's henchmen, Jensen, also stole rare and valuable stamps from Bayport resident Hurd Applegate, who is ecstatic when Frank and Joe retrieve his collection in the process of apprehending Wandy and his associates. While investigating the Dalrymple and Applegate cases, Frank and Joe also help the

Bayport police department capture Indian Tom and Zeke Peters, two river thieves who have been using vacant rooms at the Purdy Estate to hide stolen goods.

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