

**Transforming the Cultural Economy for Little Readers:
Print-Based Adaptations for Children in Nineteenth-Century America**

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This dissertation explores the production history of print-based adaptations for children as a category of writing and publishing for a dedicated market segment, contributing to the present growth in the study of adaptation in children's literature and nineteenth-century American literature in recent years. Print-based adaptations for children that adapt culturally relevant novels, plays, ballads, folk tales, and fairy tales are typically understood as abridgments, simplified retellings, and bowdlerizations. This dissertation offers an integrated methodological approach for studying these texts in the American print market to broaden these limited conceptions by bringing these texts together in the same study to constitute a corpus of their own. I argue that the myriad of print transformations produced from transatlantic and domestic sources showcases textual and material interventions and innovations meshed in the development, not on the periphery, of nineteenth-century children's literature.

In each chapter, I contextualize adaptation for child readers in the American context, examining the strategies used to transmit stories from adult to child readerships, which rely on integrated ideological, pedagogical, and commercial processes. I argue that the period's adaptation processes for children did not remain static or reflect a singular approach, displaying the variety of ways in which readers are encouraged to interact with shared print through books produced and marketed especially for them. The first half addresses how adaptation via children's editions, facilitated by solitary and family reading protocols, attempts to restrict and supervise child readers.

These books encourage reading modes of didactic utility, which I refer to as reading labors, and function to cultivate the cultural capital of the white middle classes. Then, the second half shifts from the textual displays of reading practices to two case studies that challenge the reading labor model and show how print remediations like paper doll shape books and the vast proliferation of toy books by the McLoughlin Bros. emphasize leisurely, imaginative, and playful reading modes. When treated as textual and material transformations in a professional print field that fostered the growth of juvenile publishing, nineteenth-century adaptations for children are shown to encompass complexity and are worthy of our sustained attention.

Table of Contents

Preface.....	xiv
1.0 Introduction: 19th Century Print-Based Adaptations in Anglo-American Children’s Literature.....	1
1.1 Print-Based Adaptations for Children: In Context.....	6
1.2 Adapting the Study of Children’s Literature: Reconsiderations of Reused Stories	14
1.3 Cultural Anxieties of Children’s Books and Reading Children.....	21
1.4 The Labor and Value of Reading.....	31
2.0 Adapting Books for Child (Mis)Readers	37
2.1 Transforming English Novels to American Sunday-School Reading.....	46
2.2 The Emerging American Middle Class and Moral Fiction for Children.....	59
2.3 “It is all very pretty to read about”: Optic’s <i>Robinson Crusoe Jr.</i> and the Assertive Misreading Child	63
2.4 “’Tis just the book to puzzle one’s young brain”: ASSU’s <i>Little Marian’s Pilgrimage</i> and Failing the Misreading Child	80
2.5 Rescuing Children from Misreading or Saving Assets	97
3.0 Supervising Child Readers and Auditors: Adaptations and Communal Reading Circles.....	103
3.1 Nineteenth-Century Communal Reading Practices	106
3.2 “Pray and Work!”: Prescriptions for Family Circle Reading	110
3.2.1 From Apple Tree to Parlor: Reproducing Campe’s Adaptation in the US117	

3.3	Adaptation as Restriction of Juvenile Political Activism.....	123
3.3.1	Uses of Abridgment: Erasures of Black Suffering and Agency and Protections of White Virtue.....	134
3.3.2	A British “Peep” at the American Political Landscape.....	139
3.4	Empowering the Child Auditor and Storyteller in the Juvenile Family Reading Circle.....	146
3.4.1	Establishing a Juvenile Family Circle Model.....	150
3.4.2	Children Leading the Reading Circle Through Poetry and Prose.....	154
3.5	Two Competing Models.....	163
4.0	Incorporating Play into Modes of Reading: Adaptation, Remediation, and Paper Doll Shape Books.....	167
4.1	Materials of Play: Books and Toys.....	178
4.2	Paper Doll Shape Books: Playing with Format.....	185
4.2.1	Breaking Down the Toy-Book Hybrid: On the Inside.....	188
4.2.2	Breaking Down the Toy-Book Hybrid: On the Outside.....	192
4.3	Playful Reading.....	204
4.3.1	A Final Word: The ASSU’s Compromise with <i>Little Marian</i>	208
5.0	The Business of Juvenile Printing and Adaptation: Toy Books for Children by the McLoughlin Bros.....	214
5.1	Profiting from Toy Books.....	216
5.2	History of McLoughlin Bros.: Appropriating the Series Strategy.....	228
5.3	Overview of McLoughlin Bros. Trade Catalogs.....	236
5.4	The Rise of an American Toy Book Brand.....	241

5.4.1 “There are now in this world, and always will be,” Mother Goose.....	242
5.5 Content Recycling in the McLoughlin Bros. Catalogs	248
5.5.1 Content Recycling: Series Strategy	257
5.6 Series Labels: Promoting Content, Format, and Price	261
5.6.1 “Find their way straight to fairyland”: Distinguishing the McLoughlin Bros. Brand.....	269
5.7 Access to Cultural Capital	272
6.0 Coda: Beyond a Field of Print-Based Adaptations in 19 th Century Children’s Literature	281
Appendix A.....	292
Bibliography	295

List of Tables

Table 1. List of labels assigned to toy book series in McLoughlin Bros. Catalogs. 261

Table 2. Character labels for seventy-six toy book series in McLoughlin Bros. catalogs.. 265

List of Figures

Figure 1. This figure visualizes the relation between adaptations, children's literature or writing for children, and the broader category of print with “adult” literature..... 12

Figure 2. Green cloth and simple cover decoration on Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869), shows additional decoration. From personal library. 54

Figure 3. Gold embellishments decorate the book spine of Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869). From personal library. .. 54

Figure 4. Similarly decorated cover of *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1852) for the tall and thin little book. From personal library. 57

Figure 5. In the illustration “THE WATER-WHEEL,” Robert builds a water wheel on his father’s property, as shown in Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869). From personal library. 67

Figure 6. In the illustration “BUILDING THE HOUSE,” Robert uses the materials from his raft to erect a shelter in Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869). From personal library. 75

Figure 7. Marian reading *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in a a tree, as pictured in the frontispiece of *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1852). From personal library. 81

Figure 8. Illustration of Marian and her bare foot as she journeys on her pilgrimage in *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1852). From personal library..... 89

Figure 9. Chromolithography and die-cutting are two processes used to create this unique paper doll shape book. Lydia L.A. Very, *Red Riding Hood* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1863). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh..... 169

Figure 10. The full-color print extends from the front to the back cover of the paper doll shape book, prominently displaying the Prang imprint on Lydia L.A. Very, *Red Riding Hood* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1863). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh. 170

Figure 11. The paper doll shape book has lost its head in Lydia L.A. Very, *Robinson Crusoe* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1864), showing Crusoe as a runaway youth and the palm trees of his island. Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh..... 189

Figure 12. The internal layout of the paper doll shape books displays verse with “head” and “toe” illustrations in Lydia L.A. Very, *Red Riding Hood* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1863). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh..... 190

Figure 13. *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* is remediated as a paper doll shape book with *Little Marian* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, n.d.). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh. 210

Figure 14. *Topsy* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 189-?). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh. 216

Figure 15. *Dolly's Adventures* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 189-?). From personal library. 218

Figure 16. *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 189-?). From personal library..... 220

Figure 17. This chart visualizes a survey of four catalogs (1875-1876, 1886, 1895, and 1910), showing that the largest percentage of inventory is comprised of series books..... 223

Figure 18. Series Books Prices for three catalogs (1886, 1895, and 1910). 235

Figure 19. In the McLoughlin Bros. list of toy book inventory in the 1875-1876 catalog, each listed item typically includes a short blurb describing the material format, content, and price. *Catalogue of Toy Books, Paper Dolls, ABC Blocks, Games, Valentines, &c. for 1875--'76* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1875?). Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society. 237

Figure 20. Most recycled story content in 1875-1876, 1886, 1895, and 1910 catalogs..... 252

Figure 21. Most reproduced forms and genres in four catalogs..... 254

Figure 22. Most recycled content in series books advertised in four catalogs. 257

Figure 23. The types of forms and genres recycled in the series books in four catalogs.... 258

Figure 24. Categorized labeling for the 220 total series in the 1875-1876, 1886, 1895, and 1910 catalogs..... 262

Figure 25. Average prices for toy books in series, collections, and standalone volumes.... 273

Figure A 1. Most recycled content in 1875-1876 catalog. 292

Figure A 2. Most recycled content in 1886 catalog.....	293
Figure A 3. Most recycled content in 1895 catalog.....	293
Figure A 4. Most recycled content in 1910 catalog.....	294

Preface

The basis of this academic research started with a “discovery”: a toy book that I traced down in my undergraduate junior research seminar at Saint Vincent College from Susan Williams’s article “‘Promoting an Extensive Sale’: The Production and Reception of *The Lamplighter*.” To my delight, this toy book, titled *The Lamplighter Picture Book, or The Story of Uncle True and Little Gerty: Written for the Little Folks*, was an adaptation of *The Lamplighter*, one of the novels we read in my class on nineteenth-century women’s writing, “Sentimental Politics.” Through studying this book, I combined my developing interest in children’s literature and sentimental literature in the capstone project for the major. A decade has passed since the completion of that humble project, “Little Gerty Grows Up: Revising Cummins’ *The Lamplighter* from a Women’s Novel to a Children’s Picture Book.” This dissertation presents years’ worth of work that has expanded and, in its own way, adapted beyond that little paper. It feels appropriate to incorporate the toy book “Gerty” in this dissertation because it reminds me of how far I have come in my scholarship, research interests, and writing.

While I would return to this academic germ over and over, I was also summoned back to childhood memories of my own ownership of print-based adaptations. I can recall from my childhood my copies of *Dracula* (1997) and *Black Beauty* (1997), part of the Eyewitness Classics, a series of “timeless classic stories for today” produced by DK Publishing and crafted for middle-school readers. (*Dracula* was my favorite.) A few more titles from the Great Illustrated Classics series, first printed in the late 1980s, sat on the small bookshelf in the bedroom I shared with my little sister, Rebecca. While the first books mentioned were gifted to me personally at Christmas,

the Great Illustrated Classics were hand-me-down books from my two older sisters, Lea and Sara, born in the early 1980s.

My parents, like other adults, introduced us to these “classic” books via adapted works intended for child readers. These adaptations still incorporate illustrations and other peritextual materials that engage and contextualize the reading experience for independent readers. With the Eyewitness Classics, its adaptation underpinnings are pedagogical. On every page, the narratives are framed in fascinating illustrations and “facts” that highlight the historical and bibliographical contexts of the adapted novels and their authors. The reading experience of *Dracula* is clearly mediated with the arrangement of narrative with the additional material summons page spreads akin to the visual display and design of reading and social studies textbooks. Adaptations like the Eyewitness Classics possess value not strictly through knowledge of the literary text but additional knowledge assets that would relegate it more fully as an educational experience, rather than an imaginative foray into the horror inspired by Bram Stoker’s novel. While I do not think the goal of the adaptation falls within the realm of the moral panic surrounding novel reading that characterized Anglo-American reading discourse in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (context is key to understanding adaptation processes), my memory of this material book and its adapted contents demonstrates how modern print-based adaptations for children assert their relevance and accessibility. It also shows that a market continues to exist for these types of books addressing child audiences. Acquiring value socially and culturally from reading adapted and shared texts remains a fixture of childhood reading and children’s publishing. This persistence and proliferation in adaptation for child readers encouraged me to follow my own impulse to explore what that looked like in a more distant past.

1.0 Introduction: 19th Century Print-Based Adaptations in Anglo-American Children's Literature

Robinson Crusoe on his island, alone, deprived of the assistance of his fellows and of instruments of all the arts, yet providing for his own subsistence and preservation, and procuring for himself a state of comparative comfort—here is an object interesting for every age, and *one which may be made agreeable to children in a thousand ways*.¹

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau

In *Emile* (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau famously argues that children should read only *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Finding value in a single novel example, he recognizes the story as the “happiest treatise on natural education,” and dismisses the rest.² The most interesting point that Rousseau makes about *Robinson Crusoe* is not that it should be the only book in a child’s library, though he certainly gets readers’ attention with such high praise for a popular novel after his declaration, “I hate books.”³ When it comes to sharing *Robinson Crusoe* with children, he indicates that changes may be made to Defoe’s creation for this particular audience’s needs and tastes. With his suggestion that *Robinson Crusoe* can be “made agreeable to children in a thousand ways,” Rousseau points to adaptation. From the mid-eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, producers of children’s books grappled with defining the audience of

¹ Emphasis added. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, Or Treatise on Education*, trans. William H. Payne (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2003), 163.

² Rousseau, 162.

³ Rousseau, 161.

printed reading materials: adaptations of texts were generally, to this point, understood to be books that are shared between adults and children, but, as Jay Fliegelman argues, they gradually came to be age-defined.⁴ Written at a time when Anglo-American children's literature was in its early formation and authors and publishers were still establishing the contours of the category, Rousseau's reading recommendation inadvertently yet powerfully foretells the vast publication opportunities in adapting other popular and beloved stories to produce new book products for a growing, differentiated readership of children.

Following the growth of adaptation studies and children's literature and the work already completed by scholars in British literature, American literature and studies, children's literature, and book history with and related to this corpus, I locate a variety of adaptations in their cultural and economic contexts of production. By bringing together adaptation studies, book history, and the historical study of children's literature and childhood within the context of the transatlantic American print market, I argue that adaptation processes for children did not remain static or reflect a singular process. Instead, they were printed and reproduced in a myriad of textual and material transformations that multiplied as narratives shifted and relocated in transatlantic and domestic exchanges from the eighteenth century throughout the nineteenth century.⁵

⁴ See Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 67–89.

⁵ For an account of John Newbery and how this publisher revolutionized the juvenile market as a permanent and profitable, selling entertaining and secular works that included *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (1744), *The Renowned History Giles Gingerbread* (1761) and *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (1765), see M.O. Grenby, *The Child Reader, 1700-1840* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5. For analyses of American abridgments of British novels like Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, see

Adaptations of early print iterations were transformed into new books, revealing how producers or adapters (as I will often refer to them) were influenced and inspired by numerous developments: printing and illustration innovations, the establishment of writing and authorship for children as it relates to the discourse on child-rearing and education, debates in the culture of reading and passive readers, increases in literacy rates, and the political, social, and economic climates of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶ This dissertation contributes a unique corpus that consists of a surprising assortment and range of texts: cheap chapbooks, novels rewritten in verse, and abbreviated retold versions with crude woodcut images no larger than an adult’s palm. Adapters also produced thick, hundred-page abridgments with explanatory notes and accompanying illustrations as well as thin and fragile “metamorphosis” texts that unfold leaf by leaf each scene in both prose and verse with an accompanying woodcut or engraving. By the mid-century, adaptations appeared as children’s toy books with poetry, abridged prose, and an “original” score, in which children could perform—reading, reciting, and singing for a circle. Tall paper-back collections featuring legendary literary figures like Rip Van Winkle with bright, full-page chromolithographed illustrations dwarf the innovative die-cut shape books fashioned as paper dolls containing playful verse in their folds. By the end of the century, these paper dolls would

Leonard Tennenhouse, *Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800*.

⁶ See Ronald J. Zboray, *Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4. Zboray cautions an “overemphasis” on technological innovation as influential in the “democratization of literature” and “on the reading experience,” arguing that they are over-exaggerated.

double in size and increase in expense, though cheaper options were still available. One-syllable books accompanied by colored illustrations and elegantly embossed spines feature series of enjoyable reading for beginning readers. Hundreds of series of adaptations come in a wide array of format options, from penny paper-wrapped versions to indestructible linen books and elegantly bound and decorated classics.

Even though I do not cover every single adaptation that I have examined throughout my research, this study's corpus is defined by two types of textual imports in addition to the adaptations of American novels and literary works by authors Maria Susanna Cummins, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Washington Irving. The first type is British imports and appropriations of familiar and recognizable novels, including John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come* (1678), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and Jonathon Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the latter published initially under the title *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and Then a Captain of Several Ships* (1726). The second type is translated and appropriated imports from Britain and the European continent like Joachim Heinrich Campe's adaptation *Robinson der Jüngere* (1779) and various versions of popular fairy tales, folk tales, and nursery rhymes.

This dissertation presents adaptations for children published and sold in the United States as sites for exciting illustrative, textual, and material experimentation in storytelling, instruction, and play for child readers. These sources of cultural production amounted to what Rousseau called the "thousand ways" to transform printed texts (like *Robinson Crusoe*) in nineteenth-century America. Through the process of adaptation, these texts disseminated shared ideological values and ideas, particularly conceptions of childhood and middle-class mores, and expanded the juvenile market and books marketed for child readers through adaptation. Some of the questions I

ask include: What kinds of adaptation choices—both textual and material—are made for the adaptations to function as cultural capital adequately? What writing and publishing practices in adaptation decrease, maintain, and increase the value of transmitted texts as cultural capital? Do experimental adaptations forfeit their statuses as investments of cultural capital?

Forming from a legacy of British and European moral fiction and didactic pedagogy from the eighteenth century, adaptations produced in nineteenth-century America insist on the vulnerability of their imagined child readers, and adapters betray fears and anxieties about children's abilities to read in unsanctioned, transgressive ways that can be socially potent or subversive. I argue that adapters transform literary works like novels into suitable texts for child readers, creating new products for purchase in the juvenile market. Adaptation functions to redeem the value of transmitted stories as cultural capital. Through adapted children's editions aimed at newly literate readers independent readers, adapters negotiate on matters of what I refer to as reading labors, conceived as "productive" didactic reading activities that emphasize skills of comprehension and interpretation. Children who productively labor with their books mine their reading for values that mirror or aspire to American middle-class ideology. Yet, with technological innovations and developments in book production and the changing attitudes regarding reading and childhood, such restrictions put in place by adaptation were also being undone by adaptation. Less suspicious of leisure and imaginative, playful modes of reading after the mid-century period and onwards to the end of the nineteenth century, adapters produced charming new products. Adaptation remediations that blend toys and books together into a single book product and the vast proliferation of toy books, mainly through series books, are two case studies that I explore in this study to expand our notion of print-based adaptations for children.

1.1 Print-Based Adaptations for Children: In Context

The “thousands” of print transformations emerged within a broader nineteenth-century print culture that Meredith McGill has argued was “defined by its exuberant understanding of culture as iteration and not origination.”⁷ Adapters reused and recycled works already in circulation to repackage and revise them for nineteenth-century contemporary child readers. According to McGill, numerous publishing houses printed and reprinted foreign and domestic texts throughout the century due to republican cultural attitudes regarding intellectual property and loose or non-existent copyright laws. Reprinting and reproduction (of knowledge) were deemed a “cultural form” of civic and moral good.⁸ Nineteenth-century textbooks like rhetorics, readers, and composition books are an example of a form, like adaptations, that was reproduced and reprinted through various “practices of compilation involving the wholesale copying, redaction, and transformation of earlier texts.”⁹ Like McGill, Jean Ferguson Carr, Stephen L. Carr, and Lucille M. Schultz approach this extensive archive of reproduction to explicate how it functions and to gain a freshened perspective on books that may appear at first glance as just a copy. Carr, Carr, and Schultz, for instance, suggest that textbooks’ production and “their innovation may be less in the ‘originality’ of specific materials or conceptions, than in

⁷ Meredith L. McGill, *Material Texts: American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 4.

⁸ McGill, 3.

⁹ Jean Ferguson Carr, Stephen L. Carr, and Lucille M. Schultz, *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States*, Studies in Writing & Rhetoric (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 11–12.

arrangement, emphasis, or forms of attention to student work.”¹⁰ This culture of reprinting and reproduction provides insight into the legal, economic, and cultural systems and practices used to create this production network of exchange, recycling, and adaptation, prompting the following questions: What kind of tradition in adaptation was established in the nineteenth-century juvenile market? How did the various approaches to adaptation fit with nineteenth-century print culture and the (re)production of print? This culture of reprinting and reproduction is evident in nineteenth-century children’s literature through the products and processes of adaptation that I explore in this dissertation. Adaptation as multiple and commonplace even traces back to its early establishment within the production of children’s literature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The study of print-based adaptations needs a dedicated nineteenth-century history of adaptation in children’s literature, marking a transitional period when the juvenile market established itself in the late eighteenth century and through its growth in the nineteenth century. Gail Schmunk Murray, for instance, recounts the incorporation of novels like *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, and *Gulliver’s Travels* into early children’s literature: “First sold as imports, these books were eventually reproduced by American printers in the early eighteenth century, sometimes in simplified and bowdlerized versions, and were readily available.”¹¹ Emer O’ Sullivan similarly asserts that “adaptation has been a central element of children’s literature since children were discovered as a literary audience.”¹² The following chapters are constituted

¹⁰ Carr, Carr, and Schultz, 12.

¹¹ Gail Schmunk Murray, *American Children’s Literature and the Construction of Childhood*, Twayne’s History of American Childhood Series (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 5.

¹² Emer O’Sullivan, ed., “Adaptation and Chapbooks,” in *Historical Dictionary of Children’s Literature* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2010).

from this idea of adaptation as “imports” to focus on the nineteenth-century American print juvenile market.

This study’s approach is to examine how adaptation constitutes a foundational “element” in children’s literature. Anglo-American histories of children’s literature generally contain a significant gap after recounting how abridgment, simplified retelling, and expurgation (redaction of inappropriate material) constitute norms of adaptation for children before picking back up again with mentions of medium-specific adaptations like film and comics of the twentieth century. Print-based adaptations have generally been ignored given these assumptions, for the implicit suggestion is that these common books do not add any additional value or understanding given their derivative, commercialized, and even trivial status in relation to both the adapted sources and the contemporary “original” children’s books produced alongside them. I follow Gregory Semenza’s call for a “historical turn” in the study of adaptations. Semenza notes that “one particular limitation of even the most cutting-edge theoretical approaches to adaptation studies is their striking transhistoricity.”¹³ He proposes a diachronic view of adaptation, but that can only be within reach for children’s literature if its earliest formations of adaptation via print, a synchronic view, are traced and mapped out in the nineteenth century. This period establishes a diverse set of approaches to print-based adaptation that includes and extends beyond this understanding, which, I argue, displays far more complexity when put in context and showcases how adapters tap into the growth and trends of the juvenile market with their products during this period. That is, adapters develop

¹³ Gregory Semenza, “Towards a Historical Turn?: Adaptation Studies and the Challenges of History,” in *The Routledge Companion to Adaptation*, ed. Dennis Cutchins, Katja Krebs, and Eckart Voigts (London: Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Group, 2018), 59.

and advance print-based adaptations in ways that scholars and critics generally associate with the innovations, experimentations, or advancements of “original” children’s literature. Print-based adaptations should also be associated with these terms.

My specific focus in adaptation is books transformed for little readers or young, pre-adolescent children navigating books independently as early literate readers in the nineteenth century. Adaptation can be a nebulous and broad idea that encompasses a text (or artifact) we can point to and an action or change that occurs; its definitions and parameters more broadly are debated extensively within the adaptation studies field.¹⁴ Appropriating adaptation studies scholar Linda Hutcheon’s break-down of adaptation as well as children’s literature scholar Benjamin Lefebvre’s application of “transformation,” I use the term adaptation to refer to texts and products that have undergone textual and material processes of transformation.¹⁵ I narrow my examination of adaptations specifically to print-based products, which are adaptations that transform within the same medium. Through the adaptation processes of these products, the texts do not cross or shift into an entirely different medium like a stage play or film. Print-based adaptations are books that

¹⁴ See Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2013); Sarah Cardwell, “Pause, Rewind, Replay: Adaptation, Intertextuality and (Re)Defining Adaptation Studies,” in *The Routledge Companion to Adaptation*, ed. Dennis Cutchins, Katja Krebs, and Eckart Voigts (London: Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Group, 2018), 7–17.

¹⁵ My definition is based on the three-dimensional definition of adaptation first shared by Linda Hutcheon in 2006 and Benjamin Lefebvre’s specific usage of “textual transformation.” Hutcheon recognizes adaptation as a product, a process of recreation and reinterpretation, and a process of audience engagement. See Benjamin Lefebvre, ed., *Textual Transformations in Children’s Literature: Adaptations, Translations, Reconsiderations*, *Children’s Literature and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 2. Hutcheon and O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 6–32.

are adapted into new books. Lefebvre's use of "transformation" in particular suits my goal in expanding our narrowed conceptions of nineteenth-century print-based adaptations in the American context because it attends to material *and* textual changes that occur in the products versus processes Hutcheon initially distinguishes. The adaptations for children in this study are distinctive. As tokens of cultural capital for the young reading public, they are variations (to different degrees) of important and valuable stories, which meet assumptions or expectations related to age. For the nineteenth century, in particular, scholars of children's literature and nineteenth-century transatlantic studies should not underestimate the power of adaptation or the capital it possessed in the juvenile marketplace for readers, writers, illustrators, and publishers alike.

While this reprinting and reproduction culture indicates how the production of adaptations flourished in the nineteenth century, it does not tap into possible explanations for adaptation processes constituted by motivations to address a particular age group, especially in a period in which the complete bifurcation of status that Beverly Lyon Clark traces between adults' and children's literature did not occur until the late nineteenth century.¹⁶ In *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural*

¹⁶ Closer examination of early American and antebellum print and literary culture reveals multiple objects that were appealing to adapters to transform in myriad of ways for children. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady* (1748), Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), James Fenimore Cooper's *The Leather-Stocking Tales* (1823-41), Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852), and Maria Susanna Cummins's *The Lamplighter* (1854) were significant and amusing reading material for *all* ages that, in some cases, eventually became staples of juvenile publications or synonymous with important childhood reading through various textual and material adaptation. Like

Construction of Children's Literature in America, Clark says that “for over a century the line between juvenile and adult literature was all but invisible.”¹⁷ Her specific focus reveals that children’s literature possessed a positive status and overall perception of popularity. For instance, Clark identifies “great” nineteenth-century authors (whose works we now commonly associate with cultural capital) as writing for both adults *and* children, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Edith Wharton, to name a few.¹⁸ A challenge for studying nineteenth-century adaptations is locating these books among the blurred line between “adult” literature and children’s literature. We take for granted that such addresses were either not so neatly delineated or were broader before and during the nineteenth century. As Clark elucidates in her study, the cultural attitude, in sum, was “very different.”¹⁹ The print and reading culture of the nineteenth century was shared and permeable, meaning that producers of print (authors and publishers) often wrote addressing its audiences with both adults and children in mind because consumption practices were also mixed and communal. Children and adults, then, were not necessarily considered interlopers of children’s writing or broader works. In this environment, adaptation products and processes are a curious category since the impetus to adapt books for children is commonly understood to prevent trespass

Robinson Crusoe, these texts were consumed by broad audiences that crossed age and status, but were eventually variably adjusted for a more exclusive audience of children through the American children’s literature market category of the nineteenth century.

¹⁷ Beverly Lyon Clark, *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Constructions of Children's Literature in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 48.

¹⁸ For an extensive list, see Clark, 49.

¹⁹ Clark, 49.

into literary territory that is either too complicated (for children) or too simple (for adults). What are the purposes and motivations to adapt books for child audiences, even ones like *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, etc., already in the hands and minds of children?

The following diagram attempts to capture the relation between these three categories that my study brings together (fig. 1, below). The center of the figure, or the overlap of all three circles, represents the unique corpus of this dissertation's inquiry: adaptations for children in the nineteenth century. Notice that the boundaries of the circles are not marked with a solid line. The unmarked circles represent the permeable crossing of these boundaries for the production of printed texts and the consumption, or reading, by the public.

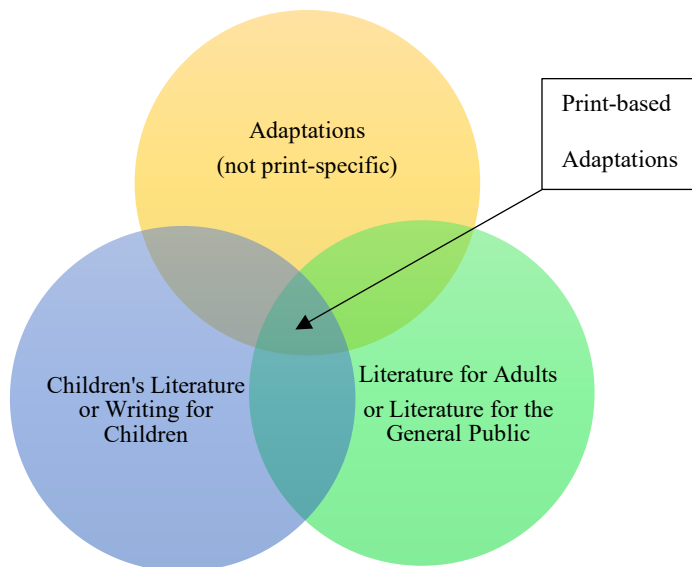


Figure 1. This figure visualizes the relation between adaptations, children's literature or writing for children, and the broader category of print with “adult” literature.

In Clark's view, the bifurcation of children's literature and adult literature had not been realized until the end of the nineteenth century, which in effect maintained and, in some respects, elevated the status of children's literature. Yet, the production of adaptations for children indicates that the separation and segregation that Clark traces were not characterized by such an apparent change, at least not in terms of status and perception that Clark highlights in her study. Indeed, these adaptations for children reveal the uneven development of that shift across the century. Through textual and material transformations, adaptations for children in the nineteenth-century American print market are characterized by a dual insistence on the differences between the needs of child readers versus the adult reading public and the shared tastes of the popular material they consumed. Even among adapters, from individual authors to small-scale and large-scale publishers, the adaptations offer competing ideas about children's interaction with shared books and reading, which I explore across the following four chapters. Since adapters used the same narrative content that brought the reading public together, the adaptations themselves are excellent sources for revealing the ideological, pedagogical, and material processes that situate children as readers and consumers of culturally legitimized stories. Thus, they are fascinating sites to examine various textual and material tensions about interacting with shared print. They negotiate matters of the idealized conceptions of childhood that emerged during this period, adult conceptions of child readers' needs for comprehension and utility, and the various approaches to suit the tastes of autonomous readers participating in an actively growing print culture.

1.2 Adapting the Study of Children's Literature: Reconsiderations of Reused Stories

Literary and cultural historians of children's literature have paid increasing attention to the prolific production and reception of adaptation in and of children's literature, with the majority of the studies occurring in the last decade. Scholars of children's literature and adaptation, in other words, have embraced what has been referred to as the ubiquity of adaptations in children's literature. As Benjamin Lefebvre succinctly points out, "textual transformations have for a long time been the norm rather than the exception."²⁰ The focus of study has ranged across periods, genres, and mediums from print-based adaptations in children's literature to remediations in film, musicals, stage plays, radio programs, comics, and other forms of transmedia, including novelizations and merchandizing. The field's focus on the variety of adaptations has also been internationally framed to account for how transcultural adaptation in and of children's literature shifts across borders and language through translation, setting up fascinating avenues on the circulation and reception of stories all over the globe.²¹ Part of what accounts for this growth may be related to an overall field evaluation that Sarah Cardwell makes of adaptation studies more broadly: "fundamentally underpinning the recent transformation of adaptation studies is a radically amended notion of what (an) adaptation is, and a greater recognition of its connectedness with other cultural practices, such as borrowing, remaking, translating, and so on."²² Overall, the field is strengthened by this diversity and variety of adapted texts and materials because scholars

²⁰ Lefebvre, *Textual Transformations*, 2.

²¹ See Emer O'Sullivan, *Comparative Children's Literature*, trans. Anthea Bell (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2005).

²² Cardwell, "Pause, Rewind, Replay: Adaptation, Intertextuality and (Re)Defining Adaptation Studies," 7.

appreciate and give attention to texts that may be overlooked as commercial opportunities or dismissed as simple derivations of “great” classics and beloved stories of our youth. Examinations of adaptations have proven a fruitful exercise to correct these reductive assumptions and limited scopes.²³ Following this foundational work, in this dissertation, I situate groups of adaptations in

²³ There are numerous book studies, article collections, and articles in academic journals that showcase this enterprising work. For book studies and collections, see Patricia Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Sylvie Geerts and Sara Van den Bossche, eds., *Never-Ending Stories: Adaptation, Canonisation and Ideology in Children’s Literature* (Gent: Ginkgo Academic Press, 2014); Barbara Hochman, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011); Erica Hateley, *Shakespeare in Children’s Literature: Gender and Cultural Capital*, *Children’s Literature and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Jackie C. Horne, *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children’s Literature*, *Ashgate Studies in Childhood, 1700 to the Present* (Ashgate Publishing Group, 2011); Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer and Astrid Surmatz, *Beyond Pippi Longstocking Intermedial and International Aspects of Astrid Lindgren’s Works*, *Children’s Literature and Culture* 77 (New York: Routledge, 2011); Lefebvre, *Textual Transformations*; Barbara Tapa Lupack, *Adapting the Arthurian Legends for Children: Essays on Arthurian Juvenalia*, 1st ed., *Studies in Arthurian and Courtly Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Ruth K. MacDonald, *Christian’s Children: The Influence of John Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress on American Children’s Literature*, vol. 10, XXIV *American Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); Naomi J. Miller, *Reimagining Shakespeare for Children and Young Adults*, *Children’s Literature and Culture* 25 (New York: Routledge, 2003); Robyn McCallum, *Screen Adaptations and the Politics of Childhood Transforming Children’s Literature into Film*, 1st ed. 2018., *Palgrave Studies in Adaptation and Visual Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018); Anja Müller, ed., *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children’s Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Andrew O’Malley, *Children’s Literature, Popular Culture, and Robinson Crusoe*, *Critical Approaches to Children’s Literature* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *Chaucer as Children’s Literature: Retellings from*

context to carve out a history of nineteenth-century print-based adaptations for children produced in the American market. These books might otherwise be overlooked for an assumed simplicity or triviality, despite being produced, in some cases, by high-profile writers like William Taylor Adams (Oliver Optic) and Lewis Carroll and often by prominent publishers of the period, including the American Sunday-School Union, John P. Jewett & Co., L. Prang & Co, and McLoughlin Brothers. Such a dismissal is still incredibly easy for books adapted for newly literate and younger children—early readers—in the nineteenth century. Up against famous novels and stories in the Golden Age of children’s literature, or “the children’s literature canon,” perceptions of adaptations do not quite measure up to these books’ originality and landmark redefinition of writing for children.²⁴

These texts and their label as adaptations carry cultural and academic baggage, which relegates them as derivations that fail to reflect the status of their textual origins. Following scholars like Jackie Horne and Sarah Robbins, who remove “didactic” from its negative critical qualities to pursue more productive frames of inquiry, I embrace a similar methodological move to recast adaptations outside of terms like “condensed,” “simplified,” and “bowdlerized” to begin building a different set of terms to describe the body of adaptations for children in the nineteenth

the Victorian and Edwardian Eras (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2004); John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture, Volume 5: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children’s Literature*, vol. 5, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

²⁴ The exception to this sentiment is the intersection of adaptation and celebrated books of the Golden Age in books like R.M. Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* (1857) and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1881-1882). Even then, they are claimed as well-known and popularly read Robinsonades, adaptations of Daniel Defoe’s novel *Robinson Crusoe*.

century.²⁵ I am not interested in arguing that these terms are inapplicable or false; instead, I shift away from the primacy these terms come to hold with nineteenth-century adaptations for children. These skew an understanding of this corpus of texts and what they potentially present concerning the reading child figure (represented and addressed) and how adults imagine this figure in relation to the stories transmitted. I showcase how the adaptation of culturally relevant texts—which stem from diverse motivations, including addressing this segmented audience, invoking nostalgia, promoting moral character or self-improvement, encouraging or prohibiting children access to a political sphere, affirming or challenging dominant hegemonic values concerning racial superiority and prescribed gender roles, or representing avenues for juvenile salvation—happen in interesting, surprising, and even offensive adaptation processes that cannot be wholly captured by the terms “simplified” or “bowdlerized” as we imagine and use them in our academic discourse,

²⁵ See Horne, *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children’s Literature*, 6; 28. Sarah Robbins, *Managing Literacy, Mothering America: Women’s Narratives on Reading and Writing in the Nineteenth Century*, Pittsburgh Series in Composition, Literacy, and Culture (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 34. Like “simplified” or “bowdlerized”, didactic has been used and applied as a negative term to describe historical children’s literature. Children’s literature and didacticism, as associated with writers like Samuel Goodrich, Lydia Sigourney, Lydia Maria Child, Jacob Abbott, and others, are placed in opposition to complex, aesthetically rich, realistic and fantastical texts for children, particularly because these former writers’ projects are associated with writing against the fairy-tale and fantasy tradition in the early nineteenth century. However, there are scholars who do not condemn didactic texts: Anne Scott MacLeod for instance focuses on the moral tale in non-school juvenile fiction in the Jacksonian era, remarking that “No one can make a claim for the literary merit of this fiction: there was none. But there was a simple dignity and conviction in that it went beyond a certain attempt to control society by indoctrinating children with safe moral values.” From Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children’s Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 97.

whether as terms of dismissal or critique of fidelity and aesthetics. I aim to correct these misconceptions and build beyond them with detailed and thorough examinations of both textual and material adaptation processes in relation to other adaptations marketed and addressed to child readers.

Thus, in this dissertation, I approach adaptation by bringing together adaptations regardless of the source narrative more broadly. Since there are many print-based adaptations, adaptation studies' tried and true approaches, including source-to-adaptation case studies and single-text models, possess limitations.²⁶ Case study approaches rely on a comparative method to gain insight on the adaptation process of creation and reception from the "source" or "original" to individual adaptations.²⁷ More commonly and when applicable, I will refer to the "source" using John Stephens and Robyn McCallum's term, "pre-text."²⁸ Though there are benefits to this type of comparative reading, which lays bare the differences and similarities between the pre-text and the adaptation, I limit my use to turn to a broader comparative approach: consider the similarities and

²⁶ Some scholars critique the case study approach as limiting the potential of the theorization and development of adaptation studies. See Semenza, "Towards a Historical Turn?: Adaptation Studies and the Challenges of History."

²⁷ Edited collections reflect these in-depth examinations and cover considerable ground in the breadth of material that has been adapted for child audiences historically and globally. See Lefebvre, *Textual Transformations*; Müller, *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children's Literature*; Geerts and Van den Bossche, *Never-Ending Stories: Adaptation, Canonisation and Ideology in Children's Literature*.

²⁸ Stephens and McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture, Volume 5: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature*, 5:4.

differences among adaptations themselves. This approach renders the single-text model (basically an expanded version of the case study) moot for my purposes.²⁹

Avoiding the single-text model complements how adapters approach the process with a similar intertextual tactic as discussed in chapters 2 and 3 with the influence of popular entertainments, other forms of children's literature, and even social reading practices. Adaptations also often appear in groups through series like the adaptations examined in chapters 4 and 5. Thus, my dissertation does not do away with case studies. Still, it does resist traditional case studies concerning adaptation (1:1 comparative between pre-text and adaptation) and single-text models in favor of studying adaptations as groups so that adaptations can be productively categorized in relation to each other for further insights on historically specific periods of adaptation production. Kamilla Elliott, a prominent theorist in adaptation studies, asserts that "if we are to theorize adaptations as adaptations, we have to consider them in relation to each other. Such groupings need not amount to universal claims or hierarchical rankings, as in older modes of taxonomization; they can be dialogically or dialectically or intertextually negotiated."³⁰ One of the ways to consider them in relation to each other is to locate a specific quality of adaptation that unites a particular category together. Each chapter reflects a shared quality that struck me in my research and reading of numerous print-based adaptations, which can be broken down to metareadings and textual displays of reading practices in chapters 2 and 3, and charming material transformations of specific

²⁹ Case studies also allow for comprehensive looks at contemporary adaptations that continue to flourish in film and literature as well as across other medias. Case studies are numerous and a default approach that is particularly useful when expanded into a single-text model.

³⁰ Kamilla Elliott, "The Theory of Badaptation," in *The Routledge Companion to Adaptation*, ed. Dennis Cutchins, Katja Krebs, and Eckart Voigts (London: Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Group, 2018), 23.

mediums or forms with the paper doll shape books in chapter 4 and the toy book adaptations in chapter 5. The four case studies in the following chapters only constitute a small sample of adaptations produced in the long nineteenth century, but together they highlight the various ways in which adapters assert, negotiate, and reimagine child readers' interactions with shared print as cultural capital through and in these textual and material transformations.

With looks at unique recreations and reimagined pre-texts for children, I model an approach that demonstrates how cultural and historical contexts with literary and book production practices impact adaptation processes in specific ways. This way, I can highlight the variability of adaptation practices in a particular period and according to shifting markers of age and audience for whom adaptations are created. New technologies for print production that developed and became even more efficient are another key factor here. While the first three chapters bring together a small sample of books for a comparative examination, the fourth chapter uses an alternative quantitative method to expand the sample size significantly. Thus, the dissertation as a whole applies this broadened comparative method to examine adaptations alongside other adaptations, tackling adaptation's ubiquitous quality with attention to the inventory of an innovating juvenile publisher.

In the remaining portion of this introduction, I set the stage for understanding adapters' restrictions and supervision of reading children via textual and material transformation of children's books. First, I highlight the cultural anxieties surrounding children's books and reading children, and then I review the labor and value of reading as understood and transmitted by adults through print and literacy educations to show how adaptations as products aim to compete in the juvenile and broader print market.

1.3 Cultural Anxieties of Children's Books and Reading Children

In order to think about age-based adaptations of popular stories into children's books in the long nineteenth century, we need to consider how writers thought about the relationship between childhood and print culture in this era. The prevalent growth of the American children's book market in the nineteenth century precipitated a reaction that questioned the usefulness and exceptionality of many children's books available for young readers. Importantly, writing about children's books was informed by a seriousness attached to the importance of childhood reading (mainly for instruction) and how pedagogically relevant texts were produced. As one anonymous writer who went by the initials E.D.S. wrote, writing for children was "a delicate service."³¹ In E.D.S.'s view, this "service" is a serious enterprise, which must incorporate a moral or civic imperative to the books that children read because children reading books was a means to construct character and to emulate models of virtue. This period's emerging juvenile authors, including Jacob Abbott, Lydia Maria Child, Samuel Goodrich, and others, considered fairy tales and Mother Goose nursery rhymes, for example, unsuitable and inappropriate. They argued that these books perpetuate fantasy rather than fact for ill-perceiving readers.³² These critiques were not limited to

³¹ E. D. S., "Children's Books," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts*, March 22, 1855, 94.

³² See Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 9. Sánchez-Eppler reminds us that this common narrative is used to explain in a handful of children's literature histories why American writers for children were slow in producing imaginative and fictional material in comparison to other nations; this detail should not be used for teleological ends (footnote 12).

the fiction genre but extended to other reading materials shared with children, as Lyman Cobb describes in *Cobb's Juvenile Reader No. 1*:

The practice of giving children dialogues between wolves and sheep, cats and mice, &c. &c., often met in elementary Reading-Books, containing statements and details of things which never did, and which never can take place, is as destructive of truth and morality, as it is contrary to the principles of nature and philosophy.³³

Cobb suggests in his juvenile reader that schoolbooks, like those that contain reading exercises, present false scenarios like anthropomorphizing animals as verbal. The works authors and publishers produced for children, then, were presented as replacements of this harmful childhood reading and antidotes to the kinds of effects these unacceptable tales potentially had on the rational and moral development of children. While the “host of terrible fancies, by which the tender mind used to be perverted,” as an anonymous editorialist opined about fairytales and other fantastical stories as an immediate concern, the anxieties surrounding reading children also rested in 1) the high volume and dubious quality of American texts produced for children to replace the deemed unacceptable childhood reading and 2) the effects of fiction and novel reading on vulnerable readers.³⁴

³³ Lyman Cobb, *Cobb's Juvenile Reader No. 1: Containing Interesting, Moral, and Instructive Reading Lessons, Composed of Easy Words of One and Two Syllables: Designed for the Use of Small Children in Families and School* (Ithaca, New York: Andrus, Woodruff, & Gauntlett, 1830), 5.

³⁴ “Children’s Books,” *The Illinois Monthly Magazine*, June 1831, 403.

In the nineteenth century, technological innovation facilitated an unprecedented increase in print production which was symbolically marked as a “flood” of print.³⁵ What was uncertain at the time was how to navigate the vast availability of material and textual objects because cultural critics of the period feared that vulnerable readers would drown amidst the quantity as well as the suspect quality of these print products. Gillian Silverman isolates and explains the anxiety: “the fear is that modernity is altering reading habits, creating a public incapable of profound and continuous textual engagement—a concern that is, as Karin Littau points out, echoed by contemporary critics of the Internet.”³⁶ These anxieties were also articulated specifically in relation to the juvenile market of books produced for children.

Closer examination of the period’s public writings like newspaper articles and magazines reveals that adults focus on the number of books available to American youth even if they acted

³⁵ “Flood” is a historical term used by contemporary critics. For an example, see Catharine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, Revised Edition (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 82 Cliff Street, 1848), 234, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nnc1.0312719609>. Beecher describes how “highly-wrought fictions, which lead the imagination astray; and especially from that class of licentious works, made interesting by genius and taste, which have flooded this Country, and which are often found on the parlor table, even of moral and Christian people.” It is also a term employed by scholars to describe the growth or explosion of print. It is also used and quoted in scholarship. For two examples, see Patricia Crain, *The Story of A: The Alphabetization of American from The New England Primer to The Scarlet Letter* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000), 144; Barbara Sicherman, “Ideologies and Practices of Reading,” in *The History of the Book in America: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*, vol. 3, *A History of the Book in America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 283.

³⁶ Gillian D. Silverman, *Bodies and Books: Reading and the Fantasy of Communion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 27.

as alternatives to the popular or vulgar fanciful texts.³⁷ Publications like *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters*, *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and the *Christian Inquirer* include articles on “Children’s Books” that refer to the vast number of books published for the juvenile “class” of literature. For example, a writer of the *Christian Register* in 1834 grumbles that “the counters of the booksellers groan beneath them and with their intrusive blue and yellow covers, we see them gradually elbowing grave octavos and respectable duodecimos out of their places on the shelves of the library and the parlor table.”³⁸ Often, the unwieldy number is a point of critique, which questions the motivations of producers of this work: is it for the instruction and amusement of young minds or the manufacture of texts in a lucrative market? In the quote above, these books meet a demand that “respectable” or “grave” texts do not. Additionally, the writer may also suggest that juvenile books are practically uncontrollable if not also aggressive in their dominant visibility and presence in these public and private spheres.

The large number of books is a concern for the Sunday-school library, as well, so this concern crosses its way into the non-commercial field of print culture. According to F. Allen Briggs, “one of the chief defects mentioned in *Sunday School Libraries: Their Uses and Abuses* is their unwieldy size. Particular attention is called to a collection of 1,100 books which served a

³⁷ Not all critics and reviewers take such a vehement rejection of fairytales and other fantasy stories from the eighteenth-century print culture as ill-suited for child readers. See W.A. Jones, “Children’s Books,” *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review*, December 1844, 536–37. The author explains that whatever the age of the reader, “with a pure heart, a healthy imagination, and a refined moral sense, could or can, help loving a good fairy tale or romantic legend.” Another writer defends fairy tales as great and interesting childhood reading in “Concerning Children’s Books,” *Yankee Doodle*, December 19, 1846, 128.

³⁸ “Children’s Books,” *Christian Register*, January 25, 1834, 14.

school of sixty-six pupils. The author of this pamphlet advocated a library of about 300 volumes because...the teacher could know all the books and could select desirable reading for his students.”³⁹ In order to manage the number of texts being churned out even by larger bodies like the American Sunday-School Union and printing firms selling by catalog and at store fronts, managers or librarians of Sunday-school libraries were encouraged to limit the number in order for the adult to play a larger role in guiding and directing reading choices for his pupils.

Given the number of books available, these reviewers and critics were skeptical that the books were in the best service of childhood reading and instruction. They explained how so many choices were unnecessarily overwhelming (if not also damaging to young readers who cannot handle the load). Also, they argued that the sheer number could not realistically and consistently represent excellent writing. Some certainly argued that it did not. Reviewer H. of *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters*, in his article on Jacob Abbott’s Rollo and Cousin Lucy series, writes, “As to writers, their standard too should rise continually; and while they admire and covet the popularity of the successful, let them not imitate mechanically, but seek to analyze the causes of success.”⁴⁰ This comment cautions aspiring children’s authors that writing for children is not a simple project but a serious one. The reviewer urges aspiring writers to study the best exemplars of exceptional writing for children and communicates an overall concern about formulaic and imitative texts in the proliferation of children’s books at that time.

³⁹ F. Allen Briggs, “The Sunday-School Library in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 31, no. 2 (1961): 172.

⁴⁰ H., “Children’s Books.--Rollo and Lucy,” *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters*, November 1842, 256–57.

Adaptations both fit and challenge these concerns. Repetitive and numerous books of the broader children's book market were suspected of being fueled by profit rather than civic or moral motivations. If a book was suspected of fulfilling a profitable venture, then its qualities and content were considered empty of moral and aesthetic value. Adaptations, or different types of "edited" stories, did not escape from this scrutiny; they too were viewed as easy capital enterprises that added to a bloated market and did not benefit children's reading.⁴¹ Adapters and writers of children's books appear to have used this rhetoric that surrounded the anxiety of children's reading and the navigation of children's books in the broader print culture to address this criticism of the juvenile literature market as well as to use it as a marketing tool. In the "Address to Parents" in *The Children's Robinson Crusoe*, the adapter writes that this book "is now commended to the careful and anxious parents, who may be seeking among the loaded counters of the children's bookseller, a safe and useful book."⁴² A Lady, the anonymous author of the text, uses the prefatory material to assuage adult concerns about purchasing her reversion of *Robinson Crusoe*. The writer further acknowledges parental fears and adult diligence of children's reading materials, which is another key concern when it comes to children consuming certain genres. As referenced above, fairytales and nursery rhymes were scrutinized for their lack of engagement with reality, and fiction and fantasy offered additional subversive and transgressive possibilities that were perceived as threats to both women and child readers. Critiques of the fiction genre, especially the novel, entered the discourse on reading and children for posing these similar dangers of enthusiastic

⁴¹ Jones, "Children's Books," 536.

⁴² My emphasis. A Lady, *The Children's Robinson Crusoe; Or the Remarkable Adventures of an Englishman, Who Lived Five Years On an Unknown and Uninhabited Island of the Pacific Ocean* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1830), viii.

engagement. Interestingly, the trajectory of adaptation outlined above appears to have eventually moved towards an acceptance of book commercialization practices that do not inherently threaten the child reader. The interests of publishers reassure adults of that with some different approaches that allowed the vast proliferation of toy book adaptations by the prominent firm McLoughlin Bros. Where the adaptative impulse is to defend children from the market allures of print, large-scale publishers like McLoughlin Bros. embraces the flood, branding it to add comfort, familiarity, and wonder to commonly recycled and adapted stories, and marketing the books affordably for working- and middle-class consumers.

Reviewers and critics of writing for children contributed to and extended discourse of reading to include child readers, especially as the book market segmented to address an imagined, narrowed child readership. Suspect novel and fiction reading had long been associated with a broader uneducated public, but especially women readers.⁴³ Eventually, fears and anxieties about child readers joined the chorus as more print materials dedicated to the reading, education, and rearing of children circulated. In *The Mother's Book*, for instance, Child advises that “even the best of novels should form the *recreation* rather than the *employment* of the mind... They are a sort of literary confectionary; and though they may be very perfect and beautiful, if eaten too

⁴³ See Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 45–47. Davidson explains how the novel in the early American period was criticized heavily for its associations with an uneducated public, namely women readers. Using the studies of Rhys Isaacs about Virginian print culture following the Revolutionary War, Davidson shows how a similar “flood” of print was seen as a threat given its potential to upset an established social order. Mainly, novels and other suspect fiction reading disrupted and challenged an interpretative authority in gentrified society since the novel invited the individual readers to forge meaning of the text and of culture.

plentifully, they do tend to destroy our appetite for more solid and nourishing food.”⁴⁴ Here she gives a restrained endorsement to novels, acknowledging that the genre has “so elevated a character” that it is not so damaging as it was fifty years prior. However, she still categorizes novel reading as entertainment that does not privilege useful reading that other works like biographies, histories, and travel narratives provide for the reader. Like a sweet treat, access to novels should be limited for readers, especially children, since an early introduction or indulgence could corrupt the “palate” or not contribute to moral development via the reading practice. While Child’s prescription is more cautionary, Samuel Goodrich, a prominent figure in nineteenth-century children’s print culture as a bookseller, publisher, editor, and author (as the famous Peter Parley), broadcasts an alert in a lesson on “Books.” He writes, “Indiscriminate reading, therefore, is dangerous to most; to the young it is perilous in the extreme.”⁴⁵ Goodrich’s use of the term *indiscriminate* usefully captures for us the attention adults gave to children’s relationship to print culture. Indiscriminate captures a lack of judgment when it comes to the selection of the texts as well as a reader’s lack of engagement in reading.

Novels became a site for the cultural imagination to consider what constituted uncritical reading and reveal its consequences. Karin Littau, for example, has shown through the examination of several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European novels like *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and *Madame Bovary* (1856) how the dangers of reading fiction, especially the novel, were associated with the loss of control of the body—steeped in sensation, passion, emotion—and would preclude

⁴⁴ Lydia Maria Child, *The Mother’s Book* (Boston, 1831), 87.

⁴⁵ Samuel G. Goodrich, *The Third Reader: For the Use of Schools* (Louisville, KY: Morton & Griswold, 1839), 67.

a mental mastery of the text.⁴⁶ If readers are invited to recognize these dangers, did adults of the period think child readers could recognize them? Courtney Weikle-Mills suggests that these kinds of efforts are documented in the peritextual materials of some of the most popular fiction produced and imported in the early nineteenth-century United States. Fears and anxieties about reading children appeared in printed texts that have been traditionally associated with an adult readership but also address children of a young republic. Using a selection of early American novels, Weikle-Mills reveals how the charges against novels and the terrible consequences of reading them become not strictly associated with the disenfranchised female reader but implicated in the reading of inexperienced, rebellious children and, more broadly, the “childish” citizen during the early republic of the United States.⁴⁷ Weikle-Mills contends that “associating resistance with childhood and bad reading, many novels mark dissent as the result of immaturity..., associating non-rights-bearing citizens’ expectations of power and equality with dependence, subjection, seduction, and civic illiteracy.”⁴⁸ No wonder critics like Child did not wholly trust the novel genre to serve as material for productive reading practices or, as I want to interpret them, as a currency of cultural capital that would cultivate important middle class and Protestant values of the period. Children’s

⁴⁶ Karin Littau, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies, and Bibliomania* (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2006), 62–82.

⁴⁷ Courtney Weikle-Mills, *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence, 1640-1868* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 95–130.

⁴⁸ Weikle-Mills, 98.

authors and other critics were attentive to how children read novels by offering a variety of prescriptions like Child gives above or intervenes by writing for children themselves.⁴⁹

Though they wrote what they deemed as appropriate and useful fiction for children, Child, Abbott, and others associated childhood with malleability as vulnerability if adult influences remained absent.⁵⁰ They were still wary of fiction's power and its possibilities in the socialization and influence of children. Childhood, including the books produced for children, needed adult governance and guidance. As Karen Sánchez-Eppler explains, "Throughout the nineteenth century concern about the moral content of fiction and the dangerous excitement of the fictional form were generally expressed in terms of the risks such writing poses to the 'vulnerable innocence' of 'young' readers."⁵¹ I want to add that an additional risk to children's assumed vulnerabilities extended to what was understood as an increased possibility for children to misread or misinterpret the text without adult assistance, control, and supervision. Such misreadings, as I examine in chapter 2, point to the ways in which adapters themselves interpret children's independent reading not simply as a misinterpretation but a transgression against cultural norms and codes according to gender and class. Misreading threatened the labor and middle-class values imagined through the nineteenth century's culture of reading. These conditions of juvenile and wider print market prepped adapters to restrict and discipline child readers through adaptation.

⁴⁹ Child is not a cut-and-dry figure on this issue reading, as will be discussed later in chapter 4. She may be assuming the position parents and other adults may have about child readers. Child writes, in *The Girls' Own Book*, "I knew I could not avoid numerous criticisms, and therefore I did not write with the fear of them before my eyes." Lydia Maria Child, *The Girls' Own Book* (New York: Clark Austin & Co., 1833), vi.

⁵⁰ Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*, 10.

⁵¹ Sánchez-Eppler, 9.

1.4 The Labor and Value of Reading

This remarkable moment of social change produced a culture of reading that strongly influenced how children were instructed to read and how books and reading practices were characterized in books for literacy instruction. In his works for the instruction and education of children—*The Third Reader* and *Fireside Education*—Goodrich writes, “books are vehicles of thought, mines to be wrought, from which we are to extract knowledge more precious than diamonds.”⁵² Goodrich characterizes the reader in an active position that acts upon the book. Child readers need to labor in the mines of their books in order to benefit from the practice. His image of the miner to display this relationship is not a coincidence or unique. According to Gillian Silverman, “[T]he standard for appropriate reading” was commonly represented “as an active, assimilative exercise in which new information is slowly absorbed by a controlling agent.”⁵³ Though Silverman notes that images of machinery are commonly used to depict the reading process to illustrate beneficial, acceptable, and efficient reading, or what she terms “railroad reading,” in the nineteenth century, Goodrich uses the mining analogy to capture similar notions of productivity and utility but with the added association of “precious” value.⁵⁴ The book as a mine contains capital for the reader to enrich himself, but the reader must exert the labor to unearth it. Like Goodrich, Thomas Kimber presents reading using economic terms. In *The American Class Book, or, A Collection of Instructive Reading Lessons: Adapted to the Use of Schools: Selected*

⁵² Goodrich, *The Third Reader: For the Use of Schools*, iv.

⁵³ Silverman, *Bodies and Books: Reading and the Fantasy of Communion in Nineteenth-Century America*, 34.

⁵⁴ See Silverman, 24. She defines “railroad reading” as an instrumentalist approach that “located satisfaction primarily in systemization and mastery of material.”

from *Blair's Class Book* (1812), Kimber imagines a reading protocol that engages with the peritexts that accompany a book in addition to its main content. For instance, he encourages readers to study the table of contents and any introductions that accompany it. He further suggests writing in the margins and having multiple “perusals” of a text as a way to grapple with an author’s ideas and explanations. He explains the importance of adopting his reading practice, arguing that “these methods of reading will cost some labor at first, but the profit will richly compensate the pains: one book read in this manner will more enrich your understanding, than skimming over the mere surface of twenty authors.”⁵⁵ Kimber speaks of surface reading, and he advocates for a deeper engagement, which is what Goodrich’s mine analogy is able to capture succinctly.⁵⁶ The profit or value from the labor of reading was presented as incredibly important. This idea of value is similarly expressed in a list of maxims on “Books and Reading” in *Maxims and Directions for Youth, On a Variety of Important and Interesting Subjects, Calculated for Private Families and Schools* (1811). The maxim reads, “He who possesses good books without gaining any profit from them, is like an ass that carries a rich burden and feeds upon thistles.”⁵⁷ Books possessed value for the knowledge they contained, and readers, including child readers, were tasked with extracting it

⁵⁵ Thomas Kimber, *The American Class Book, or, A Collection of Instructive Reading Lessons: Adapted to the Use of Schools: Selected from Blair's Class Book* (Philadelphia: Kimber & Richardson, 1812), 165.

⁵⁶ This engagement also reflects the kind of systemization that an instrumentalist approach to reading, as prescribed by conduct manuals in the nineteenth century, suggested for its readers. Silverman, *Bodies and Books: Reading and the Fantasy of Communion in Nineteenth-Century America*, 24.

⁵⁷ John Thornton, *Maxims and Directions for Youth, on a Variety of Important and Interesting Subjects, Calculated for Private Families and Schools* (London: Printed for W. Baynes, 54, Paternoster-Row; By W. Heney, Crown Court, Aldersgate Street., 1811), 27.

effectively. From schoolbooks, advice manuals, and newspaper and periodical reviews and columns, it was evident that adults were especially concerned with how children could engage in active and thoughtful meaning-making when children autonomously read books and navigated an emerging massive print culture.

One response to curb these independent wanderings towards terrible books that failed to cultivate productive reading practices was to counter with fiction that imagined these scenarios through fictional child readers in children's reading materials. For example, in *The Mount Vernon Reader: A Course of Reading Lessons, Selected with Reference to Their Moral Influence on the Hearts and Lives of the Young, Designed for Middle Classes* (1839), Jacob Abbott includes a story or lesson on deceiving parents, which deals exclusively with such an approach to discourage these illicit novel reading. A young girl, Louisa, "was abundantly supplied with materials for reading; but her parents were desirous, as every judicious and considerate parent would have been, that her books should be such as would afford profitable employment for her mind, and to this end, they wished that her reading should be under their own direction."⁵⁸ Louisa's parents take an active role in the guidance and supervision of Louisa's reading: both the products and the process. Therefore, a lack of parental engagement isn't the issue. Instead, Louisa exercises her literacy and agency to get and read novels secretly against her parents' wishes. Her independent forays into a dangerous print culture without her parents' permission eventually results in her illness. Louisa shares her deception with her friend Ellen, who represents the model for the child reader to identify

⁵⁸ Jacob Abbott, *The Mount Vernon Reader: A Course of Reading Lessons, Selected with Reference to Their Moral Influence on the Hearts and Lives of the Young, Designed for Middle Classes* (New York: Published by Collins, Keese, & Co. No. 254 Pearl Street, 1839), 230.

with as possessing sufficient moral character and sound judgment. Ellen is appalled that Louisa has this secret. Despite getting severely ill, Louisa continues to read novels without her parents' knowledge or consent. Eventually, she confesses to her parents and recovers. The lesson could not be clearer with this cautionary tale in which disobedience and deception physically affect the body and threaten the soul. Deception and illicit reading combined are toxic. It is dangerous to the health and spiritual salvation of the child who moves beyond the boundaries or direction of her parents. Like Abbott, pedagogues package this lesson in a myriad of locations in print culture, from schoolbook readers to the fiction produced for a child audience. Metareadings like the one that appears in Abbott's text commonly make their way into adaptations for children as well, creating continuity with Abbott's and other's lessons in productive reading that extends well into the middle of the nineteenth century. Adapters more clearly focus on the reading of transmitted stories, ruminating on texts' role and function for cultural production. Adapters also experiment too, using the form of children's writing to model and script the forms of productive reading they valued by producing children's editions from popular novel pre-texts from the eighteenth century and from the contemporary moment in the nineteenth century.

Beginning with chapter 2, I establish the anxieties of misreading specific to two adaptations titled *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* by examining the threat of imaginative reading that outright subverts the reading labor protocol. These two adaptations offer a gendered and class look at the issue. Here I introduce the conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production and cultural capital in order to further tease out the implications of the adapters' restrictions and the adapters' expectations of child readers and their usage of cultural capital. While chapter 2 represents the child reader as a problem that requires an adaptive solution that favors the monitoring of child reading, chapter 3 brings together a collection of adaptations

that address a form of modeling child readers would have likely been familiar with: communal reading in the family circle. I turn my focus to fictionalized representations of communal reading, including mixed-age family circles and juvenile family circles. With a sense of the fears that motivated adults and adapters in the nineteenth century, the second chapter examines texts that embed supervisory apparatuses in the adaptations in a couple of different ways. The frame narratives and textual frameworks are used to abridge and retell adaptations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Lamplighter*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. While the adaptive impulse for this period leans towards supervising and tightly controlling the interpretative possibilities of adapted narratives, other adaptations do challenge the impetus to instruct in favor of active political and social participation in the transmission of ideas. Thus, while I have selected a range of adaptations that reflect the reading labor protocol outlined here, ones that compete with these prescriptions to restrain and supervise were also present.

By chapter 4, I think beyond the traditional codex form and consider remediation and adaptation through the paper doll shape book, a novel material *and* textual transformation. This toy-book hybrid liberates the child reader from the restrictions put in place by other adaptations. Following in the same footsteps as *Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* examined in the latter part of chapter 3, the L. Prang & Company paper doll shape books' format and adapted stories script imaginative fantasy play. This series of books does not fear the child reader's power of imagination, and through experimental processes of chromolithography, die-cutting, versification, and illustration, the adapters of this first-of-its-kind series open up possibilities of interactions with adapted stories rather than foreclosing them. Child readers can still profit in the ways still valued by cultural arbiters and pedagogues by mining the text for moral and embodied cultural capital but still remain safe in their imaginative wanderings

via the manipulation and play of a paper doll figure and plaything. Finally, chapter 5 presents a competing paradigm that takes immersive storytelling to its limit with the category of toy books produced by the McLoughlin Bros. Departing from prior case studies in the dissertation that rely on smaller samples of comparative close reading analyses, this chapter incorporates distant reading and uses a dataset mined from four McLoughlin Bros. catalogs. I trace and categorize the catalogs in order to capture quantitative data on their production efforts and business model. Building on the archival work and research established by Laura Wasowicz and other scholars of the toy book producer, I show how McLoughlin Bros. relies on the branding of cultural capital to broaden its access to include the working classes with its middle-class peers.

With the flood of print, adaptation as a writing and publishing practice for child readers proliferated in the nineteenth century, and this study attempts to show that these adaptations as steady sellers, commercial opportunities, familiar and nostalgic books, exciting opportunities for imaginative engagement, and tools of socialization were meshed in the development, not on the periphery, of nineteenth-century children's literature. I conclude the dissertation with chapter 6, the coda, to discuss the possibilities of the methodological approaches applied in this dissertation, particularly in relation to dealing with the ubiquity of adaptation and addressing the reception of adaptations with its intended audience of child readers.

2.0 Adapting Books for Child (Mis)Readers

In *Explanation of the Pilgrim's Progress, &c. &c. Abridged, and Adapted to the Capacities of Children, In Dialogue, Between a Child, and His Mother* (1821), the anonymous author, known only as "A Lady," presents an announced adaptation of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). The adaptation re-frames the allegory from the narrator's dream of Christian's incredible journey to the Celestial City as an exchange between a ten-year-old boy, Charles, and his mother as they read and discuss the text. Charles is not a newcomer to Bunyan's allegory; he has already read the book with a fellow friend, so the dialogue functions instead to test Charles' knowledge of the story and for Mother to fill in the gaps of his understanding. In an amusing moment of the story, Charles begins to anticipate the thrilling entrance of Apollyon. Seeing his distraction, Mother re-directs his attention to the story sequence and pace his reading:

Child. Pray tell me, mother as I don't just now recollect, where he met with *Apollyon*, that dragon?

Mother. Don't be in a hurry. You must first be informed, that Christian, on his arrival at the summit of the hill *Difficulty*, found, that he had a steep and dangerous descent downward, to a valley called *Humiliation*.⁵⁹

A Lady's adaptation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* dramatizes Charles' disruptions, highlighting the little reader's misreading as pleasurable and not as instructive. Charles persists in the dialogue with his questions about Apollyon, and they reflect his recognition of particular elements of the story.

⁵⁹ A Lady, *Explanation of the Pilgrim's Progress, &c. &c. Abridged, and Adapted to the Capacities of Children, In Dialogue, Between a Child, and His Mother* (Boston: Published by Samuel T. Armstrong, and Crocker & Brewster, No. 50, Cornhill, 1821), 23.

His focus is tellingly on an epic battle. Mother cues him to listen and then reflect upon the signification of the fight on Christian's spiritual journey instead. When Charles asks, "Did not they fight there?" and his mother responds, "Yes; if you will have patience I will tell you."⁶⁰ Charles replies in frustration and exclaims, "O, dear mother! I am impatient to know how the battle ended, for my schoolfellow and I skipped over a great deal."⁶¹ In this exchange, Charles betrays his undisciplined reading of Bunyan's narrative, and he does not acknowledge the sequence of events that culminate in the hero's salvation. From Mother's supervisory position, Charles fundamentally misreads the necessary steps he must symbolically enact to replicate Christian's allegorical journey as his own spiritual pilgrimage. He requires an adult, in this case, his mother, to identify, correct, and reinforce the reading for him and, by extension, the text's audience of children.

This representation of a child reflects the conception of childhood in this period that understood adults as responsible for the inscription of their ideas on unformed beings, which required a considerable amount of guidance and caretaking. Defined by Jacqueline Reinier as "the malleable child," this Enlightenment-era construct was appropriated into American child-rearing in the early republic into the nineteenth century, in which childhood signified the becoming of a productive American citizen.⁶² Steven Mintz describes this construct as "life's formative stage, a highly plastic period when character and habits were shaped for good or ill."⁶³ Childhood's

⁶⁰ Lady, 25.

⁶¹ Lady, 26.

⁶² Jacqueline S. Reinier, *From Virtue to Character: American Childhood, 1775-1850* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), ix-xi.

⁶³ Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 76.

malleability or plasticity was a vulnerable state given that detrimental influences could interfere with the child's education and upbringing, resulting in unfavorable vices and moral failings. Books are another environmental influence that may corrupt.

Juvenile fiction both reflects these anxieties about the malleable child and seeks to remedy them. In an overview of children's books from 1820 through 1860, Anne Scott MacLeod confirms this construct as dominantly present throughout children's fiction of the period.⁶⁴ These books possess "a sense of urgency that made of every childish experience an opportunity for teaching morality."⁶⁵ The goal of this fiction was didactic or for the purposes of moral instruction. Unsurprisingly then, the reading activity depicted in *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress* shows a child exercising his literacy and attempts to demonstrate his comprehension with his mother carefully examining him. As the adult figure affectionately directing her son, Mother is intent on instilling values of patience and piety. Reading is another socialization activity that requires monitoring and molding, especially when the child deviates from or, worse, resists the potential lessons embedded in their books. To miss or ignore instruction puts a child's character and future at stake. Thus, adults taught children prescribed protocols about "productive" reading or reading that supports instruction and character formation. When necessary, Charles's misreading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as simply an adventure story is corrected.

Charles's unauthorized reading does not go unchecked. In this adaptation, Charles represents a form of the malleable child that faces exposure to corrupting influences by innocently misreading, or misinterpreting or misunderstanding a culturally sanctioned meaning of the

⁶⁴ MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 94.

⁶⁵ MacLeod, 94.

narrative. Outside of the mediations of the maternal and parental figure, Charles's reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* with another child violates some reading protocols, like skipping passages or pages and not engaging in what authorities in literacy considered "active" meaning-making of the text. Despite being imaginatively captured by Christian's heroism and engrossed by thrilling narrative events, Charles and his companion, were participating in what some adults would understand as "unproductive" forms of reading. To be fair, his mother commends him for comprehending the surface-level events in the storyline from memory, a step in actively engaging the material. It is important that Charles is receptive to her corrections, showing that his reading and, by extension, his soul and character can be redeemed. Still, the adapter uses the dialogue frame to establish Charles within the first few pages as a misreader whose reading activities need intervention. His initial interaction with *The Pilgrim's Progress* fails to decode what she views as essential aspects of the allegory; thus, his continued reading of the novel requires his parent's consistent redirection. He must access these spiritual significations because they model the salvation process; thus, an adult mediator, in this case, his mother, rescues him from his misreading by decoding the redemption narrative with him. Adaptations like *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress* possess this logic: intercede on behalf of child readers and manage the reading process.

Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress demonstrates an adaptation process in which books like *The Pilgrim's Progress* require an adult presence within the re-framing of the narrative to assure the transmission of the story to its targeted audience of independent child readers. Its recurrent publishing history, though short, possessed a longer run than others. *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress* was printed at least three times: in 1808 by J. Barfield of London, again in 1818 (by the same printer), and then finally in 1821 by Samuel T. Armstrong, and Crocker & Brewster of Boston. This pattern reflects a circulation of print materials in a transatlantic book trade where an

American market appropriated British imports through reprinting. The book arguably served a demand in the market for such a product that addressed the needs of child readers as misreading a key book like *The Pilgrim's Progress*. *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress* offers a glimpse of the purpose of adaptation as a creative and market process, but as the two case studies in this chapter indicate, producing a receptive and submissive reader as modeled by Charles is far more challenging outside the loving embrace of a watchful and correcting parent. These adaptations demonstrate how similar processes of textual transformation are aimed to restrict autonomous child readers from independently consuming shared texts like *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*.

Over one hundred years after the publication of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Explanation of the Pilgrim's Progress* was not the only adaptation available in the juvenile market in the first decades throughout the nineteenth century. Others like *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Versified: For the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth* (1807) and *Bunyan Explained to a Child: Being Pictures and Poems, Founded Upon The Pilgrim's Progress. Part I[-II]. Or Christian's Journey; Consisting of Above Fifty Engravings, With a Poem to Each, and a Map of the Journey* (1831) were intent on clarifying the meaning of the text for child readers who misread Bunyan's novel as a heroic adventure. Different than a child reading the novel alone, nineteenth-century print-based adaptations like *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress* re-position a child audience's engagement with the narrative on adult pedagogical terms, establishing distinctions in the relations between persons according to age, status, and ability. These adaptations show common concern for reading children's demonstrated comprehension, acceptable interpretation, and the necessity for adult control over children's interactions with print, particularly with transmitted material shared across generations. Adaptations which explain *The Pilgrim's Progress* or retell it in modes that assume

vulnerable child readers is not exclusive to Bunyan's allegory, and when compared to other adapted children's editions in the period, including those that adapt Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), show a similar pattern. As Mother says to Charles, "As you are now only a child, it is not in your power to do much."⁶⁶ Adaptations like *Explanation* and others assert a perceived necessity to mediate these narratives for an audience assumed to possess limited interpretative and disciplined "power" of reading.

The similar approaches to textual reproduction contained in this chapter meet new market demands for materials "adapted to the capacities of children" in print-based adaptations. Adapted classic literature for children typically simplified, censored, or reduced texts in retold modes, but these books go beyond this to exhibit heightened concerns that nineteenth-century American society held about child readers and how adapters sought to carefully control interpretative power and reading engagement of the books that children read. Specifically, adaptations produced for the increasingly crowded juvenile market and increasingly literate child public that emerged in this era reveal anxieties about children reading any form of *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* without supervision. This change is significant given that *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe* are two narratives transmitted from generation to generation of children since the seventeenth century. They were also two of the most popular fictional books adapted for a child readership beginning in the eighteenth century.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Lady, *Explanation of the Pilgrim's Progress, &c. &c. Abridged, and Adapted to the Capacities of Children, In Dialogue, Between a Child, and His Mother*, 8.

⁶⁷ Other popularly adapted content included nursery rhymes, folk tales, fairy tales, ballads, romances, and other fiction like *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

Two emerging “giants” of the children’s literature market reframe these stories to showcase child characters that read and then engage with either Crusoe’s adventure or Christian’s pilgrimage. The first is written by prolific children’s author William Taylor Adams under the pseudonym Oliver Optic. In *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (1863), Optic embeds a child character, the young Robert Gray, who reads Defoe’s Crusoe and “want[s] to be a Robinson Crusoe.”⁶⁸ Crusoe’s exciting island enterprises enthrall Robert. The second adaptation I discuss was produced by a significant Christian-based publisher and provider of books and periodicals for children, the American Sunday-School Union (ASSU). In the ASSU’s adaptation, another child character—Marian of *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* (1852)—is inspired to undertake a pilgrimage to “seek the road to Heaven” in her multiple re-readings of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.⁶⁹ Both characters in the adaptations individually set out to replicate the heroes’ stories. These texts represent children as innately vulnerable to unmediated books. Optic and the ASSU offer cautionary tales where child characters circumvent adult authority or are at risk from an absence of adult supervision of children’s reading. The child characters’ misreadings, or misinterpretations of the stories, lead them to perilously embody the stories and embark on journeys that exceed the boundaries of the protected, domestic space, a site that represents the supervised and carefully mediated generational transmission of these stories from adults to children.

⁶⁸ Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe, Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, (Successors to Phillips, Sampson, & Co.), 1863), 27.

⁶⁹ *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, No. 146 Chestnut Street, 1852), 7.

Strikingly, the adaptations that I examine are not retellings of the narratives that reproduce the main plots and points of view of the original novels and are therefore directly connected to these pre-texts. Instead, these adaptations recast the main characters of Robinson Crusoe and Christian as child characters who read and are inspired by Defoe's and Bunyan's stories. These new texts are what John Stephens and Robyn McCallum refer to as a reversion, "a narrative which has taken apart its pre-texts and reassembled them as a version which is a new textual and ideological configuration."⁷⁰ I adopt Stephen's and McCallum's usage here to highlight how these two adaptations for children recast and then feature fictionalized child reader's appropriations of Defoe's adventurous tale and Bunyan's religious allegory within a cultural climate fearful of children's reading. These adaptations thus reveal a logic of cultural reproduction that is more complex than other processes of simplification or bowdlerization. To persuade readers that they are as vulnerable as Robert and Marian, *Optic and the ASSU* strip Robert and Marian of any glamor their imaginative and daring reading activities could potentially afford them. Then, they mandate that they return to the home of middle-class childhood to live out their extended educations and preparations for adulthood.

Despite the pedagogical and spiritual importance that *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe* possessed in the instruction and socialization of children, *Optic and the ASSU* present the view that they do not readily accept Bunyan's and Defoe's original works as suitable for a child audience. The cultural preoccupation with children's malleable states and unmediated fiction manifests itself within the narratives. I argue that *Optic and the ASSU*, both of which had

⁷⁰ Stephens and McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture, Volume 5: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature*, 5:4.

considerable reach and influence on the market of children's books, appropriate these stories through adaptation to "rescue" their imagined child audiences from the effects of misreading. These two reversions warn of the dangers and stakes of children's unprofitable autonomous reading, even of valuable and popular narratives, and seek to protect reading labors through literacy instruction and pedagogy, a goal that informs the processes of other adaptations tailored to the juvenile market. Both texts utilize narrative frames and the didactic mode common to non-adaptive children's fiction of the period. The adaptive choices draw attention to broader trends in children's reading and how children interact with print appropriations.

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to use as a conceptual framework, I discuss how adapters like Optic and the ASSU imagine the reading activities of independent readers as lacking a key feature that was becoming important to the middle-class parents that were their main purchasers: the embodied cultural capital necessary to decode the popularly transmitted novels. *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* as adaptations share features with other juvenile book products marketed to the middle class. These products appeal to the desire for instructional material that invests in children's education and training, cultivating middle-class values and dispositions like productivity, obedience, and piety. The adaptations promote models to condition the child audience's reading as labor, a process of decoding moral instruction "productively."

Adapters like Optic and the ASSU provide heavy-handed interpretations of children's misreading reading activities of *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and they provide insight as to how other adaptations like them operate within these narrowed ideological parameters and according to pedagogically sanctioned reading protocols. These adaptive approaches to children's appropriations of popular books functioned to socialize child audiences into the middle-

class and predispose children to values embodied by the reversions to make a sound investment in children's futures as productive economic actors. Adaptation enables the recreation of popular novels as children's books, contributing to specialized literature for children separate from a broader reading audience. But these adaptations strikingly restrict child readers and discipline transgressive readings. The problem is not necessarily with the novels themselves as inappropriate reading material. The adaptations maintain the texts' statuses as influential sources of instruction. Unsupervised, uncontrolled, and undisciplined: independent reading children are the problem, and benevolent adults are not willing to gamble on the cultural and economic outcomes that the adapters suggest and imagine in *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*.

2.1 Transforming English Novels to American Sunday-School Reading

The unadapted or lightly-adapted *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* proved to be popular and culturally relevant narratives. They possessed readerships that had existed for over a hundred years by the time adapters transformed the narratives into new book products for child readers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷¹ As imports into the British colonies (before the American Revolution) and the early republic of the United States, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* appealed to a patriotic zeal that celebrated religious freedom and

⁷¹ The circulation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* grows in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when taken up by the Protestant mission movement. See Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

revolutionary sympathies from British tyranny.⁷² Despite their established longevity and cultural, ideological relevance in the United States, repeated complaints about the books and children's safety and ability to read them emerged. There is even a printed complaint in the preface of *The Children's Robinson Crusoe* (1830) that laments the lackluster abridged versions, an issue A Lady rectifies with her own adaptation offering.⁷³ These criticisms are set against a commercialized environment referred to as a "flood" of print, where adults expressed anxieties about the incredible growth of nineteenth-century print production and children's book consumption in child-rearing manuals, conduct manuals, reading textbooks, and periodicals. The market is flooded with children's fiction. The impulse to adapt is multiple, but adaptations in this period like *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* bear a self-consciousness of children reading the pretexts and how they are doing it, revealing a desire to discipline and instruct children in that process. Furthermore, the juvenile market as a sustainable trade was a site ripe for adaptations for children that featured these novels—one of the key reasons being that children's writers, pedagogues, and critics starting in the late eighteenth century, responding to Enlightenment thought on child-rearing and the malleable child, recognized the stories as instructively valuable texts in these periods.

Scholars have documented how adults legitimized both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe* as approved reading and instruction. Andrew O'Malley, for instance, relates the

⁷² For colonial and early American readership of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, see MacDonald, *Christian's Children: The Influence of John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress on American Children's Literature*, 10:27–30. For more on American abridgments of *Robinson Crusoe* in the 18th century, see Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800*.

⁷³ Lady, *The Children's Robinson Crusoe; Or the Remarkable Adventures of an Englishman, Who Lived Five Years On an Unknown and Uninhabited Island of the Pacific Ocean*, viii.

popularity of Defoe's novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, situating its perceived use as a pedagogical text that reflected principles outlined by John Locke. O'Malley states that "the novel accorded already with the very concepts and goals Locke had set out some twenty-five years earlier in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1694), and which writers for and educators of children took up fully by the second half of the eighteenth century."⁷⁴ It helped that another Enlightenment thinker and pedagogue—Jean Jacques Rousseau—advocated for the novel's instructive potential for children.⁷⁵ In the nineteenth century, *Robinson Crusoe* had found a home in the American market and American readership that included children. Ruth K. MacDonald also accounts for the popularity of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, relating how a culture of Sabbatarianism, a practice in which Christians observed Sunday as a day devoted to worship and rest, approved Bunyan's novel as a meditative text for Sunday reading (in addition to the primary recommendation of the Bible), introducing child audiences to the narrative through this practice.⁷⁶ The religious evangelical Protestant revival of the Second Great Awakening in the nineteenth century created the cultural conditions to interpret *The Pilgrim's Progress* as "a credible and prestigious source" for American readers to affirm hegemonic dominance of the Protestant American middle-class against incoming immigrant populations.⁷⁷ Putting the novel in children's hands, MacDonald claims, was part of a socialization process to assert political and social control. The novels possessed both ideological and pedagogical appeals. Processes of reiteration and

⁷⁴ O'Malley, *Children's Literature, Popular Culture, and Robinson Crusoe*, 24.

⁷⁵ O'Malley, 24.

⁷⁶ MacDonald, *Christian's Children: The Influence of John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress on American Children's Literature*, 10:31–32.

⁷⁷ MacDonald, 10:33.

repetition like reprinting and adaptation would imply that social legitimization of the novels was firmly in place by and during the early-to-mid-nineteenth century. Yet adaptations produced for child readers in the juvenile market, especially children's editions and stories like *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, complicate the novels' statuses as approved material for child readers, especially given the kinds of apparatuses of supervision and control applied to these adaptations insist on their necessity as a support or guide for child readers.

MacDonald, for instance, only scratches the surface of the adaptation process in her discussion of nineteenth-century adaptations for children of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, not questioning whether adapters and others resisted the notion that child readers could adequately decode the spiritual conversion narrative for their enlightenment:

But the choice of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as appropriate material to redact reveals the authors' and publishers' concerns that children be familiar with the text and its religious implications even if they could not yet read it themselves. Saving youthful souls was still a concern in the nineteenth century, even if one had to dilute and ornament a text to do so. If authors and publishers also made money by supplying popular demand for the book, that was fine, too.⁷⁸

MacDonald's overview of the children's editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* offers a generalization of the "concerns that children be familiar with the text" and interprets adaptation processes as ones of derivation and sources of commercial profit. MacDonald reinforces a common critical assessment of adaptations for child readers—fidelity to protect the integrity of the pre-text—which limits our understanding. Though she takes care to contextualize and describe several of the key features of several adaptations produced for child readers, MacDonald completes the minimal examination of the adaptation process within its new cultural context. It is important to identify the cultural assumptions about child readers or the kinds of textual controls put in place to

⁷⁸ MacDonald, 10:147.

supervise children's reading, given adults' anxiety about children's interactions with print. The fictionalized scene of Charles and his mother in *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress* introduced at the beginning of the chapter reveals the anxiety and the approach to direct children's readings and interpretations. Adults were attuned to what they perceived as wayward reading and attempted to regulate reading closely with didactic print offerings aimed at child readers subject to their age-dependent limitations.

Pedagogues and children's writers recognized the moral capital that *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe* could potentially disseminate if interpreted "actively," and O'Malley, who has focused sustained attention on the relationship between Locke and *Robinson Crusoe*, identifies this particular point in the eighteenth-century context when examining adaptations of *Robinson Crusoe* from that period. He specifically touches on Sarah Trimmer, an author who produced several works for children, including *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature, and Reading the Holy Scriptures, Adapted to the Capacities of Children* (1780), and her review of *Robinson Crusoe* in the periodical *Guardian of Education*.⁷⁹ In the article, Trimmer raised the issue of children's ability and the lack of supervision in children's reading. Specifically, she doubts that children will emulate the valuable qualities of *Crusoe*, ignoring worthy values in favor of being swept away on fantasies of adventure. Put another way (following Bourdieu's framework of cultural production), Trimmer was perhaps concerned with children's embodied cultural capital, what she understood as their limited capacity to read for the benefit of their instruction. Trimmer doubted that child readers could successfully interpret and accrue the moral capital of the novel that reinforces middle-class values, completely free of an adult presence.

⁷⁹ O'Malley, *Children's Literature, Popular Culture, and Robinson Crusoe*, 25.

Adults in the eighteenth century like Trimmer were already attentive to readers who were “in the necessarily dependent state of childhood.”⁸⁰ By the nineteenth century, this awareness only grew with the rising tide of print and children’s access to it, and adaptations for children commonly responded to it. I affirm then that the concern for the reader’s capacities to read was not limited to *Robinson Crusoe* in the eighteenth century. I extend O’Malley’s work to thread these ideological and pedagogical concerns into the nineteenth century, given the primacy of didactic writing in early American and antebellum juvenile writing, adoptions and adaptations from their British counterparts. This kind of adaptive impulse in eighteenth-century adaptations that O’Malley traces persists from the eighteenth century onwards, where adapters continued to regulate and moderate children’s reading of appropriated books, including *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. This impulse would carry over across the Atlantic with imports of these novels into the colonies and eventually the United States, extending into the nineteenth century with an American publishing industry that competed with its British counterpart. Hand in hand with the accompanying shifts in conceptions of childhood, ideas about how children read and should read, and the emergence of a juvenile market segmenting the market according to age, adaptation served as a compelling process to regulate and enforce children’s embodied cultural capital concerning the consumption of popular stories that enticed child readers for generations.

The Pilgrim’s Progress and *Robinson Crusoe* present particular issues for young readers that would have resonated with contemporary adult anxieties, supporting the motivation to adapt in light of these issues. These concerns include but are not limited to accessibility and legibility of the moral and spiritual lessons, subversive challenges to parental authority, and encouragement of

⁸⁰ O’Malley, 27.

adventurous wanderings. Both pre-texts present opportunities for child readers to imaginatively occupy positions that stray from the domestic home. Nineteenth-century print-based adaptations for children showcase a motivation to regulate how child readers engage in these stories. Without proper narrative elements that reflect adults' interventions, guidance, and supervision, autonomous children's reading was considered risky. *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* show the transformation of these narratives that would be particularly relevant to an imagined child audience and to a juvenile book market establishing itself and growing. What further authorizes these two reversions are the texts' producers that looked to include the books as approved reading material for the Sunday-school circuit.

Adams transposes the Robinson Crusoe narrative from an adventure novel into a book installment in a moral tale series for young children. It is part of Adams's "Riverdale Stories," also known as "The Riverdale Books" or "Riverdale Story Books."⁸¹ The series, uniformly packaged simply in green or red cloth boards with plain stamped covers (fig. 2) and a decorative gold-gilt spine (fig. 3), contains twelve stories "for Little Folks." The books feature children under the ages of twelve of multiple families from the fictional idyllic village of Riverdale. The books, by and large, function as didactic texts intent on providing a moral education for readers, valorizing the integrity of the family, and idealizing domestication and management of the American landscape.

⁸¹ These various iterations of the title of the series appear in ads for Oliver Optic's work as well as within the Riverdale series books themselves. For instance, in *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks*, an additional illustrated title page features the title of the book with "Riverdale Story Books" in a curved banner atop small, oval scenes representing scenes of the children from the series' storylines. The second title page that follows (lacking illustration and mirroring frontispiece) then lists "The Riverdale Books" above the title of the volume: *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks*.

This framing allows the author to tackle socio-economic differences in class in the village itself. Characters are both poor and affluent, and the series is dedicated to a utopic vision of benevolence, charity, and consistent doses of good ol' industriousness to improve one's conditions. It also treats both female and male child characters to reinforce gendered norms and roles. *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* is the ninth installment in the series. Adams introduces the book's protagonist Robert Gray in *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, who appears only in this one installment in the Riverdale universe. The child protagonists primarily featured in the series are Frank (10 years old) and Flora Lee (8 years old), children of affluent and respected Riverdale resident Mr. Edward Lee.

The series is oriented around their good deeds and mishaps, presenting them as good yet redeemable child characters. Frank and Flora appear as secondary characters to their fellow friends in the series, like Katy and Nellie Green in *Dolly and I*, David White in *The Young Merchant*, or Kate Lamb in *Careless Kate*. Frank Lee makes a notable appearance in *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, secondary to Robert's misadventure, which I will discuss later. The reversion's placement within the series brings the novel into proximity with a well-established juvenile writer and didactic writing model. Transmitted across a century in this "little folks" series, Adams, as Oliver Optic, interrogates *Robinson Crusoe* within this new context in which adults were all the more attentive to middle-class children's reading activities that ideally reflected a pleasurable instructive mission.

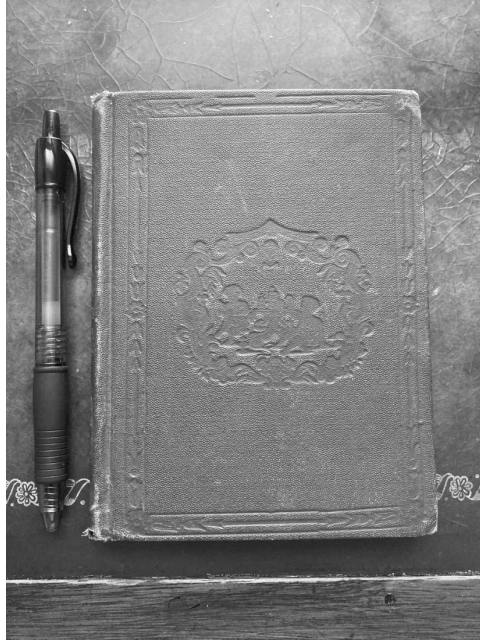


Figure 2. Green cloth and simple cover decoration on Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869), shows additional decoration. From personal library.



Figure 3. Gold embellishments decorate the book spine of Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869). From personal library.

Adams had considerable success through his Optic author persona writing boy series and editing *Oliver Optic's Magazine: Our Boys and Girls* (1867-1875).⁸² Part of this success was in part to the publishing alliance forged with Lee & Shepard. Lee & Shepard recognized, like other commercial publishers, a demand of the Sunday School movement to curate Sunday-school libraries with moral fiction for children.⁸³ The books were advertised by Lee & Shepard as appropriate for Sunday-school libraries, as shown in reports of religious societies. Deidre Johnson reinforces how Adams was not exclusively a boy's series author but also produced content that would appeal to more than one segmentation of the market, including one that still committed to the didactic function of children's books. Johnson states, "Although one Adams scholar notes the Riverdale stories are 'somewhat of an exception' to his work, they are indicative of Adams's early focus on moral fare and fiction for the very young, and they helped earn his books a spot in Sunday-school libraries."⁸⁴ Lee & Shepard tapped into a market demand for didactic material targeted at child audiences. After Lee & Shepard acquired the plates to Adams's Boat Club series and the Riverdale series, Adams then worked exclusively with this publishing firm until he died in 1897. This series designed for the younger set may have laid the foundation of his publishing success with Lee & Shepard. Importantly for this discussion, the marketing approach by Lee & Shepard

⁸² For more on Optic as an early practitioner of the boy's series, see Sarah Wadsworth, *In the Company of Books: Literature and Its "Classes" in Nineteenth-Century America*, Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book (Amherst; Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006).

⁸³ This series survived in multiple editions through the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century.

⁸⁴ Deidre Johnson, "Juvenile Publications," in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture: Volume Six: US Popular Print Culture 1860-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 303.

highlights how Adams's "little folks" series served segmented markets for private and evangelical consumption given the common attention to initiating children into the middle-class habitus by socializing them with the embodied cultural capital necessary to interpret their reading material productively.⁸⁵

Unlike *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* was anonymously written and produced by a large-scale publisher created "to compete with the commercial press for the attention of its intended audience: the children of America."⁸⁶ The American Sunday-School Union, a nondenominational national religious publishing society established in 1824 to found Sunday Schools throughout the country, published this little book in 1852. The ASSU was also involved in the non-commercial print production, which curated free libraries in each of these schools. Interestingly, the books were not only sold for this circulation scheme. In its youth periodical, *Youth's Penny Gazette*, the ASSU advertised that their publications were available for purchase in multiple depositories across the country.⁸⁷ Given these books were meant to be part of the free libraries of Sunday schools, they needed to be sturdy enough to survive the consumption and exchange from one child loaner to another during the circulation among pupils. They also needed to possess material features to compete with other juvenile options on the market. Whether they concurrently released two material options of the same story, switched material approaches in

⁸⁵ Johnson, 303.

⁸⁶ David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 81.

⁸⁷ Depositories were located in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Louisville, St. Louis, Rochester, and Charleston, as advertised in the *Youth's Penny Gazette*. See *Youth's Penny Gazette*, vol. XV, No. 20 (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1122 Chestnut Street, 1857), 80.

printing and binding, or perhaps made one format available for acquisition by Sunday-school free libraries versus the book depositories, *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* circulated in two formats until a material transformation in 1866.⁸⁸ The first format was marbled boards with a black spine, and the second was ornamented green cloth, which featured the centered title stamped in gold (fig. 4). Thanks to the development in printing technologies, the formats were cheap to produce and durable enough to withstand circulation or private ownership.

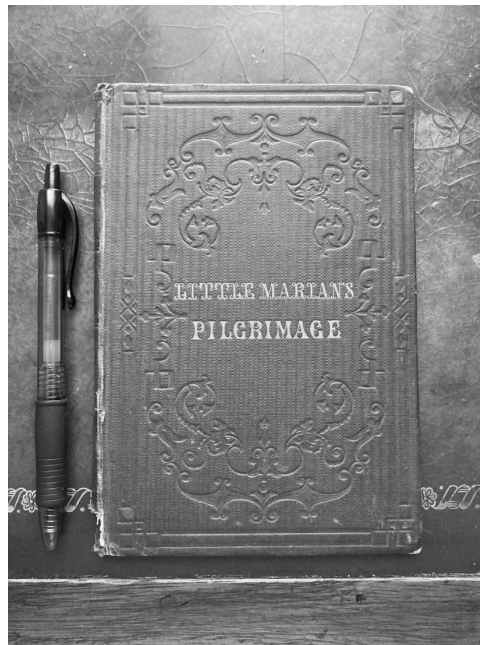


Figure 4. Similarly decorated cover of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1852) for the tall and thin little book. From personal library.

⁸⁸ See chapter 3 for more on *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* as a book in the shape of a paper doll.

Like other national religious publishing societies established in the period, including the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, the ASSU competed against the interests of commercial publishers. For instance, the ASSU shared a common idea that the institution published what it deemed appropriate and morally tailored children's reading material in opposition to a growing print culture flooded with what the societies considered "bad" books. According to Paul David Nord, "the ASSU managers believed that the supply of Sunday school books would increase the demand for them, perhaps even drive bad books out of circulation."⁸⁹ In the very first lines of an annual printed report, managers of the ASSU announced that "Whenever the American Sunday-school Union accomplishes the purpose for which it was instituted, the children in all our land will read intelligently; they will have the free use of good books, adapted to their wants and capacities."⁹⁰ The Committee of Publication, a multid denominational group of fourteen members, approved books published by the ASSU. Under the copyright notice in *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, the ASSU typed the following disclosure about its approving committee: "Not more than three of the members can be of the same denomination, and no book can be published to which any member of the Committee shall object."⁹¹ This institutional body sought to monitor and curate an approved library for young children across the country. Still, adults were apprehensive of autonomous readers moving outside the bounds of adult prescriptions and recommendations for reading practices and reading materials. While children might have had "free use of good books," via Sunday-school libraries or from their collections, they were perceived by

⁸⁹ Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America*, 82.

⁹⁰ American Sunday-School Union., "Annual Report of the American Sunday-School Union" 9 (1833): 3.

⁹¹ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*.

adults as vulnerable to the temptations of other circulating print products, especially fiction, from the overloaded bookseller shelves.

Recommendations and additions like *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* to Sunday-school reading and popular moral fiction suggest that adults wanted to address children's misreadings directly to a child audience from a young age. These two adaptations serve the perceived needs of middle-class white children and indoctrinate lower-class and immigrant children part of the Sunday-school institution to adopt these values. With each text, we can see how producers of juvenile writing treated popular adventure reading compared to authorized evangelical or Sabbatarian reading within a general reading culture that stressed productive reading activities. The common goal of both is to restrict independent "dreaming" child readers.

2.2 The Emerging American Middle Class and Moral Fiction for Children

Publishers, printers, and writers produced print-based adaptations for the juvenile market within a print culture where mixed-age audiences consumed books like *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Perceptions of children and approaches to their socialization and education are important factors to contextualize the adaptation processes of these interesting editions for child readers. The dominant, Protestant middle-class values and dispositions during the period sought to inculcate the young with character, which Jacqueline Reinier defines as "industrious activity tempered by internalized restraint."⁹² Building this character was a fundamental goal of children's educations, and it required the development of conscience, more commonly referred to

⁹² Reinier, *From Virtue to Character: American Childhood, 1775-1850*, 73.

as “internalized restraint.” According to Anne Scott MacLeod, “Education, whether home or school, was primarily *moral* education—in part, of course, for its own sake, but also because only the firm establishment of exemplary character in the rising generation could secure the future of the republic. Children’s fiction before 1860 was written entirely as an adjunct to such moral education.”⁹³ *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* were part of this fabric of moral literature for children in the mid-nineteenth century.

The hope for these moral tales—and Optic’s and the ASSU’s texts certainly fall into the realm of cautionary moral tales—is that they would serve as tools “to develop in children that sensitive conscience, that internalized set of principles that would make them morally self-sufficient.”⁹⁴ In an extensive study of the privatization of the American middle-class in Oneida County, New York, from 1780 through 1865, Mary P. Ryan examines Victorian child-rearing practices that developed alongside the emergence of the new middle-class. Ryan’s discussion of this moral education argues that “already in the 1830s...the literate native-born Protestants of Utica had worked out a set of strategies for the reproduction of a middle-class personality” through the operations of conscience inculcated by maternal figures in the home. Books for children, available for adults to purchase, generally packaged middle-class morality for child audiences to absorb the values important to this group. Both MacLeod and Ryan list similar traits that were deemed necessary for the development of character. Combined, they are obedience, self-control,

⁹³ MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children’s Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 89–90.

⁹⁴ MacLeod, 97.

usefulness, charity, selflessness, honesty, frugality, temperance, and industry.⁹⁵ As explained earlier, these books were available for adults to purchase for their children or Sunday-school teachers to provide for their pupils via circulating Sunday-school libraries.

The middle-class family distinguished itself from the working family through the male breadwinner who supported the family's lifestyle and education. Children, then, in this social formation, did not manually work or labor. Their childhood focused on the labors of education that did not translate to monetary currency and support for the home economy. Instead, they collected what Bourdieu would define as cultural capital, a symbolic asset that would potentially assure the continuity of class position and provide opportune movement further up the socioeconomic ladder. The development of character was part of this education. Ryan has found evidence, for example, that middle-class parents delayed boys' employment in the labor force in favor of extended education, as shown in the stipulation of wills that would protect these investments in their children with the finances to support their continued labors outside of the workforce.⁹⁶ Ryan's study reveals that these investments in children's, especially boys' education, were a drain on family resources given the expense and the children's lack of contribution to the family economy during their childhood. Despite the considerable cost it required to school their children, adults made these educational investments in their sons' and daughters' future roles as spouses and employees. Children's educations would begin in the early years of their childhood with the literacy instruction and distribution of cultural capital.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ MacLeod, 95; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 161.

⁹⁶ Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 168–69.

⁹⁷ Ryan, 185.

The middle-class investment in childhood education that focused on the development of character included a culture that emphasized the importance of *productive* reading. Ideal reading practices, reviewed in chapter 1, imagined an active engagement with books, and pedagogical approaches for literacy included attention to reading labors as primarily a profitable activity for gaining knowledge. According to Bourdieu, a competence of this sort develops under social conditions that invest a subject with *embodied* cultural capital. Bourdieu explains that embodied cultural capital, or “the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body,” is necessary to appropriate the forms of capital lodged in objects in order for a person to reap the value and increase one’s cultural capital.⁹⁸ In other words, for child readers to gain profit from objectified forms of cultural capital that include cultural goods like books that house works of literature, for instance, they must be equipped with the means to appreciate and interact with them, thereby demonstrating their competence. Unlike economic material forms like money or symbolic processes of bequest, gift exchange, or titles of nobility, embodied cultural capital is transmitted and acquired through processes of socialization and education that begin within the institution of the family.⁹⁹ Adaptation becomes the means to provide access and educate children to develop these competencies whenever they interact with popular and culturally relevant stories like *Robinson Crusoe* or *The Pilgrim’s Progress* from a young age. Of course, *how* a child appreciated and interacted with their reading was limited to these nineteenth-century views of what constituted productive reading: active meaning-making for the pursuit of instruction and the development of

⁹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Readings in Economic Sociology*, ed. Nicole Woolsey Biggart (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2002), 283.

⁹⁹ Bourdieu, 283.

character. Essentially, the end goal was to reap what Sarah Robbins refers to as moral capital, which she defines as “guidance on ways of discriminating between right and wrong.”¹⁰⁰ When this moral capital is contextualized within the nineteenth-century Protestant ethic regarding character building described above, the stakes of reading are rendered within a strict didactic function. *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* reflect this early investment in children’s moral education. The books are tailored for young children to access and decode the values or moral capital disseminated. Adaptation, then, functions as a critical process because it provides adult mediation and guidance for independent readers. The texts’ gestures towards the malleable, vulnerable child reader may be expressed as a motivation to rescue them from their lack of reading capabilities. However, the corrections for the child characters and the reconfiguring of the novels by the adapters betrays a fear of children reading novels in ways that are outside of the control of adults. The adapters unintentionally reveal that the fictional children’s “misreading” is indeed powerful enough to warrant discipline through ridicule and redemption.

2.3 “It is all very pretty to read about”: Optic’s *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and the Assertive Misreading Child

Adaptation as a process aids in transmitting and accessing any given text for its intended audience; therefore, print-based adaptations for children can be self-conscious of how children initially gain access and how they interact with the pre-text versions. For instance, to demonstrate

¹⁰⁰ Robbins, *Managing Literacy, Mothering America: Women’s Narratives on Reading and Writing in the Nineteenth Century*, 57.

the circumvention of parental guidance in book selection, Adams writing as Oliver Optic, imagines a single scenario in which a child reader acquires an unmediated novel without supervision or permission. In Optic's *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, the audience learns that eleven-year-old Robert Gray receives the book *Robinson Crusoe*, as a gift from an elder brother who resides in Boston. Dissemination of the novel occurs as a lateral generational transmission, from sibling to sibling, wherein the brother initiates the younger child into a shared source of reading, rather than a hierarchical transmission from parent to child—clueing us into the potential danger Robert will face. The act of gifting a book, a gesture that the book market commercialized, also shows how the brother's gesture easily bypasses the parents' active role in book selection. Distance separates the brothers, so the access provided by Robert's brother does not come with the supervision adults desired for child readers. With this narrative exposition, which ultimately shows the dangers of this type of unmediated transmission, Optic sets up an adaptive intervention for his own readers: a discussion and critique of Daniel Defoe's novel that might otherwise be missing from an unmediated print copy. Through this approach, Optic establishes a position on the novel and a reading of it to influence young readers following the Riverdale Story Books series.

Optic affirms that a sanctioned reading of *Robinson Crusoe* favors the presentation of Robinson Crusoe as a hero who presents ideal qualities of industriousness, resilience, and self-reliance. Though not explicit in his opinion on the story, Optic indicates that Crusoe is an admirable figure for the way he demonstrates how he masters the land he occupies, taming it through agricultural development with animal husbandry and farming through trial and error. This reading is within reach for the cultivation of character and an artisan role in the economy Robert is being groomed to occupy. Robert errs in his reading when he embraces Crusoe's adventure and asserts the domineering masculinity of Crusoe. Crusoe, who claims independence and freedom from his

parents' wishes and plans, represents the resistance of the patriarchal social order. Of course, Crusoe's defiance of his parents is a primary reason for disqualifying the text as "appropriate" for children. It was not uncommon at all for adaptations to rewrite this bit in order to provide reassurance of social stability. But Optic uses Robert's defiance, in imitation of Crusoe, as the basis of Robert's misreading or misinterpreting the story as literal and not fictional. That is, in the pre-text, Crusoe disobeys his parents, but the original character's eventual success on the island is deemed unrealistic to expect and replicate autonomously and independent of established societies and communities of families.

Robert dreams of power, and in nineteenth-century juvenile moral fiction, this is clearly a mistake. Robert's misreading of the novel begins with a reading process characterized as "dreaming," which signifies a disconnect and a lack of engagement with Defoe's novel according to reading protocols regulated by literacy textbooks and other instructive apparatuses conducted by adults of the middle-class domestic social structure. Robert proceeds to read *Robinson Crusoe* multiple times, becoming enthralled and more distracted with each reading: "He spent almost all his time in thinking about the man alone on the island; and I dare say he very often dreamed about the goats, the cat, the parrot, and Man Friday."¹⁰¹ His dreams are filled with an acquisition of authority that he wishes to wield on an island with his domesticated menagerie. Through his reading, Robert considers Robinson Crusoe, the fictional shipwrecked sailor, "a great man" and becomes infatuated with Crusoe's exploits when he "dream[s]" about becoming Crusoe.¹⁰² The adult narrator, whose voice exudes a countering authority, takes a direct approach to correct

¹⁰¹ Optic, *Robinson Crusoe, Jr*, 22.

¹⁰² Optic, 23.

Robert's reading for the book's audience, beginning by judging Robert's response to the Crusoe narrative as "certainly very silly."¹⁰³ He dismisses it as the wrong way to approach Crusoe. Furthermore, Robert's dreaming is a specific word choice that is repeated twice, directly about Robert's musings on Defoe's adventurer before emerging again towards the end of the story, utilized ironically as the narrator builds up to the didactic moral punch at the end (but more on that later). The narrator emphasizes that Robert's reading as inspiration and imaginative is ultimately unproductive, for it caters to a dangerous masculinity that conquers to his selfish benefit. Robert also ignores the story's fictionality, specifically its romanticization of isolation and survival as an adventurous feat of resilience. The narrator's dismissive tone reveals that Robert's "dreaming" is comparatively wasteful or lazy to his creative, active, and industrious character *before* he reads his book.

Robert is an active participant in Riverdale by working and attending school, demonstrating Crusoe-like qualities even before his reading. At the narrator's first introduction of Robert, the narrator indicates how Robert is intelligent and productive, even commenting on Robert's character: he "was generally a very good boy."¹⁰⁴ He is treated as an apprenticed carpenter, going to his father's shop during his free time, "inventing or constructing queer machines."¹⁰⁵ A fledgling engineer and student, Robert can build carts, windmills, and water wheels. When Robert constructs a water wheel and dam, he adds a beneficial technology to his father's property, and it even complements the natural beauty of the rural landscape. A full-page illustration before the first

¹⁰³ Optic, 23.

¹⁰⁴ Optic, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Optic, 10.

page of the first chapter highlights this activity (see fig.5). Its placement is an introduction to a positive, ideal image of Robert as industrious and a master at managing the resources of his father's land.

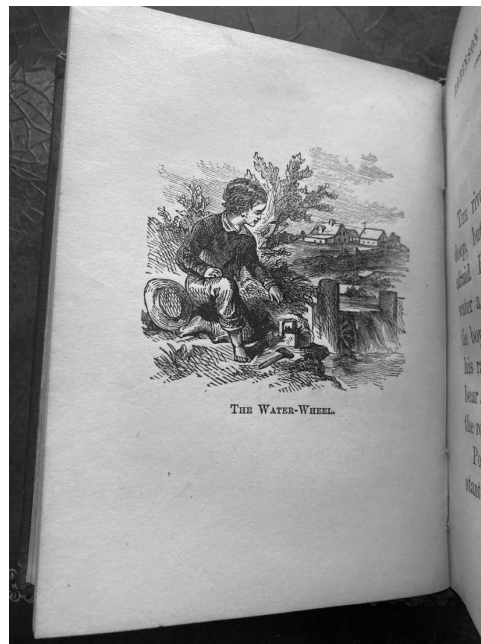


Figure 5. In the illustration “THE WATER-WHEEL,” Robert builds a water wheel on his father’s property, as shown in Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869).

From personal library.

The water wheel and dam have a clear utility to himself and his family, so Robert's indiscriminate reading and hours-long dreaming under the elm tree later in the first chapter provide a stark contrast to this image.¹⁰⁶ With each turn of the page, Robert's independent reading, dreaming, planning, and adventuring lead readers farther away from this image. Reading occupies him, distracting him from his carpentry labors or closer examination of the text for the moral capital adults expected children to acquire from reading. Furthermore, this reading does not reflect the kind of labor imagined by Goodrich and others in their prescriptions for the reading process, given that Robert lies in repose, disconnected from the text through dreaming. To make matters worse, he also does not engage in the labor he used to otherwise enjoy during his leisure hours. Robert's reading is a threat, destabilizing his economic future. Integral to my argument is differentiating between the process of reading and the content. Optic does not condemn reading

¹⁰⁶ I realized an interesting difference when I consulted my personal copy of *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* In the 1869 edition, the water-wheel illustration is replaced with the illustration "ESCAPE OF PUSSY" as the introductory image of Robert to the child audience. The water-wheel illustration appears, instead, on the left page across from chapter three (the chapter in which Pussy does escape from the raft during Robert's misadventure). I was able to compare it to another edition (1866) and the same order appears in that one. I am not sure when the change occurs, but it occurs at least as early as 1866, three years after the initial publication. All other illustrations and their order remain consistent with the 1863 edition. "ESCAPE OF PUSSY" and "THE WATER-WHEEL" are the only two that swap positions. There are certainly a couple possibilities here that I can only speculate: 1) an error that was not corrected for at least 3 years' worth of printings; 2) it might have been a conscious choice, an edit, to the order of illustrations so as not to spoil Pussy's escape in the story; 3) the "ESCAPE OF PUSSY" captures the mockery of the character and reflects the irony of the title, making that image just as suitable for displaying to the audience the author's motivations in adapting *Robinson Crusoe*.

fiction; it is not the root of Robert's distraction from work. The narrator's details on the multiple readings contribute to Robert's unproductivity because Robert embraces Crusoe's fictional life without recognizing Crusoe's moral character, only what he gets to *do* as a result of his independence. For example, Robert does not collect knowledge from *Robinson Crusoe*, nor does he engage with the Crusoe's empowerment through spiritual submission and obedience to the ultimate patriarchal power. Crusoe's religious conversion is never referenced. Instead, Robert valorizes Crusoe's actions from sailing and fishing to the unspoken ones that include dominating Friday, other animals, and intruders on his island colony by violent force.

From the start of *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, Optic uses the narrator's perspective from an adult position to establish unambiguous authority and judgment of Robert's misreading and engagement with the novel. Optic does not leave the audience to fill in that gap themselves despite the consequences the character faces later in the story. The narrator functions as adult oversight of children's reading within the narrative structure of storytelling itself. This structure replaces the first-person journal storytelling of Defoe's novel, which distances the reader from the pre-text and the character of Robinson Crusoe, and allows the narrator to intervene. To protect the vulnerable reader against these engagements with the novel, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* does not invite readers to align with the protagonist. To do so is to identify with the misreading habits that threaten the fictionalized children, like Robert, in the first place. Optic distances the child audience from Robert's point of view as much as possible. One of the first instances in which this occurs is a scene between Robert and Frank Lee (the series main character), walking together after school and discussing *Robinson Crusoe*. This interaction is vital, given that both boys are fans of the novel and the same age. Frank's engagement with the story functions as a foil to Robert's misreading. In this interaction, the misreader Robert is positioned against Frank, a reader who indulges in the

pleasures of the story but does not allow Crusoe's adventures to sweep him away. Frank's reading operates within accepted norms in which he, despite also being a boy, prefers domestic life. He still produces an active, didactic reading. Frank's reading affirms the domestic space as nurturing and comfortable, an ideal that Frank enjoys even at the cost of the promise of independence *Robinson Crusoe* offers. He directly counters Robert's exclaimed desire, "It is all very pretty to read about, but I don't believe I should like to try it."¹⁰⁷

The two children begin a discussion prompted by Frank to evaluate the plausibility and attractiveness of living like Crusoe on a deserted island. Frank admits in their conversation that he has read the book multiple times. The narrator casts it as engaging entertainment: "his eyes sparkled as he thought of the pleasure which the book had afforded him."¹⁰⁸ When prompted by Robert as to whether he would like to live on an island alone, Frank responds, "Well, I don't know as I should like it overmuch. I should want some of Jenny's doughnuts and apple pies."¹⁰⁹ Why be responsible for his own sustenance through foraging, farming, hunting, or fishing when not only the necessities are supplied by a middle-class lifestyle but also the sweet treats? Robert ignores just how carefree a middle-class childhood is. Their conversation continues when Frank challenges Robert's desire to live like Crusoe by bringing up the hardships and dangers on a deserted island, like lack of shelter, sickness, racist fears of cannibalistic Indians, and more. Frank pokes at Robert's dependence as a child with each challenge. Frank even goes so far as to tease Robert, who asserts he would be able to care for himself if he were ill with measles, whooping cough, or

¹⁰⁷ Optic, *Robinson Crusoe, Jr*, 19.

¹⁰⁸ Optic, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Optic, 16.

scarlet fever. Frank skeptically responds, “Perhaps you could; but I think you would wish your mother was on the island with you in that case.”¹¹⁰ Optic characterizes Frank with a conscious awareness that Defoe’s story presents a romantic understanding of survival and isolation; Frank understands that the “real” experience would likely be bleak, lonely, and dangerous when separated from the luxuries of society. He respects the privileged domestic bliss (maternal love) and material comforts (delicious food and shelter). That is, he appreciates his middle-class childhood as an overseen state of care, not isolated independence. Frank thus possesses the embodied cultural capital, or the values of mind and disposition, to read a novel like *Robinson Crusoe* productively while appreciating the novel’s imaginative pleasures. As a result, such a process reflects on his moral character, cultivating a middle-class habitus and providing a model for the series’ audience to emulate.

In contrast, Robert romanticizes fiction as a possible existence of independence, adventure, and survival, a true testament to his aspiring manhood and resilience. Like other fictional boys of this period’s literature, Robert is captivated by what Eric Tribunella calls the “privileges of manhood.”¹¹¹ Intrigued by Crusoe’s sovereignty over subjects (parrot, dog, cat, Friday), he interprets Crusoe’s isolation as independence to fish, roam, hunt for shellfish, and sail. This exercise in autonomy captures Robert. He is a misreader, vulnerable through the perspective of Optic and other contemporaries who share this conception of childhood; yet, he clearly resists the authorized interpretation, which Optic presents to the reading audience via Frank’s dialogue.

¹¹⁰ Optic, 18–19.

¹¹¹ Eric L. Tribunella, “Boyhood,” in *Keywords for Children’s Literature*, ed. Philip Nel and Lissa Paul (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011), 22.

Robert is confident in his ability to “get along just as well as Robinson Crusoe did,” defending his inspired engagement with the novel.¹¹² This child misreader does not follow Frank’s lead in using Crusoe’s shipwreck and tribulations as a lesson on the importance of domestic comforts, the value of parental protection, or as an opportunity for gratitude. He even ignores Frank’s realization at the end of their conversation that “every one don’t get out of a scrape as easily as Robinson Crusoe did.”¹¹³ In fact, he does not even respond to Frank’s interpretation, clearly ignoring it. He continually dismisses Frank and, by extension, the authorized interpretation that reinforces the dissemination of the novel’s moral capital—a lesson in obedience to parents and gratitude for domestic comforts and dependence. Thus, he initiates a secret plan for “becoming a Crusoe,” choosing to establish himself on an island located on a nearby river.

Though the dialogue may provide an opportunity for the audience to pick a side of the debate to support, Optic enacts a plot structure akin to the cautionary tale so that the ideal recipient may recognize the invalidity of Robert’s reading of *Robinson Crusoe*. Since he is industrious, skilled, and attentive to the details of Crusoe’s way of life on the island, Robert takes care to build himself a sturdy raft, secure feline and canine companions, and buy some provisions with his own pocket money. However, his life on his island does not go like he thought it would. Robert’s initiation of his plan goes awry. The Crusoe scheme begins to fall apart on Robert’s raft journey before establishing himself on the island. Optic rejects any opportunity for settlement of Robert’s island outright and dashes desire for independence. Since Robert embraces the novel as a guide to imitate Crusoe’s defiance against his parents, Optic enacts disciplinary measures in the plot to

¹¹² Optic, *Robinson Crusoe, Jr*, 20.

¹¹³ Optic, 21.

show the consequences of children who disobey and strike out on their own. Optic's reversion rewrites Defoe's plot. While Crusoe is punished for his own disobedience, he experiences a conversion on the island, and his site of retribution becomes his colonial paradise. The plot becomes an easy rewrite given that Robert ignores Crusoe's restored religious devotion completely. Like Charles from *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress*, Robert focuses on the adventure and the excitement. From the perspective of a supervising adult, misreads the novel's value to readers. The reversion's plot then progresses to show that Robert's embodiment of Crusoe's heroic journey proves a failure.

Robert does not live the idealized independence he envisions on his claimed island. Eventually left without his companions, edible food, or drinkable water, Robert acknowledges his emulation of Crusoe's independence as a misreading. The misreading character becomes an instructive example for the implied child reader of *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* The adaptation attempts to regulate the reading of *Robinson Crusoe* and restrict resistant readers like Robert, who misinterpret the novel outside the bounds of an authorized didactic mode. In the case of the *Robinson Crusoe* specifically, Robert does not appreciate the comforts and protections of his dependence and subjecthood under his parents' dominion. The narrator establishes this lesson consistently throughout the book. Robert relies on his parents for food, shelter, and guidance, but the reversion makes a point to reveal that it is not constraining, emphasizing Robert's lack of appreciation for his parents' care. Two illustrations in the adaptation demonstrate this point.

First, in "THE WATER-WHEEL" illustration, we can see the picture of an idyllic existence, quite the landscape to roam while still staying in sight of the home from a safe distance. Through his labors and in his childhood, it's evident that he exercises his autonomy within limits and preparation for the independence he will eventually possess as an adult man in a middle-class

artisan position. But, during his Crusoe-like adventure, in the “BUILDING THE HOUSE” illustration, as seen below, it is essential to recall that he uses the materials of his raft to build this house (fig. 6). He must dismantle his raft—the vehicle of his adventure and a marker of his skilled carpentry competence—to re-build shelter he assumes will be provided by the island, as it was for Crusoe. This moment in the book marks the only time the narrator acknowledges Robert’s perseverance and identifies a quality that stems from his productive skill in repurposing the raft for a house: “In spite of these difficulties, Robert went to work like a hero, and by sunset, he had finished his house so far as he could, for his stock of boards fell short when he had covered the top and one side of the dwelling.”¹¹⁴ Importantly, the narrator connects Robert’s resourcefulness and persistence to heroism akin to Crusoe, but that is the limit of this recognition. Though Robert works until nightfall, determined to finish the structure, his persistent efforts do not benefit his time on the island.

¹¹⁴ Optic, 82–83.

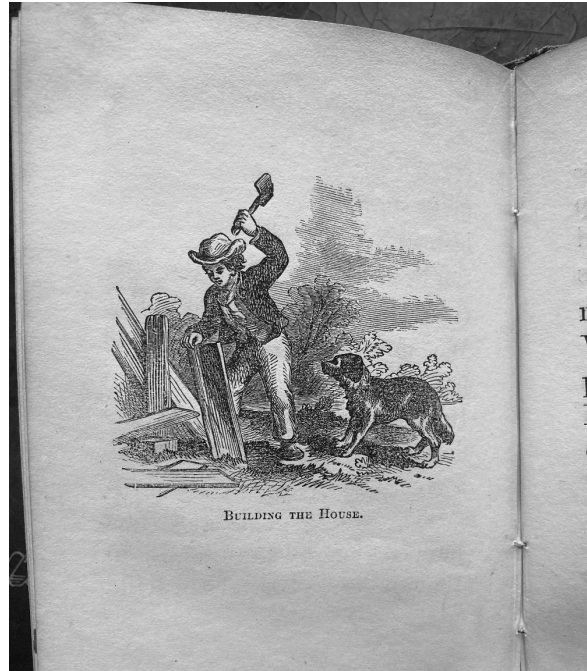


Figure 6. In the illustration “BUILDING THE HOUSE,” Robert uses the materials from his raft to erect a shelter in Oliver Optic, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.: A Story for Little Folks* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869). From personal library.

As house and home, it lacks domestic comforts—food, company, and safety—and he notices the difference as he curls up on the ground in a blanket to sleep. The narrator describes it as “gloomy” and “cold,” directly contrasting “his father’s warm kitchen.”¹¹⁵ By using the raft to build shelter, he loses the one tool to ensure his prolonged existence and dominion on the island. After beginning his work to build a shelter, he realizes that he needed the raft to forage for food elsewhere, away from the island. Optic’s narrator opines, “He was acting like a man who locks himself into a prison, and then throws the key out the window.”¹¹⁶ The narrator highlights Robert’s vulnerabilities as a

¹¹⁵ Optic, 85.

¹¹⁶ Optic, 78.

boy and a child, especially when he likens Robert's shortsightedness in using the raft to build the house to effectively recast the island not as liberation but as self-inflicted imprisonment, stemming from his ambition.

In addition to those of Frank Lee and the narrator, multiple perspectives incorporated in the story continue to reject Robert's reading of *Robinson Crusoe* and isolate it as an unpopular approach to the novel until the last page. For example, the consciousness of Trip the dog and Robert's cat, imagined by the narrator's omniscient view and access, readily point out Robert's foolishness, reversing notions of obedience to a master who possesses authority. The thoughts of these two domestic animals similarly condescend to Robert's unreasonable plans and efforts to live solitarily and independently on an island located in the local river. For example, the narrator says, "But I think if Trip could have spoken, and had the courage to utter his whole mind, he would have said, — 'Young master, you are a fool. What do you want to come here for, where there isn't any body or any thing? You were a great deal better off at home, and I think you are a real silly fellow.'"¹¹⁷ The fantasy of exerting power over a domesticated menagerie of wild animals, fulfilled by Crusoe's taming of a parrot, goats, cat, and dog, is lost when already domesticated animals resist Robert's attempts. With another reference to Robert's silliness, the narrator reminds the readers of Robert's lack of judgment and common sense. Optic mocks Robert's misreading further with a narrator that uses unfettered access to point out his foolishness to a child audience. Robert ends up alone (the cat and dog abandon him as soon as they can), cold, and hungry. He is without a cave, food supply, or raft, which he repurposes to build a house. His life on the island does not last twenty-four hours when the townspeople rescue Robert after dark.

¹¹⁷ Optic, 70.

Optic includes one more perspective to isolate Robert and the results of his misreading as an apparent failure. When rescued by a search party initiated by his older sister, “the men laughed at the idea, and Robert began to cry again.”¹¹⁸ Robert becomes emasculated and patronized for his juvenile fantasy, achieving fame, unlike the heroic shipwrecked sailor. He becomes known as “Robinson Crusoe Jr.,” a comic humiliation by all the boys in Riverdale. At the end of the story, Robert concludes that “he never wanted to live on a desolate island again, and said no more about trying to catch a Man Friday. On the contrary, the adventure caused him to love his parents more than ever before.”¹¹⁹ Robert’s reading of *Robinson Crusoe* is re-domesticated within the protections of adult authority. He does not buck at these protections and submits to his dependence warranted by the love of his parents. In an image worth mentioning, the narrator says that the men “wrapped him up in his blankets, and taking the rest of his things into the boat, they rowed back to Riverdale.”¹²⁰ Robert is, by this point, passive in his actions and thoughts. The narrator is the only one to express Robert’s reflective thinking without direct expression in dialogue. His passivity makes it seem like he is almost swaddled like a nonverbal babe and returned to his home.

Eventually, Robert shares Optic’s interpretation of *Robinson Crusoe* once Robert’s embodied journey exposes the reality Frank Lee warns him of earlier in the text. While still alone, Robert reflects on his choices: “As he shivered with cold, he concludes that it was not so pleasant, after all, to be a Robinson Crusoe. The book was all very well as a story, but it was not the life he cared to live.”¹²¹ In the concluding pages of the story, Optic uses the term dreaming two times

¹¹⁸ Optic, 94.

¹¹⁹ Optic, 95–96.

¹²⁰ Optic, 95.

¹²¹ Optic, 86.

more to deride Robert's inspired, imaginative reading and reinforce the didactic one as the preferred option. Since Frank's first reflections on his preference for treats, safety, and care afforded to him by his loving parents, Optic is consistent to reinforce that for their safety and protection: children must obey their parents and submit to their dependent state that furnishes them with the comforts of a carefree childhood: "Do you suppose he dreamed of Crusoe in his cave, with his dog and his parrot? It is more likely that he dreamed of his warm bed at home; of hot biscuit and new milk, of apple pie and doughnuts."¹²² Robert's misreading is rooted in misjudgment. From Optic's point of view, the novel's adventure is not a realistic one to embody because the environment that this child has wandered to is unknown, posing a significant danger for a reader who bases the experience entirely on fiction located in a "new" world ready to be discovered. The only certainty that Robert has is that his chosen locale is deserted. The exoticized location of Crusoe's deserted island paradise, on the other hand, is rich with resources, ready to be extracted and used. Robert's brief island life is destitute of the supplies needed to survive in the style of Crusoe. These repeated references to comforts and luxuries of domestic life affirm them as the basic necessities of a valued childhood.

Robert is made a fool for daring to read and live Robinson Crusoe's adventure. The exercise of his autonomy through his reading of *Robinson Crusoe* could not be more explicit in its consequences: he is a figure of mockery by adult men and his fellow peers for his failed adventure and attempt at possessing independence and authority. Optic regulates a child's audience of *Robinson Crusoe* within a mediated, didactic children's book to rescue his implied audience from Robert's dangerous misreading. As a result, Optic ideally offers a book that supports children with

¹²² Optic, 89.

the competencies to recognize the importance of an instructive reading that contributes to developing their moral character. Optic's framing of the novel includes narrative intrusions of a condescending adult position, commenting on Robert's actions and thoughts and even chastising Robert's failure to productively read *Robinson Crusoe* as a didactic text and reap its moral capital. Robert follows through with a transgressive reading to embody the role Crusoe depicts. This role, however, is mismatched with Robert as a child in two respects. First, Optic reminds his audience that Robert does not measure up to the adventurous, resilient, and fictional Crusoe. Second, Robert's secret escape from home chafes against the social hierarchy of middle-class domesticity that Robert is expected not only to submit to as a dependent but also embrace with gratitude.

Robert is not unlike other resistant reader child characters who defy the didactic instruction of a text or his status, and his misreading could potentially be inspiring to other child readers roused by Crusoe's adventures. However, Robert's resistance and actions that stem from his reading do not succeed in his aspiring isolated autonomy. Optic disciplines Robert's character through a series of events that result in his mockery by the story's conclusion. The power and agency in Robert's reading cannot be rewarded. Thus, the adaptive goal of *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* is to restrict the child reader to a narrowed interpretation of Crusoe's exploits as an impressive feat that no sensible or responsible person would carry out, let alone a child. *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* then, in its title and recreation, does not pay homage to the pre-text in the way we might expect in an adaptation for a child audience that faithfully retells the author's original story. It does not use the title acknowledgment to distribute cultural capital that would honor its originality or literariness, but rather to ridicule any child reader's fervent desire to live like Robinson Crusoe. The embodied cultural capital that the child is to extract from a "productive" reading of *Robinson Crusoe* is deference to parental authority, guidance, and provision. The uncertainty of the environment in

which the child may “escape” is too uncertain. Robert may be ridiculed, but he may find redemption in this rule that leads him back to the stability of his family, to his father’s carpentry shop, and to school where he may properly be molded.

2.4 “’Tis just the book to puzzle one’s young brain”: ASSU’s *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* and Failing the Misreading Child

Like the story of Robert Gray in which Optic warns and corrects the audience of Robert’s misreading of *Robinson Crusoe*, Marian’s misreading of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is eventually corrected after she mistakes the symbolism of Christian’s journey for a literal one but not before her innocence and safety are likewise threatened by the perils of journeying on a treacherous path. In *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage*, the anonymous author constructs the reversion of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* as a response to children’s reading vulnerabilities. It addresses how a middle-class education and status can equip children with the means—embodied cultural capital—to engage with products of print culture to decode the text successfully for the acquisition of moral capital. *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage*, like *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, serves as a warning for the potential for independent child readers to read unproductively and find themselves in danger. Still, more specific to the ASSU’s publication is the adapter’s warning that independent readers may not profit from the moral education adults expected children to gain from their reading labors. While Optic maintains focus on Robert’s disobedient reading, which we might understand as resisting disciplinary forms of reading and the path to manhood lined up for his future, *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* approaches this warning to implicate the absence of adult supervision and the threat

that it poses to the female body, its purity, and destiny for evangelical motherhood. Adult's missing guidance puts the misreading child figure's future in jeopardy.

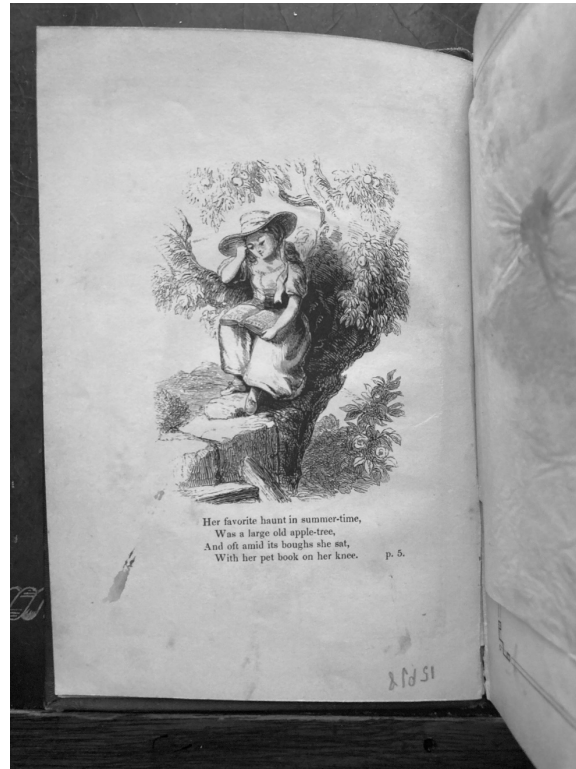


Figure 7. Marian reading *The Pilgrim's Progress* in a tree, as pictured in the frontispiece of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1852). From personal library.

As shown above, Marian's introduction to readers is a frontispiece illustration that shows a little girl sitting and reading in a tree (fig. 7). Leisurely reading her book, she appears peaceful and at ease, as shown by the gentle smile. At the start of the verse narrative, the third-person omniscient narrator shows how Marian exercises a considerable amount of autonomy within her household. Still, this autonomy forges an engagement with books outside of adults' active supervision and guidance. Marian resides "in a large house, with two kind aunts," and though "a happy child," Marian is often alone to exercise her independence given she does not even have playmates to occupy her:

For though at times she felt/
That playmates would be better far,
Than either birds or flowers,
Yet, with kind aunts and story-books,
She past few lonely hours.¹²³

Given her aunts' affluence, Marian has considerable economic security that does not make demands of her time and labor in a self-sustained home economy. Marian's childhood constitutes a pleasant and natural childhood that is not burdened by the constant oversight of adults, just as Robert in *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* suggestively got to exercise autonomy on his father's property. Marian independently explores nature to "play" with the birds and flowers and reads books, which serve as her closest of companions. *The Pilgrim's Progress* becomes her favorite or "pet book" that she returns to for multiple readings.¹²⁴ The narrator uses the word "pet" to describe Marian's relationship to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which characterizes Marian's reading as an indulgent, repetitive practice. The narrator reveals that Marian often reads in seclusion, especially in the apple tree that serves as a favorite reading spot. Marian creates an intimacy with this book she reads in her bed, kitchen, and parlor. Personifying the book and her relationship with it, the narrator

¹²³ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 5.

¹²⁴ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 5.

presents the book as a companion that provides entertainment and amusement for Marian, especially since she finds herself without playmates. These images are incredibly charming, showing how Marian's reading engrosses her, capturing her interest and occupying the bulk of her time, most often in the comforting embrace of the apple tree. The integration between home and nature as reading spaces was common in the nineteenth century, which Patricia Crain keenly observes in her examination of images depicting reading children:

Children's reading was often imagined outdoors, in a pastoral or a domesticated nature...These figures are granted a kind of aristocratic grounding, as if their literacy funded access to the same kind of prestige and stability, comfort and leisure, as inherited land. Reading, such images suggest, both inhabits and comprehends nature; it's inside of nature, but nature is inside the book...This nature is less the great outdoors than just beyond the doorsill.¹²⁵

The Little Marian's Pilgrimage frontispiece is consistent with this notion that Marian's reading activities are just "beyond the doorsill," supposedly within the protective eye of her guardians and the home's domestic servants. In Crain's reading, Marian's depicted absorption is a romantic ideal, a "layered cultural fantasy" signifying an aspiration for what literacy and reading promise the viewer and consumers. In *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, however, Marian's intimate engagement depicted by the frontispiece is a source of anxiety when read alongside the verse narrative.¹²⁶ Unlike the inheritance of land or a title, the needed embodied cultural capital to successfully decode and mine the moral capital from sources of reading (objectified cultural capital like the book *The Pilgrim's Progress*) is transmitted and cultivated through education and socialization into the middle-class habitus. As the speaker of the verse indicates, Marian, though she can

¹²⁵ Patricia Crain, "Postures and Places: The Child Reader in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Popular Print," *ELH* 80, no. 2 (2013): 356.

¹²⁶ Crain, 345.

appreciate the story, is ill-equipped with the means to interact with books in the prescribed ways that adults regulated for such a conversion text as Bunyan's allegory. Her unproductive reading of the allegory, in other words, does not capitalize on the valuable knowledge concerning the metaphorical road to salvation that it contains.

Without an adult presence to mediate and explain the layered symbolic meaning of the allegory when Marian accesses the book, she is left undirected:

unexplain'd, 'tis just the book,/ To puzzle one's young brain,/ And this poor child had no kind friend/ Its meaning to explain.¹²⁷

Lacking guidance in the rereading of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Marian fails to decode it independently, which leaves her with a text that has little value to her when she reads it like an entertaining novel that moves her to embody its journey. As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, adaptations for children of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are preoccupied with explanations of the text to prevent misreadings. Often, adapters cite that children are distracted by an exciting journey in which Christian eventually battles the monster Apollyon. Other adaptive strategies include retelling the narrative in accessible language and forms. For example, in *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Versified: For the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth* (1807), the adaptation process includes both the transformation of the prose into verse with accompanying explanatory notes. The Preface offers a clue as to the anxiety in this kind of misreading of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The editor of this adaptation explains that he "conceived that the *Pilgrim* in verse would be peculiarly acceptable to young persons, that it would entertain them more than in

¹²⁷ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 6.

prose, and make a more durable impression on their memory.”¹²⁸ He then elaborates on the importance of the explanatory notes, presenting them “as a key to the Author’s spiritual design, that so the work may not be considered as a novel, intended only to amuse, but as a correct representation of Christian experience.”¹²⁹ The danger in misreading is to confuse the purpose of the work as entertainment rather than a spiritual manual for conversion. With the aid of the versified mode, a child audience may engage with the text with standard reading protocols, like recitation, which would have been considered acceptable forms of productive reading labors.

Similarly, though absorptive and inspiring as it was for Robert reading *Robinson Crusoe*, Marian’s reading is also reduced to unproductive and uncritical engagement since it does not function to decode the meaning of Bunyan’s narrative. Instead, “visions strange and wild/ Began to fill the little head/ Of the lonely, dreaming child.”¹³⁰ Like the descriptions of Robert’s reading process, the narrator describes Marian’s reading through the term “dreaming,” again suggesting a lack of efficiency, purpose, and, more importantly, labor in her engagement. Marian does not possess competence in an ideal reading practice that imagines an active reading to mine the content of books, including a relevant missionary source of American Protestant evangelicism in the United States and beyond that could convert and socialize children and adults into religious culture.

More importantly, Marian lacks adult guidance and mediation, which served to help children engage with the texts when they access them independently. At the start of *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage*, adult figures—particularly women—fail to guide the vulnerable reader, who misses

¹²⁸ George Burder, *Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, Versified: For the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth*, Early American Imprints, Second Series, no. 12239 (Hanover, N.H.: Moses Davis, 1807), iii.

¹²⁹ Burder, iii.

¹³⁰ *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage*, 6–7.

the symbolic meanings in favor of a literal understanding. Marian's exercise of autonomy in childhood has its limits, especially when oversight or perhaps even negligence threatens her physical and spiritual safety. The text insists that she requires guidance and supervision by an adult of a symbolically dense text like *The Pilgrim's Progress* to navigate successfully. Otherwise, the puzzle of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Marian's brain remains jumbled. Ideally, Marian would have a figure similar to the maternal moral center represented in Charles' mother in *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress* discussed in this chapter's introduction or the authoritative narrative voice of Optic's *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, carefully directing the reader in an interpretation of the novel. Thus, it matters that the ASSU's misreader figure is parentless; she differs from Robert as a misreader because she is not resistant but neglected. Marian is an orphan under the care and guardianship of two aunts "who were not very wise."¹³¹ The verse speaker describes Marian's aunts as "old," "deaf," and "lame," signifying incompetence and an inability to care for Marian's education adequately.¹³² Her aunts, who push the upper boundaries of middle-class and affluent statuses, support her literacy education, possessing the monetary capital to purchase books for Marian's consumption. Such a characterization makes sense—Marian lives in excess in this home without the proper nurturing. They provide for Marian's entertainment, which includes plenty of storybooks, and for her general welfare, including food and shelter. Any sort of supervision or regulation of Marian's reading is limited, indicated by the following verse: "'Don't read so, child,/ For sure you'll hurt your eyes.'"¹³³ Ironically, the aunts correct Marian for an overindulgence they

¹³¹ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 6.

¹³² *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 7.

¹³³ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 6.

supply in excess, not modeling the restraint of middle-class ideals. The directive also does little to help Marian navigate a critical text of nineteenth-century Protestant Sabbath culture independently. Without the socialization into productive reading practices and the cultivation of the embodied cultural capital necessary to access the objectified cultural capital of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Marian is vulnerable to misreading, relying on the text strictly as an entertaining, pleasurable story.

The dismissal of the aunts' guardianship of Marian is a challenge to their neglect and lack of connection to the domestic sphere in everyday activities, including child-rearing and education. Another look at Marian's reading apple tree and her autonomous roaming of the house can be interpreted as almost paradisaic for its representative leisure and peace, yet this lack of productivity within the norms considered appropriate and necessary for girls and women sets off alarm bells for the adapter to correct. The signals of the aunts' combined incompetence, indulgences, and lack of intervention in the cultivation of Marian's embodied cultural capital equates to failing to educate her in the social norms and roles of womanhood. They fail to train Marian to be a future wife and mother. Instead, her days are spent in freedom from economic worry or responsibility, appropriate for a privileged child but inadequate for the necessary transmission and reproduction of evangelical Protestantism in which women ideally participated as the moral teachers for their children. In a sense, the reversion challenges the idea that these failed women make the best society for this young girl, given their blatant disregard for mothering Marian in the accepted ways of womanhood.

Interestingly, then, the text creates a reversion in which Christian's progress is reimagined as a girl's journey of recovery that disciplines women and girls as well as restricts the reader from

any seductive imagining of her own heroism and freedom in pursuance of the Celestial City.¹³⁴ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* follows a similar plotline as *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*: a child misreader is inspired to undertake an autonomous journey, emulating the hero of the novel's journey. Marian is like Robert in that she interprets the character's pilgrimage as a literal one that she can accomplish. When Marian embodies Christian's journey due to her misreading, she puts herself in danger. The text emphasizes Marian's vulnerability, which is certainly heightened by her female innocence as she journeys farther away from home. Just as Robert wanders into an unknown environment that does not sustainably provide his survival, Marian also finds herself in a dangerous situation for an unaccompanied young girl thinking she is on her way to the Celestial City. Thus, the familiar hallmarks of female endangerment are remixed into this adaptation. In an illustration, Marian's figure, who holds a basket on one arm, is reminiscent of Little Red Riding Hood, a fairytale female character also in danger as she undertakes an independent journey to her grandmother's house (fig. 8).

¹³⁴ A nineteenth-century book review of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* presents the book as an adaptation of Christiana's journey, or part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. Christiana is Christian's wife, who eventually follows his footsteps, with their children, to the Celestia City. I would argue that the reviewer's position is a misreading. Marian is cut off from the most exciting bits of Christian's journey: the killing of Apollyon. Marian flirts with the danger (and loses a shoe), but this narrative fairy tale symbol is only used to signal a warning of such behavior. It is only after Marian's solo journey is rehabilitated that she can take the Christiana journey spiritually *with her children*. The intervention is the important point of the entire reversion.

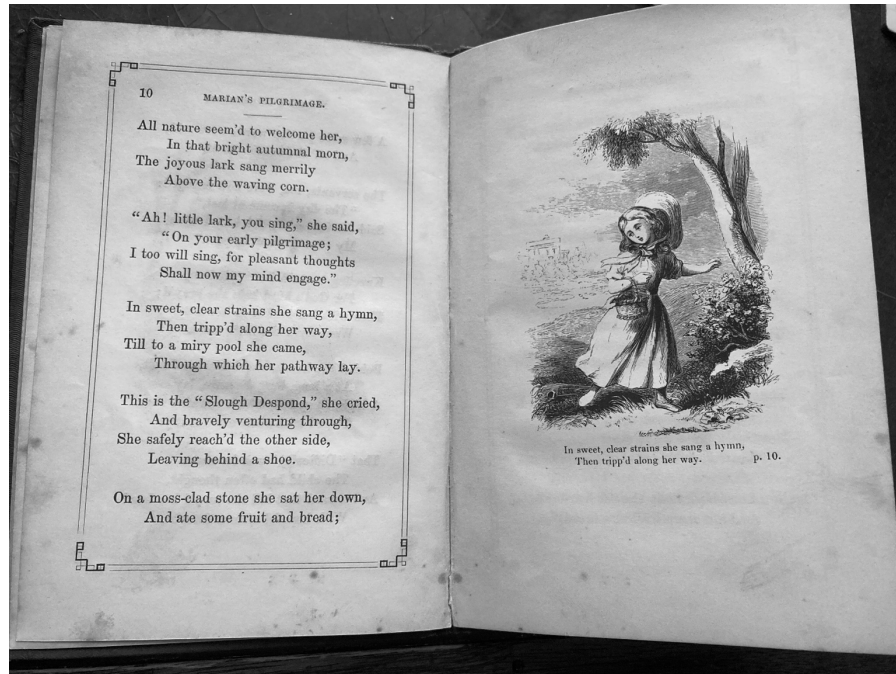


Figure 8. Illustration of Marian and her bare foot as she journeys on her pilgrimage in *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1852). From personal library

In *Little Red Riding Hood's* case, the girl is at risk of being consumed by a wolf due to her carelessness and lack of attention to her mother's directions. Marian is not on a journey to her grandmother's house but onto the Celestial City, which she takes for an earthly place that she can travel to herself. The terrain is also treacherous and poses a danger. When Marian's aunts' housekeeper recovers Marian's lost shoe during the household's servants search party to locate and recover Marian, the housekeeper reveals that Marian left the protected confines of her home to travel in an unsafe environment:

Oh! Mistress, this is all that's eft, Of poor Marian! / 'Twas found in that deep, miry slough / Just above Harlan's Chase— / Poor child! I fear she's smothered there, / For 'tis a frightful place.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 20.

The adults trace her movements from home to a bog where she leaves behind a shoe. This moment in the text highlights the plausible possibility that Marian could have drowned, though the reader is aware that she is safe. The lost and then recovered shoe also possesses symbolic implications, especially within fairy tale traditions that the imagery of the illustration summon.¹³⁶ Shoes may confer status and agency. However, Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario, who focuses on fashion in fairy tales, especially “Cinderella,” points out that “a slip of the dress, or the fall of a shoe is fraught with dangers and opportunities.”¹³⁷ The risk for Marian and the missing shoe is the potential loss of status for her unsupervised journey, ironically at a moment in which she exercises her agency from her inspired reading. Such a move by the anonymous adapter reflects a similar insistence made by *Optic*: the children’s misreadings are threats to themselves despite exercising considerable power in self-determination. They try to convince children of their vulnerability when their reading functions outside of adult supervision and guidance. In the background of the illustration, a house sits with its thin outline, which shows the distance Marian has traveled. The image also shows how far away Marian is from the protections of the home and the status of leisure and education that she experienced within that space. In a sense, Marian’s embodiment of the pilgrimage fares better than Robert—she does not face starvation, cold temperatures, or despairing isolation. Still, she finds herself many miles from home, eventually at a stranger’s door asking admittance. Is he a wolf or indeed a kind stranger that will give her entrance to a place of respite?

¹³⁶ For a brief review of shoes’ symbolism especially as it pertains to the elevation in status for the character Goody-Two Shoes see Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America*, 25–27.

¹³⁷ Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario, *Fashion and the Fairy Tale Tradition: What Cinderella Wore* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 3.

Upon her arrival at a porter's lodge, which she takes to be the Wicket-Gate, she says to the porter who opens the door: "I hope you're *Watchful*, sir,/ I want *Discretion* now."¹³⁸ At this point in the verse narrative, she expects admittance to the Palace Beautiful, which the porter grants. Luckily for Marian, she is not devoured or threatened by the porter. The porter takes Marian to the three women who reside in the main house, known as Brooklawn Hall. The adapter flirts with the threat to Marian's innocence, but ultimately she is protected by the inhabitants inside.¹³⁹

The narrator in *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* shares a sympathetic view of Marian. This position heightens her vulnerabilities in her reading activities and moral education, both of which lack adult supervision. The result is that it primes a reader to accept incoming adult guidance as a necessary intervention. The pitying speaker of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* does not distance the imagined reader from Marian. Marian is referred to as a "poor" child or "poor Marian" at least four times in this short little story. For reference, the entire text contains twenty-three pages of verse. The speaker does not condescendingly or comically represent Marian as a rebellious or thoughtless girl who transgresses against her status and disobeys her aunts. Thus, the speaker sharing Marian's story is strikingly different from Optic's omniscient narrator, whose critical perspective emphasizes through multiple characters the stupidity of Robert's actions in trying to imitate Robinson Crusoe. Most interestingly, Marian's motivations are depicted not as a direct challenge to her childhood dependence in the likes of Optic's misreader. Robert is an ambitious boy, wishing to liberate himself of the constraints of his status with the promise of authority and

¹³⁸ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 12.

¹³⁹ Wayward girls cannot be rehabilitated. They will suffer and be killed. See Anna Mae Duane, *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Violence, Race, and the Making of the Child Victim* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), 97–124.

autonomy that Robinson Crusoe represents on his colonized island. He indicates a desire to emulate a dangerous masculinity that does not fit the domesticated masculinity of the middle-class and community of Riverdale. Robert follows in character Crusoe's footsteps, disobeying his parents and leaving home without their permission or knowledge. Marian does defy her guardians and leaves without consent. Yet, Marian's external dialogue, which reflects her inner conscience, shows how she does not rebel in any way against their authority:

“I must go alone, I see;/ And I'll not let them know,/ Or, like poor Christian's friends, they'll say,/ My dear, you must not go.”¹⁴⁰

Her heart is in the right place. She does not decode the text to understand this moment in the allegory as a test against temptation; instead, she takes it literally to mean that her guardians may prohibit her from making the journey just as Christian's friends discouraged him. Marian lacks ambition and instead acts in ignorance and innocence, guided by the feeling that she must act but not truly understanding the meanings as to why. Yet, her ignorance and an unproductive interpretation of the novel prohibit her from decoding the allegory correctly. Marian possesses an earnestness that frames her as a figure of admiration since her interest in the text means predisposing herself to a narrative valued for its moral capital in Protestant culture.

Her misreading occurs due to an absent, competent adult authority to mediate the text for her and explain it as an allegory, not a literal journey she must take. Marian requires an interpretative intervention, and it matters that she would accept a corrective, mediated reading. Marian functions as an ideal misreader of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, given that she isn't so distracted by the entertaining battles and obstacles of Christian like the fictional child reader Charles was in *Explanation of Pilgrim's Progress*. She is not incompetent or unaware of the details of the text,

¹⁴⁰ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 7.

even reciting, carefully, each step of her journey to the Wicket-Gate. While Robert was met with derision for his wishes and attempt to become Crusoe, Marian is not laughed at or ridiculed. When the three women realize that Marian misreads them as Piety, Prudence, and Patience and considers their home to be the Palace Beautiful, they are charmed, pleased, and even moved to tears by Marian's desire to complete a pilgrimage when she demonstrates at least the superficial comprehension of the novel. They take it upon themselves to “talk about that precious book, And try to make it clear” that the journey is not a literal one.¹⁴¹

Given the task of decoding the symbolism of the allegory for Marian is completed by the women of Brooklawn Hall, the author of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* suggests that maternal vigor and attentiveness are crucial to mediating the text for Marian to have access to a productive reading experience. The women's willingness to educate Marian reflects an investment in the child's embodied cultural capital that her aunts fail to provide. As a child misreader, Marian exercises her autonomy by embarking on a pilgrimage, but the author stresses this power as vulnerability. The speaker of the verse attempts to soothe the reader and distract from the knowledge that Marian's imaginative journey has been hijacked and corrected in terms of need, protection, and safety. Marian requires dependence upon adult women for success in decoding *The Pilgrim's Progress*. While her home with her aunts is lacking, she finds fulfillment in a supportive domestic space with “mothers” of Brooklawn Hall, who mediate the text for her. *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* is an example that points culpability to unaware adults, particularly maternal figures who were the figures tasked with guiding the child through the reading experience of texts like the Bible and, of course, Sabbath reading materials, including *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The question is whether her

¹⁴¹ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 18.

aunts attempt to train Marian as a wife and mother, and the answer is a resounding no. The women who Marian initially believes to be Piety, Prudence, and Patience, come to reflect the role they possess in *The Pilgrim's Progress* itself. The Palace Beautiful becomes a site of recovery and preparation for the rest of the journey, which means a review of theological principles necessary to continue and validation of her understanding of conversion. The reversion suggests that the failure is not the fault of Marian but the maternal figure's responsibility to educate the child to prepare to labor with their books and mine the moral capital that they contain. Not only does this *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* assert restrictions on the child, but it must discipline the adults that indulge such fantasies of empowerment that exceed the boundaries of gender norms and roles.

Marian's needs require gentle guidance and training, which were popularly communicated and modeled by Lydia Maria Child in her guidebook for women. Child, for instance, imagines in the carefully cultivated woman reading subject a moral spouse and mother, one molded since childhood. Child writes in *The Mother's Book* under the heading "Advice regarding books," that reading has the potential to build girls' and women's characters:

I think a real love of reading is the greatest blessing education can bestow, particularly upon a woman. It cheers so many hours of illness and seclusion; it gives the mind something to interest itself about, instead of the concerns of one's neighbors, and the changes of fashion; it enlarges the heart, by giving extensive views of the world; it everyday increase the points of sympathy with an intelligent husband; and it gives a mother materials for furnishing the minds of her children.¹⁴²

Productive reading for girls is imagined here as a beneficial accompaniment to nursing tasks women and girls complete. It also functions as a valuable source of knowledge that serves them in their roles as wives and mothers. Marian is pictured in a romantic frontispiece illustration alone in a tree, reading storybooks, particularly her favorite book, *Pilgrim's Progress*. It "cheers" her

¹⁴² Child, *The Mother's Book*, 86.

seclusion given she has no playmates. The image further naturalizes the “love of reading” with Marian nestled comfortably and seamlessly with the tree, exemplifying a relationship between child and book that Child prescribes in *The Mother’s Book*. Child, however, is not an advocate for a complete autonomous relationship between children and their books. She cautions mothers that fictional texts, like novels, require adult involvement. Child prescribes supervisory practices including “hearing them read such books, or reading with them, frequently talking about them, and seeming pleased if they remember sufficiently well to give a good account of what they have read.”¹⁴³ This relationship between model mother and child receiver is reminiscent of the reading scenes depicted in *Explanation of Pilgrim’s Progress* in the dialogue between Charles and Mother. *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* also reflects this prescription in Marian’s misreading and failed pilgrimage when it eventually shows how the women of Brooklawn Hall step in to model for Marian as an unguided girl reader. Her unproductive reading labors put at risk her future reproductivity and role in the social reproduction of the middle class.

Unlike the comicality of Robert Gray’s return to Riverdale after his rescue in *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, the last five stanzas of *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* are tonally reverent as they share Marian’s future following rescue from her misreading. The approach to Marian is one of recovery. *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* explicitly states that the women’s interpretative redirection makes an impact throughout her girlhood, affirming that “Yes, many a lesson, ne’er forgot,/ The little Marian learn’d.”¹⁴⁴ In the next stanza, Marian ages and becomes a wife and mother who leads her children

¹⁴³ Child, 87.

¹⁴⁴ *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage*, 22.

to the gates of heaven, which the speaker implies is the result of the correction and revelation of her misreading:

And oh! How pleasant 'tis to see/
This little pilgrim band,/ As on toward their heavenly
home,/ They travel hand in hand.¹⁴⁵

The speaker paints an image here of support and guidance by the mother figure of her children's salvation. The adapter's reversion of the text imagines Marian assuming this role that was otherwise absent to Marian herself at the story's start. The ending of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* is celebratory as it concludes the book's ultimate lesson:

And now, dear reader, ponder well/
This tale—though strange, yet true—/And let our
Pilgrim's history/
Its lesson read to you./ If to your young and trustful hearts,/ The grace
of God is given,/ Be earnest, as our Marian was,/ To seek the road to Heaven.¹⁴⁶

The stakes of Marian's dependence and vulnerability are made more evident by this ending to highlight the relation between her productive reading labors to embody the piety taught to her by the women at Brooklawn Hall and the values and dispositions encoded in *The Pilgrim's Progress* through Christian's pilgrimage to salvation. Ideally, *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* posits that children's reading labors are productive when supported by adult supervision and guidance because their reading decodes the values encoded within the text.

In *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, the economy of reading ties to the cultural and social reproduction of middle-class Protestant culture that begins with the socialization of children to internalize or embody the desire for salvation. The sympathetic portrayal of Marian as a misreader invites readers to Marian's position of redemption, both in her misreading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the soul. This moral education operates in a broader evangelical Protestant mission

¹⁴⁵ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 22.

¹⁴⁶ *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 23.

reignited by the revivals of the Second Great Awakening in the early nineteenth century. This reversion of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an ASSU publication for child readers, so this goal is hardly surprising. Given that childhood is the training ground for adulthood during this period, children's reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is preparatory for the salvation of their souls. For girls, especially, it is preparatory for their imagined role as middle-class wives and mothers. The end of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* presents the stakes of the adaptation process of a text like *The Pilgrim's Progress* that ascribes cultural value to a productive reading of Bunyan's allegory that allows Marian to succeed in her role as a maternal shepherd and authority for her children. *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* may be tonally sympathetic in its treatment of Marian, but its rewriting of the original narrative otherwise attempts to mask its goal to restrict the child. As stated earlier, Marian exercises her desire to be part of Christian's heroic journey, and after the Palace Beautiful, he is equipped with the sword, shield, and helmet to fight the frightening Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation. Marian never makes it to the Valley of Humiliation despite eventually finding her way to heaven in her adulthood. The adapter disrupts the appeal of child readers' to Christian's heroism and denies this reversion in which a young girl finds herself attempting Christian's journey. Marian is, in effect, kidnapped by the women of Brooklawn Hall to protect her future by solving the puzzle of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

2.5 Rescuing Children from Misreading or Saving Assets

These two examples of child misreaders present slightly different outcomes—ridicule versus recovery. Both books feature tales of redemption for children daring to read the stories that inspire an imaginative engagement and transgress accepted cultural norms and codes of gender

and class. Together, these two books project the following lessons on cultural capital and profitable reading. The effect is to rescue little folks from misreading culturally relevant novels while still gaining an authorized productive reading experience. Readers gain the knowledge that disobeying one's parents results or wandering unaccompanied as a female can *almost* result in dire consequences. The transposition then transforms the threat of misreadings of a famous novel of childhood into a children's book as safely accessible because it readily decodes the story with overt adult mediation, forming an active schema for future reading of the complete novels. Thus, even a textual adult intervention saves them from interpretative missteps. To control the risk of unmediated reading modes for independent readers, the writers advocate and use adaptation to accomplish their ends: equip very young readers with literacy in their potential for misreading and sell these products in a juvenile market addressed to them and for their needs. Adaptations existed to fill that void if a parent or another adult does not.

Therein lies the benefit of adaptation to create new *book products* advertised in the juvenile market and Sunday School reading lists: the children's editions make these two popular and commonly read narratives accessible to readers implied as vulnerable. They may also function as products to protect adults' investments in children's moral educations. It would be counterproductive for the ASSU, for instance, to damn receptive readers like Robert and Marian who eventually recognize their errors; the publishers and adapters of both texts find no profit in distancing the imagined child audience from the narrative whose mission is to bring eager and interested readers into the Protestant Christian fold via Sunday-school literature. Symbolically, too, the loss of Marian equates to a loss in cultural reproduction of the middle-class. It is as important to prepare and groom her as a prospective mediator and guide her future children's spiritual pilgrimages. Similarly, Robert would be a lost investment of knowledge and labor in the

carpentry trade of Riverdale, a considerable cost to middle-class households. Future assets ready to be redeemed to socialize future children into Christianity and middle-class life.

The child figures' productive readings of the novels tie to their eventual assumption to middle-class economic activities, whether literal or symbolic, so their reading labors are an asset that cannot be lost or neglected. To further tease out these implications, I turn to Sharon Murphy in her extensive study of the development of the life insurance industry in nineteenth-century America. She points to how an emerging middle class, or "people who had economic and social aspirations but were dependent on a regular income and generally eschewed risk for fear of failure," possessed a desire to educate their children in preparation for middle-class economic futures that would amply provide a middle-class lifestyle.¹⁴⁷ Murphy explores this cultural and class impulse in the development of the life insurance industry, where the emerging middle class became the targeted consumers of life insurance policies. In her findings, life insurance policy marketing focused on the loss of the breadwinner, the effect of the loss on the family, and the investment potential offered by the product. The first approach centered on avoiding risk and appealing to middle-class fathers' values and perceptions of their role as the sole providers for the family. Since the middle-class family's capital was located in the father's labors (primarily a white-collar worker), the breadwinner's death could be economically and socially damaging to a family that relied upon his income, which supported the necessities to live and the products and qualities represented by a middle-class lifestyle.¹⁴⁸ Murphy explains that "a father's untimely demise thus

¹⁴⁷ Sharon Ann Murphy, *Investing in Life: Insurance in Antebellum America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 126.

¹⁴⁸ Murphy, 132.

might force his children to enter the workforce prematurely, sacrificing the education that was becoming increasingly necessary as the basis for a middle-class lifestyle.”¹⁴⁹ The advertising literature often described the loss of lifestyle in harsh terms:

All antebellum companies thus believed that their most lucrative business would come from middle-income fathers, whose death would leave their families in “pecuniary distress,” “in want,” in a state of “poverty, in the hour of their distress,” suffering “sacrifice and loss,” or exposing them “to insult or poverty” or “the horrors of destitution, of want, and of misery.”¹⁵⁰

Therefore, the industry marketed life insurance as a product that provided assurances to middle-class families’ intent on maintaining their social and economic standing. Advertisements marketed life insurance policies as valuable assets that offered protections. The second approach was to represent a life insurance policy as an investment strategy for middle-class families. Murphy explains that “while this group relied on a stable income for survival (like the working class), they also possessed some discretionary funds beyond the requirements for mere subsistence (like the upper class). Yet the investment options in antebellum America were largely unavailable to this group.”¹⁵¹ Mutual companies in the 1840s presented a policy as a sound investment that could impact their social mobility. The new middle-class childhood and the investment in the family’s children were considered another investment. Just as the group dynamics of the middle-class paved the way for life insurance, similar needs were met with the safety and reassurances of adaptation. I do not think it is a coincidence that the book products discussed above also intend to mitigate risk concerning children’s reading labors with appropriated books commonly transmitted to child

¹⁴⁹ Murphy, 130.

¹⁵⁰ Murphy, 133.

¹⁵¹ Murphy, 154.

audiences for their cultural and moral values. Optic's and the ASSU's books were not unique in their didactic aims, but they are fascinating for their direct address of child readers of appropriated texts, conscientious of investing child readers with the embodied cultural capital necessary to interpret their books "productively." What pedagogues and critics considered unproductive reading or misreading posed a risk to vulnerable child readers when economic and social futures were at stake, and adapters, in turn, provided child audiences adapted material and textual forms of "converted" currency in the cultural economy of reading. Read between the lines, though, and these gestures towards vulnerability are really restrictions placed upon imaginative readers that exercise power outside of the bounds of social control. Such book products could appeal to adult consumers, who monitored and supervised their children's reading, as well as the large-scale market of the Sunday-school circuit that wished for materials to reflect their accepted and tightly controlled moral mission. After all, there is a committee established for the ASSU to scrutinize and make decisions on the fitness of publications for hints of any transgressions. Print-based adaptations for children, particularly those that rewrite or abridge didactic pedagogical texts, represent a sound investment in children's cultural capital in the economy of books, morality, and middle-class values.

In chapter 3, I extend this chapter's focus on the adaptive impulse to enforce reading protocols of supervision and guidance. As *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* asserts, the cultivation of embodied cultural capital requires adult intervention and direction, and there is no better apparatus to accomplish this mediation than through the negotiation of communal reading practices. Thus, we move from independent readers to family circles where adapters incorporate and adapt apparatuses and practices of communal reading as frame narratives, structures, and modes of

reading, generally following the same principle outlined here: restrict the child reader and socialize them to reproduce middle-class values and norms.

3.0 Supervising Child Readers and Auditors: Adaptations and Communal Reading Circles

If nineteenth-century print-based adaptations like *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* attempt to restrict the child reader because adults feared the potential and action of their imaginative power, the adaptations discussed in this chapter supervise readers with added narrative structures or frameworks. These texts may quell the anxiety that children attempt to circumvent the protected domestic space (as Marian and Robert do in chapter 2) and comprise the ideal apparatuses put in place to mediate reading content. This chapter, like the last, presents a group of print editions explicitly adapted for children, this time pointedly featuring domestic, communal reading practices in which children interact with retold and adapted stories. The adapted narratives include *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Lamplighter*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. My interest in this specific group of texts lies in how the representations and constructions of communal reading groups and practices are created *as part of* the adaptation process, incorporating some additional feature of communal reading that was not textually present in narrative pre-texts. I group the books in two categories: first, the English translation *Robinson the Younger* (1781), *The New Robinson Crusoe* (1788), and *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853), utilize a family circle frame narrative to represent a supervising and mediating adult authority of print, surrounded by receptive child auditors; second, *Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) and *The Lamplighter Picture Book, or The Story of Uncle True and Little Gerty: Written for the Little Folks* (1856) hide the mediation of the pre-text by establishing a juvenile family reading circle framework that empowers the child reader as an abolitionist storyteller.

Communal reading of print materials was a primary and influential activity in nineteenth-century culture, one in which real children were socialized from an early age, often beginning with

the family. Models of group oral reading were diffused through the printed emblems around which this practice was organized. Adapters represent scenes of communal reading in adapted children's editions, and these examples are not in of themselves remarkable or uncharacteristic of nineteenth-century fiction or the broader print culture. However, adapters pointedly reimagine narratives for implied child readers within didactic and pleasurable contexts of family reading and model its practices in relation to the consumption of appropriated novels and other classic literary content. In other words, the adapters of these texts place mediating controls of the practice and their influence on the telling of stories on display. Why? How do the adaptations depict or construct reading as a communal, monitored activity situated within the home? Given that group reading was central and incorporated into the daily lives of nineteenth-century American readers, including children, how do these adaptations apply the functions of this interactive practice within book products where independent child readers may encounter them? What kinds of readers do these texts imply? What types of readers do they want to shape through these adapted texts?

This set of adaptations shows various textual narrative devices and formal constructions representing communal reading models of mixed-age and juvenile families. As cultural anxieties about reading in the nineteenth century make clear, the process of reading, to be productive and beneficial, is of utmost importance. Adapters go to considerable lengths to rewrite and restrict agential independent reading, casting them as misreadings to reconstitute boundaries of social norms and roles the unsanctioned independent reading transgresses. The adaptations in this chapter feature the family reading circle practice as an additional approved domestic educational site of shared access and transmission. When adapters depict communal reading in these adaptations, it becomes *the* site of diffusion for cultural capital, and they create models of communal reading as a pedagogical tool as they negotiate children's entrance into the world of reading. I argue that these

devices and constructions capitalize on the pedagogical potential of family reading practices to legitimize the adapted narratives as moral and instructive texts for child readers.

Joachim Campe's English translation from German of his adaptation *Robinson the Younger* and *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* by "Aunt Mary" are two specific models that present a top-down hierarchy. In these two adaptations, the adapters strictly limit children to the auditor position within the fictional narratives that frame the retelling of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and the revised abridgment of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These models further position themselves to cultivate a dominant middle-class habitus that privileges and re-inscribes particular social roles according to gender, race, and class, emphasizing reading as productive labor. While these restrictive and mediated approaches appear to constitute the norm, two adaptations in this chapter offer a competing model that questions the necessity of an adult presence and authority in stories' transmission and diffusion. The toy books *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* empower child auditors and storytellers in communal reading circles constituted of young folks. These books set the stage for adaptations in the 1860s onwards to liberate children's reading of print appropriations and familiar tales from supervisory and restrictive reading systems. Taken together, the choices made by the adapters reveal the competing politics of reading in relation to abolition in the antebellum era. *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the carefully adult-controlled mediation of the abolitionist novel limits children's political participation in the debates on slavery and black people's freedom. In contrast, *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* reconnect child readers and the pre-text narratives to the political sphere from inside the domestic space and imagines children's active participation.

3.1 Nineteenth-Century Communal Reading Practices

In the nineteenth century, oral reading was communal reading that crossed ages, abilities, and purposes. Ronald and Mary Zboray reveal how oral communal reading, as described in diaries and letters, was embedded and integrated into various daily routines and tasks, including but not limited to learning, sewing, cooking, and ministering to the sick and disabled.¹⁵² One form of communal reading, what I will refer to as family reading, was a commonplace practice: members of a “family circle” would gather together to read, share, and hear poetry and fictions from the daily issue of the newspaper, the latest serial installment, a newly purchased or borrowed book, or readings from the Bible. This practice served as a popular mode of domestic entertainment, integrated into people’s daily lives. Anne Scott MacLeod uses a twentieth-century analogy to illustrate the significance of communal consumption of books within the home. MacLeod explains, “Families read together much as families today might watch television together and for the same reason: reading was then, as television is today, by far the most available form of entertainment for most Americans.”¹⁵³ The emphasis here is on reading as a form of shared entertainment and not strictly an individual practice. Communal reading of a shared book was as popular as tuning in to a weekly episode of *Leave It to Beaver* with your family surrounding the television set.

In actual settings, adults used family reading as an educational tool. Jane Hunter asserts that nineteenth-century family circle reading relied on a combined effort towards learning by

¹⁵² Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Everyday Ideas: Socioliterary Experience among Antebellum New Englanders* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 132-37.

¹⁵³ Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children’s Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 114.

contextualizing oral communal reading as a pedagogical practice. Specifically, Hunter sheds light on how the model of family reading uses “the most common domestic entertainment within the Victorian family” as a supervisory apparatus to monitor girls’ reading and deploy it as an ideological tool in the fashioning of girls’ subjectivity when it was “used as reward, improvement, or therapy for life’s challenges.”¹⁵⁴ Nineteenth-century family reading may be further understood as the oral sharing of printed texts. Parents or adult family members acted as authoritative monitors or mediators to instruct children in reading, teach elocutionary performance, and supervise children's engagement with print in the domestic space. Between its commonality, sociality, and pedagogical potential, the actual practices of communal reading did not remain isolated to lived experiences. Ideal and model depictions of the family reading practices made their way into the public imagination through print.

Images and representations of family reading circulated as textual scenes of reading and reading iconography in periodicals and newspapers, advice literature, gift books, and published book collections of essays and sketches. Often depicting charming middle-class reading families, these representations generally present ideal scenes of home-based instruction or entertainment in which eager faces listened and hands labored with small tasks alongside the fireside or in the heart of the home's interior. Where the Zborays, MacLeod, and Hunter trace histories of communal reading that indicate how *real* people read together in practice, I focus on textual representations of the social practice as incorporated by the adaptation processes in adaptations for children. Reproductions of these representations across media, specifically within these adaptations

¹⁵⁴ Jane H. Hunter, *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 62.

produced for children, begs a closer look. Adaptations that use communal reading models and feature middle-class families for pedagogical purposes unite labor and leisure forms of reading—coded as instruction and entertainment for children—to adapt culturally relevant texts. Specifically, adapters isolate the pedagogical and political power of communal reading.

Adapters use communal reading models that put the family centerstage. Prominently featuring the family as part of literacy acquisition and education is superficially consistent with actual practice. Ronald Zboray asserts that “The family, more than any other institution, encouraged literacy. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, most reading and writing instruction took place within the household.”¹⁵⁵ Interestingly, actual literacy education crossed class but was dependent on adults’ literacy within the home. If a mother and father could monitor a child’s lessons, literacy as “literary socialization” began from birth: “Whether they attended poor district schools or expensive academies, finished their education in elementary classrooms or pushed on through college, most children learned basic reading at home under household members’ eyes, particularly mothers.”¹⁵⁶ Part of this instruction included literacy in the reading process that schooled children and adults in selecting print materials and provided prescriptions for reading as demonstrated by the schoolbooks produced for families and schools.

Within Bourdieu’s framework of cultural production and cultural capital, the family as an institution initiates new subjects into the world and makes the initial investments of cultural capital. Indeed, for Bourdieu, the family is one of the first institutional sites that share a habitus, or “a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception,

¹⁵⁵ Zboray, *Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public*, 84.

¹⁵⁶ Zboray and Zboray, *Everyday Ideas: Socioliterary Experience among Antebellum New Englanders*, 153.

and action common to all members of the same group or class.”¹⁵⁷ Therefore, social practices like reading reinforce the values and dispositions that inform the habitus. As a key value, literacy was integral to the reproduction of the nineteenth-century American middle-class habitus. It provided the means necessary to participate in class relations and reproduce them. As Patricia Crain writes in her study of literacy and reading as the property of the child, “We have come to think routinely of literacy as among the fundamental forms of cultural capital.”¹⁵⁸ While Crain explores literacy as property through the reading child figure, I similarly expand the discursive relationship of childhood and reading to examine the “labors” of reading expected by children as pedagogical objects in the communal reading of transmitted stories.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, as shown by these particular adaptations, the adapters situate the family as an institution playing a central role in children’s literacy acquisition and grooming children’s reading labors according to the values and dispositions of the middle class. The family circle modeled in the first two adaptations of this chapter homogenize conceptions of the white child in the family circle as receptive, imitative, and submissive to a set of social relations, assuring their obedience and superiority as classed subjects dutifully engaged in reading as a productive, pedagogical activity. The impulse to restrict child readers in nineteenth-century adaptations dates back to Joachim Heinrich Campe and *Robinson der Jüngere*, one of the first successful and widely circulated adaptations for children.

¹⁵⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 86.

¹⁵⁸ For more on the cultural concept of literacy as property, see Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America*, 20.

¹⁵⁹ Crain, 20–42.

3.2 “Pray and Work!”: Prescriptions for Family Circle Reading

Initially adapted in 1779 (volume one) and 1780 (volume two), Joachim Heinrich Campe’s German adaptation, with his English translation of the same text *Robinson the Younger*, offers the earliest example of a family circle frame narrative in an adaptation for children. What’s additionally exciting about this text is that it was “an international bestseller.”¹⁶⁰ It was translated into multiple languages (English, Latin, Italian, Spanish, to name a few) and was circulated and reproduced throughout Europe, Britain, and the United States. According to David Blamires, Campe himself translated his adaptation from German into English as *Robinson the Younger* in Hamburg for C.E. Bohn in 1781. Campe’s own English translation of his German adaptation of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* for children reimagines the telling of Robinson Crusoe’s story as a relation between teller and auditors and not simply between reader and book or reader and author. Campe structures the frame narrative as the dialogue of a mixed-age circle: father, mother, children, and two additional adult auditors and dialogue participants, presented as friends. In literary terms, he establishes an extradiegetic narrative level to tell Defoe’s adventure story, meaning that characters who make up the family are separate from and outside Defoe’s story world and adventure. As made evident by Campe’s preface to his translation, Campe offers *Robinson the*

¹⁶⁰ Nikola Von Merveldt, “Multilingual Robinson: Imagining Modern Communities for Middle-Class Children,” *Bookbird* 51, no. 3 (2013): 2–6. Merveldt describes in this article how *Robinson the Younger* was used as a foreign language learning tool and schoolbook with its various translations to accompany the original German adaptation. She writes, “Educating children to become multilingual citizens of the world no longer versed in Latin or Greek but conversant in the living languages of their neighbors became one of the pedagogical—and sociopolitical—objectives of the day.”

Younger as reading material that serves the pedagogical imperative of being instructive yet delightful for children to read.¹⁶¹

In Campe's English translation *Robinson the Younger*, he opens with a preface that explains his motivations and goals in adapting Defoe's novel for an audience of children. Calling for a text that "awaken[s]" and "strengthen[s]" readers' moral character and prompts "immediate activity," Campe advocates for a text that supports a reading process redirecting children to "productive" uses like the benefit of their moral character. Campe takes other freedoms with Defoe's novel by reorganizing and retelling Crusoe's history or life experiences from youth through his shipwreck and escape from the island. By salvaging items from two shipwrecks, Crusoe was able to equip himself with a myriad of tools and supplies that supported his survival on the island. He argues further it does not instruct the reader in how Crusoe overcomes the plight of his isolation and complete separation from the luxuries of civilization and what those luxuries, even as basic as tools like a knife or hammer, afford him. Like Optic's *Robinson Crusoe* adaptation discussed in chapter 2, Campe is concerned that *Robinson Crusoe* teaches a poor lesson to child

¹⁶¹ Campe notes however that not all reading material represents these precepts in childhood reading and education. He writes about the dangers that sentimental books pose to "the next generation," calling sentimental books a "raging epidemick, mental disease" and "contagion." He argues that sentimental books invite readers to engage in a reading process that indulges emotions that create a dangerous malaise. In short, these books brainwash children to their physical, mental, and spiritual detriment. Campe fears that young readers of these books would be "just as sickly in mind and body, as enervated, as dissatisfied with themselves, with the world, and with heaven, as the present" generation. He proposes an "antidote" to sentimental books with an adapted version of *Robinson Crusoe*. See Joachim Heinrich Campe, *Robinson the Younger by Mr. Campe. From the German*. (Hamburgh: printed for C.E. Bohn, 1781), 2.

readers regarding the difficulty and the “real” experience of a solitary existence on the island. Thus, Campe rewrites Crusoe’s history into three parts that emphasize his solitary helplessness and the relief of Friday’s enslavement, which is presented to the reader as a “companion,” and the shipwreck supplies that wash ashore.¹⁶² This wreck supplies Crusoe with some tools and other “necessaries of life, to enhance the value of so many things, which we consider as trifles, because we never felt the want of them.”¹⁶³ The tools that European society has created to ease and improve human existence are valuable commodities, but it is through their absence that readers may recognize the sincere difficulty and challenge to survive without them, which may, in turn, present a challenge to one’s faith, reason, and ingenuity. Robinson overcomes these struggles.

This recognition of Crusoe’s self-denial is slightly different from how Optic insists on the preference of a middle-class lifestyle over the individualistic ruggedness the child character Robert prefers. Through this integrated process of brutal survival, caring for the self in innovative ways, and cultivating a pious spirit, Campe’s hero becomes a model for the child readers to imitate and emulate once the material has been refashioned: specifically, the hero’s “circumstances and adventures so, as to be productive of many moral remarks, and natural occasions for pious and religious sensations, adapted to the understanding and hearts of children.”¹⁶⁴ With the inclusion of the family circle frame narrative, Campe’s adaptation invites one more layer of imitation and emulation for child readers: the ideal child auditor who is submissive and cooperative with the process of family instruction through storytelling the adults, particularly Father, have constructed.

¹⁶² Campe, xxii.

¹⁶³ Campe, xxii–xxiii.

¹⁶⁴ Campe, vi.

Campe's imagined audience includes the adults or parents of children that assume the authoritative role of children's moral and literacy educations. Campe references newly minted tutors as well. The child readers he imagines for this adaptation are autonomous and emerging literacy learners who require the assistance and guidance of an adult to decode the words and syllables on the page. He writes, "*Grown people, that love the conversation of children, are to read it to them, and give it into the hands of those children only, as have already acquired a competent fluency in reading.*"¹⁶⁵ The first implied reader of this text, "grown people" or adults who direct children's reading choices, positions the adult in the mediator and supervisor roles of the children's reading. Child readers are constructed as receivers of the text through auditory participation or a reader's independent reading practice. Campe addresses the "competent" reader, the other implied reader of the text, in the first section of the adaptation: "The book, my good child, you now have in your hands, is one of them [the evening tales that a father told and eventually recorded for his family], and you may therefore directly begin at the following page if you chuse it."¹⁶⁶ With the turn of a page, the reader of Campe's adaptation is invited into the family circle's storytelling, joining the child narratees or auditors in the frame narrative.

The "true family scenes" literally depict in *Robinson the Younger* a ritualized practice of oral storytelling, complete with implicitly outlined protocols for child and adult participants within a family circle. It is a purposeful adaptation choice. In Campe's preface in the English translation of *Robinson the Younger*, Campe reveals the frame narrative as "a secondary intention, which in the execution of this work seemed very important to me, viz: to give commencing tutors, by true

¹⁶⁵ Campe, vii.

¹⁶⁶ Campe, 2.

family scenes, an interesting example of the relation between parents and children.”¹⁶⁷ Andrew O’Malley alternatively reads this frame as reflective of the “imitative power of theatre,” or a fitting contemporary pedagogical approach for children’s learning preferences and capabilities.¹⁶⁸ Given that dialogue is classified as a form of theatre in the eighteenth century, O’Malley interprets Campe’s adaptation as theatrical drama for the middle-class home, more specifically a crafted domestic educational performance, which scripts dialogues of a family to enact a supervisory pedagogy inspired by John Locke, dramatizing “the overt and covert instruction” between the adult tutors and child pupil characters. O’Malley intently emphasizes “the theatrical quality of the dialogue,” complete with speaking parts and stage directions or descriptions of the characters’ behaviors in italics.¹⁶⁹ The represented family circle, in O’Malley’s view, is a complementary though “repeated trope of telling a story.”¹⁷⁰ Campe’s adaptation scripts the responses of child auditors to emulate positive qualities of the title hero that Campe revises purposefully to conform to cultural values of a patriarchal social structure and filial piety. As the adaptation attempts to secure the implied child reader’s compliance, it also displays utterly restricted access to the printed text of *Robinson Crusoe*, as shared *only* through the Father storyteller.

The adaptation, I would argue, is not simply a repeated trope in its heavily mediated approach to the novel’s narrative: it uses the telling of a story as a framing device to script and display the restrictions necessary for transmitting a popular book for a child audience. Campe

¹⁶⁷ Campe, xxiii.

¹⁶⁸ O’Malley, *Children’s Literature, Popular Culture, and Robinson Crusoe*, 34.

¹⁶⁹ Andrew O’Malley, *Children’s Literature, Popular Culture, and Robinson Crusoe*, Critical Approaches to Children’s Literature (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 31.

¹⁷⁰ O’Malley, 32.

locates the source and knowledge of Crusoe's history and its "vehicle" of transmission in an adult figure, not the printed text. Indeed, when first examining Campe's *Robinson the Younger*, a reader could easily conflate the story-telling practice depicted in the adaptation frame narrative as a scene of family reading. However, the book as a physical object is not referred to by "Father" (as his children refer to the character), other adults, or children in the frame narrative. The father figure does not bring a printed book to the circle or thumb through its pages, as would potentially be indicated in the stage-like directions and descriptions the dialogue includes throughout the adaptation. Campe represents the mode of storytelling.¹⁷¹ The father monitors and mediates the children's access to the story, which voids the print object as a potential source for illicit autonomous reading in Campe's model. It is a careful and purposeful control to protect the child from access to the print object, which establishes the absolute authority of Father's telling, aligning his instructive mission with themes of piety and labor heightened within Defoe's adapted narrative. Courtney Weikle-Mills's point that "books written for young people frequently posed as 'portable parents,' working as an extension of parental power and translating parent into texts" is literalized here via adaptation by assuring parental supervision.¹⁷² This important detail highlights adults'

¹⁷¹ There is conflicting evidence, however, which is the frontispiece to the 1779 German edition published by C.E. Bohn. It depicts the family circle with the Father figure holding what appears to be a codex in his hand. This image is reproduced in Merveldt's article, though I have not located additional bibliographic information at this time indicating which edition it appears. It's this visual representation that makes me wonder if the absence of a book object in the text is taken too literally (by me) to make a distinction between storytelling and communal reading, or that the engraver of the frontispiece also mis-interpreted the frame narrative as one of reading, not storytelling.

¹⁷² Weikle-Mills, *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence, 1640-1868*, 66–67.

desire to impose restrictive access to a popularly novel commonly shared and appropriated by young readers.

The unacknowledged or missing book also affirms the power of Father's role as the primary educator of the circle of children, especially since this idealization celebrates the success of his approach. The apple tree is the meeting place of their learning and storytelling, and the grass is their seat. On the one hand, Campe attempts to reflect an adapted Rousseauian approach to the natural education of children, as detailed in Rousseau's *Emile, or On Education*, by locating the children's learning in the natural world and in relation to it. On the other hand, Campe naturalizes the Father's storytelling practice and the children's education. It is not a coincidence that the family circle is staged under the apple tree, symbolic of an Edenic tree of knowledge. The imagery also clearly establishes a hierarchy of power, particularly the power the father holds in directing the telling and lessons each evening, by integrating the institution of the family and the social practice in the natural world comfortably. The father, then, becomes a gatekeeper of the Robinson Crusoe story and the knowledge that comprises it, relating the narrative and other forms of learning under the control of his devising.

Adapters like Campe try to mask such an overt restriction by adamantly insisting on the entertainment value of the pedagogical storytelling mode via the child narratees complete engrossment and enjoyment of the storytelling. Indeed, the build-up created with each evening-time storytelling shows the child auditors as receptive to the process. The child auditors of Father's family circle are the ideal participants. At the end of the telling, an unmistakable lesson concludes the entire adaptation with the following narration: "Here the father stopt. The young company remain'd for some time sitting in a pensive posture, till at last the ardent thought: *I will do so too!*"

Ripen'd into a firm resolution.”¹⁷³ The children commit to being like Crusoe and his companion Friday—pious, industrious, and most importantly, productive. As Father tells it, until death, Crusoe and Friday were engaged in “useful activity.”¹⁷⁴ Through this frame narrative, Campe pitches to his audience the didactic effect of reading, given that the child characters’ efforts in prayer and work have been cultivated through the doubling of Father’s mediated telling of Crusoe’s story and the exemplification of Defoe’s character. If the implied reader of the adaptation complies with the structure, following with the narratees through the Father’s instructive process, the adaptation essentially promises the reader a similar transformative experience.

3.2.1 From Apple Tree to Parlor: Reproducing Campe’s Adaptation in the US

Campe’s English translation is not the text picked up by British and American printers and publishers; however, the family circle frame narrative remains an essential adaptive feature that reappears in several editions of *Robinson the Younger* printed for British and American audiences through the mid-nineteenth century resulting in its transmission.¹⁷⁵ The English translations are either sourced from a French translation or a German translation of Campe’s adaptation, which leads to two versions under the short title *The New Robinson Crusoe* to be published, reprinted, and circulated in Britain and the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁷⁶ A

¹⁷³ Campe, *Robinson the Younger by Mr. Campe. From the German.*, 264.

¹⁷⁴ Campe, 264.

¹⁷⁵ David Blamires, *Telling Tales: The Impact of Germany on English Children’s Books 1780-1918* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2009), 26.

¹⁷⁶ This is not to say that *Robinson the Younger* did not circulate in Britain and the United States.

clear difference arises between the two versions indicating that one is related to the Campe adaptation and the other is not. The English translation of the German translation circulated by Newbery and others does not possess the ongoing frame narrative Campe creates in *Robinson the Younger*. It is a third-person narration of Robinson Crusoe's shipwreck and survival.¹⁷⁷ First published in London by John Stockdale in 1788, the English translation of the French translation is the version that retains the frame narrative Campe introduces in *Robinson the Younger* and captures my attention.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, it did not take long for American publishers and printers to produce their copies, following the Stockdale versions available, but under slightly edited titles

¹⁷⁷ It ends with Crusoe's return to his home in Hamburg where he reunites with his father, his mother since died during his adventures. Lessons for both parents and children conclude the final pages which encourage obedience to parents, "piety, sobriety, and a love of industry and labor." See *The New Robinson Crusoe, Designed for the Amusement and Instruction of the Youth of Both Sexes. Translated from the Original German. Embellished with Cuts*. (London: Printed for F. Newbery, At the Corner of St. Paul's Church-Yard. By C. Woodfall, No. 22, Patfrnoster-Row, 1799), 127–28, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015078572339>.

¹⁷⁸ Stockdale first published the adaptation in four separate volumes under the title, *The New Robinson Crusoe; An Instructive and Entertaining History, For the Use of Children of Both Sexes. Translated from the French. Embellished with Thirty-two beautiful Cuts*. The following year in 1789, Stockdale introduced this four-volume adaptation under the same title as a second edition that reduces four books down to two. In the same year, he published *An Abridgement of the New Robinson Crusoe; An Instructive and Entertaining History, For the Use of Children of Both Sexes. Translated from the French. Embellished with Thirty-two beautiful Cuts*. All four volumes are abridged into a single book. The frame narrative is organized by the headings of the "evenings" (thirty-one in total) of oral storytelling, not by volume. By 1789, Stockdale gave the option between purchasing Campe's adaptation as volume-based texts or a single book product.

and forms.¹⁷⁹ With varying differences in type settings, illustrations, and single-volume or multi-volume formats, they all have in common the Campe frame narrative that contains the slight changes made to Campe's original English translation. For example, the family has a British surname, Billingsley, and lives in Exeter, not Hamburg. Another adaptation occurs in the process of translation and reproduction of Campe's famous textual transformation. In the most significant alteration to Campe's adaptation, the communal storytelling frame narrative not only shifts away from the apple tree but also the book emerges as a prop. The difference then is a change in site and the mode of access to Defoe's novel. The adapters of Campe's adaptation relocate the transmission in a symbolic site of literacy acquisition for children, the domestic space, and renders the father figure as directly supervising the reading of print. Campe's vision of the family circle model that featured storytelling distances the relationship between the child and printed sources of fiction, not

¹⁷⁹ The titles are *The New Robinson Crusoe: An Instructive and Entertaining History. For the Use of Children of Both Sexes. Translated from the French* (1790), *The New Robinson Crusoe: An Instructive and Entertaining History. Translated from the French. In Two Volumes* (1792), and *An Abridgment of The New Robinson Crusoe: An Instructive and Entertaining History, for the Use of Children of Both Sexes. Translated from the French. Embellished with Thirty-two Cuts* (1811 and 1824). The 1790 American edition (one volume) was printed in Boston by Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer Andrews, where it sold at multiple bookstores in Boston and Worcester. *The New Robinson Crusoe: An Instructive and Entertaining History. Translated from the French. In Two Volumes* was printed by W. Woodhouse in Philadelphia in 1792. The abridgment version was printed, published, and sold in New York by I. Riley and in Philadelphia by John Bioren. Another abridgment version was printed and published in 1827 in Philadelphia under a slightly varied title: *New Robinson Crusoe: An Abridgment of the New Robinson Crusoe; An Instructive and Entertaining History, for the Use of Children, of Both Sexes. Translated from the French. Embellished with Thirty-Three Cuts*. The latest nineteenth-century American edition is *Robinson the Younger; or The New Crusoe* published by G. Routledge & Co. in London and New York in 1856.

bringing them in direct contact with one another. Whereas the British and American translation under the title *The New Robinson Crusoe* shifts the details of the frame narrative slightly to establish the middle-class domestic sphere, the heart of the family, as the monitor for print consumption by children.

Translated and again slightly revised by Mary Jane Godwin, *The New Robinson Crusoe* instead contains a communal *reading* frame narrative set in the parlor.¹⁸⁰ Godwin, as an adapter translator, institutes the parlor as the ideal learning site while still championing the importance of the family circle and the superiority of male power. The narrator introduces the frame narrative in the first chapter or “First Evening”:

In this [plan of study] was included a course of reading; and some book, that was at once both instructive and entertaining, afforded them amusement every evening for two or three hours before supper. But, as this exercise was meant by their father solely to encrease [sic] their fund of knowledge, and enlarge their understanding, in order that it might appear rather as a relaxation from their closer studies, than a labour imposed on them, Mr. Billingsley, in general, undertook the talk of reading himself. The following History of the New Robinson Crusoe was, during some week, the subject of their evening’s entertainment.¹⁸¹

With the shift from nature to home, the book takes its place next to the fireside. Remaking the family storytelling circle model in Campe’s English translation of *Robinson the Younger* to a family reading circle model as shown in American and British versions, Godwin includes the book as a print object, which Father uses as a source of family reading. Adults restrict readers from the

¹⁸⁰ This translation and adaptation has been credited to Mary Jane Godwin. See Teresa Michals, *Books for Children, Books for Adults: Age and the Novel from Defoe to James* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 43.

¹⁸¹ Joachim Heinrich Campe, *The New Robinson Crusoe; An Instructive and Entertaining History, for the Use of Children of Both Sexes. Translated from the French. Embellished with Thirty-Two Beautiful Cuts.*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, 2 (London: Printed for John Stockdale, opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly, 1789), 24–25.

text and supervise narrative consumption under the guise of entertaining communal reading. The narrator suggests that the child auditor and, by extension, the implied autonomous reader get to indulge in the shift in role, remaining as consumers of novel reading, yet still maintaining their productivity in learning even throughout more relaxed, evening entertainments.

Setting the circle within the parlor is significant because it establishes controls to mediate how materials of print culture enter the private domain that the family circle inhabits. Since the oral storytelling makes invisible the narrative material that the Father mediates for a child audience, locating the authority undeniably in the Father figure, the presence of the book in *The New Robinson Crusoe* versions showcases Mr. Billingsley's control over the reading material (it is total) and how the child auditors access its contents (they do not). The patriarchal family reading of the book is a powerful image. Mr. Billingsley is the holder of the text and an architect of its narrative and pedagogical goals when he distills *Robinson Crusoe* into clear lessons that are supposed to influence the child reader to emulate the productive and pious life of Crusoe. Like the oral storytelling frame narrative in Campe's English translation of *Robinson the Younger*, the male, patriarchal authority remains essential to this model.

The imagined reader of the printed adaptation of *The New Robinson Crusoe* is potentially—but not wholly—subject to the mediations that the father completes throughout the adaptation. One of the exceptions in which potential child readers are freed from the model's constraints is if they continue reading through the chapters without the kind of withholding of narrative that the child auditors experience within the narrative frame storyline. That is, there comes a point in which Mr. Billingsley does not continue with their story through thirty-one consecutive days. Due to business obligations and a means to teach yet another lesson, he does not continue the family circle ritual of reading *Robinson Crusoe*, making the children wait to hear how the story continues. The child

reader may become more of a witness to the children's didactic lesson and could simply flip the pages to pick up again the telling of the story of Crusoe, bypassing one of the several controls the family reading circle as a pedagogical and surveilling apparatus can enact. Do Campe and Godwin create enough incentive for the child readers to learn *what* encourages the father to take this route and participate as part of the circle? Does the overlapping of the family reading circle frame narrative with Crusoe's story encourage readers to know what happens to the fictional auditors and tellers? The narrator draws readers' attention to the affected auditors' minds, resolved to improve themselves; thus, readers may devote the time and effort to the frame narrative since Crusoe's development is as much a focus throughout the adaptation as the child auditors. The adaptation insists on the submission of child readers to the restrictive supervision put in place by the male mediating figure, reproducing the patriarchal ideology implicit in the novel's pre-text.

The difference is that Campe's adaptation in *The New Robinson Crusoe* limits any potential assertion of autonomous reading inspired by Robinson Crusoe's escape to the sea. This version of Campe's adaptation was reproduced in the United States through the early nineteenth century, with at least one translated edition past the mid-century in 1856, and it associates power with unmediated print. The father of the frame narrative clearly wields that power through complete control of the book, minimizing children's access. There is little room for children to err like Crusoe, except under the watchful eye of their parents, especially the father, Mr. Billingsley, who may easily and swiftly deliver a correction in the safety and control of the home. The model asserts the need for adult intervention to restructure and deliver the novel's contents, and it ideally presents the cultivation of embodied cultural capital in the family circle setting, representing the process for child auditors to apply their reading to the betterment of their character. The ideal reading scenario for Campe and the adapter-translator Godwin is that children do not appropriate the text

directly. The adaptation presents a literal product of Father's mediation of the famous novel, direct from the parlor, that can be reproduced and circulated in the juvenile book market as a safe children's edition. Any anxiety about correctly decoding Defoe's novel is eased by the textual supervision of the fictional Mr. Billingsley.

3.3 Adaptation as Restriction of Juvenile Political Activism

Obedience and deference to middle-class social norms and roles, along with the importance of the home as a protective and nurturing place, were important values imparted in adaptations for children and children's literature more broadly. But soothing adult anxiety about children's consumption of novels using supervisory apparatuses to constrain the exercise of children's literacy and autonomy in public and private spheres included and extended beyond *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) is an adaptation for literate children that offers a controlled presentation of the novel and allows a supervised interpretation of the text, much like Campe's English translation *Robinson the Younger* and American and British editions of *The New Robinson Crusoe*. The first difference is that *Peep's* family reading circle represents an adult, female-centered model. A maternal aunt mediates the text in a didactic reading to benefit her receptive and silent child auditors, producing an interesting tension and counterpoint to storyteller-author Harriet Beecher Stowe and her literary domestic abolitionism and best-selling novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly*. This family reading circle frame narrative, then, reveals a shift from patriarchal power to what Sarah Robbins refers to as a maternal "management" of literacy and the domestic space in which women assume

the primary role in educating children in reading.¹⁸² Therefore, I continue to examine the family circle supervisory apparatus as a device that, in a positive term, mediates the dissemination of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. With the restrictions put in place by adapters, the family circle frame narrative, which regulates the printed book through adult control, is not a surprise. The device is consistent in that it continues to build on an impetus to control the transmission and dissemination of print and children's reading labors. But the intersection between female auntie mediator and the political fever of slavery in the antebellum period leading up to the Civil War highlights the adaptation's illusion of the separation between public and private spheres of political, abolitionist activism.

Given that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* tackles nineteenth-century racial politics, mediation via print-based adaptation can hardly remain neutral or "innocent," even when adapted for child audiences.¹⁸³ Though *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* certainly tries. *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* reveals that supervision of narrative transmission in the domestic sphere functions as the means to enforce ideological and political limitations on white child readers. It relegates them to an implied position of passive listeners, which is in contrast to an abolitionist culture and juvenile abolitionist literature that regularly emphasized children's empowerment in the movement.¹⁸⁴ When this adaptation and its adaptive choices with the family circle frame narrative is

¹⁸² Robbins, *Managing Literacy, Mothering America: Women's Narratives on Reading and Writing in the Nineteenth Century*, 2.

¹⁸³ For more on the concept of "racial innocence" and childhood, see Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights, American and the Long 19th Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

¹⁸⁴ See Hochman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*; Deborah C. De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003).

contextualized with its “peeping” narrative device, it shows not only that the cultural reproduction of the middle class is maintained, but its narrowed vision of juvenile abolitionist politics does nothing to challenge white supremacy or advocate black autonomy in the American political landscape. In this case, adaptation restricts white children’s political activism and limits black children and adults to fictional objects of sympathy.

Published in 1853 concurrently in London and Boston by Sampson Low & Son and J.P. Jewett, respectively, *A Peep* is an adaptation that went through at least three editions. These editions appear to have been produced only in 1853. Unlike Campe’s adaptation, Aunt Mary’s adaptation does not have the kind of longevity or success that Campe’s text had in its exportations and importations across Europe, Britain, and the United States. Both publishing firms were exclusively awarded the copyright by author Harriet Beecher Stowe to publish novelized versions of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* after its serialized appearance in the *National Era*. The editor of *A Peep*, identified as “Aunt Mary,” adapts the story to reorganize the narration within a family circle narrative framing, introducing and concluding an abridgment of the novel that includes editorial omissions and revisions. Structured like bookends, the family circle frame narrative begins and ends the adapted text of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The reading circle in *A Peep* is directed by Aunt Mary, who reads the story of “Uncle Tom” to her nieces and nephew, Kate, Annie, and George. Aunt Mary is both a character in the adaptation and the attributed editor on the book’s title page, blending the adaptation process of the pre-text with the social practice of communal reading in which an adult mediates the story. When compared closely with Stowe’s unabridged novel version, this children’s edition reveals Aunt Mary’s choices as both an editor and mediator: she skips chapters, selectively reads certain passages from chapters, combines chapters, or omits words

during her reading.¹⁸⁵ The prefaces offer additional insight into “Mary’s” motivations for the editing and publishing of this adaptation.

In *A Peep*, there are two prefaces: Harriet Beecher Stowe’s address (with autograph) and another from the editor of the work, offering an apology and defense of the textual transformation. These peritexts pit the author’s interests against the adapter’s goals. Stowe’s introduction is the first prefatory text of the adaptation, and she does not spend printed space praising or overtly commending the appropriateness or suitability of this edition for its specific audience of child readers. Instead, she affirms how *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* originated as an oral story told to children before being committed to the manuscript and then print. She concludes the introduction with the instructive benefits of the character Eva, who in child form represents the savior Jesus Christ and his teachings. For Stowe, this story began and continues to be appropriate for child readers and auditors when she states, “So you see the story belongs to children very properly,” identifying Eva as a model Christian character for children to love and emulate.¹⁸⁶ Stowe’s preface firmly explains that her imagined audience for the narrative was primarily children all along.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ The pre-text I use for comparative purposes is the first novel publication of the text: (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1852) as reproduced in the Norton Critical Edition series. See Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism*, ed. Elizabeth Ammons, 2nd ed., A Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

¹⁸⁶ Aunt Mary, *A Peep into Uncle Tom’s Cabin; By “Aunt Mary,” For Her Nephews and Nieces; With an Address From Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, To the Children of England and America*, Third edition (London; Boston: Sampson Low & Son, 47 Ludgate Hill; Jewett and Co., 1853), iii.

¹⁸⁷ See De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*, 28. She cites the work of Millicent Lentz, writing, “Stowe considered the original appropriate for children”.

Stowe's position is partially consistent with the ending of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the serial version, especially the reference to Little Eva. However, her preface completely omits the serial's original controversial appeal to children directly, which called for them to assume a role in integrating schools. As Lesley Ginsberg notes about the serial ending of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "Stowe's motherly, didactic finish, which attempts to enlist the youthful reader in a practical (if visionary) plan for social reformation, is famously written out of the novel version."¹⁸⁸ The appeal may have fit the abolitionist values of the *National Era*, but it was removed for the novel version, indicating that the call to action could have been too risky for a broader antebellum public. Ginsberg further contextualizes this omission from serial to the novel by explaining how the appeal makes an "implicit assumption of childish power."¹⁸⁹ Stowe summons the white child to assume a role in the school integration of black and white children. The suggestion that children can exercise this form of political agency was likely "distasteful to the proponents of old-fashioned parental power, whose perquisites were already under attack by well-meaning reformers from the rarified transcendentalism of Elizabeth Peabody to the public school practices of Horace Mann."¹⁹⁰

Interestingly, Barbara Hochman suggests Stowe's overall work with the narrative made a significant impression, even in the context of the serial publication. Hochman explains, "*Uncle Tom's Cabin* directly challenged the moral messages of the *Era's* 'high toned' literature; it ushered

¹⁸⁸ Lesley Ginsberg, "'I Am Your Slave for Love': Race, Sentimentality, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's Fiction for Children," in *Enterprising Youth: Social Values and Acculturation in Nineteenth-Century American Children's Literature*, ed. Monika Elbert (New York and London: Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Group, 2008), 99.

¹⁸⁹ Ginsberg, 100.

¹⁹⁰ Ginsberg, 100.

religious doubt, political comfort, and the problem of human rights installment fiction.”¹⁹¹ Jewett & Co., with the novel form, first reins in the “distaste” by omitting the serial’s appeal to children (and other domestic and British reprints follow suit). Then, Aunt Mary provides the “political comfort” by returning to the familiar “moral messages” expected of fiction intended for juvenile readers. While Stowe asserts that children have always constituted the audience of her work, she does appear to compromise her political mission to inspire child reformers for the adapter Aunt Mary’s much more narrowed purpose that aligns with the protocol of reading as self-improving labor.

A Peep into Uncle Tom’s Cabin is not simply censored for “inappropriate” topics; the adaptation process reflects political censorship of child audiences who formed part of Stowe’s implied audience since its inception. In the second address, the editor apologizes for her “mutilati[on]” of Stowe’s work, insisting that adaptation was necessary, which reads as a completely unexpected contradiction of Stowe’s defense of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as belonging to children since its initial telling.¹⁹² The editor argues that “in its present form” *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* “cannot be placed in the hands of children; it was not written for them, although originally ‘told to them.’”¹⁹³ Aunt Mary suggests a distinct difference between the oral sharing of the story and children’s reading of the novel. When contextualized with the adaptive change that puts in place a family reading circle frame narrative, the preface then presents an interrogation of the practices

¹⁹¹ Hochman, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*, 33.

¹⁹² Aunt Mary, *A Peep into Uncle Tom’s Cabin; By “Aunt Mary,” For Her Nephews and Nieces; With an Address From Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, To the Children of England and America*, iii.

¹⁹³ Mary, iii.

that facilitate children's access to stories and the levels of adult supervision various reading practices allow. Aunt Mary affirms that print access is a problem, particularly when handling and reading texts as popular and politically charged as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The editor's disagreement with Stowe appears friendly, but the editor insists on adult control and supervision of children's reading that Stowe does not adequately provide.

Aunt Mary constructs a workaround to Stowe's assertion that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is for children by reminding the reading audience that *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* original storytelling included an overt adult presence (as Stowe herself admits in the preface). In the social and pedagogical practices of the family reading circle, adults facilitated access to books and knowledge, and they also used the family circle to demonstrate active reading practices through the facilitation of dialogue and lessons. In this facilitation process, adults omitted and edited inappropriate content and explained complex, inaccessible material. From a nineteenth-century literate adult perspective schooled in the labors of reading, if a child were to read the novel in its entirety as a younger, solitary reader, she was potentially exposed to unsuitable and potentially challenging content to understand without the guiding censorship and explanation of an adult. Aunt Mary, as the adapter of *A Peep*, indicates that unmediated print in the hands of children is risky, but an adult presence protects their so-called vulnerabilities by insisting on the need to "introduce[e]" children to Stowe's story of Uncle Tom and Eva.¹⁹⁴

Print copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were often reprints of the novel, differing in format and cost. So the circulating editions did not possess the supervisory apparatus adapters insist are required. Since adult intervention during novel reading is otherwise considered necessary from the

¹⁹⁴ Mary, iii.

editor's perspective, intervention via adaptation must transform the text itself, especially since adult authority and supervision could not be guaranteed through children's independent reading. The editor subtly indicates that the oral transmission, a supervisory apparatus of Stowe as an adult storyteller, was in place. However, this acknowledgment of the text's genealogy as an oral story reads more as superficial and rhetorical politeness. The contradiction to Stowe's assertions of her intellectual property and literary efforts remain. Though the editor does not go into additional explanation and even tries to play off the adaptation as furthering the dissemination of the novel by extending it from "railway carriage,...the library,...drawing room, and the cottage," to provide a specific edition for children, Aunt Mary reveals that adaptation enables and affirms a correcting adult mediation to render the story appropriate for children, ultimately betraying her purposes.

I argue that her main concern is the uncertainty of what children will do with a *political* printed novel—how they will read it— outside of an adult presence, presenting the anxiety underpinning much of the adaptation for child readers in the nineteenth century. Aunt Mary's adaptation rectifies these so-called deficiencies in the "present form" of the book, staging and framing the telling of Stowe's abridged story within a family circle and re-packaging the text through "peep" children's books and peep-shows.¹⁹⁵ Replacing storyteller Stowe and her novel with a maternal and mediating figure reflective of the family circle as pedagogical and monitory, Aunt Mary adapts the adult presence to mediate the political and cultural debates to establish an even more conservative position on abolition and slavery for child readers to adopt. Aunt Mary imagines a receptive child reader who does not interrogate further about slavery and abolition. Instead, the audience is urged to internalize principles of love and goodwill towards others as the

¹⁹⁵ Mary, iii.

“higher motive.”¹⁹⁶ By doing so, she maintains the adult authority in directing the reading of the narrative, narrows the ideological and textual content of the original novel, and guides children in a novel reading practice that encourages emulation of Eva’s and Tom’s good Christian characters, not active abolitionist principles.

The first chapter of *A Peep* begins with the children hurrying to clean up their lesson materials for entertaining storytelling and a reward for completing their schoolwork. Aunt Mary comes to her chair in the prepped circle with “Uncle Tom.” She uses this shortened title to designate the title of the story and personify the book object. Adapters fear child readers’ embodiment of reading that transgresses or resists the adults’ desired instruction because that reading process does not contribute to the cultivation of embodied cultural capital. Robert and Marian, in chapter 2, could not “safely” embody their narrative heroes, requiring adult rescue and intervention. Here, “Uncle Tom” (and not *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*) points to the model for children to admire and emulate. With this book-person in hand, Aunt Mary uses her narration to begin the story of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The family circle frame narrative takes control of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, containing the adult embodiment and presence adaptations like *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* argue is missing from novels appropriated by child readers. Aunt Mary affirms textual authority over Stowe’s narrative to control its dissemination to child readers to facilitate the cultivation of valuable embodied cultural capital.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Aunt Mary, *A Peep*, 419.

¹⁹⁷ *A Peep into Uncle Tom’s Cabin* use of this textual mechanism to establish authority is a motif part of early children’s literature, dating back to *The Governess* (1749) and *The Boarding School* (1798). For a reading of these texts through the lens of citizenship, see Weikle-Mills, *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence, 1640-1868*, 79–94.

Aunt Mary's story-telling circle begins the first chapter and slowly transitions into the beginning of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. There is no distinct separation with a page break or a new chapter, making it difficult for a reader to skip to the start of Stowe's abridged text easily. It should be noted that to search for the beginning of Stowe's text would potentially require a text-to-text comparison. The editor rather seamlessly incorporates Aunt Mary's narration style to echo Stowe's narrator voice by asking the reader to join her, often making observations of characters, and directing readers to enter and leave various scenes and locations. Thus, to access the start of Tom's story, Aunt Mary's adaptation obliges the reader to read her family circle frame narrative, which details her introduction to the story and the process of reading she wants the children to follow:

I have a great deal to tell you about him that will make you very sorrowful. But there is also much to instruct us in the account of how he bore all his trials and sorrows; and may you and I, dear children, learn from his example to love our enemies, and do good to those who hate us; and be able, also, to draw comfort from the same source at all times. But I see you are impatient for the story.¹⁹⁸

Aunt Mary presents readers with the tale's lesson within this frame before eventually proceeding to Stowe's written words. This didacticism appeals to cultural critics' calls for active reading, which the circle readily facilitates. In Lydia Sigourney's *Letters to Mothers* (1838), which was a manual of domestic femininity that Aunt Mary embodies, Sigourney cautions her readers to beware an unproductive form of reading that indulges too much time reading too many books without appropriate and necessary reflection.¹⁹⁹ She consistently advises mothers that reading as a practice should be useful; therefore, both the process—how children read—and product—what

¹⁹⁸ Mary, *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin; By "Aunt Mary," For Her Nephews and Nieces; With an Address From Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, To the Children of England and America*, 2.

¹⁹⁹ Sigourney writes, "That we read too much, and reflect too little." L. H. Sigourney, *Letters to Mothers* (Hartford, Connecticut: Hudson and Skinner, 1838), 145.

books children consume—is key to a productive effect.²⁰⁰ Aunt Mary’s adaptation reflects this prescription for children’s reading since it emphasizes what children are expected to extract from the story: moral lessons applicable to their lives. Commonplace applications may include relations with friends and rivals, reflections on their wrongdoings, or their relationship with their spiritual Father. Regardless of the specifics, these didactic lessons constitute a symbolic currency, moral capital, that would benefit children’s development of moral character. Aunt Mary’s lesson encourages child readers to follow Tom’s and Eva’s examples and embody Christian principles of love and reliance on God. This juvenile edition allows children to read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* safely since the text constructs adequate pedagogical supports for proper application and necessary self-reflection.

So far, I have explained how Aunt Mary’s use of the family circle as an adapting device allows the editor and adult reader to mediate reading activity and encourage a “productive” practice that points towards a didactic lesson of emulation. *A Peep* is also a book product that offers assurance to adults that her adaptation promotes productive reading for children, alleviating any anxiety that political action beyond sympathetic reading is effectively contained. Thus, it is effective because it supervises the novel’s content for independent readers, a control and assertion of authority that restricts child readers’ access to Stowe’s novel. It is a move that functions as a blatant means to censor welcoming child audiences into any vision of active abolitionism and reform. Examining this aspect of the adaptation process in which Aunt Mary as adapter and family circle reader abridges and mediates the novel reveals a more narrowed ideological position regarding slavery and abolition, which warrants a closer look.

²⁰⁰ Sigourney, 148.

3.3.1 Uses of Abridgment: Erasures of Black Suffering and Agency and Protections of White Virtue

In *A Peep*, the editor cuts the text in half, shortening the length of an otherwise thick novel. Condensation for the sake of a child reader's capability or endurance to consume such a lengthy book is hardly a motivation. The book is still long (more than four hundred pages) and maintains whole chapters from the source text. The editor recycles almost entire chapters from the original featuring the Uncle Tom story. This adaptation does abridge and combine chapters, often towards the end of Stowe's novel, after the death of Eva and Augustine St. Clare and Tom's sale to Simon Legree. Specific content is conspicuously absent, including episodes involving the Harris family and Emmeline and Cassy, Legree's female slaves. In the unabridged novel, Stowe represents enslaved black women's experiences, and characters Emmeline and Cassy, in particular, are subjected to sexual exploitation and violence at the hands of white men. Emmeline, for instance, is exposed to physical groping as Stowe points out to the reader Legree's gross leering and corrupt intentions, positioning Emmeline as Cassy's younger, virginal replacement.²⁰¹ The adapter excises Emmeline and Cassy's storylines from the adaptation. Therefore, while a significant number of the chapters are replicated chapters from Stowe's 1852 novel, this pattern ceases once Tom is sold from the St. Clare estate to Simon Legree because his narrative crosses paths with these two black

²⁰¹ The exception is when Emmeline and her mother are described, but not named, in the chapter, "The Slave's Warehouse" and toward the end when "two poor women" escaped on page 32. Other omissions include denominational references, like "Methodist" when Legree exclaims, "How I hate these [cursed Methodist] hymns!" on page 389. Crude language is removed. "Devil" is eliminated when Legree asks Sambo, "What's got into Tom?" in "The Victory" chapter on page 388.

female figures. The chapters are then edited and condensed to fill the gaps left from the removal of Emmeline and Cassy from the story. Even the lone reference to Sambo's claiming the slave woman, Lucy, as "his" woman, without her consent, on Legree's plantation is removed. Was this material detailing sexual violence and corrupted virtue deemed inappropriate for white child readers? These omissions appear to be intentional and consistent throughout Aunt Mary's edition, indicating an editorial decision not to expose a young audience to enslaved women's and girl's experiences of sexual abuse and violence.

This decision protects the innocence of white children and obscures the gendered, violent experiences of slavery. It also denies innocence to black children who were conscious of and experienced this abuse and violence. Brigitte Fielder, who has explored the racial perspectives on slavery in abolitionist and neoabolitionist children's literature, has remarked that "black children and their parents cannot and must not avoid learning about these things for their own safety and survival," which remains true now as it was then.²⁰² In the nineteenth century, black writers and activists circulated this knowledge through print. Nazera Sadiq Wright's research on black girlhood in nineteenth-century print shows how black authors like Elizabeth Keckley and Harriet Jacobs rely on the concept of "black girls' premature knowingness," a girlhood model, Wright explains, that used distinct age markers to reveal girls' knowledge of adult issues that included sexual violence and abuse.²⁰³ According to Wright, Keckley and Jacobs (whose work was published after Stowe's novel and Aunt Mary's adaptation in the next decade) "insisted on

²⁰² Brigitte Fielder, "Black Girls, White Girls, American Girls: Slavery and Racialized Perspectives in Abolitionist and Neoabolitionist Children's Literature," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 36, no. 2 (2017): 323–24.

²⁰³ Nazera Sadiq Wright, *Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University Illinois Press, 2016), 10–15.

revealing the repeated sexual assaults that often befell enslaved black girls” in attempts to “contest negative representations of black female sexuality.”²⁰⁴ Wright argues that the model of the “prematurely knowing” black girl in its various usages by black authors depicts “the strategies...black girls deploy to survive hostile environments.”²⁰⁵ While real and imagined nineteenth-century black girls and women were subject to sexual threats, violence, and abuse, Aunt Mary protects the virtue of white children to fulfill her stated didactic mission, limiting the scope in which child readers may engage the politics of slavery through consumption of abolitionist print.

Another choice in the adaptation process again points to political censorship given the omission of George, Eliza, and Harry from the revised abridgment. Initially, this change may make sense because the editor pitches the adaptation and condensation of the novel to focus on the central importance of Tom and Eva’s joined storylines. This move suits the didactic purpose; however, it also results in the limited representation of black character figures, including Eliza and George Harris. Hochman points out that Eliza and George’s “thoughts and actions violate civic laws and social norms.”²⁰⁶ Using a common trope about slavery’s destruction of family bonds, Stowe humanizes and directly challenges domestic political positions that uphold or are complacent with the fugitive law through these characters’ efforts to maintain the integrity of their family.²⁰⁷ The

²⁰⁴ Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was published in 1861, and Elizabeth Keckley’s *Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* was published in 1868. Wright, 12.

²⁰⁵ Wright, 13.

²⁰⁶ Hochman, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*, 50.

²⁰⁷ For more on the *National Era*’s treatment of fugitive enslaved people in poetry in comparison to Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, see Hochman, 44–50.

Harris family's narrative then presents a more controversial tale of slave agency, resistance, and rebellion when escaping from their slave owners. Granted, the Harris family, Cassy, and Emmeline are still not wholly understood as radical slave characters, but they may be considered rebellious and subversive for defying the law to assure their freedom.²⁰⁸

By excising these transgressive characters and their related storylines, the editor of *A Peep* effectively offers child readers Messianic and comical black figures in addition to the cast of virtuous white characters from George Shelby to Eva St. Clare. George, Eliza, and Harry, like Emmeline and Cassy, are characters that do not offer comic relief, unlike Topsy, who still fulfills her original role as an entertaining minstrel figure and foil to little Eva.²⁰⁹ Chapters with Topsy's appearances from the novel remain unchanged in this adaptation. Similarly, Eva sacrifices herself to redeem others in their attitudes and positions that maintain slavery, and freed slaves beg to remain in Shelby's benevolent and kind service. Tom also maintains his faith but submits to his enslaved condition. Donnarae MacCann identifies Tom as Stowe's conversion vehicle for white readers. He is "set up to proselytize the author's moral philosophy."²¹⁰ The adapter keeps the character's function intact: Tom remains an unthreatening and unimposing figure throughout the revised abridgment, especially when he steadfastly resists provocations to violence and dissent

²⁰⁸ Donnarae MacCann argues that Harriet Beecher Stowe still possessed a conservative position on slavery. MacCann dubs Stowe's abolitionist politics as part of the "cautious group" of antebellum abolitionist writers that "would not take their ex-slaves beyond new posts as servants, new homelands as repatriated Africans, or new spirits in the afterlife." See Donnarae MacCann, *White Supremacy in Children's Literature: Characterizations of African Americans, 1830-1900* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 13.

²⁰⁹ MacCann, 18.

²¹⁰ MacCann, 18.

against his white superior, Legree. Tom bears the abuse and violence with stoicism and self-sacrifice. Any sort of challenge to the hostile environment of slavery is conveniently removed from the abridgment. This edition does not give space to any figures that serve any potential to challenge authority through disobedience as the Harris family, Emmeline, and Cassy represent in their rebellious escapes. The status quo of white authority and black subordination is maintained.

A Peep presents *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a narrative that requires adults to mediate its telling within the family reading circle, but the restrictions put in place point to political censorship that avoids an education in the brutality of slavery, including the sexual threats posed against black women and girls, and representations of black characters that exercise their agency directly against the domestic civil laws. Aunt Mary's mediation transmits a version of Stowe's novel that sanitizes abolitionist sentiment, effectively removed from controversial representations of sexual exploitation and runaways. It also maintains white superiority by facilitating for children the lesson that is to be gained from the submission and martyrdom of Tom and Eva. Aunt Mary's editorial choices and explicit mediation of the novel in this adaptation narrow the scope by which juvenile readers view the scenes of Uncle Tom's story across the Atlantic, for as referenced earlier in this section, *A Peep* is concurrently published by a British company, Sampson Low & Son, and the American firm that originally published *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in novel form, Jewett and Co. in Boston. As a *British* adapter, Aunt Mary distances the abolitionist novel from its genre and associates it with less socially threatening forms of childhood reading. The editor appears to have been inspired by a form of child entertainment and a juvenile writing genre familiar to nineteenth-century British children and parents: peep-shows and "peep" children's books.

3.3.2 A British “Peep” at the American Political Landscape

Like the family reading circle used in *A Peep*'s adaptation process to provide the necessary restrictions for child readers, peep-shows and “peep” children's books also function to further narrow children's access to all of the stories comprising *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The use of “peep” in the title then bears significance given these cultural significations and relations to other print and entertainment forms. At first glance, peep may connote sneakiness or illicitness, particularly for its oral circulation and literary connections to the “Peeping Tom” figure of the Lady Godiva legend, who illicitly peeked at the naked Godiva, who was riding on her horse through the town of Coventry, as part of an agreement with her husband to rescind heavy taxes. The townsfolk agreed to stay inside and not look at the spectacle, but Peeping Tom betrayed this agreement to gaze upon Godiva.²¹¹ However, in a nineteenth-century context, the word peep would have also summoned up images and experiences of children's entertainment called the peepshow, a prevalent optical show form in the nineteenth century.²¹² Children viewed illustrated scenes through a hole

²¹¹ Printed versions of the story in verse and prose existed in the nineteenth century, so the illicit peeping and nudity was present.

²¹² Other optical forms of entertainment include the panorama, diorama, and magic lanterns. For more concerning the relationship between peepshows and their remediation in children's publishing through illustrated and movable books in the nineteenth century see John Plunkett, “Moving Books/Moving Images: Optical Recreations and Children's Publishing 1800-1900,” *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 5 (2007): 1–27. See also John Plunkett, “Peepshows for All: Performing Words and the Travelling Showman,” *Zeitschrift Für Anglistik Und Amerikanistik* 63, no. 1 (2015): 8. Plunkett explains that the association with the peep show and pornographic images did not emerge until the late nineteenth century with the introduction of the automated machines like the mutoscope.

in a box that a traveling showman would often carry on his back to fairs and markets. The viewing of these scenes also included a narrative provided by the showman.²¹³

Aunt Mary's adaptation is not a remediation of the peepshow in book form; it does not use illustration and material form to accomplish any hands-on viewing to replicate the children's physical peepshow experience of looking through a small opening to view an image.²¹⁴ However, in the family reading circle frame narrative, Aunt Mary asks the children to remember their experience of seeing the panorama exhibit in London, which showed the Mississippi River, another entertainment that relies on visual and oral storytelling.²¹⁵ Her prompt is reminiscent of how Stowe invites her readers to move with the narrator throughout the novel's scenes. For example, readers are invited into Uncle Tom's Cabin when the narrator says, "Let us enter the dwelling."²¹⁶ Once inside, the narrator treats readers to a description of the inhabitants and the home. Through the descriptive imagery of scenes that would have been depicted in optical entertainment akin to the peepshow, Aunt Mary (and Stowe) prompts the child readers to visualize the narrative, which allows them to observe and travel across the Atlantic to the American South. Since Aunt Mary

²¹³ Plunkett, "Moving Books/Moving Images: Optical Recreations and Children's Publishing 1800-1900," 4.

²¹⁴ Plunkett offers examples: Elizabeth Semple's *The Magic Lantern; Or, Amusing and Instructive Exhibitions for Young People* (1806) and Ann Taylor's *Signor Topsy Turvey's Magic Lantern; Or, The World Turned Upside Down* (1810).

²¹⁵ This reference likely refers to John Banvard's famous "Panorama of the Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio Rivers," which was exhibited not only in the United States but also in Britain. For more on the panorama, see John Hanners, "'The Great Three-Mile Painting': John Banvard's Mississippi Panorama," *Journal of American Culture* 4, no. 1 (1981): 28-42.

²¹⁶ Mary, *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin; By "Aunt Mary," For Her Nephews and Nieces; With an Address From Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, To the Children of England and America*, 11.

structures the adaptation through this textual peepshow, readers observe the cultural, social, and political conditions of slavery in the United States across the transatlantic space. Like the peepshows of fairs and markets, children can only experience the show through a small opening. The textual peeping deployed within the family reading circle framing at the beginning of the text results in a narrowed look at the various stories of slave experiences produced by Stowe's literary project. The peep, in other words, reflects the restrictive adaptation process, which stands in contrast to the panoramic look of the Mississippi River the fictional auditors witnessed. Another generic form of peeping common to children's books, which is also reflected in *A Peep*, emphasizes moral didacticism and results in a lack of an interrogation of the British nation's own role in slavery, further reflecting the narrower approach in which Aunt Mary treats the adaptation process.

The textual peeping should also be considered in relation to the travel writing genre that extended its influence into children's books, which invited a sanitized (non-sexual) voyeurism that authors used for class socialization or even religious conversion.²¹⁷ Notably, this peeping is not represented as illicit or unwelcome, especially since the texts are positioned to provide what is understood by the benevolent middle class as a necessary educational perspective for child readers. For example, in a peep series authored by the Taylors, which includes *City Scenes, or, A Peep into*

²¹⁷ During this period, travel writing would use "peep" to signal how a reader can get exposure to a certain place, its people, and their culture through these print texts. Herman Melville's *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846) is an example. See Justin D. Edwards, "Melville's Peep-Show: Sexual and Textual Cruises in 'Typee,'" *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 30, no. 2 (1999): 61–74. Edwards explains how readers, justifying their reading with rationales of scientific inquiry, occupy an excitable position of safely observing exotic and erotic scenes without violating codes of propriety. This voyeurism as a writing mode is sanitized when applied to children's books.

London, For Good Children (1809) and *Rural Scenes, or, A Peep into the Country for Children* (1810), the narrator asks child readers to view and learn about the various places, people, objects, and scenes that characterize those particular geographies.²¹⁸ Like *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin*, textual scenes can be intimate regarding characters' personal lives, setting them up as objects of children's sympathy and pity. Take this instance in *City Scenes*. The narrator writes, "What a dismal place!—However, it may do us good for once, to see such a wretched sight...See this poor mechanic and his starving family."²¹⁹ *City Scenes* displays class voyeurism, which separates middle- and upper-class child readers from a group of impoverished people. Noticeably, this scene is described for child readers' benefit, not for the family presented as starving. Taylor exposes children to this scene to encourage them to respond appropriately when they are upset or troubled by a personal, trite occurrence. She creates a lesson of gratitude for a middle-class life. Simply put, child readers may view safely from a distance; their circumstances are not affected or linked to this family or their poverty. Their reading does not require a response beyond their sympathy. More importantly, from the writer's point of view, children should apply this informative peeping as lessons in self-improvement, not necessarily as calls to action. This same kind of rhetorical position is at play in *A Peep*.

Child readers are encouraged to view these intimate scenes between characters, but the adaptation maintains a political and social separation in favor of a didactic lesson. At the end of the abridgment and the return to the frame narrative, the only child voice we hear is George, who

²¹⁸ *Rural Scenes* was authored by Ann, Jane, and Isaac Taylor, and *City Scenes* was authored by Ann Taylor.

²¹⁹ Ann Taylor, *City Scenes, Or, A Peep into London, For Good Children* (London: Printed for and sold by Darton and Harvey, Gracechurch-Street, 1809), 10.

voices his disappointment that their reading of “Uncle Tom” has ended (and the children do not have tears to cry). While the family circle as a pedagogical apparatus potentially facilitates discussion as a responsive and social activity (especially as depicted in Campe’s adaptation), the family reading circle in this fictional text does not represent that form of exchange between Aunt Mary and her charges. The little participants are otherwise silent. The mediator steps in and directs the interpretation of the text.

Favoring the cultivation of embodied cultural capital for its implied audience, Aunt Mary uses adaptation to restrict juvenile political activism beyond the stirrings of sympathy.²²⁰ Aunt Mary presents a more immediate lesson to the quiet children, to “love one another,” which the adapter describes as a “higher motive.”²²¹ The adapter reaffirms the Christian principle of love as self-sacrifice through little Eva and Uncle Tom, both presented by the editor and Stowe as the subjects of this virtue at the start of the children’s edition. Aunt Mary abridges Stowe’s novel to position children’s power for social change strictly as a personal evangelical project, a didactic lesson that can eventually be traded for or redirected towards the issue of slavery, but only when children pass into the realm of adulthood.

Aunt Mary takes the last two pages to encourage her circle to help, saying, “Do not, my dear children, let the feelings which have been awakened by what I have read to you pass away; I trust, on the contrary, they will increase and strengthen as you grow older. And try if you cannot

²²⁰ For more on the reception of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, see Hochman, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*, 10–19.

²²¹ Mary, *A Peep into Uncle Tom’s Cabin; By “Aunt Mary,” For Her Nephews and Nieces; With an Address From Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, To the Children of England and America*, 419.

find some way by which you may aid in doing away with slavery.”²²² “Some way” is never explicitly explained, even though she encourages them to keep and remember their emotional response and feelings to this family circle reading of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The demonstrable action in the abridgment in the end by Stowe’s character George Shelby, who, as a young adult (no longer the child teaching Uncle Tom to read) grants his estate’s enslaved people freedom would be fresh in readers’ minds. With the doubling of George characters internal to Stowe’s narrative and external to it in the frame narrative, the subtle suggestion, using language about growth and aging, is that children are to hold onto their “feelings...awakened” by the mediated reading to exercise their agency against slavery in adulthood. Any call to action here is riddled with ambiguity. For the time being, child readers are urged to hold up a mirror to view how they can be more like angels in the likes of Tom and Eva.

In this edition, Aunt Mary’s adaptation process reflects a transatlantic shift in a political and ideological perspective that works to muddle Britain’s culpability in American slavery and distance Britain’s involvement in the slave trade, slavery, and their imperialist projects in the Caribbean, Africa, and India. Aunt Mary does not explicitly state Britain’s participation in slavery beyond its historical role when “Our forefathers introduced slavery into America,” using both time and distance to separate themselves from slavery and the United States. The irony, of course, is that there is no mention of Britain’s own recent participation in the institution in the nineteenth century. While the slave trade was abolished in 1807, emancipation in the British empire was only declared in 1834 and then realized in the Caribbean as late as 1838.²²³ The lack of acknowledgment

²²² Mary, 418. Aunt Mary, *A Peep*, 418.

²²³ Mary, 419.

of the nation's structures that enslaved black people is not unique for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or other sociopolitical commentaries on the United States. The adaptation and its framing are consistent with other British paratextual packagings of the novel, which, according to Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily Todd, reframe Stowe's work as a "novel with particularly American problems."²²⁴ Kohn, Meer, and Todd point out how this positioning "implicitly...made Britain...look virtuous by contrast."²²⁵ Similarly, the virtue of British character is celebrated in *A Peep* (national hero and British naval commander Horatio Nelson is quoted). The urgency of emancipation described in the final section is directly related to American slavery.

A Peep allows British child readers to become intimately acquainted with characters entangled in the institution of slavery; yet, this allowance also assures readers that they may peep and remain distant from its effects. The death of little Eva, for instance, would suggest that even a free child cannot remain untouched by this institutional disease as it permeates even the sanctity of the domestic space. However, Eva's proximity to slavery at home—as part of her household and the geographical South—accounts for her death, perhaps as much as how her complete empathetic submission to slavery's violence does too.²²⁶ British children do not face a similar threat in their nation; slavery remains outside of mainland Britain.²²⁷ The peeping then allows a

²²⁴ Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd, eds., *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), xviii.

²²⁵ Kohn, Meer, and Todd, xx.

²²⁶ See Sara Lindey, "Sympathy and Science: Representing Girls in Abolitionist Children's Literature," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 45, no. 1 (2012): 61.

²²⁷ Slavery is technically illegal with the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833, though it would take until 1838 for enslaved people to be emancipated in Jamaica given the law's gradual manumission through apprenticeship. For a history of

voyeuristic look at the American political landscape and reinforces British national character on a moral high ground that the United States had yet to reach. With the adapting device of the family reading circle frame narrative, the adaptation provides additional protections with the editorial censoring via abridgment. It shelters the reading children from a political sphere imagined as far-away, on the other side of the Atlantic, but it would also suit American readers with more conservative positions on abolition, who would be satisfied with the abridgment exclusive focus on non-threatening black characters. The restrictions put in place, in other words, would have been consistent with sympathies that resisted the forthright challenge Stowe offered in her serial and published novel. In the following section, I present two adaptations that shift away from the adaptative impulse to restrict child readers, including on matters of political and social importance. The use of the family circle and the social practices associated with the dissemination of print are imagined by these adapters in a significantly more liberatory usage that locates child readers in an active role.

3.4 Empowering the Child Auditor and Storyteller in the Juvenile Family Reading Circle

Rather than employing the family reading circle as a framing narrative device, the family reading circle is adapted as a textual framework in two children's editions, one of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and another of *The Lamplighter: Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) and *The Lamplighter Picture Book, or The Story of Uncle True and Little Gerty: Written for the Little*

slavery post-emancipation in Jamaica, see Matthew J. Smith, *Liberty, Fraternity, Exile: Haiti and Jamaica after Emancipation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Folks (1856). John P. Jewett published both of the novel versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter*. Both are sentimental domestic novels. Of course, Stowe's is an abolitionist novel that features multiple storylines of enslaved persons and white characters intimately involved with the Americanized institution. *The Lamplighter*, however, is not an abolitionist novel but a sentimental domestic bestseller. Like Susan Warner's *A Wide, Wide World*, *The Lamplighter* is a bildungsroman featuring an orphan girl, Gertrude "Gerty" Flint, who is rescued from mistreatment and poverty by a kind old lamplighter named True Flint. After his death (while she still is a child), Gerty is supported by a middle-class blind benefactress named Emily Graham, who, as a surrogate mother, educates and raises Gerty according to middle-class Christian virtues. Gerty grows up and becomes a schoolteacher, marries her childhood friend, Willie, and is reunited with her assumed-to-be dead father. Both children's adaptations appear in the same anti-slavery series of juvenile abolitionist literature published by John P. Jewett & Co. in the early to mid-1850s. I use the term "textual framework" to indicate that the social practice of communal family reading is not incorporated as a threaded or book-ended narrative as demonstrated by Campe's and Aunt's Mary adaptations. Instead, the adapters for *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* embed the family reading circle as a conceptual structure via the prose, verse, and illustration of the toy book form. However, rather than incorporating an explicit adult figure, the toy books' textual frameworks construct a mixed-age *children's* reading circle. This move effectively removes the supervisory apparatus in other examples and notably departs from strict mediation of political and potentially transgressive reading material. This use of the family reading circle textual framework adapts to the littlest child readers' capabilities, not their deficiencies; thus, the adapters reimagine child readers in this model as storytellers and participants in the domestic, political sphere, using adaptation to enable child readers in political activism.

The textual and material transformation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter* is apparent: thick novel-length texts are shortened into thin, children's toy books. Relying on common strategies of textual adaptation for child audiences, the adapters filter the novels through a process of abridgment and "retelling" and transform portions of the stories into verse.²²⁸ Some of the poems have accompanying full-page illustrations, sometimes captioned with lines from the poems. *Pictures and Stories* is a bricolage of visual and textual elements. It has nine full-page illustrations, ten poems (the first four feature the adventures of the Harris family, and the remaining follow Tom's storyline with Eva, Topsy, and Simon Legree), one song with lyrics and sheet music, and approximately six to seven pages of prose. *The Lamplighter Picture Book* has four full-page illustrations (all featuring Uncle True and Gerty, with Willie and Emily Graham pictured separately in two), eleven poems, and approximately thirteen pages of prose. The latter relies more on a combination of abridgment and retold prose, whereas the former uses dominantly retold prose.²²⁹ The verse is offered in a larger type, while the prose surrounds the verses in a smaller type. The "leveling" of the novel into verse and retold or abridged prose allows child readers to voice and perform these stories for an audience of children.

Despite appearing as part of a series, these texts were not reproduced elsewhere, nor were they materially repackaged following their initial publication. In comparison to Campe's long-

²²⁸ Other prose works adapted for children in verse include *Robinson Crusoe*, *A Pilgrim's Progress*, *Little Goody-Two Shoes*, and *Sandford and Merton*. An early example is *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Versified for the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth* (1808) by George Burder.

²²⁹ The poems themselves are a variety of stanza length including quatrains, sestets, and octaves. The rhymed verse likewise follows a variety of rhymes schemes including abab, aabb, abcb, and abcbdd. The rhyming is not always strict or consistent.

lasting adaptation, Jewett's juvenile family reading circle toy book adaptations were ephemeral though subversive in the communal reading model it constructs.²³⁰ Unlike *A Peep*, scholars have devoted critical attention to these two particular children's editions, which have garnered notice for their uniqueness within the genre of antebellum children's abolitionist literature and as adaptations. For instance, Paula Connolly and Barbara Hochman discuss *Pictures and Stories* as a comparatively radical adaptation of Stowe's novel, primarily since the adaptation represents black agency and minimizes rather than accentuates racialized stereotypes of black slaves.²³¹ *The Lamplighter Picture Book* is also radical in that it is a reversion of *The Lamplighter*, a sentimental and domestic novel, as an abolitionist text. I add to this body of work to center the family reading circle textual framework as an additional distinctive feature because the adapting device does not follow the same adaptive impulse to restrict child readers.

Indeed, they are not interested in the didactic models displayed by *The New Robinson Crusoe* and *A Peep*. Similarly, Hochman contends that *Pictures and Stories* "defies generic and pedagogical conventions of the period...by offering substantial pleasures of absorption and identification."²³² I agree with Hochman when she asserts that *Pictures and Stories* contrast with

²³⁰ No one appropriated the series when Jewett's business ended after the Panic of 1857. De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*, 29.

²³¹ For more on the representation of black agency, including black motherhood see Paula T. Connolly, *Slavery in American Children's Literature, 1790-2010* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013), 31; Hochman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*, 105; 127; De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*, 65.

²³² Hochman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*, 106.

antebellum children's literature, which often emphasizes imitation as the ideal reading form. While *A Peep* restricts its readers with the family circle frame narrative, the family reading circle textual framework in both *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* resist the restrictive frame that censors juvenile political activism and models didacticism. Through the family reading circle framework, these two adaptations encourage communal interaction via the embodiment of the juvenile family reading circle, placing the topics of abolition and slavery squarely in a communal activity among children. This framework subverts the adaptive choice to use the social practice of communal reading to mediate the transmission of print for child readers via textual adult surrogates. Furthermore, the reimagined use of the framework as part of the adaptations follows and appeals to a strain of juvenile political activism through a combination of juvenile antislavery societies and juvenile abolitionist literature present since the early decades of the nineteenth century. The print transformations for children cleverly use the site and social practice of communal reading as an internal, domesticated means of juvenile political force.

3.4.1 Establishing a Juvenile Family Circle Model

The mediating adult figure of the family circle frame narratives is removed from these adaptations even though *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* are clearly adaptations produced by and mediated by adult adapters. The moral tone and didactic approach inherent to the pre-text narratives are maintained. For instance, the adaptations tame unruly characters like Gerty and Topsy and model angelic figures like Eva and Tom are sacrificed. Of course, the adaptation process does make content changes. For *The Lamplighter Picture Book* specifically, the adapter does not attempt to condense the entire storyline of Gerty's childhood and early womanhood. Instead, the abridgment focuses on only a portion of Gerty's childhood and

concludes the adaptation with Uncle True's death. The adapter does not expose child readers to any of the sensational aspects of Cummins's plot in *The Lamplighter*, including the mysterious introduction of Mr. Phillips, her father, and the fire and sinking of the riverboat in which Gerty performs a heroic deed. This material may have been considered inappropriate or too passionately stirring for little readers. In *Pictures and Stories*, adaptation omits explicit and violent material, including the deletion of characters Emmeline and Cassy, scenes of sexual exploitation, the intense beatings of Uncle Tom, and the cruel Southern child character Henrique. The issue of white childhood innocence persists with these two adaptations, as discussed earlier with *A Peep*; the adapters provide protections of child readers' virtue when adapting the novels for them. Unlike *A Peep*'s approach to censoring, the adaptation strategy in the two Jewett toy book adaptations imagines active juvenile participation in the abolitionist movement via literary transmission. Juvenile participation begins with the establishment of a juvenile family circle model.

By removing the *overt* presence of the supervising adult reader of the family circle, *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* encourage readers of the adaptations to follow a model comprised of child participants. On the copyright page of *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the editor explains that the text is not only adapted to the understanding of "the youngest readers," but it was also transformed "to adapt it for the juvenile family circle."²³³ Even though *The Lamplighter Picture Book* does not contain a preface with the adaptation motivation explicitly referenced, it does reflect *Pictures and Stories* by incorporating the same adaptation strategy. This distinction in the age groups that comprise the circle is key to these texts' frameworks of the family circle, though, notably, De Rosa interprets this preface and its

²³³ *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Boston: Published by John P. Jewett & Co., 1853).

explanation of the adaptation strategy as “a conscious marketing to a dual audience.”²³⁴ In De Rosa’s view, the two font sizes and adaptation of abridged prose and rhymed verses otherwise “accommodate family readings and independent youngsters.”²³⁵ However, I am skeptical these children’s editions primarily cater to a dual audience, given several details in the editor’s note in *Pictures and Stories*.

First, the term “juvenile” specifically flags the family circle textual framework as constructed for a children’s circle. “Juvenile” texts denoted books intended for children in the nineteenth century, and the juvenile descriptor functions in these children’s editions as a means to mark the circle imagined as composed of child participants rather than adults and children. Furthermore, *The Lamplighter Picture Book*’s extended title also exclusively addresses how it is “written for little folks,” which signifies younger children. Second, the editor’s note in *Pictures and Stories* does not have the same tone of concern or urgency that Aunt Mary shares in *A Peep*, nor does the adapter of *Pictures and Stories* prescribe an adult presence unless the implied child reader needs or desires it. Indeed, the juvenile family circle in *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* encourages interactions between younger children and their older siblings. The preface reads, “it is presumed in these [prose parts of the book] our younger friends will claim the assistance of their older brothers or sisters, or appeal to the ready aid of their mamma.”²³⁶ The last option for assistance is to seek a mother’s help. The adapter presents this adult as a discreet yet present figure, ready to provide guidance when necessary. She does not exert

²³⁴ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*, 28.

²³⁵ De Rosa, 28.

²³⁶ *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

overt control of reading, nor does she need to because the adapters of these children's editions have constructed the text with leveled reading options to enable solitary little readers to read as much of the text as their capabilities potentially allow. Little readers are encouraged to seek help from their siblings first, favoring a circle made up of children. Interestingly, the aid of siblings is privileged before adult maternal support, reinforcing a suggestion to follow a juvenile family circle model by embodying the practice.

With these details from the editor's note of *Pictures and Stories*, the adaptation processes applied to both of these novel adaptations for child readers bring into focus how the juvenile family circle textual framework centers children as its participants. *Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* locate the juvenile family circle in the domestic space, which became firmly associated as a site of childhood and play by the mid-century in addition to its associations as a female-centric realm.²³⁷ These children's editions do not assume that social reading as a practice strictly places adults in the role of readers with children as auditors. The adaptive choices enable the youngest readers to read in narrative modes associated closely with children and juvenile writing by the 1850s.²³⁸ The exciting potential of *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* is that these adaptations imagine children, even little children, in

²³⁷ See Howard P. Chudacoff's *Children at Play: An American History*, especially "The Attempt to Domesticate Childhood and Play, 1800-1850" 39-66.

²³⁸ De Rosa is not alone in considering these texts as marketed to a dual audience. Susan S. Williams notes how this smart marketing contributes to the "extensive sale" of the novel since it appeals to both children and adults, particularly those part of the abolitionist community of Boston, a city which housed a number of abolitionist offices including the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, the American Anti-Slavery Society, and *The Liberator* (189).

the positions of reader/storyteller and auditor/audience. Children, in other words, wield control of the book in the circle, following their literacy training and the framework laid out by the adapter.

3.4.2 Children Leading the Reading Circle Through Poetry and Prose

The preface calls our attention to how this child-centered model emphasizes the interaction between a little child and their book. Specifically, the rhymed verse of these children's editions serves to provide a reading mode conducive to little child readers' abilities. Indeed, ties between early literacy and oral culture are consistently associated with younger children, including beginning readers. Poetry was a familiar form for nineteenth-century child readers since John Bunyan's *A Book for Boys and Girls; or Country Rhymes for Children* (1686) established an early example of verse writing for a child audience, exemplifying how the form accessibly articulates complex concepts.²³⁹ The popularity of nursery rhymes and original poems by authors like Isaac Watts, Lucy Aikin, Jane and Ann Taylor, Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, Lydia Sigourney, and others became staples of children's books and children's culture that popularly circulated throughout the nineteenth century.

Verse as a form and mode reflected conceptions of children's nature and embodied the most effective pedagogical approach in educating and socializing children. In a poetry collection he wrote for children, Isaac Watts points out how rhyme and meter promote memorization and entertainment, proclaiming an instruction-through-delight philosophy based on the popular

²³⁹ Jack Zipes et al., eds., "Verse," in *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature: The Traditions in English* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 1118.

Lockean precept of childhood education.²⁴⁰ Lucy Aikin, author of *Poetry for Children: Consisting of Short Pieces Committed to Memory* (1801), goes so far as to describe how children have a natural affinity for verse because its sound bewitches them from birth. Aikin envisions poetry as a natural extension for children to consume, memorize, and perform as readers.²⁴¹ Their home environment conditions them to enjoy this form as much as they are born to receive it. Through perspectives shared by Watts and Aikin, poets whose work publishers reprinted for child audiences well into the nineteenth century, children were imagined as naturally suited for verse, and verse harmonized with children's tastes, making learning to read and learn a delightful process.

The naturalized inclination for rhymed verse also informed children's literacy instruction and intersected with it through pedagogy, further rooting this portion of the textual framework as additionally amenable for the capabilities of a child audience of little readers.²⁴² According to Karen L. Kilcup and Angela Sorby, "In the early nineteenth century, most commercially available

²⁴⁰ For more on children's natural inclination for verse, see Isaac Watts, *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for Use of Children*, 7th ed. (Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland and T. Green, for D. Henchman, in Cornhil, 1730), i–iv.

²⁴¹ For more, see the preface addressing parents. Lucy Aikin, *Poetry for Children: Consisting of Short Pieces to Be Committed to Memory*, 4th ed. (London: Printed for R. Phillips, No. 6, Bridge-Street; and Sold by Tabart and Co. No. 157, New Bond-Street, 1806), iii–vii. Like Watts, Aikin is motivated to write verses that may be easily committed to memory by children.

²⁴² For more on early literacy instruction and verse, see E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*, *Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book* (Amherst: Worcester: University of Massachusetts Press; American Antiquarian Society, 2005); Crain, *The Story of A: The Alphabetization of American from The New England Primer to The Scarlet Letter*. For recitation of poetry and the schoolroom poets, see Angela Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets: Childhood, Performance, and the Place of American Poetry, 1865-1917*, *Becoming Modern: New Nineteenth-Century Studies* (Durham, New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

children's poetry collections catered to small children who were learning to read."²⁴³ Also, in their reading instruction and cultural practices of reading, adults prompted children to read texts, including verse, and perform recited readings in the home and institutional settings like school. Rhymed verse, used from children's poetry collections to school books, was a form identified as most conducive to the youngest readers' capabilities. It is likewise applied in *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book*, embedded as part of the adaptations' textual framework.

The verse in the adaptations is in narrative form, beginning with markers of invitation and proclamation of the subject of the stories. The beginning lines of the first poem in *The Lamplighter Picture Book*, for example, begins as follows: "Listen, children, to the story/ Which I now relate to you,/How forlorn and homeless 'Gerty'/ Found a friend in 'Uncle True.'"²⁴⁴ The verse immediately summarizes the abridgment of Cummins's story to its first plot point of the novel. Similarly, *Pictures and Stories* invite children to "Come read my book good boys and girls" to "learn a woeful tale,/ Which a good woman told,/ About the poor black negro race,/ How they are bought and sold."²⁴⁵ Both openings show how the verse in these adaptations is in the demotic register; the language is more plain, simple, and reflective of everyday discourse. Also, this register allows the verse to be accessible and familiar for little readers. Ultimately, these openings establish a storytelling mode that renders them apt to be memorized and recited by readers, including

²⁴³ Karen L. Kilcup and Angela Sorby, eds., "'Pretty New Moons': Contact Zones in Nineteenth-Century American Children's Poetry," in *Over the River and Through the Wood: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century American Children's Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 3.

²⁴⁴ A Lady, *The Lamplighter Picture Book, or The Story of Uncle True and Little Gerty: Written for the Little Folks* (Boston: Published by John P. Jewett & Co., 1856), 3.

²⁴⁵ *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 4.

beginning readers. With the addition of the other poems in the adaptations, the verse presents engaging short episodes steeped in action and strong emotions. The first portion of *Pictures and Stories* relates the Harris family's adventures, including scenes like Eliza and little Harry's dramatic escape across the river and the family's pursuit of freedom in Canada. In *The Lamplighter Picture Book*, the poems invite readers to identify the orphaned Gerty, the main character of *The Lamplighter*, and her trials with those that enslaved people experience as fugitives and victims of slavery. Titles for these episodes always appear as introductions to the poems in *Pictures and Stories*. *The Lamplighter Picture Book* also includes these headers for its verse poems, but it sometimes introduces the prose first before moving into the verse. By clearly delineating the difference between prose and poetry, the adapters present verse as a "level" familiar, accessible, and marked for the youngest readers.

It is important to distinguish the leveling of the framework in these texts as opportunities for little child readers to successfully read the text because the stories are adapted to match or complement popular children's verse in print and the standard practices of oral performance and recitation. The leveling might be misunderstood as a progression model that structures readers like *The McGuffey's Eclectic Series*, particularly the first couple of graded readers in the series.²⁴⁶ The progression model presents scaffolded lessons that build on the previous one. The verse and prose are complementary to each other, and the verse and prose are not structured to get progressively

²⁴⁶ For an explanation of the progression model, see *McGuffey's Newly Revised Eclectic Second Reader: Containing Progressive Lessons in Reading and Spelling. Revised and Improved* (Cincinnati: Winthrop B. Smith & Co. No. 137 Walnut Street, 1853), 2.

more comprehensive.²⁴⁷ Instead, the prose and poetry are structured as cooperative forms because they are not necessarily discrete or separate narrative adaptations of the novels. The textual framework and how it is constructed on the page encourages an interactive mode among multiple readers as an oral performance or a recitation as part of the family circle practice.

To read these adaptations for a coherent and complete narrative requires reading both the poetry and prose sections. My experiment in reading only the prose or only the poetry in these editions leave gaps that can only be rectified when read together. For example, in *Pictures and Stories*, the narrator of the retold prose writes, Eliza “darted out with him [Harry] that moment, and the verses will tell you by what means she escaped” prior to the poem titled, “Eliza Crossing the River.”²⁴⁸ When the story returns to the prose section on the following page, the narrator explains that “When the two negroes saw Eliza’s escape, they began to laugh and cheer; on which the trader chased them with his horsewhip, cursing and swearing as usual.”²⁴⁹ No mention is made here of Eliza crossing the ice to reach the other end of the river as the slave trader pursues her. The story continues from one form to the other. Similar relations between these two forms of adaptation are present in *The Lamplighter Picture Book*.²⁵⁰ The movement from poem to prose or prose to

²⁴⁷ This approach is reflected in many readers and schoolbooks that feature both prose and poetry. See discussions on *Murray’s English Reader* organization of both poetry; poetry as “difficult”; and the notion of graduate readers in Carr, Carr, and Schultz, *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States*, 101–2; 116; 132–34.

²⁴⁸ *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 8.

²⁴⁹ *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 9.

²⁵⁰ The only exception is that the adapter does not incorporate the abolitionist theme in *The Lamplighter Picture Book* into the prose sections or the text’s illustrations. It is only represented in verse. This discrepancy does not mean that

poem reveals how they are narratively mended and connected. With the directive to little readers to ask siblings to engage in the reading of these adaptations is collaborative, this cooperative connection between poetry and prose potentially indicates that it is not a scaffold for different forms. Instead, it invites readers to embody the juvenile family circle and create a communal and interactive activity of reading and storytelling.

As an enabling model, this leveling, though imagined as amenable for the capabilities of beginning readers, hardly simplifies the content of these texts. *The Lamplighter Picture Book*, for example, is an abolitionist reversion of Cummins's novel. Gerty's storyline of her spiritual reform is told in tandem with scenes of enslaved persons' conditions as fugitives and victims of violence from slave owners and traders. At various points in the verse of *The Lamplighter Picture Book*, Gerty switches positions in which she is compared to a mistreated and beaten slave, an abolitionist who rescues and hides a runaway, and even a physically violent overseer. Both Deborah De Rosa and Brigitte Nicole Fielder note how the adaptation of Cummins's novel allows for child readers to sympathize with slaves by politically repurposing Cummins's character Gerty and her storyline

the plot's development does not rely on the relationship between the prose and poetry. For example, if we read in the prose section, abridged from the novel, we learn about the kitten True gifts to Gerty. Following this prose section is the poem, "Gerty's Little Kitten," and the relationship that she had with this animal when she protects it and hides it from her cruel caretaker Nan Grant. This poem narrates this relationship and extends it to create an analogy between the kitten and a fugitive slave. Following the poem is another prose section, abridged from the novel, in which readers learn about the sad fate of Gerty's kitten. Without the poem, the readers would not know the sentimental relationship between Gerty and the kitten other than Gerty's tearful and angered response in the latter prose section when Nan Grant kills the kitten.

through the novel's sentimental foundations of affect and sympathy.²⁵¹ When read alongside *Pictures and Stories*, descriptions of Gerty and Topsy reflect each other as two naughty, abused orphans without mothers and unfamiliar with prayer or the Bible.²⁵² This comparison between the two characters also reveals how both texts try to grant a justification and innocence to the characters that the imagined child readers could not claim given their privileged upbringing, education, and literacy grant them. Child readers, in other words, are assumed to possess the knowledge of right and wrong, the protection of adults, and a stable home.

For example, in "Topsy At The Looking Glass" when Topsy plays with Ophelia's personal items without permission, the speaker says, "No home; no school, no Bible she had seen,/ How bless'd besides poor Topsy we have been!/ Yet boys and girls among ourselves, I've known/ Puffed up with praise for merits not their own./ The copy by some clever school-mate penned,/ The witty saying picked up from a friend,/ Makes many a miss and master look as fine,/ As if they coined the words or penned the line."²⁵³ While Topsy does not see in the looking-glass her error in her innocent play, boys and girls can stand in front of the same mirror and take pride in the theft

²⁵¹ For more, see De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*, 52-53; Brigitte Fielder, "Animal Humanism: Race, Species, and Affective Kinship in Nineteenth-Century Abolitionism," *American Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2013): 498-504. Fielder recognizes how Gerty is used as a device in the adaptation to shift compassion from her to enslaved persons, but Fielder extends this argument to contextualize it within cross-species relationships as mediating that transfer through familiarity rather than sameness.

²⁵² Likely what makes this comparison possible is that Gerty is also a racialized character. See Caroline Field Levander, *Cradle of Liberty: Race, the Child, and National Belonging from Thomas Jefferson to W. E. B. Du Bois*, New Americanists (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

²⁵³ *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 24.

of someone else's intellectual property. The speaker urges its auditors to consider this comparison. It makes the wrongdoing of privileged, white children all the more egregious since they are aware of their theft yet still take pride in what they see as an accomplishment. Gerty's passionate temper in *The Lamplighter Picture Book* and Topsy's transgression with Ophelia's belongings in *Pictures and Stories* are certainly not excused by the speakers of the verse, but it is made clear that they are not exclusively to blame for these faults. Both Gerty and Topsy possess qualities for admiration and behave in ways that should be condemned. The adapters give both characters a complexity, not treating them simply as objects of pity and sympathy. As children, they feel sorrow, pain, anger, and even (in Gerty's case) a desire to punish those who have hurt loved ones. They can also do kind deeds for another or endure the difficult process of controlling their temper. In both adaptations, the adapters presented their child audiences with humanized characters.

These episodes are the subjects of the imagined little readers' storytelling. When combined with the abolitionist agenda of both texts, the textual framework encourages child readers to voice feelings and ideas about the inhumanity of slavery, challenging the institution's violation of the protection and security of the domestic space and family that the imagined child readers enjoy. There is a certain value attached here to this model of the family reading circle that emphasizes an active role that imagines child readers as a mouthpiece for abolitionist principles and ideas, particularly one conceived as engaged among other children. In this case, it is not a matter of monitoring or mediating the reading of the stories to ensure the didactic benefits of reading. George Shelby says at the end of *Pictures and Stories*, in prose, "O, witness that, from this hour, I will do *what one man can* to drive out this curse of slavery from my land!"²⁵⁴ The littlest reader's access

²⁵⁴ *Pictures and Stories*, 30. (my emphasis)

to Stowe's story and the communal activity enacted by a juvenile reading circle binds them and their reading to a domesticated form of juvenile abolitionist activism that they too can participate and articulate. *The Lamplighter Picture Book's* publication in 1856 with the same juvenile family circle framework extends these efforts. *Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* were likely marketed to the juvenile abolitionist societies that peppered the northeastern region of the United States.²⁵⁵ Even the dissemination of two adapted stories can constitute a form of activism and extend children's ongoing political efforts. Thus, it contrasts with the case of *A Peep*, which staves off the exercise of this political agency until adulthood.

I cannot emphasize how much these two texts are set apart from other adaptations of the period due to the family reading circle textual framework embedded in the transformations and their commitment to juvenile abolitionism. They resist the position that Aunt Mary's adaptation affirms: isolate children from the cultural urgency of slavery and the harm against black children and their separated families. The goal of *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* use forms and modes amenable to the little child readers so that their reading capabilities connect them, through their performances, to abolitionist culture from home. Locating the oral dissemination of stories in domestic, communal reading works as a powerful image and model.

In describing images of the family reading circle, Patricia Crain writes that they "emphasize, not to say enforce, connectivity and sociability, situating books as ligatures of relationship."²⁵⁶ "Ligatures of relationship" is an interesting phrase because the use of ligature

²⁵⁵ For more on juvenile abolitionist activism, see De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*, 108–14.

²⁵⁶ Crain, "Postures and Places: The Child Reader in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Popular Print," 356.

suggests a mechanism to control the tightness and looseness of what it is connecting or binding. Used to attach reeds to mouthpieces of woodwind instruments like the clarinet, ligatures provide stability and control of the reed against the opening of the mouthpiece. It can bind, or it can let go, severing or releasing the connection. Ligatures as a verb also suggest binding something tightly, especially if used as part of a surgical procedure. For a book then to provide different degrees of connection seems fitting here to consider two different uses of the family reading circle social practice and its application as an adapting device as a frame narrative and a textual framework. The most interesting to me are *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* because the adaptations reestablish these stories in juvenile texts to facilitate a connection for children to the socio-political climate from whence they came. If children are imagined in the textual framework of these two editions to connect with each other in a communal activity of reading or to connect with the characters of the stories through accessible verse and retold abridged prose forms, then the adapters appear motivated to thread children into a storytelling tradition in which they are not only auditors but are also transmitters. In a sense, they restore child readers into an active role of dissemination and transfer that other adapters like Campe and Aunt Mary try to suppress through mediation, supervision, and control.

3.5 Two Competing Models

Given the family circle's prevalence in nineteenth-century print and reading culture, its use as an adapting device in children's books examined in this chapter reveal the intended effects on its little participants (non-adolescent child readers requiring assistance, adult-mediation, or translation of texts) and the kinds of relationships adapters as authors and editors were encouraging

between children and their books. Campe's intervention attempts to inhibit the transgressive potential of the character Robinson Crusoe as a means to maintain the cultural reproduction of middle-class and Christian values and carefully monitor children's access to print. Aunt Mary's editorial and narrative mediations follow these efforts and suppress Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, enacting a form of political censorship. Aunt Mary's and Campe's adaptations remain committed to cultivating embodied cultural capital through adapted and didactic children's editions. As a social and pedagogical practice, the family circle ideally provides children protection as they access a productive print market circulating politically charged stories that violate genteel sensibilities by arguing for the abolition of slavery, a radical position during the antebellum period. Even in illustrative representations of the family circle, a secure domestic space, separate and segregated from the outside world (in addition to a maternal presence), attempt to provide these assurances.

Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* reveal that the parlor is not neutral or separate from issues in the public sphere. These adaptations apply a family reading circle textual framework, which adapts to the littlest child readers' capabilities, not their deficiencies. Constructing the framework as a collaborative and interactive children's circle, the adapters resist sheltering children and restricting the texts circulating through the antebellum family circle. Their approach with the juvenile family reading circle textual framework acknowledges that sheltering children from the socio-political debate over the question of slavery is not possible, just as sheltering reading children from the booming print culture was not realistic either. In some ways, Aunt Mary and Campe acknowledge this too and take advantage of its

possibilities.²⁵⁷ Still, restrictions through the frame narrative and additional adaptive choices of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were solutions to the problem.

What distinguishes *Pictures and Stories* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* is the adapters' willingness to provide a form of authority, control, and even ownership to child readers within the juvenile family circle model through this expression in storytelling, though certainly with some limitations discussed earlier. The adaptive efforts in Jewett's adapted toy books are consistent with the goals of juvenile antislavery societies. According to De Rosa, "juvenile antislavery society advocates believed that children could effect change through activities ranging from liberal public activism to private, familial, and/or individual reflection in America's meeting rooms, on America's streets, and in America's homes."²⁵⁸ These adapters offer an adaptive framework that affirms children as connected to and active in abolitionist political culture. Thus, the adaptations present a form of active reading not strictly defined within didactic ends of emulation or imitation.²⁵⁹ The labors of reading, though abolitionists argued that it made positive impacts on the child activists' cultivation of moral character, part of a broader effort to nationally and morally reform the United States, is a legitimate political effort for child readers.

²⁵⁷ Another adapter follows the restrictive model, using a juvenile family reading circle to complete the cycle of embodied cultural capital by creating white benevolent subjects and cultivating submissive and compliant black labor. Given its publication during the Reconstruction period, the restrictive model remains relevant in print-based adaptations for children. See Lillie E. Barr, *Coral and Christian; Or, The Children's Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: W.B. Mucklow, 1877).

²⁵⁸ For more on juvenile abolitionist societies, see De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*, 108.

²⁵⁹ De Rosa, 107-14.

Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* are not the only print-based adaptations to shift away from the restrictive model of adaptation that emphasizes supervision as a necessary means to curb children's reading activities. In the following chapter, I examine a series of paper doll shape books and their textual *and* material properties to show how print transformations opened up the possibilities for readers to stray from prescriptions of "productive" reading in favor of interactive and imaginative fantasy play.

4.0 Incorporating Play into Modes of Reading: Adaptation, Remediation, and Paper Doll Shape Books

L. Prang & Company is responsible for producing what appears to be one of the first die-cut shape books in children's literature. Louis Prang established his firm in 1860 after buying out his initial lithography business partner, Julius Mayer.²⁶⁰ Prang, also considered the father of the American Christmas card, was known for his chromolithographic reproductions of fine art in the nineteenth century. Chromolithography was a massively popular illustrative printing technology that produced multi-color prints, and Prang perfected the art of its usage in commercialized products. Perhaps less well-known is Prang's foray into juvenile printing, which indicates shrewd participation in a burgeoning and established market.²⁶¹ As evident in the trade publication *Prang's Chromo: A Journal of Popular Art*, a self-published trade publication that advertised the company's products, Prang produced printed materials that were marketed for Sunday schools and schoolrooms (an incredible network and audience to tap into given what institutions like the ASSU were able to establish across the country by the 1860s), including membership certificates of attendance and cards that acted as rewards for good behavior. The marketing columns and various

²⁶⁰ Katharine Morrison McClinton, *The Chromolithographs of Louis Prang* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc./Publisher, 1973), 3.

²⁶¹ See Michael Clapper, "Art, Industry, and Education in Prang's Chromolithograph Company," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 105, no. 1 (1995): 145–61. Clapper presents Prang as a fundamental figure in using chromolithography as an artistic and commercial process to provide art cheaply for mass consumption. Prang sold facsimiles of art pieces to the typical middle-class home without the hefty price tag of originals.

quoted testimonies of *Prang's Chromo* present his chromo products as supporting instructive purposes. Another portion of his stock also comprised a handful of juvenile books and toy books: the paper doll shape books, *The Christmas-Stocking Library* (which includes the toy book *A Visit from St. Nicholas*), and Ruth Chesterfield's *Old Mother Hubbard: A New Version*.

The paper doll shape books stand out from the rest of this inventory (see figs. 9 and 10 for an example). In 1868, Prang advertised the paper doll shape books as the "Prang's Doll Series" in the first volume and issue of *Prang's Chromo*. The series contains a total of five books: *Red Riding Hood*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Goody Two Shoes*, *Cinderella*, and *King Winter*.²⁶² *Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella* both stem from the fairy tale tradition. *Robinson Crusoe* and *Goody Two Shoes* are adaptations of eighteenth-century fiction, the former an adventure novel and the latter a children's story initially published by John Newbery. *King Winter* is likely to be the least recognizable title. *King Winter* features the narrative of a winter solstice figure like Santa Claus, who rewards children with gifts. King Winter directs his servant Jack Frost in a number of tasks like decorating the landscape and dwellings with ice and snow and delivering presents to good children.²⁶³ Affordable for middle-class consumers, each paper doll book cost twenty-five cents each, and their

²⁶² When comparing the issues of *Prang's Chromo*, minor title discrepancies appear with *Red Riding Hood*. The book itself is titled *Red Riding Hood*, but Prang lists it in his journal as either *Little Red Riding Hood* or *Little Red Riding-Hood*.

²⁶³ For a brief review of the origins in Scandinavian folk tradition, see Elizabeth Gettins, "'King Winter'--A Book to Bring in the Season," *Library of Congress Blog* (blog), December 21, 2015, <https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2015/12/rare-book-of-the-month-king-winter-a-book-to-bring-in-the-season/>.

shapes are formed to display the characters represented by the titles.²⁶⁴ Inside the shape books are versified narratives featuring the illustrated characters on the die-cut book covers and a moral lesson by the story's conclusion. The books are ten to twelve pages of two four-lined stanzas with accompanying illustrations at the "head" and "feet" of each page.



Figure 9. Chromolithography and die-cutting are two processes used to create this unique paper doll shape book. Lydia L.A. Very, *Red Riding Hood* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1863). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh.

²⁶⁴ In comparison to another a mid-century toy book in this study, J.P. Jewett's *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* is more than half the price of the Prang paper doll shape book. Jewett sold the children's adaptation of Stowe's novel for thirteen cents per book. Between the more involved chromolithography process, likely an unmechanized process of die-cutting (hand press), and inflation of book retail prices during the Civil War accounts for the rise in cost.



Figure 10. The full-color print extends from the front to the back cover of the paper doll shape book, prominently displaying the Prang imprint on Lydia L.A. Very, *Red Riding Hood* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1863). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh.

The elements listed above unite every one of the paper doll shape books in the series and contribute to a set of print-based adaptations that especially emphasize the material and textual qualities of the book and toy. In advertisements for the series, Prang printed the following blurb: “Books in the shape of a regular paper Doll. The style of these books originated with us; and the *furore* they created among the juvenile readers, combined with the continued increasing demand,

is an inducement for timely new addition to the series.”²⁶⁵ He advertised them again in 1869, under a short section labeled “JUVENILES AND TOY-BOOKS,” referring to them as “The Doll Series: Books in the Shape of a Doll.”²⁶⁶ Both advertisements call attention to the novelty of the form that combines the format and qualities of toy (doll) and book. It also uses the appeal of adaptation by presenting a group of books based on familiar and culturally legitimized stories, which had existed within the sphere of childhood and established literature for children in a variety of print-based editions already in circulation. These texts would not have had any copyright constraints for the publishing firm or fellow adapters Lydia L.A. Very and Gustav Seitz to constrain their textual and visual productions.

As indicated above, the “Doll Series” was not created by the same author and illustrator or singularly by Prang’s chromolithography firm, making the series interesting for a few reasons. Three paper doll books bearing the L. Prang & Co. imprint credit Lydia L.A. Very as the creator of the unique adaptation. Very was a schoolteacher, artist, and poet. She taught in public and private schools for over thirty years in Salem, Massachusetts, and she contributed writing and poetry in local periodicals and published collections of poetry.²⁶⁷ Very has been credited with the

²⁶⁵ Louis Prang, “Prang’s Gifts for Young Folks,” *Prang’s Chromo: A Journal of Popular Art* 1, no. 1 (1868): 6. Are the new additions to the series Gustav W. Seitz’s contributions?

²⁶⁶ Louis Prang, ed., “Prang’s Publications,” *Prang’s Chromo: A Journal of Popular Art* 1, no. 5 (1869): 7.

²⁶⁷ She has several published poetry collections. It appears that including *Poems and Prose Writings* (1856) was the first. Here are the others: *Sayings and Doings Among Insects and Flowers* (1898); *Sylph, the Organ-Grinder’s Daughter* (1898); *A Strang Disclosure: A Tale of New England Life* (1898); *A Strange Recluse, or, Ye Did it Unto Me* (1899); and *An Old-Fashioned Garden, and Walks and Musings Therein* (1900). The publication of her books remained relatively regional: Boston, Andover, and Salem. Part of a prominent New England family, Very’s brother

origination of the format, and Prang's firm also boasts that the L. Prang & Co. is responsible for producing the first paper doll books.²⁶⁸ However, two of the five paper doll shape books—*Cinderella* and *King Winter*—bear the imprint of Gustav W. Seitz in Hamburg, Germany, on the back of the paper dolls with no attribution made to an author or illustrator.²⁶⁹ Like Prang, Seitz produced chromolithographic prints that reproduced fine art pieces.²⁷⁰ It is unknown whether Seitz is responsible for the remediation of the *Cinderella* and *King Winter* stories in verse and the paper

was Rev. Jones Very, a Transcendentalist poet. Despite her literary connection and print output, little research has been done on Lydia Louisa Anna Very as an American woman writer.

²⁶⁸ See Frances Elizabeth Willard and Mary Ashton Livermore, eds., *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life* (Buffalo: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893), 733. *A Woman of the Century* details the artistic and literary contributions of the women listed in its pages, and the contributors share in Very's entry that she originated the idea and attempted to patent the doll shape books. They write, "Her artistic taste and fancy were displayed in her "Red Riding Hood," published some years ago. It was the first book ever made in the shape of a child or an animal, and wholly original in design and illustration. It had a large sale in this country and in Germany...she received but small compensation

²⁶⁹ I have not been able to trace extant copies of *Cinderella* and *King Winter* in American collections or libraries that reveal the texts as L. Prang & Co. publications. They appear to be produced only by Gustav W. Seitz.

²⁷⁰ An advertisement by "Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston, Low, & Searle," in *Publishers' Circular* suggests that Seitz was a chromolithographer like Prang, except in Germany and Europe. I have not been able to locate more information on Seitz and his firm with sources in English. Hits in WorldCat indicate some potential materials, mainly available in German. Another challenge is that Gustav Seitz is the same name as a famous twentieth-century German sculptor and artist (1906-1969) so at this time it is difficult to know what sources refer to Seitz the chromolithographer or the artist/sculptor. See *The Publishers' Circular and General Record of British and Foreign Literature: Containing a Complete Alphabetical List of All New Works Published in Great Britain and Every Work of Interest Published Abroad*, vol. 36 (London, 1873), 1038.

doll format in addition to the production of *Cinderella* and *King Winter* as printed items. Despite the unknown, as an attributed publisher of the two paper doll shape books, I consider him a contributing adapter.²⁷¹ It has been challenging to ascertain the origination of this specific remediation that renders the paper doll shape book a hybrid object, whether the credit can go to Very or Seitz.²⁷² With that said, Very and Seitz's verse and designs are consistent with each other, regardless of which one originated the hybrid design. The series exemplifies the transatlantic printing trade and exchange that continued to boom in the mid to late nineteenth century, and the series is indicative of Prang's own personal and professional ties to Prussia and Germany, an area in which color lithography or chromolithography originated in the 1830s.²⁷³ Despite leaving Germany in 1848 for what Katharine Morrison McClinton describes as "activity in the revolutionary movement," Prang appears to have maintained connections to lithographic printing firms with Seitz. Regardless of when *Cinderella* and *King Winter* were created—before or after

²⁷¹ To this date, I have not been able to locate research in English or within an Anglo-American context on Gustav W. Seitz as a chromolithographer or on the production of *Cinderella* or *King Winter*. That is, sources confirm his work with *King Winter* and as an advertised chromolithographer, but additional information like biography remains to date a challenge to locate, especially given my lack in German language reading fluency. I need to pursue potential sources in German and in Germany to provide context and additional understanding for this position.

²⁷² *Cinderella* and *King Winter* problematize the claim that the paper doll shape book originated solely with Very and L. Prang & Company. Copyright estimations date *Cinderella* and *King Winter* around 1859. Very's *Red Riding Hood* bears an 1863 copyright date. *Robinson Crusoe* and *Goody Two Shoes* were published shortly afterwards in 1864 and 1865, respectively. If Seitz's paper doll books predate *Red Riding Hood*, then Seitz's paper doll books were German print imports that Very possibly used as models for her own creations.

²⁷³ For brief history of color lithography and a short biography on Louis Prang's early printing training and experience see McClinton, *The Chromolithographs of Louis Prang*, 2–3.

Very's paper doll shape books—they are included to augment the series with additional narrative options of a genuinely unique hybrid format toy book format.

The paper doll shape designation begs the question as to the books' relationship to paper dolls as a toy. Even the advertisement itself draws consumers' attention to the paper doll. Paper dolls were a popular object for children to play with in the nineteenth century (and beyond). L. Prang & Co.'s paper doll shape books possess an interesting blend of the books' narrative contents and their paper doll qualities that invite children to handle them in playful ways that do not reflect the restrictions and mediations reviewed in chapters 2 and 3. The material packaging of the paper doll shape products raises new questions for the nineteenth-century practice in adapting books for children. Do these books reflect productive reading practices that adapters stressed in other adaptations circulating in the period? That is, do the books encourage reading labors that sought to acquire and profit from the moral capital books transmit? What kind of child audience is implied and co-constructed by these textual and material transformations? Is the paper doll shape book format at odds with the narrative content? Does the paper doll aspects of the hybrid contribute to or challenge the didactic protocols of childhood reading?

In this case, we have a textual and material transformation that literally affects how a child may handle these books. Given how the cultures of reading and play interacted on a material level in novelty books, specifically these paper doll shape books, how did child users interact with this hybrid product? These questions are not unique to the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books, as demonstrated by the recent contributions by Hannah Field in *Playing with the Book: Victorian Movable Picture Books and the Child Reader*, in which she specifically considers similar questions about children and reading in relation to books that are not the standard or expected book format. Paper doll shape books and the paper doll books that preceded the shape book versions earlier in

the nineteenth century are part of a larger, diverse category of children's books labeled as novelty books, a group of texts that focuses Field's study.²⁷⁴ According to Field, novelty books are comprised of "movable books and books with unusual formats that do not have moving parts," and they are largely defined by their distinction in material formats."²⁷⁵ As Field shows, this category can be difficult to pin down since novelty books comprise a variety of material forms, including panoramas, pop-up books, toy theaters, dissolving-view books, lift-the-flap books, and mechanical books, to name a few, except that they are united together by material combinations revealing an "allegiance to items other than books," including toys.²⁷⁶ The paper doll shape books produced by L. Prang & Co. fit this category to a tee given "the material combination" of book and paper doll plaything.

The challenge with the paper doll shape books is how to understand and interpret them as objects and sources of transmitted stories meant to be read. I have not found evidence of how children engaged with paper doll shape books, whether in conduct books, manuals, or in archival sources that specifically reference the paper doll shape books. As adaptations, the medium influences the mode of engagement and how audiences interact with the narrative as an adapted story. The medium of the paper doll shape books does not shift radically: they were reformatted to remain a book, still comprised of paper and ink. Yet, the paper doll shape books are not simply a

²⁷⁴ This critical category is labeled by scholars in the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century market and trade, novelty books were referred to by their formats. Field traces definitions and labels from William Darton (1930s), Percy Muir (1954), and Brian Alderson (1982).

²⁷⁵ Hannah Field, *Playing with the Book: Victorian Movable Picture Books and the Child Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 7.

²⁷⁶ Field, 8.

resemblance to a paper doll but are examples of material incorporation. Field calls attention to this material relationship between book and toy in novelty books, writing, “the two are not so much jumbled together after the fact as they are made hybrid at the production stage...this leads to patterns of usage that are different from those seen with other kinds of books—notably, patterns that indicate an adjustment of the very idea of what reading is.”²⁷⁷ Field stresses how the production process seamlessly brings together book and toy, and the hybridity of the object affects how a child user may use and consume it. From my close examination of the paper doll shape books, this insight helps tease out the material aspect of the adaptation process to avoid reducing the remediation as a simple repackaging with little difference or effect. The unique formats of book and toy blend together at the production stage through chromolithography, die-cutting, and bound book. These material and textual choices rethink the child’s engagement since the product summons prompts or protocols associated with the book, the paper doll, *and* the adapted narrative. Just as Field interrogates the “patterns of usage” in various novelty books, I will extend this work by focusing on how the specific format of paper doll shape books produced by L. Prang & Co. shapes the reading of these adapted stories.

In this chapter, I argue that these paper doll shape books adapt to and construct an emerging sentimentalized and non-laboring childhood of the white middle class that gained considerable influence in the postbellum period.²⁷⁸ As such, the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books are indulgences in their experimental adaptive processes in which the hybrid material and textual

²⁷⁷ Field, 9.

²⁷⁸ See Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 75–93.

qualities function to emphasize childhood play and recreational modes of engagement. Given a lack of archival evidence of living children's use of the novelties, I use Robin Bernstein's model of a "scriptive thing" and examine L. Prang & Co.'s series of paper doll shape books to consider how these novelty books script reading and children's interaction with the adapted products. Accessibility of the narratives is still essential in that the books use formats and modes to enable independent reading.

The process of adapting culturally relevant texts for young child audiences, however, does not always hinge upon guiding readers to possess the cultural capital necessary to decode adapted stories successfully and profit from the moral capital that they contain. The scripts of the adaptations invest less in a cultural literacy intimately connected with pre-text sources they adapt and more in the experience that they can create through interaction and use. In other words, they invite the imaginative engagement that is heavily disciplined and monitored in other adaptations. The remediation addresses the major concerns of unsanctioned imaginative readings that excite young readers and inspire them. A shift appears to occur, moving away from the restrictions imposed by adaptation. I argue that the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books rethink independent usage and activity connected to reading compared to other restrictive and supervisory adaptations in this study. The educational and moral motivations of the texts are still evident. Yet, the format frees childhood reading practices from explicit restrictive and supervisory apparatuses—like that of the communal, family reading circle—to encourage a romantic sense of childhood autonomy through fantasy play.

4.1 Materials of Play: Books and Toys

Books and toys comprise the materials of children's play, and one of the approaches of this chapter is to consider the material and textual properties of these hybrid products. Toy and book. Toy book. Book as a toy. Toy tie-in to a book. Each of these terms suggests a relationship between children's literature and the material culture of play. They also indicate the extent to which these materials are separated, joined, or potentially indistinguishable. The relationship between the juvenile book market and the material culture of toys then constitutes a variety of products for child consumers that unite instruction and play, a precedent that has been present since the establishment of children's literature in the eighteenth century. Robin Bernstein argues that this relationship is significantly consequential: children's literature has an incredible "historical relationship with material culture and play."²⁷⁹ This relationship is rooted in one of the most cited texts that scholars use to mark the invention of children's literature: John Newbery's publication *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (1744). Newbery sold product tie-ins—a choice between two playthings (a ball or pincushion)—that cost the consumer an additional fee and directly referenced the tie-ins in the book.

Newbery's companion products to *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* are interesting because they create a format and publishing strategy that not only worked for Newbery's business success. Contributions of his contemporaries like Thomas Boreman, Thomas and Mary Cooper, and

²⁷⁹ She advocates for "strategically maximizing[ing] upon the implications of this [origins] narrative—even as we acknowledge alternative origin stories...[she] calls for us to reconceive the field of children's literature through this integration." Robin Bernstein, "Toys Are Good for Us: Why We Should Embrace the Historical Integration of Children's Literature, Material Culture, and Play," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2013): 459.

Benjamin Collins, together with Newbery's efforts, established children's literature as a "permanent and profitable market...a class of book to be taken seriously as a recognised and important branch of the book-trade."²⁸⁰ Thought from another angle, the product tie-in format was not simply a commercial gimmick (though critics and skeptics alike still lodge this complaint against popular culture franchises or transmedia adaptations in children's culture and literature, decrying shameless commerciality). According to Gillian Brown and Heather Klemann, Newbery's book and toy tie-in represent pedagogical and epistemological interventions in activities central to children's moral instruction.²⁸¹ While Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* is a significant milestone and one of the first examples of integrating books and toys, the toy companions to his children's book were not the last to be produced for children, nor the only type created in and from children's literature. The L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books continue this tradition in uniting reading and play, showing how they are not at odds with each other but—as adults hoped—advance literacy and education.

The toy book, one of the earlier forms of the modern picture book, contrasts with the toy tie-in to a book described above: a relationship between book and toy are not explicit despite the "toy" descriptor. Irene Joyce Whalley goes so far as to explain how the toy book form "had nothing

²⁸⁰ Qtd. in Grenby, *The Child Reader, 1700-1840*, 4-5.

²⁸¹ They cite John Locke's philosophies in education and literacy as inspiration for these interventions. See Gillian Brown, "The Metamorphic Book: Children's Print Culture in the Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006): 351-62; Heather Klemann, "The Matter of Moral Education: Locke, Newbery, and the Didactic Book-Toy Hybrid," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 44, no. 2 (2011): 223-44.

to do with toys, but was basically a publisher's description of a paper-covered picture book."²⁸² The format offered some of the first examples of color printing. The included illustrations were often hand-colored illustrations before other processes of color printing were more widely available to a mass market.²⁸³ J.P. Jewett's adaptations *The Lamplighter Picture Book* and *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* belonged to this "family" of picture books referred to by publishers as toy books. As referenced earlier in chapter 3, they feature full-page illustrations alongside verse and abridged text, bound together with paper covers. The full-page illustrations were monochromatic rather than colored. Their textual adaptation creates an immersive performance and interactive play experience through the juvenile communal reading circle script. Toy books as a format would eventually feature the defining artistic work of Randolph Caldecott, Walter Crane, and Kate Greenaway by the end of the nineteenth century. Even though toy books were not associated with toys in the ways that novelty formats were, the form still implied a child audience and invoked pleasure reading for the popular sources they adapted.²⁸⁴ (Of course, some toy books also featured "original" textual content for a child audience.) Toy books as adaptations and the recycling of series are treated in chapter 5.

The connection between children's books, material culture, and play gained momentum with the rise of the toy industry in the nineteenth century and beyond. The L. Prang & Company produced the paper doll shape books in an era in which both the book market *and* the toy industry

²⁸² Joyce Irene Whalley, "The Development of Illustrated Texts and Picture Books," in *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Group, 2004).

²⁸³ Whalley.

²⁸⁴ Sources include harlequinades, fairy tales, folklore, romances, fables, ballads, nursery rhymes, and retold novel fiction,

grew with significant technological and material innovations. Before 1865, American children likely did not own a manufactured toy. Instead, the toys were often handmade objects, commonly referred to as “playthings” or “play pritties,” created by parents and children alike.²⁸⁵ Parents, for instance, carved wooden toys or sewed cloth dolls, gifting these objects to children for the Christmas holiday. Children also created toys for recreational games from the items they appropriated and recycled from materials found in their homes or from outside. Priscilla Ferguson Clement points out that “Farm kids made jacks from corn they soaked and strung together with needles and thread, balls ‘from tight, raveled old wool socks,’ and bats ‘from boards with whittled-down handholds.’”²⁸⁶ Manufactured toys were available for purchase in the American market, but they were expensive importations from Germany.²⁸⁷ It was not until after the Civil War that manufactured toys became more affordable to the American middle-class. During this period, the toy industry significantly expanded.²⁸⁸ Technological advancement aided in the cheaper production of toys for children, and “the advent of mass-produced toys [entered] a new middle-class culture of childhood.”²⁸⁹ The products became even more appealing because they possessed the additional commercial potential for gift-giving like print materials like popular gift books. The

²⁸⁵ Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890*, Twayne’s History of American Childhood Series (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 153.

²⁸⁶ Clement, 153.

²⁸⁷ Clement, 153.

²⁸⁸ See Howard P. Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2007), 79. Chudacoff cites federal census data to show that forty-seven toy manufacturers are listed in the 1850 census. The number of toy manufacturers triples to 147 by 1880.

²⁸⁹ Chudacoff, 79.

ever-increasing popularity of Christmas as a national holiday and its subsequent commercialization rendered such products excellent gifts for youngsters. Thus, the union between books and toys continued, perpetuating the innovation and adaptation and extending into producing print-based hybrids for the juvenile market. Commodity toys for children, like books, were leisurely indulgences and reflections of middle-class status that could afford the purchase.

Children's play became accepted and encouraged by adults in the nineteenth century; adults conceived it as an important characteristic and activity of childhood. Ideally, it also contributed to a child's education and socialization into adulthood.²⁹⁰ American childhood and play historian Howard Chudacoff refers to this view as "utilitarian play," where "middle-class parents came to accept, even encourage, children's special games, hobbies, and toys as a means to develop what a contemporary author described as 'a habit of reflection and observation.'"²⁹¹ Play was also an opportunity for character building as it was an experimental site in which children learned through their own experiences. As exemplified in Lydia Maria Child's *The Mother's Book* (1831), play is a source of active engagement: "As far as possible keep a child always employed—either sewing or knitting, or reading, or playing, or studying, or walking. Do not let them form habits of listlessness and lounging."²⁹² From Child's perspective, children's play, like other

²⁹⁰ Conception of childhood play underwent a significant paradigm shift: the sinful child construction of the colonial period competed with the naturalness of play perpetuated by thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau argued that children's play was natural and should be encouraged to maintain instinctive states. See Rousseau, *Emile, Or Treatise on Education*, 44–45.

²⁹¹ Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 54.

²⁹² Child, *The Mother's Book*, 63.

activities, are opportunities for demonstrating industriousness and vigor. Bringing this perspective and approach to the American public, Child produced a manual on child's play.

Child's *The Girls' Own Book* (1833) was popularly reprinted throughout the nineteenth century, likely because its approach to play, much less restrictive than other manuals like Harvey Newcomb's conduct guides *How to Be a Lady: A Book for Girls, Containing Useful Hints on the Formation of Character* (c.1846) and *How to Be a Man: A Book for Boys, Containing Useful Hints on the Formation of Character* (c.1846), adapted well to the sentimentalization of childhood as a period dedicated to education, play, and leisure.²⁹³ Child's book is structured by an extensive list of games, amusements, and exercises, complete with instructions and illustrations that serve as representations of the activities' games or diagrams. Child situates her book as a resource for girls' preparations for womanhood, consistent with the malleable perception current to the moment. Therefore, some of the included activities encourage girls to imitate skills associated with femininity and gentility of the white middle-class household (e.g., sewing, creating ornaments, and playing with dolls). While girls' play is presented as the imitation of adult women's domestic

²⁹³ Newcomb's manuals reveal a restrictive approach to play practices, socializing young people into strict, gendered codes of behavior. Newcomb urges children to use their education of the commandments and biblical teachings to apply Christian precepts to their play activities. The hope is that they would reject those entertainments that are considered un-Christian. For an extended study on home entertainment guide manuals, see Melanie Dawson, *Laboring to Play: Home Entertainment and the Spectacle of Middle-Class Cultural Life, 1850-1920* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 3. Dawson examines home entertainment guide manuals as sources of these prescriptions. Dawson conducts a study of American middle-class culture and illuminates the narratives about middle-class life and identity that these texts create and even critique. Participants of leisure and entertainment are not exclusive to children, but also to "urban and rural players, women and men, white and black players, adults and teens, plus society matrons, governesses, the unskilled as well as the supremely talented, banker clerks, shop girls, merchants, and housewives."

activities, which allowed for the smooth transition from girlhood to womanhood, Child's collection of play practices is relevant because it imagines diversion and amusement as manifesting in everyday life of children, individually and communally, both inside and outside of the domestic space.²⁹⁴

Child's book demonstrates how much play is imagined to be part of children's daily life in relation to other activities, including reading. Usefulness and activity blend with amusements in the way in which, as will be discussed in the remaining sections, the material properties of the paper doll shape book blend toy and book. Her contributions are less concerned with anxieties of how children may err in their play or restricting forms of play. *The Girls' Own Book*, a small yet chunky book (measuring fifteen centimeters tall), contains almost 200 forms of play. She provides numerous "frolics" that encourage physical movement, including dancing, running, and seeking in games like "Twine the Garland, Girls," "I Spy," "Hide and Seek," and multiple variations of "Blind Man's Bluff."²⁹⁵ Child sanctions a variety of activities, providing scripts, demonstrations,

²⁹⁴ See Gillian Brown, "Child's Play," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (1999): 90. Brown interprets ideal representations of play in fiction as a "recapitulative paradigm," in which girls reproduce activities expected of them in adulthood. Brown positions Child's text as prescribing mimetic form of play for girls, which was reflected in fictional works about and for children. However, I would argue that Child's cache of amusements is not as constraining in content and substance as these predictable activities of female social roles might suggest. For example, Child sanctions physical games, active exercises, and activities like calisthenics because they strengthen and prepare the body for "usefulness," perhaps in situations in which values of elegance and refinement would not translate smoothly or practically to the demands of physical labor of the working class. Child's warnings that accompany these exercises are usually limited to exhaustion or physical harm, not violations of feminine behavior.

²⁹⁵ Child, *The Girls' Own Book*, 54–59.

and extensions that would suggest indulgences in play as a natural part of the distinctive period of childhood. References to fun and amusement signify that enjoyment of the activities is important, and her collection of entertaining activities anticipates a larger cultural shift later in the century in which adults and cultural authorities would assign even greater importance to foster children's pleasure in their leisure time away from their schooling.

In contrast to the sinful child view in which Puritan culture assumed that play was evidence of inactivity, Child shows the cultural shift that resituates children's play as a welcome diversion that keeps children occupied. In Child's opinion, like other educational activities, play is instrumental in cultivating physical and mental exertion, diligence, and concentration. The L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books show adaptations for child readers adapted to this cultural environment. Thus, the vehicle of the adapted story would not be the only appeal, but its unique hybrid format that unites the benefits of both reading and play.

4.2 Paper Doll Shape Books: Playing with Format

The paper doll shape books play with format through material transformation, but how did real children play with the paper doll shape books? Evidence of how children engaged with paper doll shape books, whether in conduct books, manuals, or in archival sources that specifically reference the paper doll shape books, to my knowledge, either do not exist or have not been recovered. Just as manuals, conduct books, and literacy textbooks provided prescriptions for readers to follow, I have considered whether there were similar protocols or imagined uses for the paper doll shape books. Similarly, novelty books themselves, like the adaptations already discussed in previous chapters, may depict or paint a picture of how adapters imagine children to

read books generally. The paper doll shape books themselves do not picture or describe how child users should interact with them, nor do advertisements represent their usage through text or image. Also, I am not aware of any additional artifacts that offer such a representation of interacting with paper doll shape books specifically.²⁹⁶ Thus, I turn to Robin Bernstein’s model of the “scriptive thing,” which will function as a tool to shed light on these unique artifacts. Through Bernstein’s model, I explore the material and textual qualities of the adaptations and how they prompt interactions for imagined users to engage with adapted stories. I also hypothesize how readers might resist these scripts and consider the effects on the transmission of the stories.

In *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*, Bernstein introduces this model as an approach to analyze recorded performances of everyday life and objects of material culture, which she refers to as scriptive things. Ideal applications for this model involve texts that pose interpretative difficulties for historians, especially when traces of use appear lost or hidden due to their ephemerality. Innovating thing theory with performance studies, Bernstein defines a scriptive thing as “an item of material culture that prompts meaningful bodily behaviors.”²⁹⁷ Bernstein argues that a scriptive thing possesses “a set of prompts...[that] reveal a *script* for a performance. That script is itself a historical artifact. Its examination can produce new knowledge about the past.”²⁹⁸ A paper doll shape book may be considered an example of a scripted thing since its hybrid format brings together books and paper dolls, objects in of themselves that prompt certain behaviors to use and interact with them. Add that evidence of its

²⁹⁶ For more on print representations of children reading see Field, *Playing with the Book*; Crain, “Postures and Places: The Child Reader in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Popular Print.”

²⁹⁷ Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*, 71.

²⁹⁸ Bernstein, 71–72.

use is difficult to ascertain from the kinds of sources escribed above, paper doll shape books are an excellent candidate for the model. To analyze what Bernstein refers to as the “determined” and “implied” actions of the scriptive thing, a researcher examines the historical contexts in which the scriptive thing was produced and received. Thus, I look at several threads of context that intersect in this unique series of remediated adapted stories for children: the production context of paper dolls and early nineteenth-century versions of paper doll books, evidence of scripts of paper doll play, and the production context of the paper doll shape books themselves. I also want to note that I will analyze and discuss the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books as a group and refer to individual text titles and their contents when relevant.

The following section examines how the adapters construct the hybrid toy-book products to represent the title characters in paper form and tell the stories in versified narratives with accompanying illustrations. I argue that the adaptations cultivate a mode of engagement that encourages immersive fantasy play when the expected functions of paper doll play are absent. While the book form and verse provide greater accessibility to younger readers and invite readers’ memorization of instructive morals, the interplay between verse and illustration on the inside covers animates the narrative content and, by extension, encourages the child user to animate the figure of the paper doll shape book. The scripts of the paper doll shape books free childhood reading practices of adaptations from the restrictions and supervision put in place in other adaptations that support didactic reading protocols. The adaptations’ blended format has the potential to shift away from that supervisory impulse, reflecting a romantic sense of childhood autonomy through fantasy play.

4.2.1 Breaking Down the Toy-Book Hybrid: On the Inside

When first handled, an L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape book reveals the object's thickness showing that the doll comprises multiple sheets of paper bound into a little book. The thickness of the paper doll as a book lends itself to being sturdier in comparison to the more delicate paper doll. Given that the product is paper, the wear and tear of use are reflected in the dolls' worn bindings. One artifact of *Robinson Crusoe* also shows a severed head from the stiff paper wrapper that exposes the first page of the internal contents, though it is still a mystery as to when and in what circumstances led to the damage (see fig. 11).²⁹⁹ At the very least, this damage indicates that the paper doll shape book was handled and opened, perhaps stored in such a way that bent the front wrappers repeatedly, stressing the same spot. The material blending of the two forms an inseparable hybrid: book and toy qualities are combined into a single product. The paper doll unfolds like a book; the book is in the shape of a paper doll.

The book format and qualities of the paper doll shape books present instructive adapted verse narratives, accompanied by illustrated vignettes that mirror or enhance the verse to share accounts of the characters' (mis)deeds (see fig. 12). The top and bottom illustrations sandwich the two stanzas located in the middle of the page. The series provides a variety of models for child audiences receptive to didactic reading. The models range from ideal figures of acceptable moral character (Goody Two Shoes, Cinderella, and Jack Frost in *King Winter*) to reform figures that err

²⁹⁹ See Lydia L.A. Very, *Robinson Crusoe* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1864), Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh.

and eventually recognize their errors (Red Riding Hood and Robinson Crusoe) after repentance for poor behavior.



Figure 11. The paper doll shape book has lost its head in Lydia L.A. Very, *Robinson Crusoe* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1864), showing Crusoe as a runaway youth and the palm trees of his island. Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh.

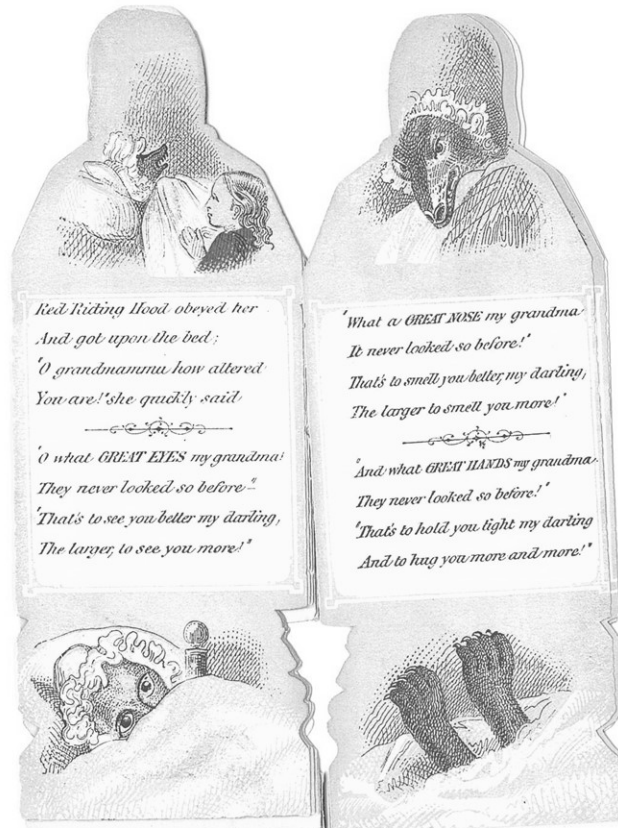


Figure 12. The internal layout of the paper doll shape books displays verse with “head” and “toe” illustrations in Lydia L.A. Very, *Red Riding Hood* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1863). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh.

For readers to access a lesson from a paper doll shape book, they must open the book, read each stanza, and turn each leaf to read the completed narrative. By completing the text from beginning to end, readers may acquire the narrator’s amiable prescription for an upright moral character. Prompting readers to turn the page and read the contents is built into the structure of the narratives, relying on the momentum of rhyme.

Each page contains a series of two four-line stanzas stacked on top of each other. The book’s design nestles the stanzas in the middle and between illustrations located at the “head” and “feet” of the figure’s silhouette. The verse in black type is framed in a white box, which stands out

from the beige-colored paper. The effect spotlights the verse in relation to the colored illustrations. The rhymes of the verse propel the reader forward with each turn of the page, but the structure attempts to slow the reader down with stanza breaks that have a visual divider, a handsome thin-lined, flourished design. It does not demand the reader to stop. The gentle flourish encourages the reader to pace her reading and process the main character's good deeds. Or, in the case of a character like Crusoe or Red Riding Hood violating an essential social value, a careful and considerate reading supports the reader's comprehension and recognition of the character's transgression. This feature is important given that verse's predictable and simple rhyme scheme widens the implied reader to younger child readers (as discussed earlier in chapter 3). As with other print-based adaptations that rely upon verse as the narrative mode, it supports the child reader's performance, recitation, and memorization of the content. Among the series, the books contain a variety of lessons for the child reader, including obedience, good behavior, and kind treatment towards animals.³⁰⁰

I do not want to offer the impression that the verses are dry prescriptions for children's behavior; didacticism does not reign as the primary or dominant mode of the books. The poetry, illustrations, and designs potentially cultivate engagement that produces a pleasurable and exciting reading experience, especially since the adapted folk tales, fairy tales, and adventure stories

³⁰⁰ The kind-treatment-towards-animals lessons are reinforced illustratively on the paper doll figures. Except for *King Winter*, all of the paper dolls have at least one animal figure integrated into the overall paper doll figure. For instance, in the chromolithographed image of Crusoe, his parrot Poll is perched on his shoulder and the dog and cat are at Crusoe's feet. Goody Two Shoes is also pictured with the group of animals in her narrative: lamb, raven, pigeon, and skylark. This lesson, of course, is not extended to the predator wolf in *Red Riding Hood*. He lies down menacingly at Red's feet in her paper doll figure, and in the narrative, he is shot with a firearm by Red's grandmother.

selected by the adapters foster a sense of wonder, excitement, and suspense. For instance, in *Robinson Crusoe*, the shipwreck is punishment for Crusoe's disobedience against his parents, yet, Crusoe defies the odds in surviving the threat of the storm and vastness of the island wilderness. In the verses of *Red Riding Hood*, Red narrowly escapes the jaws of the wolf after the gripping build-up of the threat posed by the disguised wolf, created by the well-known repetitive question-answer structure of Red's surprise observations of "Grandma" wolf's eyes, nose, paws, and mouth. The adapters frame the verses with little illustrative vignettes at the top and bottom of the page. The images typically connect to the story details, so they are not unrelated or inconsequential. In a two-page spread, the small space that each six-inch figure provides brings the elements of verse and illustration into closer proximity with each other, generating an interplay that potentially animates the reader's imagination of the versified narrative as users move from page to page.

This animation does not necessarily conclude when the user closes the book or comes to the end of the narrative. The die-cutting and chromolithography processes used to create the paper doll figures further extend the playful reading of rhyme and adventure into play with the book itself. The excitement of the stories presents an opportunity to animate the physical figure that constitutes the book's formatted shape. That is, the figure of the paper doll poses the most potential for imaginative play, which deviates from the more common invitation for fashion play that is historically associated with paper doll objects as well as prior examples of paper doll books in children's literature.

4.2.2 Breaking Down the Toy-Book Hybrid: On the Outside

Paper dolls were a child's plaything, printed and sold before the postbellum era when toy manufacturing took off in the United States. Notably, adults and children handcrafted these toys

as well.³⁰¹ Manufactured or self-created, paper dolls “are two-dimensional figures drawn or printed on paper for which accompanying clothing may also be made.”³⁰² These figures possess a long and rich history: scholars have identified papercutting practices to create these figures in China beginning in the first century CE and Japan at 610 CE. Paper dolls were eventually produced in Europe and the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through various material objects and genres, including aristocratic forms of satire, toy theatres, and paper doll books.³⁰³ The latter two examples reflect the definition and function of the object that we generally associate with a paper doll. That is, the term paper doll commonly suggests it is a child’s plaything or toy. According to Antonia Fraser, the modern paper doll—as part of doll culture and girlhood play—

³⁰¹ Archived collections of paper dolls like the one housed at the University of Chicago Library in the Special Collections Research Center provide evidence in how children recycled paper to create their own paper dolls, complete with figures and wardrobes of their own design.

³⁰² Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, *Paper Dolls: Fragile Figures, Enduring Symbols* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2017), 2.

³⁰³ Adams and Keene, 2. Adams and Keene offer a comprehensive overview of the paper doll as a material object and as a symbol, which is split into two sections of the book. Chapters 1-7 explore the material object and Chapters 8-13 discuss the symbolism of “paper doll.” Chapter one treats the process and creation of these figures in China and Japan. Then Adams and Keene detail how it moved from Asia to Europe with the French *pantin*, or jumping jack, which is the first commercial example of the paper doll. See chapter two for more on the *pantin* paper doll as political satire and change in the eighteenth century. They also cover its commercial use and intersection with children’s culture in chapters three and four with toy theatres and paper doll books in Europe and the United States.

was created in the 1790s in England and eventually produced in the United States.³⁰⁴ This form of a paper doll is “a flat card or stiffened paper doll figure, onto which could be attached a series of different dresses,” and it is the object summoned by Prang’s advertisement and description of the paper doll shape books introduced at the beginning of the chapter.³⁰⁵ In the nineteenth century, paper dolls as a commodity were printed and sold by numerous firms, but McLoughlin Bros. in New York had dominated the paper doll market.³⁰⁶

The blending of the paper doll format into the book distinguishes the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books from a prior iteration of the paper doll and book combination. Samuel and Joseph Fuller, London publishers and print-sellers in the early nineteenth century, first introduced paper

³⁰⁴Fraser claims that paper dolls as a toy object merges “the function of a doll with that of a fashion display in a more mobile and economical way than the earlier life-sized fashion dolls’ from which it evolved.” Qtd. in Hannah Field, “‘A Story, Exemplified in a Series of Figures’: Paper Doll versus Moral Tale in the Nineteenth Century,” *Girlhood Studies* 5, no. 1 (2012): 40. See Antonia Fraser, *A History of Toys* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 92.

³⁰⁵ Qtd. in Field, 40. See Antonia Fraser, *Dolls*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), 43.

³⁰⁶ By the turn of the twentieth century in the United States, paper dolls and their collection became popular toys and sources of activities for children. According to Judy M. Johnson, a founding member of the Original Paper Doll Artists Guild, though availability and production of these figures continued into the latter half of the twentieth century with revivals, reprints and, introductions like Mattel’s Barbie paper dolls, the “Golden Age of Paper Dolls” reigned from the 1930s through the 1950s. See Judy M. Johnson, “The History of Paper Dolls,” The Original Paper Doll Artists Guild, 2005, <http://www.opdag.com/History.html>. Katherine Adams and Michael Keene note that the firm “produced more paper dolls than all the other American publishers of these dolls combined.” See Adams and Keene, *Paper Dolls: Fragile Figures, Enduring Symbols*, 67–68.

doll books. The Fullers created a number of them from 1810-1816.³⁰⁷ The paper doll books were reproduced in short order as reprints domestically and transatlantically in the United States. Patricia Crain identifies at least three reprints in the U.S.—calling them “the chapbook trilogy”—that were printed until 1832: *The History of Little Fanny*, *The History of Little Henry*, and *The History and Adventures of Little Eliza* (reproductions of the London 1810 Fuller editions).³⁰⁸

The Fuller paper doll books were sold as a set. Like *A Pretty Little Pocket-Book*, these paper doll books present a book and toy companion model, which invites its audience to read and engage with the objects together. Each set was organized in a sheath, which held and stored the individual paper components. Inside the sheath, the set included “a black-and-white storybook containing the moral history of a young person (often in verse), a number of hand-colored cut-out images printed separately on card, showing costumes, and a single hand-colored cardboard head.”³⁰⁹ In this toy-book companion model, the paper doll books do not prompt child users to move dresses and accessories from figure to figure child as one would with a traditional paper doll. Instead, the user could move the cardboard head from image card to image card. These image cards depict the costumes in the scenes, which match the book companions.

These early paper doll books do not depart from the paper doll’s origins with fashion play. Hannah Field argues that the format invites the child reader to pay attention to the dress the paper

³⁰⁷ For a bibliography of these paper doll books (as curated by the Opie Collection of Children’s Literature at the Bodleian Library) see Field, “‘A Story, Exemplified in a Series of Figures’: Paper Doll versus Moral Tale in the Nineteenth Century.”

³⁰⁸ Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America*, 91.

³⁰⁹ Field, “‘A Story, Exemplified in a Series of Figures’: Paper Doll versus Moral Tale in the Nineteenth Century,” 37.

doll head occupies at any given point throughout the story, to become absorbed in fashion rather than in the moral of the book. Field demonstrates how the didactic moral tales in the books—consistent with the critiques against fixations with fashion, dress, and vanity in earlier didactic moral tales like Sarah Fielding’s *The Governess; or, The Little Female Academy* (1749)—does not align with the prompts of the paper doll companions format. Indeed, the narrative and the format of the product encourage more attention to the paper doll companion, which may be amplified further if the user ignores the storybook entirely in favor of strictly interacting with the costumes and the head paper pieces.³¹⁰ (When users remove them from the paper sheath, they are separate forms for the user to manipulate and store as they wish.)³¹¹ Ironically, this focus on fashion is explicitly discouraged in fiction for children contemporary to the paper doll books³¹² The Fuller paper doll books bring together book and toy objects to create a pleasurable product, but the play script ultimately undermines the content of the moral tale. A resisting child user may doubly undermine it by not engaging the story if they wish not to pay attention to the moral tale at all. I want to point out that what drives Field’s analysis is the separation of the formats, though packaged together in the sheath envelope and sold as a set. The L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books hybridize the paper doll and book formats together in the production process. Thus, the determined and implied actions of the paper doll shape books as scriptive things will be different, beginning with their departure from encouraging child users to engage in fashion play. Paper dolls, as mentioned above, were typically indexed as toys for fashion play, but there is little evidence in the

³¹⁰ Field, 53–54.

³¹¹ Field, *Playing with the Book*, 9.

³¹² Field, “‘A Story, Exemplified in a Series of Figures’: Paper Doll versus Moral Tale in the Nineteenth Century,” 41–42.

material items of the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books that would indicate fashion play is a function. The material format, packaging, and accompanying instructions of American paper dolls elucidate this point; thus, I look at the paper doll products of McLoughlin Bros. of New York, the most prolific paper doll producer in the nineteenth century.

Users that acquired a McLoughlin Bros. paper doll were provided directions to cut out the figures and accompanying dresses and accessories. These directions were printed on the dolls' packaging, which varied from envelopes to booklets and book forms.³¹³ In these instructions, users were directed to cut out the figures and wardrobe from the paper carefully. Care was necessary given that the attachment fashion pieces had tabs that users needed to cut around.³¹⁴ Cutting off these tabs, or trimming them off, would make the play with the provided clothes difficult: the unaffixed clothing would fall off if the user positioned the doll upright. In this format, users cut out the forms and the dresses and accessories. Then, the accessories and clothing function as the "moving" pieces, enacted by the choices made by the user to clothe and unclothe the doll figure. To dress and undress a paper doll and serve its function for fashion play using the purchased product, users needed to cut the paper doll from the paper correctly. Notably, none of the paper

³¹³ Packaging varied and depended on the material qualities of the paper dolls that determined the price. In one of the firm's catalogs approximately dated to 1880, McLoughlin Bros. advertised a large array of paper dolls that sold in the following packages: "Paper Dolls in Envelopes," "Paper Dolls in Book Form," and "Penny Paper Dolls." *Catalogue of McLoughlin Bros., Toy Books, Games, ABC Block, &c.* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1880?).

³¹⁴ For earlier products of the paper doll, apparently these tabs were not available for affixing wardrobes to the doll forms. Users would use dabs of sealing wax to attach the clothing. See "Guide to the Paper Dolls Collection Mid 19th Century," The University of Chicago Library, 2007, <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/src/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.PAPERDOLLS#idp140419880>.

doll shape books possess any printed textual or visual instructions—on the envelope or book—to prompt the user to disassemble, cut, insert, move, or organize parts. Indeed, L. Prang’s & Co.’s product does not have a wardrobe for the dolls. Therefore, scissors are not an invited prop as they would be with other paper doll products. Scissors are needed to liberate the paper doll figure from the paper sheet and create or cut out additional suits and accessories. The die-cutting process eliminates the need for the user to cut the figure from paper because it conveniently shapes the figure at the production stage using a shaped mold, which, once pressed and cut into the book, creates a ready figure. Paper doll clothes not included. No scissors are required.

While the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books do not invite fashion play, it is important to note that it does not explicitly prohibit it either. At this time, I am not aware of any evidence to indicate that child users may have created their own suit and accessories designs to apply to the paper doll shape books. Given that adding and removing suits to paper dolls were implied cultural prompts with paper dolls as papercutting activities, child users may have attempted to incorporate the practice to these paper doll shape books.³¹⁵ In one book of the series, a user’s creation of the additional suits to accompany the paper doll figure would reflect both the script for papercutting play more generally and a central element of the story. Cinderella is the only character in the group with a costume change as part of the plot; indeed, Cinderella served as a narrative source for one of the Fuller paper doll books sold earlier in the nineteenth century, bringing reading and fashion

³¹⁵ Since the paper doll book is a complete figure of its own, perhaps any paper suits and accessories that may have been created could have been deemed unrelated to the novelty item and thrown away over time. Of course, a lack of evidence does not prove the point; it presents an issue and question of what was ascribed value for keeping and preserving when it came to products such as this one that perhaps inspired additional play activities to accompany products created for children.

play together.³¹⁶ Users, however, would have been met with challenges of design, thanks to the covers' peritextual elements that typically accompany books, which include title, imprint, authorship, and copyright, fixed at the bottom of the figures in a block. Furthermore, to use the forms as a canvas for fashion design would also be trickier since the figures of *Red Riding Hood*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *King Winter* have covered heads (hoods and a hat). Unable to remove the head accessories, which are part of the printed illustration, could make for odd design combinations, disrupting the point of switching and replacing suits interchangeably. Thus, for the paper doll shape books, fashion play or display does not appear to be its intended purpose, marking a departure from how the paper doll is indexed as a fashion plaything.

The lack of fashion play as a primary or encouraged function fundamentally changes the experience of interacting with the paper doll shape books. The books' material format of the figures presents open-ended possibilities: it invites the child to engage in fantasy play by allowing the user to take control and direct a figure in imitation of the narrative or one of their own making. *Red Riding Hood*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Goody Two Shoes* are the most distinctive in shaping since they conform to the figures' silhouettes. *King Winter* and *Cinderella* do not bear this level of shape detail. *Cinderella*, for instance, has a halo of flat, solid background around the figure's dainty form. The die-cut shape used for the former examples was more precise and reflective of the precision required to cut a paper doll from paper.

The stiff paper figures wrapping the book are important here, too, given they bear a stunning visual likeness to the stories' characters. The figures themselves are realistic and detailed

³¹⁶ See Field, "A Story, Exemplified in a Series of Figures': Paper Doll versus Moral Tale in the Nineteenth Century," 41; 52.

as a result of the chromolithographed prints on the paper. Chromolithography allows for greater detail from the outline to the various colors applied to the illustration. The process involves the literal layering of colors on the same paper, requiring multiple stones to imprint the image.³¹⁷ It effectively blends colors and lines to create the illusion of a three-dimensional figure on a flat piece of paper. The stiff papers of the covers give the book and figure a slight rigidity to stand up and not collapse when held with one hand. The paper doll shape books may also be propped open to stand on a hard, flat surface. Thus, the chromolithographed illustrations with a “standing” figure enhance the three-dimensional effect, especially since the front cover shows the figure from the front of the body. Then the back cover reveals the figure from behind, picturing the back of the head down to the heels.

Another interactive possibility the format invites is that the user can reenact or perform the narrative contained within the pages of the paper doll book. The visual likeness of the characters

³¹⁷ The method is based on lithography, a printing form that uses chemically-etched stones, like limestone, as the source of the image rather than a woodblock or engraving. For the surface to be successfully etched and to receive the ink for printing, a lithographer draws the image using a greasy crayon or pencil. Chalk and then gum Arabic with nitric acid is applied to separate the image area from the non-image areas. The process relies upon a basic principle that the grease, which forms the outline and detail of the image, repels the water. Once etching is completed, the stone is coated in water, wiped down, and dried. Then, the lithographer rolls on the printing ink to the stone and then lays the paper before sending it through the press to evenly imprint the image from the stone into the paper. Chromolithography is time-consuming and was an expensive process, depending on the size and detail of the image and the number of stones required to produce a completed illustration. For the series of paper doll books, they are approximately six inches tall and two-and-a-half inches wide with front and back color printing which suggests that the size of the stones would have been small and the process not as intensive as the fine-art reproductions Prang also sold.

in the printed figures supports their use as props for fantasy play. They have the potential to be paper figurines that visually imitate the protagonists depicted on the internal pages. The characters' likenesses of the covers are replicated in some illustrative vignettes on the interior pages. The verse narratives then serve as scenarios from which child users may script their play with the paper figures. The die-cutting process enables the combination of the paper doll book into a single, hybrid entity of book and toy that brings the script and figure together with the threaded binding of the wrappers. The character's actions in the narrative may be then transferred to the figure, manipulated by the child user's hands with accompanying dialogue and movement to imitate and act out the narrative scenarios.

When examined in relation to the book's narrative, the design choices made for *King Winter* reveal how closely the material figure and the narrative verse are brought together to invite fantasy play. As stated above, the title characters are represented in paper form and shape. Contrary to this expectation is the paper doll book titled *King Winter*. After reading the verse content in the book and viewing the accompanying illustrations, I realized that King Winter, a character always depicted with an icicle crown, is not the paper doll figure pictured on the book's paper wrappers. Instead, King Winter's devoted servant, Jack Frost, with his distinctive facial features (long white beard and red nose) and wearing a hooded cloak, is the figure that is cut and represented in paper doll form. Jack Frost is a fictional character who decorates the world in snow and ice, delivers presents to good and bad children, and discovers (for King Winter) who has been naughty and nice. If users cast their figures in the scenarios presented by the narratives, then Jack Frost, not his master King Winter, is the figure with the most potential for manipulation and play. Part elf, part Santa Claus figure, Jack Frost completes most of the action in the narrative in service of King Winter. Like the other paper doll forms in the series, Jack Frost is the most active in the plot and

events of the stories. And the child user has the additional power of wielding the power of King Winter, directing their servant Jack to do their bidding. This discrepancy between the title of the book (*King Winter*) and the chromolithographed figure of Jack Frost indicates how the design of the paper doll book, which unites the representative paper doll figure and the narrative script, supports the user's actions towards fantasy play, acting out the scenarios they witness through their reading. The material properties invite the child to embody and reenact the narrative action and dialogue through the paper doll figure.

The L. Prang & Co. paper doll books constitute a series that seamlessly blends play and leisure into protocols of reading that still recognize or contain an instructional mode but minimize its importance to the function or purpose of reading that the paper doll books offer. When opened, the figure is facing down though its shape remains due to the die-cutting process. (Or if held up in the user's hands, the figure faces out and is hidden from view.) The child user must close the book to interact with the figure as a prop for fantasy play. The subtle gesture is a reminder that child users are not beholden to the script tucked away inside when the book is closed to make the figure complete. The memorization and recitation of the verse may serve as a script, but it also may be ignored when using the figure for fantasy play. Not limited to the implied scripts to structure their interaction with the physical book and paper doll, child users can always revise a present script or entirely create their own that may or may not coincide with the retold stories or morals inherent to each paper doll book. They can wield power and resistance in what we would call today free play. This opportunity for open-ended fantasy play may be expanded even further if the child were to collect the series Prang advertises, introducing the possibility of a mashup of narrative systems in which Robinson Crusoe, Red Riding Hood, Goody Two Shoes, Jack Frost, and Cinderella do not remain in isolated, separate narratives. The cost would not necessarily have been prohibitive and

thereby discounting this possibility. The entire set totals \$1.25, the equivalent of a juvenile gift book. Thus, the cost would have been within reach for middle-class adults gifting the whole set to a child for Christmas or the New Year. The didactic function of the verse then becomes one of the multiple modes of engagement and options presented to the child user and not strictly required.

Bernstein's model of the scriptive thing as applied here helps reconstruct hypothetically the scripts the paper doll shape books prompt for usage by interpreting the determined and implied actions that these charming hybrid objects invite. In her examination of novelty books, Field also uses Bernstein's concept of the scriptive thing to explain the possibilities of how child readers engaged the variety of novelty books available.³¹⁸ Field's observation is particularly pertinent here given how Field also applies Bernstein's model and does not dismiss a user's agency in engaging with the scripts: "the child's physical interactions with the novelty book, both scripted and unscripted, are a potential site of resistance, a way of eluding or reshaping common demands on or expectations of children's reading."³¹⁹ The paper doll shape books and the prompting scripts they do not depart radically from a protocol of reading invested in instruction and an active reading process, as displayed by invitation to recite the verse; the interplay of the images and text in the same small visual space; and the turn of the page to follow the narrative to its conclusion. The toy-book hybrids center the paper doll format, a plaything rife with possibilities for interaction and use that may not align with the play performance of morals. As expected from their literacy education, child users may have mined the moral capital from the texts and performed the accompanying script. Such use reflects a sanctioned way of reading and play in which children use embodied

³¹⁸ Field, *Playing with the Book*, 25–58.

³¹⁹ Field, 32.

cultural capital to productively read and interpret the adapted stories according to didactic reading prescriptions. However, the toy format and its open-ended possibilities of play test the demand or expectation of children's reading, especially children's reading of adapted texts, to serve a strictly didactic function of transmission. The saving grace of this remediation is that the potential of the paper doll figurine play conveniently creates distance between the user and the powerful transgressive embodiment restrictive adapters feared. The paper doll figure acts as a kind of container to project such transgressions and gives wiggle room for the child reader to imagine and dream. The remediation of reading adaptations displayed by the paper doll, therefore, sanctions the immersive reading experience through fantasy play with the paper doll figures, an important move that distinguishes it from the restrictions and mediations put in place by other adapters in this study.

4.3 Playful Reading

The L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books are an interesting case study to reflect on an adaptation process that shifts away from restrictive and supervisory transmissions of cultural capital in a recalculation of what might constitute symbolic profit and assets for child readers. The impulse to monitor the acquisition of embodied cultural capital, as displayed by other adaptations in this study, is negotiated through the paper doll shape book to appeal to children's desire to play. They figure as a transitional collection of texts that anticipates the value ascribed to what kinds of experiences adapted narratives provide versus how children productively mine them. Briefly, I want to return to *The Girls' Own Book* for insight because I think it demonstrates how the L. Prang

& Co. paper doll shape books are not outliers of a historical and cultural process that reimagines childhood and reading in this manner.

In *The Girls' Own Book*, Child allows room for users to interact with the manual physically and intellectually as a book of didactic and imaginative engagement. In an interesting move, the topics of “reading” or “books” are not represented in the extensive “Contents” table at the beginning of the text. In a keyword search of the book itself, “reading,” “read,” and “books” limitedly appear.³²⁰ “Reading” and “read,” for instance, emerge with role-playing in the “Dolls” section and the “School-Keeping” game. For doll play, girls are tasked to assume a maternal role and teach their dolls to read.³²¹ For “School-Keeping,” children are instructed to play the roles of students and schoolmistress, acting out lessons, including reading.³²² Reading as imagined in these two forms associates girls’ appropriate future roles as preparatory forms of play. The goal in the inclusion of these play activities is undoubtedly a practice in imitation that reflects Child’s participation in a sociopolitical process of “domesticating literacy” in the manuals and fiction she produced in the period.³²³ There is another lone reference to reading (not as a suggestion for

³²⁰ I need to devote more attention to the language games, like rebuses and tongue twisters, and how they fit within this discussion.

³²¹ Child, *The Girls' Own Book*, 78–79.

³²² Child, 75–76.

³²³ Robbins, *Managing Literacy, Mothering America: Women's Narratives on Reading and Writing in the Nineteenth Century*, 15.

imaginative play) in a section on memory games.³²⁴ Child's notes on reading function as a kind of educational creed, showing readers that she insists that children, including girls, should "read and study with such habits of carefulness," indicating a practice akin to reading as labor.³²⁵ She does not explicitly position reading as a fun activity in itself. Reading is characterized as a pedagogical necessity and a practice closely associated with learning. The book as an object is only referenced once as a tool to create leaf impressions, reflecting one of the myriads of uses books possesses in the nineteenth century beyond narrative engagement through reading.³²⁶ Through this initial search, I assumed that reading might not be associated with play, but near the end of the amusements catalog, I noticed that Child appends reading to these other activities.

She provides the opportunity for readers to immerse themselves within the provided pages' pleasurable reading content. Child inserts reading material towards the end of the book in a section titled "Miscellaneous," a puzzling label since it is not an assortment of uncategorized activities or games. This section represents a small collection of reading material for the audience of the text to consume. Child includes fourteen pages of stories: two fables, verse, a history of a little girl named Mary Howard, and a fairytale.³²⁷ These genres are consistent with books produced for and

³²⁴ That reference is made in the "Games of Memory" section. Child defends the choice, re-affirming her pedagogical belief that children must understand words and not simply know them. She separates these memory games as a play activity and states that they do not benefit memory at all writing, "for words without ideas do the mind no good" (86).

³²⁵ Child, *The Girls' Own Book*, 87.

³²⁶ Child, 147. For more on the materiality of books and their uses in the nineteenth century, see Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012).

³²⁷ Titles include "The Self-Satisfied Duck," "The Umbrella, the Muff, and the Fan," "Address to My Kitten," "Mary Howard," and "The Palace of Beauty."

read by children in the period, and in the case of “Mary Howard,” its inclusion in *The Girls’ Own Book* is a reprint of a chapbook version in circulation in the United States.³²⁸ The reading content printed in *The Girls’ Own Book* neatly aligns with Child’s perceptions of play as functional: the stories are moralistic, but their genres are not strictly categorized as instructive since they can be considered captivating engagements of fiction.

The section organization differs from others in the text. It does not have an accompanying introduction like other sections in the book, nor does the section have instructions, directives, or suggestions that structure the other activities in the rest of the book. The readings are only searchable in the contents section under the title names for each. While reading as an activity is not explicitly cited as amusement, embedding reading content into the play guide strikes me as an interesting choice that highlights how books, including a manual of play and on play, are meant to be read as well as enjoyed. Child allows room for users to interact with the manual physically and intellectually as a book of didactic and imaginative engagement, immersing themselves within the provided pages’ pleasurable reading content. *The Girls’ Own Book* then can bear the means to escape to and create play activities. It hints at how a print resource may remind its readers that a form of play is contained within the handling and engagement with the material object itself, including an object such as a book.

Like the paper doll shape books produced in the 1860s, Child brings the merits of reading and play so close together that it is challenging to distinguish reading from play in *The Girls’ Own*

³²⁸ For more on the chapbook *The Little, but Affecting History of Mary Howard* by Sandborton Press in New Hampshire, 1836, see Melissa Gniadek, “Mary Howard’s Mark: Children’s Literature and the Scales of Reading the Pacific,” *Early American Literature* 50, no. 3 (2015): 797–826. No mention is made of its reprint in Child’s play book.

Book. I think there is a catch to *The Girls' Own Book* and its positioning of reading as a play activity. To find the fictional tidbits in *The Girls' Own Book*, readers must sit and follow the protocols of profitable or active reading prescribed to them, especially since Child incorporates fictional reading without necessarily flagging it in any obvious way. This point is relevant: Child imagines reading as usefully playful in this traditional book. Child's perspective is informed upon an idea of reading that bears in mind the conventional book format with covers, words and images to consume, and pages to turn. But the logic that brings reading and play together in the manual are consistent with and amplified in the toy book hybrid of the paper doll shape books. The paper doll shape books bear a physical format indicating an evident and active relationship between reading and play.

Child's manual importantly anticipates the blending of use and amusement in reading outside restrictive or supervisory modes championed by didactic moral fiction. I consider the blending as key for the remediated adapted narratives to be acceptably experienced as immersive and playful without the threats or fears demonstrated by adapters in chapters 2 and 3. The paper doll shape books are similar to the Jewett toy book adaptations that imagine children as agential in their reading activities, which run counter to the didactic adaptation impulse. They position children's reading activities as powerful. Indeed, works like Child's manual and the paper doll shape books function to alleviate adult fears. As adaptations, they provide children active roles in the transmission process rather than limiting them to positions of receivers or auditors.

4.3.1 A Final Word: The ASSU's Compromise with *Little Marian*

Adaptation may be used as a vehicle for transmitting and ascribing cultural value through repetition with variation to the stories themselves, but the paper doll shape books indicate how

hybrid material and textual adaptations transform the stories' worth not for the lessons they transmit but for how they may inspire children to embody play as a natural extension and response to reading. Since this period saw a rise and availability of manufactured toys, such a combination in format would be commercially attractive to the point that a non-commercial publisher committed to the moral capital of juvenile fiction and adapted stories of texts like *The Pilgrim's Progress* would compromise on restrictive adaptation.

Containing the same story in verse when it was adapted from Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* underwent another transformation after its 1852 publication that impacted its material form. In 1866, the ASSU began advertising a new edition of what was formerly titled *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*: "A simple story in verse about the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' beautifully printed in colors, and done up in the shape of a 'Paper Doll.'"³²⁹ The modest, familiar, and slimly bound book form (see fig. 3 in chapter 2) was reshaped to bear a visual resemblance to the illustrated engravings of Little Marian in the 1852 version (see. fig. 13). The publisher used the same processes of chromolithography and die-cutting as L. Prang & Company.³³⁰

³²⁹ "New Books, Just Published," *American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular*, December 1, 1866.

³³⁰ The shape book of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* does not have a copyright date listed on the text itself. It does have the imprint's storefront address in Philadelphia. The ASSU was at 1122 Chestnut St., Philadelphia between 1857 and May 1919. The chromolithographs are signed by Ferdinand Moras, a European lithographer who came to the U.S. in 1854. Moras's shop was located in a number of locations in Philadelphia, but from 1867-1869, it was located at 610 Jayne Street, the same address imprinted on *Little Marian*. Given the advertisements in the *American Literary Gazette* and business directories listing the ASSU's and Moras's firm locations, I would date *Little Marian* to the late 1860s rather than the American Antiquarian Society's approximate copyright estimation between 1853-1857. The date is important because it does not pre-date Prang's series of paper doll books.



Figure 13. *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* is remediated as a paper doll shape book with *Little Marian* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, n.d.). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh.

The text reflects cutting-edge and commercially popular printing and publishing technologies in the second half of the nineteenth century in its material, hybrid form. No longer titled *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, *Little Marian* could be said to be published, illustrated, bound, and cut in

the “most attractive garb of blended instruction and amusement” to entice purchasers and readers.³³¹ Sold for fifty cents, this product was affordable to middle-class consumers.

The remediation of *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* as a hybrid toy book product is a fascinating material development given that its 1852 version presents a narrative insisting on the importance of productive reading to decode and access John Bunyan’s spiritual allegory. The anonymous adapter imposes adult guidance to support Marian in interpreting John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. As explored in chapter 2, the ASSU’s *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* restricts and redeems a fictionalized child figure who misreads the symbolism of the pilgrim Christian’s journey to salvation as literal. The story presents a cautionary tale of the child’s embodiment of the journey inspired by an unmediated reading, absent of adult direction to explain Bunyan’s narrative. Through the remediation, the ASSU transforms its adaptation again in a curious turn.

The original, adapted narrative anonymously penned and then reproduced by a non-profit printing firm competed with commercial publishers and printers producing fiction. The ASSU’s remediation of *Little Marian’s Pilgrimage* into the paper doll shape book is itself an appropriation of another printing firm’s new textual and material transformation for children. Given that other adaptations produced by L. Prang & Co. were present, the advertisement and the remediation of the book indicate that the ASSU, trying to supplant competitors’ products with their acceptable fictional content, was attempting to remain competitive in the juvenile book market. With the remediation of the firm’s book into one shaped like a paper doll, this material adaptation suggests

³³¹ Qtd. in Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America*, 81. See footnote 65. It originates from *The Sixth Report of the American Sunday-School Union: Presented at Their Annual Meeting in Philadelphia* (American Sunday-School Union, No. 146 Chestnut Street, 1830), 16–17.

that their cautious approach for producing evangelical fiction came to incorporate evolving conceptions of children's play and reading as entertainment.

This development shows that adapting to a cultural environment in which cultivating the instinctual, playful natures of children with toy objects and print objects for their enjoyment was becoming an ideal supported by technological and market advancements. From my perspective, the adaptive choices for the product made their mark quite literally on the material format of the print-based adaptation the ASSU initially produced. *Little Marian*, then, reflects an attempt to rebrand *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* within a new context in which the newly formed conception of the white middle-class, leisure-filled, and commercialized childhood competes with the restrictions of child readers enabled by its initial adaptation process. Since *Little Marian* bears the same format properties as the L. Prang & Co., the possibility for imaginative free play is present and reflective of reading freedom Marian, the fictionalized child reader of the reversion enjoys at the start of the versified narrative maintained from the 1852 version. Marian's reading power at the beginning of her story neatly aligns with the script of the paper doll figure of the shape book discussed in the previous section. Even more so, if a child user resists the narrative scenario of the poem, Marian has the potential to follow through with the most appealing part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*: the fight and defeat of Apollyon. Remember, this event is denied Marian in the reversion and foreclosed to her as a girl who adults train to shepherd her future children to heaven, much like Christiana does in Bunyan's sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

In a final assertion of the publisher's position, the depiction of the Marian figure in chromolithography bears two important symbols to indicate the ASSU's commitment to didactic reading despite yielding to shifts in the cultural environment with this toy book hybrid product. First, Marian, dressed in her journeying attire, has been knocked down a peg in status: she is

wearing only one shoe, which signifies a loss of status in fairytales. For Marian, she may only be redeemed by the intervention of guiding women that correspond to the allegorical figures of Bunyan's House Beautiful in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and her imaginative reading threatens her purity and safety. The other symbol pictured is the Bible nestled close to her heart, which shows that Marian, as a receptive and then redeemed model reader by the end of the verse, does not abandon the most important book of all.³³² Together, these symbols provide reminders of the productive uses of didactic reading and the moral capital that they contain in a move that does not wholly sanction the immersive reading experience the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books remediate. Such a move was futile. With the 1860s and 1870s, the flood of print continued unabated. It was then amplified further by the publishing efforts of large commercial publishers like McLoughlin Bros. that dedicated their production efforts on adapted and reprinted stories for children that completely abandons adaptation practices that advocated restriction and supervision shared stories. Concerns for the child reader's acquired cultural capital through reading move to the potential profit a publisher may accrue from a business model that *invests in* adaptation and a segmented audience of little readers.

³³² See *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, 8. Marian says, "I'll take my Bible" before embarking on her journey.

5.0 The Business of Juvenile Printing and Adaptation: Toy Books for Children by the McLoughlin Bros.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, McLoughlin Brothers (1858-1920) created an influential brand of children's picture books, games, and paper dolls. Much of their production efforts were focused on books for children, creating hundreds of books called toy books. Joyce Irene Whalley defines toy books—a flexible and evolving material and textual form—as colored picture books wrapped in paper covers.³³³ Bonnie Keyser echoes this definition, adding that the books typically employed large type and implied an audience of children “who ha[ve] not yet learned to read.”³³⁴ According to Keyser, “In America, the terms ‘toy book’ and ‘chapbook’ were often used interchangeably. Many early American printers called their small books for children ‘toys.’”³³⁵ As far back as the eighteenth century, some chapbooks may be considered adaptations: they adapted several recognizable novels, ballads, folk tales, fairytales, and romances into abridged versions in a cheap material format with simple illustrations.³³⁶ Like chapbooks, toy books were

³³³ See Whalley, “The Development of Illustrated Texts and Picture Books,” 221. Whalley narrows the type with a medium specific definition which reflects versions from the 1850s: “in its earliest manifestation it consisted of about eight pages, with a minimum of text and a picture on each page, which was usually blank on the back.”

³³⁴ Bonnie Keyser, “The McLoughlin Brothers and 19th Century ‘Toy Books,’” *Bookman's Weekly* 78, no. 20 (1986): 1993.

³³⁵ Keyser, 1993.

³³⁶ See M.O. Grenby, “Before Children's Literature: Children, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Early Modern Britain,” in *Popular Children's Literature in Britain*, ed. Julia Briggs, Dennis Butts, and M.O. Grenby (London:

inexpensively produced and relied on popular content to adapt to toy book form, sometimes with the addition of hand-colored illustrations. Numerous firms, including Mahlon Day, Samuel Wood and Sons, Cory and Daniels, Geo. P. Daniels, Weeden & Peek, Philip J. Cozans, J. Wrigley, S. Babcock, T. W. Strong, Edward Dunigan & Brother, and Elton & Co., among others, continued the practice of adapting familiar stories (alongside original content) for dissemination to child audiences at affordable prices. Innovations in toy book formats with more sophisticated illustrations led to early versions of what we refer to as picture books, featuring the work of acclaimed illustrators Randolph Caldecott, Walter Crane, and Kate Greenaway; these illustrators are not only famous for original content but also illustrations that accompany some of the most well-known stories like *The House that Jack Built* (Caldecott), *Cinderella* (Crane), and *Mother Goose, or, The Old Nursery Rhymes* (Greenaway). McLoughlin Bros. likewise appropriated and followed competitors by relying on adaptation as a practice to produce toy books. Indeed, they arguably surpassed these efforts by establishing an efficient adaptation publishing model and system. McLoughlin Bros. was a master in creating cheap, eye-catching toy books, but the company was also an adaptation machine.

Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Group, 2016). Grenby carefully teases out the different characteristics (format, readership, plebian content, and distribution method) between early versions of chapbooks (17th and 18th centuries) and how they developed into the nineteenth century as a format of popular literature and children's literature.

5.1 Profiting from Toy Books

Here is *Topsy* (see fig. 14), a McLoughlin Bros. shape book with a full-color cover depicting a black girl in a dress and pinafore. *Topsy*, like most of the toy book inventory, is part of a series. Called the Topsy series, it comprises four books, including *Topsy*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Dolly's Adventures*, and *Dolly at the Seaside*. According to a catalog description, “Each contains twelve pages, four of which are in full color. The remainder are in monochrome—text and illustrations.”³³⁷



Figure 14. *Topsy* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 189-?). Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, Archive & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Libraries, University of Pittsburgh.

³³⁷ *McLoughlin Brothers' Catalogue* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1895), 3.

These texts display a combination of the firm's most innovative techniques, including chromolithography and die-cutting, which by the 1890s had become efficient, mechanized, and mass-produced. The result was these inexpensive novelties. Given the price and material format, these toy books would attract potential buyers, ranging from the lower, working-class to the middle class.

For comparison, the L. Prang & Company paper doll shape book series sold for twenty-five cents, and ASSU's *Little Marian* cost fifty cents in the 1860s. A little over thirty years later, the Topsy series and other shape books with similar material qualities were only six cents apiece, a significant price reduction, making the novelty format of paper doll shape book affordable. At least three of the books in the series (*Topsy*, *Dolly's Adventures*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*) qualify as loose adaptations.³³⁸ *Dolly's Adventures* (see fig. 15) is a disturbing retelling of Little Red Riding Hood in which a doll, not a child, goes on an adventure after experiencing boredom. Her owner, a 5-year-old girl named Marjory Bell, begins her lessons, leaving Dolly unoccupied as a plaything. A cruel boy replaces the famous wolf character of countless other versions of the tale as the threat to Dolly's safety.³³⁹

³³⁸ *Dolly at the Seaside* contains a broad, superficial narrative of a young girl and her doll going to the seaside. It includes other short poems, which attempt to bridge together a story that outlines children's activities at the beach. The doll and child return home to their usual activities.

³³⁹ Instead of being threatened by the traditional wolf figure (a toy wolf made of wood and set on wheels makes brief appearance), the threats to "Dolly-Red-Riding-Hood" are a couple of pigs and a cruel boy. In a completely unexpected and disturbing turn of events, the boy who rescues the doll from the pigs lynches the doll from a tree. The lynching is depicted in a monochrome illustration. Dolly is recovered by Marjory, taken home, and tucked safely in bed. Marjory's dog, Jacky, is tasked with minding the doll whenever the child is busy with her lessons. Robin Bernstein's work on

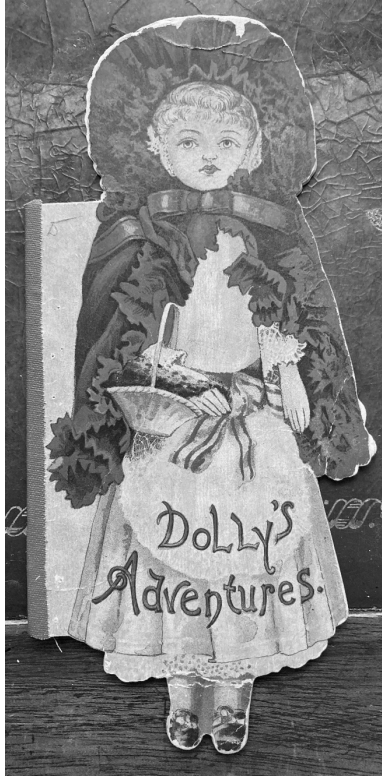


Figure 15. *Dolly's Adventures* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 189-?). From personal library.

While the text's title does not acknowledge the Little Red Riding Hood connection, the iconography associated with the fairy tale girl figure is first represented in the cover image through the signature red cloak and basket.

doll play and racial violence is relevant here. This narrative that brings together doll play and the Little Red Riding Hood suggests that the fairy tale functions as a prompt for play enacting gender violence as punishment for her transgressive wandering. Rather than a wolf in “sheep’s clothing” pretending to be the grandmother, it is a “heroic” boy pretending to be the doll’s savior. Located in relation to *Topsy* and *The Last of the Mohicans* with caricatured depictions of black and indigenous children, the violence against Dolly accomplishes an erasure of the violence perpetuated against black and indigenous people in the nineteenth century and in prior centuries.

This series is not only striking at its low price, novelty format, and bright illustrations—elements that became synonymous with the McLoughlin Bros. brand. But it is also interesting how two of the books contain recognizable signs of nineteenth-century American literary fiction alongside the remediation and adaptation of the Little Red Riding Hood tale.³⁴⁰ *Topsy* summons the black child character from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and meshes the image with clear stereotypical racialized markers of a watermelon and a big grin.³⁴¹ Similarly, *The Last of the Mohicans* (see fig. 16) is an appropriated title from the second installment of James Fenimore Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales*, a multivolume series featuring the character Nathaniel “Natty” Bumppo. The cover of *The Last of the Mohicans* shows another stereotypical image of a cherubic “Indian” child with a headdress, furs, gold jewelry, and bow. With policies of forced removal and assimilation resulting in the genocide of indigenous people well underway by the 1890s when this series is published, the richness of the furs and jewelry and the lush green landscape pictured behind the figure is mocking.

³⁴⁰ Brightness and illumination as a label for series titles functions to capture the luminosity of McLoughlin colored illustrations as well as a mood and image that reflects the sentimentalization of childhood characteristic of the period. See fig. 10 of this chapter.

³⁴¹ Juxtaposed to the white angelicism of the Dolly on *Dolly’s Adventures*, the cover of *Topsy* replicates antebellum and postbellum illustrative imagery of Topsy and Little Eva that creates contrasts between whiteness and blackness.



Figure 16. *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 189-?). From personal library.

The content of the shape books is devoid of any connection to the original narratives produced by Stowe and Cooper, not that they were not chock full of their own racialized depictions as well. Instead, the shape books contain loose verse narratives featuring black and indigenous characters in relocated scenes completely unrelated to Stowe's and Cooper's novels. Natty, for instance, the eponymous hero of the *Leatherstocking Tales*, is never named, only a nameless "Indian Brave" who grows from infancy to adulthood in a few pages. The shape books stretch the limits of adaptation, and McLoughlin Bros. co-opts the character of Topsy and the title *The Last of the Mohicans* as signs of fiction popularly reprinted and adapted for juvenile audiences by its

competitors.³⁴² There is more to discuss later in the chapter, but suffice it to say that these books are empty shells in relation to the original narratives from which they create a surface intertextual connection; adaptation for these books functions as a means of racist indoctrination and textual allusions to famous stage entertainments that perpetuate violence and voyeurism. The reliance on such content enables this publisher to produce a cheap and “charming” series, broadening the possibility of a working-class child and family being able to afford its purchase. But there is a catch. Without the adapted narrative elements, does this innovative print product possess value according to adaptation purposes explored in this study? An example like the Topsy series appears to turn the adaptation logic of reading labor and profit examined elsewhere in this study on its head. The extraction of profit benefits the publisher, but does it benefit the reading child, particularly the working-class child? The McLoughlin Bros. “quality” toy books, tokens of imaginative, sentimental childhood of the middle-class nursery, are available for purchase at affordable prices.

The company was most active during the heyday of children’s publishing that picked up steam after 1865 (what scholars in the field of children’s literature now refer to as the Golden Age of children’s literature). Recent archival efforts critically establish McLoughlin Bros. as a juvenile printing giant in the late nineteenth century. Laura Wasowicz, the American Antiquarian Society’s curator of children’s literature and an expert on the McLoughlin firm and their work in juvenile

³⁴² For instance, Hurd & Houghton published reprints of James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Leatherstocking Tales* in 1868 as part of a series with his other works. Labeled the Cooper Stories, it included three volumes: *Stories of the Prairie; and Other Adventures of the Border*, *Stories of the Woods; or, Adventures of Leatherstocking*, and *Stories of the Sea*. For print-based adaptations for children of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* pre- and post- Civil War, see Hochman, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*.

publishing, asserts that “the firm was much more than just a prolific imitator... McLoughlin Brothers produced a vibrant line of titles—many of them original American tales with illustrations by home-grown artists—that were read by thousands of children around the country.”³⁴³ Responding to the company’s reputation for plundering editions from British imprints like George Routledge & Sons, Wasowicz argues for expanding this limited conception of the McLoughlin Bros. business model. The negative association of “imitator” is a distraction when the firm produced original creations that notably contributed to an industry shift in aligning artistry with picture book illustration.³⁴⁴ I do not discount this view. But at the same time, we should not dismiss the imitations or iterations in print as unoriginal, derivative, or secondary compared to the “vibrant line of titles” Wasowicz defends. Following this renewed interest in McLoughlin Bros. production activities, I argue that the revised and expanded understanding of McLoughlin Bros. can include a reframed view on its borrowing and stealing: the company appropriated and transformed familiar favorites as part of a more extensive, complex practice of adaptation as a form of marketing.

A clear indicator of adaptation surprisingly does not come from the presence of individual titles alone but the firm’s use of a series strategy. According to Wasowicz, “the company published over a thousand titles in about 150 series between 1860 and 1890, constantly reissuing and repackaging popular books and shifting them between different series.”³⁴⁵ One of the records of their business that has survived since the nineteenth century is paper pamphlet catalogs, which

³⁴³ Laura E. Wasowicz, “McLoughlin Brothers’ Conquest of the American Picture Book Market, 1858-1920,” in *Radiant with Color & Art: McLoughlin Brothers and the Business of Picture Books, 1858-1920*, ed. Laura B. Hewes and Kayla Haveles Hopper (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 2017), 11.

³⁴⁴ Whalley, “The Development of Illustrated Texts and Picture Books.”

³⁴⁵ Wasowicz, “McLoughlin Brothers’ Conquest of the American Picture Book Market, 1858-1920,” 11.

contain listings and prices of stock.³⁴⁶ The books themselves often include backmatter advertisements listing blocks of different series with accompanying titles. The content of the catalogs and the advertisements clearly shows that the firm organized most of their books for children in series (see fig. 17). The McLoughlin Bros. series generally contain four to six “kinds” of books, which means that there are four to six different titles in a single series (though the number may vary with more extensive series like Aunt Louisa’s Big Picture Books); hence, the impressive figure that Wasowicz offers. Furthermore, Wasowicz’s terms of reissuing and repackaging capture my attention, for it points to a key approach to the publishing company’s strategy of recycling, which involved the adaptation of books inside and outside of children’s literature.

Percentage of Toy Book Inventory

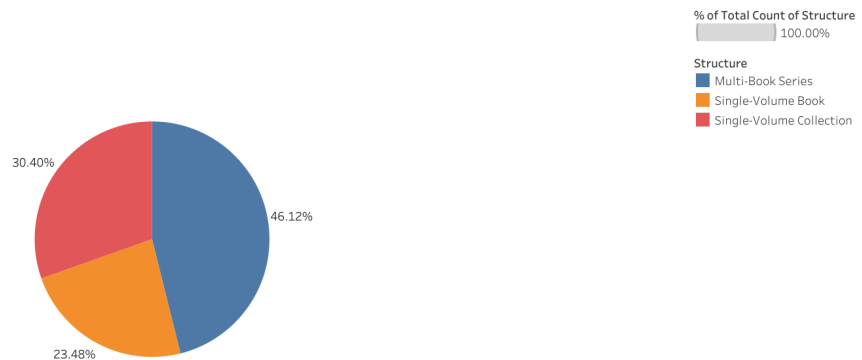


Figure 17. This chart visualizes a survey of four catalogs (1875-1876, 1886, 1895, and 1910), showing that the largest percentage of inventory is comprised of series books.

³⁴⁶ See Justin Schiller, “McLoughlin Brothers Archives--A Brief Account,” in *Radiant with Color & Art: McLoughlin Brothers and the Business of Picture Books, 1858-1920*, ed. Laura B. Hewes and Kayla Haveles Hopper (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 2017), 33–39.

The repetition of familiar staples of books for children, including Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Robinson Crusoe, Mother Goose, among others, appear in the pages of these catalogs in series titles and individually named books as part of multiple series. How did this adaptation machine treat these beloved stories? How do the various adaptations compare across different series?

This chapter examines this publishing firm's inventory to show how adaptation processes are inextricably linked to economic contexts of production. Adapting books for child readers is not strictly an ideological, pedagogical, or even artistic project; these motivations facilitate creation, but they are not exclusive. The toy book production practices of McLoughlin Bros., a premier producer of picture books in the latter half of the nineteenth century, underscores the profit publishers reap from adaptation. Given that print adaptations for children were ubiquitous in the nineteenth century (as they are now), McLoughlin Brothers' marketing and production efforts, in my view, contributed to that ubiquity with the publication of hundreds of adaptations (not to mention the story and character game and toy tie-ins they also sold, which are beyond the scope of this chapter). Indeed, the company is perhaps responsible for establishing an efficient system of adaptation, which heavily incorporated and adapted for its use of the "publisher's series" as a commercially successful model through the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. Distinct from serialized periodical fiction or multivolume series fiction, the publisher's series is a versatile industry device. Publishers used the series for chapbooks and toy books that predate the McLoughlin toy book line. Given the company's significance, I use the McLoughlin Bros. printing firm as a case study to illustrate its dedicated use of adaptation processes as part of its business model and in the perpetuation of its brand over any single adapter who contributes to its stock.

Through this examination of a single publisher's activities in the juvenile market, my goal is to use an alternative approach to the study of print-based adaptations for children that is not solely reliant on the comparative reading between the original or pre-text text and the adapted text. I need to use a mixed-methods approach to produce both distant and close readings of a significant corpus for my purposes. The McLoughlin Bros. corpus is enormous, and an extensive bibliography remains incomplete (though in some capacity under construction).³⁴⁷ It poses a significant challenge for any researcher to grapple with its contents. The McLoughlin Bros. series strategy also poses a significant limitation of the comparative method when numerous adaptations involve the recreation and reproduction of hundreds of stories. Thus, I analyze individual books and series, including editions of *Mother Goose*, *Rip Van Winkle*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and shape books in the *Topsy* series, and my method also aggregates data from the McLoughlin Bros. archive to get a better sense of the whole within the chosen sample. With my focus on the series strategy, the best source to collect data is the existing catalogs.

The American Antiquarian Society has digitally scanned and made available through open-access for download dozens of catalogs dated from 1867 until the mid-1940s. I focus on a set of four catalogs advertising toy books from 1875 to 1910. From the four catalogs, I have organized the catalogs' listings to track the adapted content of the series, especially to see how often the content is recycled across series and during the firm's most lucrative period in the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. Furthermore, I categorize the titles of series to

³⁴⁷ For an ongoing updated list of series titles with accompanying details and images, see Cary Sternick, "19th Century Juvenile Series," *19th Century Juvenile Series*, October 22, 2018, <http://www.19thcenturyjuvenileseries.com/index.html>.

examine how the various labels that these titles signify contribute to the company brand of toy book production. The data collection of the four catalogs yielded over 1,800 entries consisting of individual works, book collections, and series books. I visualize and analyze the data in bar charts and tables using the interactive data visualization software Tableau Public with this dataset. The following questions inform my research into the adaptation processes used by McLoughlin Bros.: What does cataloging of their catalogs reveal about their attitudes and approaches to book production, which, whether inadvertently or not, involves various processes of adaptation? How can we understand the press's attitude and approach to adaptation more broadly when individual print-based series are not singularly examined? What schemas in the adaptation, if any, are established? What role does adaptation have not just in the work's standing but the publisher's standing?

The McLoughlin Bros. production efforts exemplify how children's publishing continually relied upon adaptation to produce books for children, using strategies and packaging that unite several processes common to the transformation of books for children, including versifying, abridging, rewriting, reframing, and reworking with different formats. I argue that the adaptation processes that construct McLoughlin Bros. toy books are distinctive from prior case studies presented in this dissertation. The company contributes adapted print-based books for children to the market, but it is divested from the anxieties of the newly literate young child reader, who other adapters and writers of children's books insist are vulnerable to the traps of fiction (especially the novel) and the potential loss of embodied cultural capital that adapted books transmit. Indeed, in what appears to be a reversal of adult fears of the flood of print in which child readers may drown, McLoughlin Bros. capitalizes on the market allures of that "flood," saturating the market with as many options of its inventory as possible. The McLoughlin Bros. offers a competing paradigm of

the adaptation process fueled by commercial interests in vast proliferation. The McLoughlin Bros. system of adaptation relies upon content recycling and the series strategy. It appropriates characters and narratives historically associated with mixed-age audiences, including Robinson Crusoe, Aladdin, Rip Van Winkle, Robin Hood, and Biblical stories, integrating them into a cultivated nursery brand characterized with Mother Goose as a kind of ringmaster, ushering child consumers into the exciting fairyland of sentimentalized childhood.

Chapter 5 begins with a brief historical overview of the McLoughlin Brothers company originations and strategies. I define and describe the publisher's series and the critical neglect of the device's use in juvenile publishing. I contextualize the function of such a strategy and its use by McLoughlin Bros. as a vehicle for cultural production and dissemination of popular literature aligned with early childhood and reading. I offer a glimpse of the catalog data, showing the breakdown of prices for series and the average cost of a McLoughlin Bros. toy book. Then, I outline the other remarkable trends of the catalog data, which reveal how McLoughlin Bros. overwhelmingly relies on character labels and the respective narrative content of a nursery cast, centered around the icon of Mother Goose, to promote the brand. Characters from literary fiction, particularly Robinson Crusoe, are integrated into the nursery brand with an array of toy book options that emphasize imaginative immersion and escape rather than the instructive impetus of other adaptations in this study. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the potential for the McLoughlin brand to reach out to working-class readers with adapted cultural capital long since available for little middle-class readers. I argue that the toy books represent important symbols of class aspirations for a carefree childhood (which the adapted fiction provides through humor, awe, and adventure).

5.2 History of McLoughlin Bros.: Appropriating the Series Strategy

Laura Wasowicz has provided a descriptive and thorough account that traces the origins of the company from the 1850s until its end in 1920. Her recovery of their business operations and strategies have been key to my own efforts in situating the firm as a prominent producer of adaptations and as part of this dissertation's history of print-based adaptations.³⁴⁸ McLoughlin Brothers entered the juvenile publishing scene before the Civil War, coming to being in a moment in which children's books were considered steady sellers. Originally a partnership between two brothers, John Jr. and his younger brother Edmund, McLoughlin Bros. was officially established in the late 1850s, emerging from Elton & Company that also focused on juvenile publishing. The sons of John McLoughlin Sr., John Jr. and Edmund inherited Elton & Company, founded by McLoughlin Sr. and Robert H. Elton, an engraver and printer. After their father's and Elton's retirement, McLoughlin Jr. initially took over the business around 1854 and then made his brother, Edmund, a partner in 1855. By 1858, the firm was established as McLoughlin Brothers, which replaced the Elton & Co. imprint that McLoughlin Jr. had used for a few years. John McLoughlin also printed books solo under his imprint prior to the partnership with Edmund.³⁴⁹ McLoughlin Jr. retained the firm's original focus on printing toy books. He and his brother eventually expanded production to include board and card games, paper dolls, and blocks, an array of products that would make the McLoughlin Brothers imprint famous.

³⁴⁸ Wasowicz, "McLoughlin Brothers' Conquest of the American Picture Book Market, 1858-1920."

³⁴⁹ Wasowicz, 12. Wasowicz reports that "Between 1852 and 1853, John McLoughlin Jr. started issuing picture books on his own, announcing himself as 'a successor to Elton & Co., publisher of toy and juvenile books.'"

McLoughlin Brothers employed a few successful tactics to ensure their dominance in the publication of the juvenile toy book, to create it as an industry in itself. Such strategies included piracy (before the passage of the 1891 copyright law that would forbid such a practice) and buyouts and debt acquisition of competitors.³⁵⁰ The lack of copyright worked to their advantage as well. The catalogs reveal that the firm reproduced titles in various formats. Much of the content they recycle possesses no copyright, particularly texts rooted in the oral tradition, including fairy tales, folk tales, ballads, and nursery rhymes. Since McLoughlin Brothers did not need to contend with copyright as a commodity for purchase, the firm gained exclusivity through adaptation in the burgeoning American juvenile market, especially since the firm adapted the content to include options for colored and uncolored illustrations, using the most up to date and cutting-edge printing technologies and licensing them to protect their interests. Even when copyright might pose a barrier, common publishing practice within the United States did not always balk at the appropriation of printed material that another firm across the Atlantic produced. For instance, McLoughlin Brothers commandeered Aunt Louisa's Big Picture Book Series, one of their most heavily advertised and extensive series, from the British juvenile market.

McLoughlin Bros. sold its inventory in lots and wholesale to booksellers and other major publishers (including William H. Hill Jr. & Company, Moss & Company, and D. Appleton & Company) and other businesses that used the books for advertising purposes across the country.³⁵¹ Such an approach required a large production infrastructure bolstered by the construction of a printing factory in New York that was finished in 1872. This factory employed many participants

³⁵⁰ Wasowicz, 20.

³⁵¹ Wasowicz, 15–18.

in the production process, which according to Wasowicz, included “as many as 525 pressmen, feeders, and floor staff, as well as 75 artists.”³⁵² Upon closer inspection of the catalogs, McLoughlin Brothers created a model that could appeal to a class range of adults purchasing books for children. It also generated a large inventory in which other booksellers and publishers could select wholesale lots to suit their respective consumer bases. With this sophisticated production staff and site, efficient mechanization of printing for both textual and illustrative processes, and an established distribution circuit, McLoughlin Brothers’ network for selling children’s books and other juvenile products was wide.

McLoughlin Brothers held a special and prominent position in the juvenile market in the postbellum period. It distinguished itself further because the business focused on producing a variety of series books on a significant scale that varied from reprints to adapted verse or prose narratives, most often showcasing the inclusion of charming colored and uncolored illustrations. In her account of the McLoughlin Brothers firm and history, Wasowicz points out that the series strategy plays a pivotal role in the success of the McLoughlin Brothers firm and their establishment in the children’s picture book market.³⁵³ I would argue further that the series strategy figures particularly prominently in the production of adaptations for children. The adaptations McLoughlin Bros. produced cannot be discussed without closely examining its series.

There is not a single definition of “series,” for what, at its core, constitutes a set of related texts. Broadly speaking, series refers to a uniform group of books presented under a single title or

³⁵² Wasowicz, 22.

³⁵³ Wasowicz, 14.

collection name.³⁵⁴ It is easier to define series by the different types or forms publishers and writers create before explicating further its roles and functions as a means of publishing. The most associated idea of the book series is multivolume fiction, which constitutes what Maria Nikolajeva calls sequels or “sidequels.”³⁵⁵ These books may be written by a single author, like Martha Finley and her Elsie Dinsmore series of evangelical girlhood and Horatio Alger Jr. and his popular rags-to-riches Ragged Dick series. *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, a text examined in chapter 2, is part of a series published in the 1860s called the Riverdale Story Books, which William Taylor Adams wrote under the pseudonym Oliver Optic. Optic’s series follows the works of Jacob Abbott (Rollo and Cousin Lucy series, among others), Elizabeth Wooster Stuart Phelps (Kitty Brown series), Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward (*Gypsy Brenton* series), and Sophie May (*Little Prudy* and Dotty Dimple series), who were prolific series writers for children, beginning in the 1830s into the 1860s.³⁵⁶ Recent iterations of this form in children’s literature include the Harry Potter series, A

³⁵⁴ Series is distinctive from serialization, or the printing of serialized fiction or books as installments in published periodicals. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly*, for instance, appeared in the *National Era*, an anti-slavery newspaper, in 1851 before its publication in novel form by J.P. Jewett of Boston in 1852. Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is one novel among many in the nineteenth century that exemplifies the serialization of novels as a publishing strategy and material form of print consumption for audiences.

³⁵⁵ Maria Nikolajeva, “Beyond Happily Ever After: The Aesthetic Dilemma of Multivolume Fiction for Children,” in *Textual Transformations in Children’s Literature: Adaptations, Translations, Reconsiderations*, ed. Benjamin Lefebvre (New York: Routledge, 2013), 198.

³⁵⁶ See Deidre Johnson, “19th-Century Girls’ Series,” *19th-Century Girls’ Series*, January 2020, <https://www.readseries.com/>. for an incredible table that provides lists and commentary of nineteenth-century girls’ series. It is thanks to Johnson’s research and open-access corpus that I am even aware of the scope of early series

Series of Unfortunate Events, and Percy Jackson and the Olympians. Some multivolume fiction organized into series may not be written by a single author but are the products of several “ghost” writers under a single author pseudonym. In the nineteenth century, Goodrich used this model and employed Nathaniel Hawthorne to author contributions to the Peter Parley series.³⁵⁷ Later, the Stratemeyer Syndicate hired numerous writers to produce famous series books like Nancy Drew Mystery Stories, The Hardy Boys, and *The Bobbsey Twins* books in the twentieth century. There are multiple examples within children’s literature of this multivolume series form.

The McLoughlin Bros. inventory is full of groups of books that do not employ the multivolume fiction series form; the company relied on the series strategy most closely associated with the “publisher’s series.” John Spiers defines the publisher’s series as “a set of uniform volumes with a distinctive look, often (but not always) uniformly priced, usually comprised of titles by different authors, sequentially unified as an artistic or intellectual project by an individual and specific character described in an accompanying ‘blurb.’”³⁵⁸ The publisher’s series relevantly describes many “libraries,” collections, or groups produced and sold in the period. Publishers used

books in children’s literature. There is an additional link available in the main table that lists a comprehensive list of series books in the nineteenth century, <https://www.readseries.com/ser-19a-linkd.htm>. Johnson’s research accounts for the bulk of the work dedicated to series fiction for children prior to twentieth century counterparts. For an overview of the origins and developments of series fiction in children’s literature, see Deidre Johnson, “From Abbot to Animorphs, from Godly Books to Goosebumps: The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Modern Series,” in *Scorned Literature: Essays on the History and Criticism of Popular Mass-Produced Fiction in America*, Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture 75 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 147–65.

³⁵⁷ See Lauren Laffrado, *Hawthorne’s Literature for Children* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

³⁵⁸ John Spiers, ed., *The Culture of the Publisher’s Series: Authors, Publishers, and the Shaping of Taste*, vol. 1 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 23.

this series approach to select original works and reprint them in sets recognizable and distinctive to the imprint. Harper & Brothers of New York successfully developed this publishing process initially with Harper's Family Library, though this publisher did not generate this strategy. As Scott Casper indicates, the firm imitated several British series publications from the 1820s.³⁵⁹ Harper & Brothers then introduced other series for segmented markets, such as the Boy's and Girls' Library, targeting child readers.³⁶⁰ Other publishers imitated the series strategy and further developed the market opportunities it offered with various approaches. It even continues to be used as a strategy today.

While reprinting for publisher's series was common in nineteenth-century print culture and book production practices, publisher's series marketed for child readers, especially younger readers, deviated from strictly reprinting and opted for various iterations of adaptation.³⁶¹ In other words, publisher's series for children were not only grouped reprints advertised for a child audience. Publisher's series were also assembled collections of print-based adaptations of popular stories, folk tales, and fairytales for children. For example, the L. Prang & Company paper doll

³⁵⁹ Though not the only or first example, Casper particularly highlights John Murray's "Family Library" (first created in 1829) because Harper's Family Library was published only a year later. Harper & Brothers went so far as to borrow both the title of the series and some early volumes of the British series. See Scott E. Casper, "Case Study: Harper & Brothers," in *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840*, ed. Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley, vol. 2, *A History of the Book in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 129.

³⁶⁰ Casper, 131-32.

³⁶¹ See McGill, *Material Texts: American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853*, 3-4. McGill explains how foreign and domestic texts were printed and re-printed throughout the century by various publishing houses as a result of different cultural attitudes regarding intellectual property and loose, or non-existent, copyright laws.

books (in chapter 4) are a publisher's series featuring adapted books for children—united together by format but produced by at least two different adaptors, Lydia Very and Gustav Seitz. Similarly, *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* published by J.P. Jewett (from chapter 3) are part of a publisher's series labeled the Juvenile Anti-Slavery Toy Books, a series of abolitionist children's fiction. The McLoughlin Bros. series group together adapted stories under numerous identifiable series names. The majority of these book series are not connected by narrative sequence or expansion, nor are the books' narratives united by a single character or group of characters of a story universe.³⁶² The firm's catalogs list series after series of books that are discrete texts of original fiction and recognizable fairy tales, folk tales, nursery rhymes, poetry, and additional forms and genres.

According to Spiers, the publisher's series, compared to the other series forms, is an understudied phenomenon, including in children's literature.³⁶³ For my purposes, the publisher's series offers an opportunity to approach the adaptation process for child readers from the angle of marketing and dissemination. Series publishing operates as an essential element in the transmission and distribution of adaptations as cultural reproduction in children's literature, but series in the McLoughlin Bros. catalogs presents clues as to how its adapted books were packaged, branded, and sold to appeal to its buyers and imagined audience of child readers. Wasowicz, for instance,

³⁶² The one exception that comes to mind are series based on biblical stories. The stories may be organized around the Old Testament, New Testament, or specifically the Gospels.

³⁶³ Spiers, *The Culture of the Publisher's Series: Authors, Publishers, and the Shaping of Taste*, 1:5; 9. For instance, the gap reveals itself when book-trade studies do not index "series," even though "serial" and "part-works" may be included. The publisher's series is not entirely ignored, given existing work on individual publishing houses or specific series.

presents the strategy as a savvy way to determine price structure: the more series the firm produced, the more price points could be offered and replicated across formats (for example, colored or uncolored illustrations, unvarnished and varnished covers, and bindings). This approach made books affordable to a broader audience that encompassed both middle-class and lower-income consumers.³⁶⁴ Indeed, the data supports Wasowicz’s assertions, showing that most books sold in series sold at a retail price of fifteen cents and below (see fig. 18). As I show in the following sections, the price structure is only one element of this strategy that should be considered. With adaptation and the series strategy, the company was able to maximize the company’s success in the toy book market. McLoughlin Bros. promoted a nursery toy book brand by appropriating popular children’s literature through smart production choices. The company, in effect, upgraded the toy book format with innovative techniques in printing and illustration while still presenting cheaper options so that working-class children could afford these tokens of fantasy and wonder.

Counts of Book Prices for McLoughlin Bros. Series (1886, 1895, & 1910)

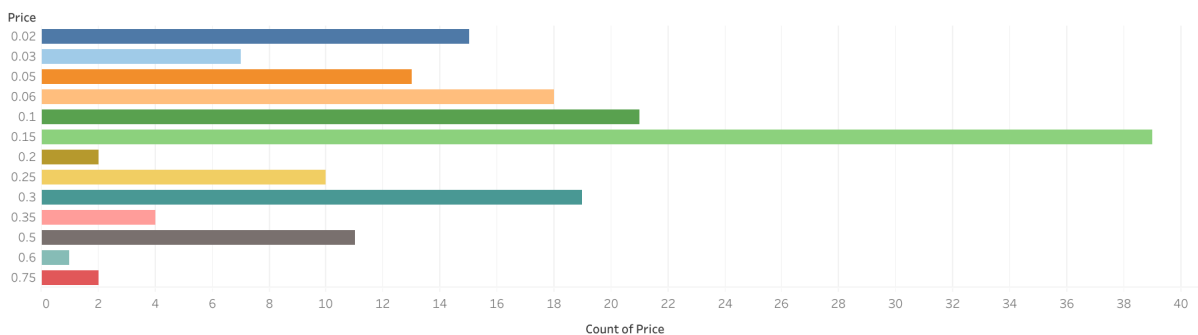


Figure 18. Series Books Prices for three catalogs (1886, 1895, and 1910).

³⁶⁴ Wasowicz, “McLoughlin Brothers’ Conquest of the American Picture Book Market, 1858-1920,” 14.

5.3 Overview of McLoughlin Bros. Trade Catalogs

The McLoughlin Bros. trade catalogs of the firm's existing archive are a treasure trove of bibliographic information. Since the firm offered such extensive detail of its inventory, I have attempted to track the toy books to reveal and quantify patterns of adaptation. I recorded the stories and categorized various aspects of series, collections, and single-volume standalone books listed in four McLoughlin Bros. catalogs for the following years: 1875-1876, 1886, 1895, and 1910.³⁶⁵ Full-text copy scans of these four catalogs were accessed digitally from the American Antiquarian Society. I focused exclusively on the toy book sections of the catalogs to collect and build the dataset, so I did not record intermedial transformations (medium shifts) of stories for puzzles, games, blocks, or paper dolls.³⁶⁶ This way, I have remained consistent with my focus on print-based adaptations. The firm provided organized lists of their inventory in the catalogs, separated from manufactured products from toy books to paper dolls, alphabet blocks, games, and other paper products like valentines. The firm often included the same list of information in the toy book sections: the book or series title, a brief blurb on the format description, and its retail price and/or gross price (see fig. 19).³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ See catalog collection website at Laura Wasowicz, "McLoughlin Bros. Collection," American Antiquarian Society, 2021, <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/mcloughlin-bros>. All four of these dates are approximate dates listed on the collection website.

³⁶⁶ There is an potential opportunity here to imagine the McLoughlin Bros. inventory as the production of transmedia in nineteenth-century children's literature.

³⁶⁷ *Catalogue of Toy Books, Paper Dolls, ABC Blocks, Games, Valentines, &c. for 1875--'76* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1875?). "Per Gross" in the 1875-1876 catalog indicates that a series would be sold to a wholesaler or bookseller



Figure 19. In the McLoughlin Bros. list of toy book inventory in the 1875-1876 catalog, each listed item typically includes a short blurb describing the material format, content, and price. *Catalogue of Toy Books, Paper Dolls, ABC Blocks, Games, Valentines, &c. for 1875--'76* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1875?).

Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

in twelve dozen packages (144 total). The Sunshine Series (linen toy book) contains six different books (*The Three Little Kittens*, *The Little Old Woman*, *The Robber Kitten*, *Sad Fate of Poor Robin*, *Story of Simple Simon*, and *Little Bo-Peep*). It was “put up in assorted dozen packages, containing two of each kind.” This “gross” package, distinctive from a “lots,” cost \$18.00. The retail price for a linen book in this series is approximately 20 cents each, as listed in the \$20, \$25, and \$50 lot packages advertised in an older catalog, which the AAS estimates was printed between 1871-1874. See McLoughlin Bros., *Publishers of Toy Books & Juvenile Books, : Manufacturers of Paper Dolls, Games, Building and ABC Blocks, Valentines, &c.* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1871-1874?). The cost would go up to 25 cents by 1875-1876.

It is unusual to come across series blurbs that omit this information.³⁶⁸ The series, collections, and single-volume standalone books are also organized in sections. The labels for these sections most often highlight a material feature, like size, covers, or pages (linen).³⁶⁹ For instance, the 1875-1876 catalog begins with a featured list of bound toy books, some of the most expensive print inventory ranging from 75 cents to \$1.50 per book. This pattern continues with other extant catalogs of the 1870s. In later trade catalogs, including 1886, 1895, and 1910, McLoughlin Bros. advertises 2-cent, 3-cent, 5-cent, 6-cent, 10-cent, and 15-cent books first with dedicated sections like “special” shaped toy books, Mother Goose, linen books, half-bound books, and clothbound books appearing later in the catalog. These latter examples are often the most expensive, beginning at twenty-five cents and costing up to \$1.50 each.

The format of the catalog scans and the lack of a universal and consistent format for the McLoughlin Bros. catalog corpus poses a challenge for data collection, especially when the blurbs possess general similarities but are not always consistent. Thus, to build a dataset, I have manually coded the book blurbs. I use four catalogs for the dataset, which yield 1,810 entries that recorded multiple elements. For each entry, I have documented the catalog date, type of book volume (a single-volume collection, a single-volume “standalone” book, or part of a multi-book series), and the “story” of each text when identifiable, rather than the title. That way, the several title permutations of a narrative like a ballad “Frog He Who Would A-Wooing Go” that appear within

³⁶⁸ It was more common for the retail price of a book not to be consistently present, possibly due to spacing issues or a typesetting error.

³⁶⁹ It appears that it varied less year to year, but more so decade to decade.

and across the four catalogs are consistently marked.³⁷⁰ In cases where an identifiable narrative is challenging to detect, I have opted for the text's title. Typically, these entries are alphabets, natural histories, individual poems, moral tales, or short story and poetry miscellany collections. Here, the category I have labeled "type" is most helpful because I can trace categories of stories: forms (e.g., fiction, poetry, opera) and genres (e.g., folk tale, fairy tale, nursery rhyme, moral tale, cautionary tale) to at least capture a sense of what kinds of content these lesser-known texts consisted of and how they might contribute to other forms and genres already reproduced by the firm. Finally, I have entered a brief format description, price, and the title attached to either the series, the collection, or the standalone toy book.³⁷¹ It is worth mentioning that one issue in using the catalogs to reconstruct this publisher's inventory is that the corpus of catalogs is technically an incomplete one. Though the company suggests in its trade materials that it released the catalog on an annual basis, I have not located a source that indicates *when* these catalogs were first released during the firm's lifespan beginning in 1858. Unfortunately, the company also did not organize its

³⁷⁰ The list of series content is not a consistently reliable indicator of title. For spacing and formatting, a typesetter made choices in some instances to abbreviate the titles. I realized these minimal discrepancies in later catalogs (1895 and 1910) because the title listed did not always match the book cover images that accompanied several of the inventory listings. Furthermore, the dataset for price remains incomplete at this time since the 1875-1876 catalog does not list retail price, only the gross price.

³⁷¹ For format descriptions, I did not go into incredible detail. I did not record whether book covers were varnished or unvarnished, for instance. I am still interested in the comparison between price per book and what material characteristics possessed more value, especially when notably advertised, and in what kinds of material formats were available as standalone books, collections, or series books. Developing a controlled vocabulary for this coding requires more time and more data from additional catalogs. Where possible, I would begin by adding a comparative catalog for each decade already represented in this dataset.

trade publication like a periodical, labeling it according to volume or issue, which could provide additional context.³⁷² The earliest catalog in the American Antiquarian Society collection is dated between 1871 and 1874, and McLoughlin Bros. appears to have regularly released annual catalogs starting in that decade through the 1930s. Any dataset created from the extant catalogs would, as a result, be fragmentary since it would not cover the firm's business activities since its establishment in 1858. However, the catalogs available for this study coincide with the period Wasowicz isolates as the company's rise and domination in the picture book market. The first catalog I include in my research, 1875-1876, follows shortly after the McLoughlin Bros. factory was built and finished. Thus by 1875, the company's production system was running to accommodate the print output advertised by the catalogs. By capping my selection of catalogs with 1910 rather than one from the 1900's decade, I attempt to see the firm's production activities after the turn into the twentieth century. In comparison to the 1903 catalog, 1910 contains a notable series like the Young Folks' Standard Library, which is not present in any other catalog available and reflects a competitive option against other firms that offered "classic" libraries or series of

³⁷² Later catalogs confuse this point slightly. For instance, much later issues of the catalog like in 1909 and 1910 include in the catalog title: "McLoughlin Brothers' Eighty-First Annual Catalogue" and "McLoughlin Brothers' Eighty-Second Annual Catalogue," respectively. The titles suggest that the trade publication has eighty previously published catalogs, one for every year of the company's existence. Falsely, these two catalogs suggest that the company had been operating since 1828 when it formed in 1858. An earlier one, the 1901-1902 catalog, is titled "McLoughlin Brothers' 53rd Annual Catalogue." The math does not add up, and clearly, the firm attempted to brand itself as a longstanding institution for additional credibility and project quality. Wasowicz points to another example of this "spurious claim," an advertisement in *Publisher's Weekly* celebrating the company's 90th anniversary in 1918. See Wasowicz, "McLoughlin Brothers' Conquest of the American Picture Book Market, 1858-1920," 26.

abridged and reprinted works.³⁷³ Using Tableau Public, I have created a series of visualizations, as demonstrated by the first figure in this chapter. The collection of charts reveals interesting decisions on the part of McLoughlin Bros.: the firm capitalizes on content recycling and the series strategy to expand wholesale and retail options and develop a brand steeped in the nostalgia and charm of sentimentalized childhood. McLoughlin Bros. held a competitive edge by effectively upgrading the toy book.

5.4 The Rise of an American Toy Book Brand

McLoughlin Bros. carefully cultivated a nursery toy book brand that featured the Mother Goose figure. With its combined fantastical and whimsical significations dating back for several centuries, this evolving figure is a centerpiece of the McLoughlin Bros. brand from which other appropriated signs of the nursery from folklore, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and fiction could complement and circulate. The figure conveniently binds these together, uniting material that would grow with infant readers into their young childhood. Historically, Mother Goose is strongly associated with the realm of childhood as the teller of nursery rhymes in an American context. Yet, like other folkloric figures, Mother Goose has undergone her own transformation in print and even

³⁷³ The earliest advertisement I have found for this publisher's series is 1905 in *Publisher's Weekly*. "McLoughlin Brothers' (Fifty-Seventh Year)," *The Publishers Weekly*, 1905, 842. These types of series appear to become the norm of series adaptation for young people in the late nineteenth century and at the turn of the twentieth century. It is a potential avenue for future study to compare against other publishers' products, including Henry Altemus Company and the Young People's Library (1895-1933).

on the pantomime stage to signify several ideas associated with fantasy, play, and humor that would accumulate and transform with each reappearance.³⁷⁴ It is worth briefly exploring this history of Mother Goose as a cultural icon because the print circulation of Mother Goose nursery rhymes within an American context and by the McLoughlin Bros. firm is only a piece of the larger puzzle that composes this age-old figure. Also, the traces of this history are reflected and, in turn, adapted by McLoughlin Bros. to suit the expanding toy book brand. Much of the publication history I present here comes from the research of Christine Jones, Donarita Vocca, and Ryoji Tsurumi. I connect the McLoughlin Bros. corpus and featured branding of Mother Goose to this long and rich history.

5.4.1 “There are now in this world, and always will be,” Mother Goose

Often depicted as an old female figure, Mother Goose appears as a granny with a long nose and a hooked chin and sits in a chair before little listeners in early nineteenth-century American publications of Mother Goose rhymes or melodies (as they were more commonly called).³⁷⁵ This image bears a slight resemblance, minus these uglier crone features, to Mother Goose’s first print appearance in the famous frontispiece of Charles Perrault’s *Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé*:

³⁷⁴ See Ryoji Tsurumi, “The Development of Mother Goose in Britain in the Nineteenth Century,” *Folklore* 101, no. 1 (1990): 28–35.

³⁷⁵ See *The Only True Mother Goose Melodies: An Exact Reproduction of the Text and Illustrations of the Original Edition Published and Copyrighted in Boston in the Year 1833 by Munroe & Francis*. (Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1906), 2.

Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye (1697).³⁷⁶ Interestingly, in Perrault's version, Mother Goose is the "teller" of the most famous fairy tales: "Sleeping Beauty," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Blue Beard," "Puss in Boots," and "Cinderella," not the sing-song nursery rhymes.³⁷⁷ The British and American association of nursery rhymes Mother Goose would come later after Perrault's tales were translated into English in the 1720s. Newbery's edition of *Mother Goose's Melody, or, Sonnets for the Cradle* (published approximately in the 1760s) solidified the figure's association with juvenile poetry and song.³⁷⁸ In print, Mother Goose à la Newbery was adopted by an American audience through a combination of print imports (reprinted and published by Isaiah Thomas and others) and literal appropriation of the figure as a "real" author with American roots. In this fabricated history, Mother Goose is Elizabeth Goose (other names include Vergoose or Vertigoose) from Boston. This widowed grandmother sang and told little songs and rhymes to her grandchildren. Noticing the delight of his children, her son-in-law Thomas Fleet supposedly published the rhymes in 1719 in the book titled *Songs for the Nursery, or, Mother Goose's Melodies for Children*. The text was rumored to have been briefly rediscovered and then "lost," but no evidence indicates that it ever existed "outside the imagination of the printer's great-grandson John Fleet Eliot" who wrote about

³⁷⁶ In English, the title translates to *Stories or Tales from Times Past; or, Tales of Mother Goose*.

³⁷⁷ See Christine Jones book for the most recent English translation of the French Perrault version. Christine Jones, *Mother Goose Refigured: A Critical Translation of Charles Perrault's Fairy Tales* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2016).

³⁷⁸ Donarita Vocca, "Mother Goose," in *Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, ed. Bernice E. Cullinan and Diane Goetz Person (New York: Continuum, 2005), http://pitt.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/kidlit/mother_goose/0?institutionId=1425.

the genesis of the rhymes and their eventual publication.³⁷⁹ Published by Munroe & Francis in 1833, Eliot's version that perpetuates the history of Mother Goose as an American, *The Only True Mother Goose Melodies, Without Addition or Abridgment: Embracing, Also, a Reliable Life of the Goose Family, Never Before Published*, attempts to claim dominance in the juvenile market in the 1830s with an authoritative version, attracting buyers and competing with other publishers' production of the nursery rhymes.³⁸⁰ Eliot's bold printing stunt reveals the value of this cultural icon. Thus, what kind of meanings were attached to the figure? How was she represented in books for children and other mediums of nineteenth-century media?

The signifiers "Mother" and "Goose" possessed connotations and ideas attached to social relations and cultural concepts of wisdom and magic that would have resonated with audiences of the nursery rhymes and fairy tales. Christine Jones echoes other scholars, noting that "the metaphor of a maternal goose and the weighty humanity of the figure in the image evoke aged female wisdom, matronly tasks, and peasant stories."³⁸¹ Ryoji Tsurumi reinforces this idea, explaining that title of "Mother," like "Dame" and "Gammer" "was a term of address for an elderly woman of the lower classes and could be used as a prefix to her surname."³⁸² If she was not represented as this grandmotherly figure, Mother Goose was rather witchy, wearing a conical brimmed hat and riding either a broom or a gander in the night sky. This fascinating representation has its roots in

³⁷⁹ Zipes et al., "Verse," 1119.

³⁸⁰ Zipes et al., 1119–20.

³⁸¹ Jones, *Mother Goose Refigured: A Critical Translation of Charles Perrault's Fairy Tales*.

³⁸² There are other "Old Mothers" that predate the first print appearance of Perrault's Mother Goose, including Old Mother Hubbard, Mother Bunch, Mother Carey, and Mother Shipton. See Tsurumi, "The Development of Mother Goose in Britain in the Nineteenth Century," 30–31.

the figure's introduction to the British pantomime stage, in Thomas Dibdin's *Harlequin and Mother Goose; or, the Golden Egg* (1806). Inserting Mother Goose into the familiar Aesop fable narrative of the goose that could lay golden eggs, the figure is taken from the chair at the fireplace and becomes a flying witch with incredible powers. As Tsurumi points out, "[Dibdin] presents Mother Goose as a witch, as is clear from the stage directions and the first scene. She raises a storm, and flies on a gander; later she raises a ghost, and there is found in her 'retreat' in 'a thick wood' 'an OWL seated on branch.'"³⁸³ This representation brings a "magical image" of a godmother-like figure in contact with a symbol of the supernatural (a witch). When transplanted to the pantomime stage, Mother Goose is a source of awe and humor.³⁸⁴ This form of Mother Goose, according to Tsurumi, becomes a dominant visual representation when chapbook producers adapt and reproduce the pantomime version in print.³⁸⁵ J.E. Evans's chapbook *Old Mother Goose, or the Golden Egg*, a fifteen-stanza narrative (1820) is probably the most popular of these versions. By the late 1850s, when the McLoughlin Bros. partners and siblings John and Edmund continued with toy book publishing begun by their father and his partner Elton, the Mother Goose figure possessed these signifiers: wise grandmother, enchanting storyteller, and comically powerful witch.

McLoughlin Bros. relied on this amalgamated cultural icon as the star of its nursery brand. It is the only narrative source or icon with a section specifically assigned for select editions of this recycled content in each of the four catalogs. Possibly as early as 1858, one of its publications of

³⁸³ Tsurumi, 28.

³⁸⁴ Tsurumi, 30.

³⁸⁵ Tsurumi, 32.

Mother Goose nursery rhymes reveals how McLoughlin appropriated these prominent Mother Goose characteristics and combined them into a single toy book that sold into the early 1870s and then into the 1880s.³⁸⁶ First, it shows that the firm recycled content from popular print culture, but it also demonstrates how they crafted their toy book inventory to reflect and contribute to the social and cultural trends of Mother Goose in the period. McLoughlin Brothers reprint Mother Goose's address to child readers from the John Fleet Eliot's "rediscovered" American Mother Goose collection, incorporating it into the publishing company's own version of the nursery rhyme collection, *Mother Goose's Melodies, with New Pictures*.³⁸⁷ Likely to avoid copyright infringement, the firm retitled the address from "HEAR WHAT MA'AM GOOSE SAYS!" to "WHAT MOTHER GOOSE HAS TO SAY FOR HERSELF." Still, the main body of the address reproduces word-for-word the Munroe & Francis material:

My dear little Friends, there are now in this world, and always will be, a great many grannies besides myself, both in petticoats and pantaloons, some a deal younger to be sure; but all monstrous wise, and all of my own family name. These old women, who never had chick nor child of their own, but who always know how to bring up other people's children, will tell you with very long faces, that my enchanting, quieting, soothing volume, my all-sufficient anodyne for cross, peevish, won't-be-comforted little bairns, ought to be laid aside for more learned books, such as *they* could select and publish. Fudge! I tell you that all their batterings can't deface my beauties, nor their wise pratings equal my wiser prattlings; and all imitators of my refreshing songs might as well write a new Billy Shakespeare as another Mother Goose: we two great poets were born together, and we shall go out of the world together!

No, no, my Melodies will never die,/ While nurses sing, or babies cry.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ It appears that the paper wrapper version from the 1850s-1870s was replaced with one that had stiff covers.

³⁸⁷ The imprint on the back paper wrapper bears the address 30 Beekman St., a location occupied between 1863 and April 1870. The retail price is listed as forty cents.

³⁸⁸ *The Only True Mother Goose Melodies: An Exact Reproduction of the Text and Illustrations of the Original Edition Published and Copyrighted in Boston in the Year 1833 by Munroe & Francis.*, 2.

The appropriation of this address plays a role in ascribing symbolic value or the cultural capital of Mother Goose nursery rhymes for child readers and auditors. It also further augments the representation of Mother Goose as a grandmotherly figure. It humanizes her as a prickly old matron, protective and proud of her nursery creations. The collection uses the figure's voice and wisdom of age to reassure the adults in the background that the nursery rhymes are indeed appropriate for little ears and eyes, suggesting that they work as a calming balm for unsettled youngsters. In an unapologetic confident tone, the voice also affirms the rhymes' relevance to childhood, boldly situating them as part of a literary, poetic canon in league with William Shakespeare, and then playfully and even arrogantly referring to Shakespeare familiarly as "Billy." The address argues for the rhymes' timelessness and tradition. At the same time, the Mother Goose speaker displays silliness ("Fudge!") and wit ("never had chick nor child") that is consistent with the meanings Mother Goose had accrued. For the rest of the toy book, McLoughlin Bros. replaces the internal content of the Munroe & Francis edition with its own collection of recycled nursery rhymes, complete with illustrations that are hand-colored in shades of yellow, blue, green, and red.

However, within its pages are additional elements that resonate with other significations the Mother Goose figure collected through its print reproduction and adaptation. The first element is two illustrations of an old woman witch figure sitting astride a gander (i.e., male goose) on both the front paper wrapper and the title page.³⁸⁹ The witch imagery of Mother Goose appears on these

³⁸⁹ See *Mother Goose's Melodies with New Pictures* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1858). The front cover paper wrapper illustration and the title page illustration may show a witch on a gander, but they illustrations contain quite a few differences in the build of the old woman character (thin versus stocky), slight variations in the dress, and dissimilar hats (captain or "Pilgrim" hat versus a soft fabric, conical-like cap).

pages and is repeated at least once in the internal content. Then the second element, Evans's verse narrative of the "Old Mother Goose and the Golden Egg," appears in this edition. The toy book brings together all of the figure's key qualities that evolved since its first print appearance in 1697. Since these signifiers of the Mother Goose figure had existed in the print and broader cultural environment, McLoughlin Bros. could conveniently connect Mother Goose as a disseminator of nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and folklore. The result is being able to cross age groups from infancy to young childhood with the material that the company reproduced. This bridging is indicative in the range of imagery used to depict Mother Goose as the firm diversified its inventory with more options for its overall brand and appeal to consumers' desires for domestic entertainment and pleasurable pastimes for children. For the younger set, Mother Goose maintained her magical whimsy but not as a witch. She is an anthropomorphized, domesticated singing goose, capable of playing the piano and dressed like a human, wearing a bonnet on her head, spectacles on her bill, and a shawl over her wings on the cover of *Mother Goose's Melodies*. Furthermore, with this icon at the head of the toy book brand, the publisher projected itself as an authority of the nursery, asserting its continued relevance as a nursery fixture for decades to come. The firm's reliance on the icon of Mother Goose is not exemplified through individual books alone. Examining its overall inventory shows how its reliance on Mother Goose as a significant component of its brand permeates its other toy book offerings.

5.5 Content Recycling in the McLoughlin Bros. Catalogs

Part of how McLoughlin Bros. reiterated and built this nursery brand with Mother Goose as its focal point was through the repetition of recycled content and the application of the series

strategy. Content recycling is an important form of adaptation and a key feature of the McLoughlin Bros. toy book production model. Content recycling appears across the toy book offerings, from series books to single-volume collections and single-volume “standalone” books that are not marketed as part of a series. I use the term recycling to signify a process of reuse, meaning that the firm produced “new” series and volumes of books with various formats (size, material, shape, and other distinctive features) but relying on reiterations of the same content to furnish the proliferation of product offerings. Recycling as reuse is distinctive from a concept of salvaging in which “waste” materials are recovered and reconstituted into usable products. This type of process might signify familiar approaches to adapted books for child audiences that salvage or rescue pre-texts from obsolescence. Adaptation, in this case, might, for instance, update the material or localize material to its “new” temporal context to assure its relevance to a new audience. I do not think that the result of McLoughlin’s toy book publishing efforts reflects salvaging purposes or the mere preservation of children’s book traditions of folklore, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes. Though preservation of these traditions is undoubtedly an effect of the adaptation processes put in place by the company’s production practices (and will be referred to later in this chapter), the recycling approach as reuse indicates more of a baldly economic calculation.

This publisher sold various adapted content, but it also specialized in offering numerous format options with book covers, colored and uncolored illustrations, book sizes, materials (linen or paper), and prices under the flexible umbrella of toy books. This kind of recycling easily multiplies the toy book offerings with slight variations in the material and format packaging, which creates a myriad of combinations that are advertised in the catalog pamphlets. As a trade provider to booksellers and other businesses across the country, McLoughlin Bros. varied the inventory as much as possible without unnecessary costs or risks with untested material. Some of the earliest

instances of tested and reliable recycling, for example, come from its first couple of decades in business as a partnership: two series that were not McLoughlin Brothers originals, Mrs. Hale's Juveniles and Dame Wonders' Series, appear in the 1875-1876 catalog. These two examples are recycled series content from other American juvenile publishers who, in turn, had appropriated the series from British competitors.³⁹⁰ Trade buyers had the option of purchasing lots of books that offered samples of multiple series, collections, and packages of the McLoughlin toy book inventory. Returning or loyal customers could also select gross packages of books according to price and format, specifically tailored to local demand. Thus, the occurrence and re-occurrence of content throughout the series and individual books produced by McLoughlin Brothers reveal a model that stretches the value of content the company already possessed, whether through commission, internal production, or piracy.³⁹¹ But what kind of content did the firm recycle? And

³⁹⁰ Mrs. Hale's Juveniles, a series of titles written by Sarah Josepha Hale (author of the nursery rhyme, "Mary Had a Little Lamb"), I came across records for the books that show that it was initially published by Edward Dunigan & Brother in New York.³⁹⁰ Robert Elton contributed wood engravings to the series when it was initially published by Dunigan, but John McLoughlin Jr. reissued it with his name as publisher in the 1850s when he assumed control of the business. Of course, by the time McLoughlin Brothers was officially operated by the brother partnership, the series of Mrs. Hale's Juveniles continued to be a staple series into the 1870s, advertised in their catalogs. Elton's original wood engravings were eventually replaced by the illustrations by J.H. Howard. Dame Wonders' Series has an even more interesting bibliographic history. The series was also published by Dunigan in New York, but it was a novelty book originally published by the London firm Dean and Munday beginning in the 1820s, except it had a longer title—Dame Wonders' Transformations. Edward Dunigan then began publishing the series in 1843 and eventually John McLoughlin published the books.

³⁹¹ See Grenby, "Before Children's Literature: Children, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Early Modern Britain," 43. He argues similarly about "reuse" but as applied to British "children's chapbooks" in the nineteenth century.

how does the series strategy reinforce that content to build the nursery toy book brand that prominently promotes Mother Goose?

McLoughlin Bros. produced an immense volume of content between the years 1875 and 1910. In my dataset, I have recorded 423 distinct stories. The firm relied upon story content to reuse across the inventory for series of toy books, single-volume collections, and single-volume “standalone” toy books. A cursory look at the catalog blurbs provides the distinct impression that the books repeat themselves in the various format and price offerings (see fig. 20). Figure 20 shows the most recycled content for all four catalogs combined, confirming that the firm relied on certain sorts of material for toy book production. To control for single records of stories, I provide a filtered visualization set at a minimum of six reuses in sum across the four catalogs. I also created individual breakdowns of the story count by catalog, and these reveal the trends of which stories remain top competitors in the toy book market (see Appendix A, figs. A1-A4). At the top of the charts, “Mother Goose” is the most recycled content for the company’s toy book stock.³⁹²

Grenby asserts that “it made no economic sense to commission authors to produce new texts, no (in general) illustrators to produce new images. Pirating recent children’s books was one possibility, but another was to reuse the traditional texts and familiar cuts that had been in circulation, and enjoyed by children, for decades.” The difference for McLoughlin Bros. is that they not only appropriated and reprinted dissolved publisher’s toy book series (like Elton & Co. or Edward Dunigan and Brother), but they reused material that was created by the firm itself, replicating it in various formats, sometimes with updates of new illustrations or other material features.

³⁹² The only exception is the 1875-1876 catalog. The difference is minimal. Cock Robin is at the top of the chart (16 times) versus Mother Goose in a close second (15 times).

Story Count By Catalog Year

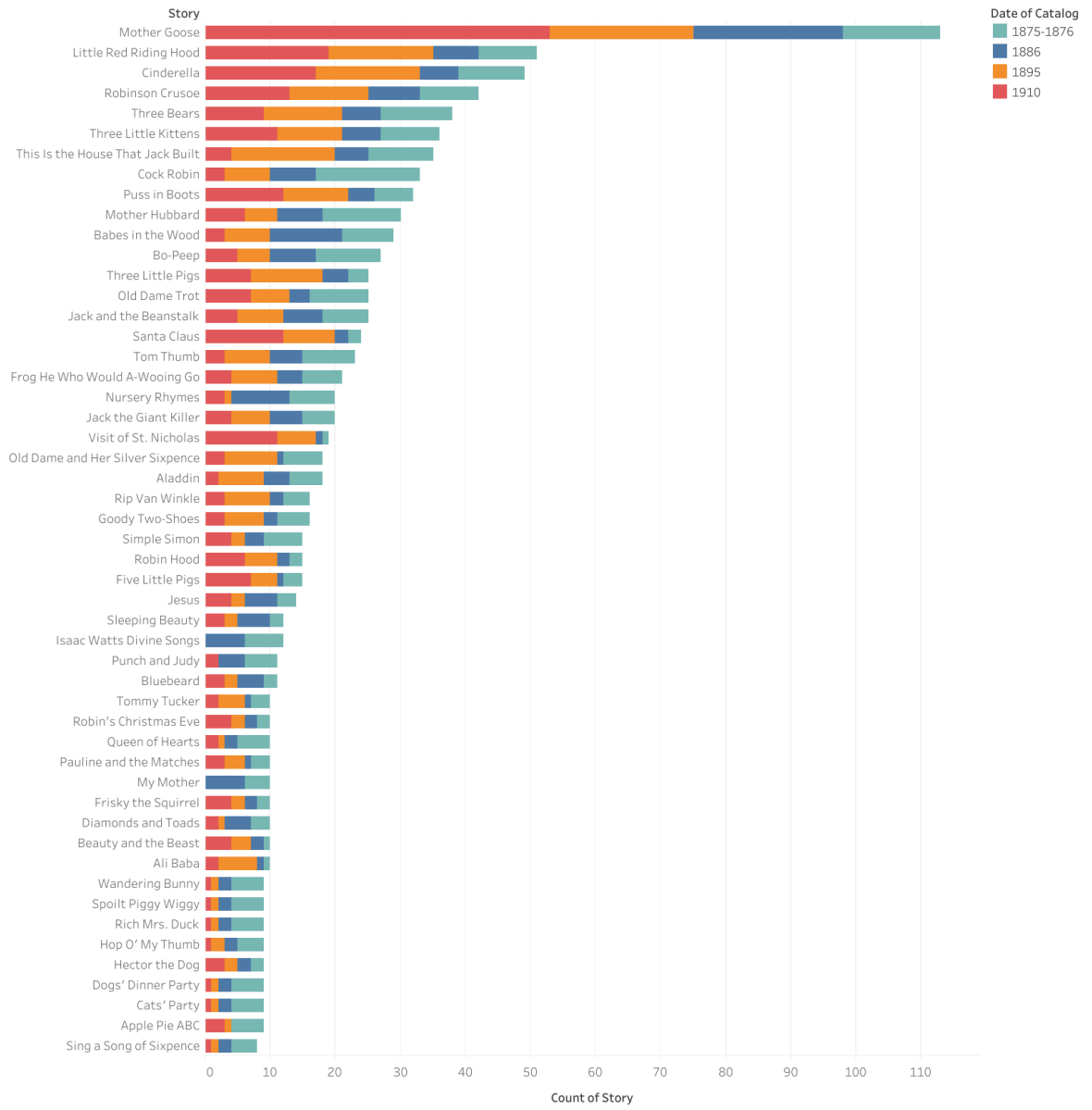


Figure 20. Most recycled story content in 1875-1876, 1886, 1895, and 1910 catalogs.

In many cases, the stories are recognizable to contemporary audiences, reflecting the common characters of the Mother Goose nursery rhyme cast like “Mother Hubbard,” the “Three Kittens,” and “Bo-Peep.” Other standouts are “Cock Robin,” “This Is the House That Jack Built,” and “Babes in the Wood.” Three are popular nursery rhymes and a ballad, dating back to the eighteenth-century chapbook publishing tradition. Nursery rhymes make up most of the content recycling for the firm, and it is a prime feature of the four catalogs (see fig. 21).

Another recycling trend is the use of fairy tale and folk tale figures including “Aladdin,” “Cinderella,” “Jack and the Beanstalk,” “Jack the Giant Killer,” “Puss in Boots,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” and the “Three Bears” (which some might refer to as the tale of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”). Combined with other fairy tale narratives by authors like the Brothers Grimm, Madame d’Aulnoy, and Alfred Crowquill, fairy tales make up a considerable portion of the toy book contents, which dovetails nicely with Mother Goose as a featured aspect of the toy book brand because she can stand in readily as a teller of rhymes and fairy tales.

Type Count by Catalog Year

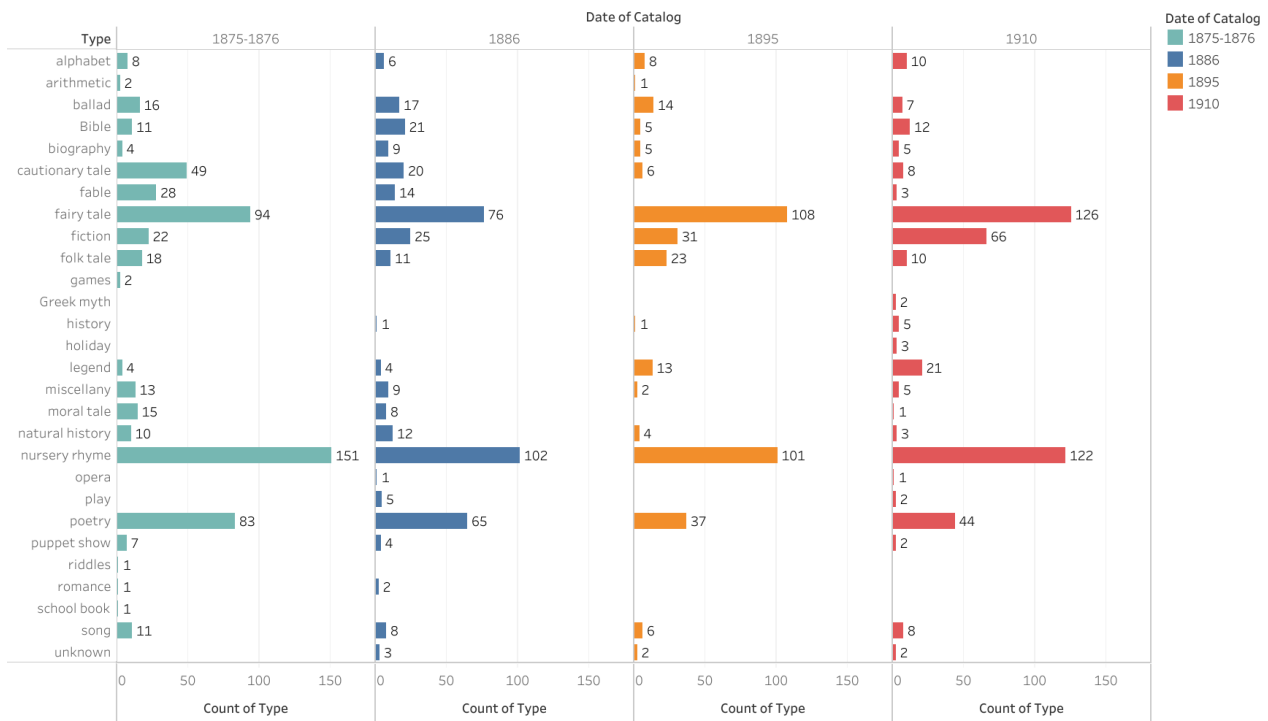


Figure 21. Most reproduced forms and genres in four catalogs.

Fiction is steadily represented across the four catalogs, often featuring characters that assume heroic roles and are rewarded for their virtue. The most recycled novel character is the shipwrecked sailor Robinson Crusoe, and this story maintains that position in the four catalog years, combined as well as for each individual catalog year. *Gulliver's Travels* appears on an extended list of recycled material as well (not listed in fig. 20), but that material is recycled less than "Robinson Crusoe." Both narratives are, at a basic level, seafaring adventures to exotic lands, but *Robinson Crusoe* has the adaptable edge, at least in the American context. It is transformed in a variety of ways. For instance, the "Robinson Crusoe" story appears as a shape book (his goatskin hat and fur clothes make for a fascinating and detailed shape figure), a one-syllable book (a reimagined early reading book that adapts one-syllable literature as compelling fiction reading), and a variety of toy book editions from heavily abridged, retold versions to a short ditty in a

compiled collection of nursery rhymes. Washington Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle” and the story “Goody Two-Shoes” contribute to the overall number of fiction content.

The legendary “Robin Hood” and jolly “Santa Claus” are another set of recycled regulars, both categorized under the “legend” type (see fig. 21 above). “Robin Hood” regularly appears in series with “Robinson Crusoe” content. The increase in “Santa Claus” stories especially possessed an appeal as a symbol of the holiday season, which crystalized as a national holiday through the 1850s and 1860s. But even this data is only a partial view of the material dedicated to the holiday season. For instance, the reproduction of “A Visit of St. Nicholas,” also known as “The Night Before Christmas” poem (1823) by Clement Clarke Moore, is recycled (reprinted) material, especially for the 1895 and 1910 catalogs.³⁹³ Both Santa Claus and “A Visit of St. Nicholas” appear in the top ten most recycled stories for 1910. Like Mother Goose, Santa Claus and iterations of the merry folk figure functioned as powerful imagery for its toy book brand and a fitting character to blend with its other mainstays. Sometimes quite literally. For example, Santa Claus, the folk character, enters the nursery rhyme universe with Bo-Peep and Little Boy Blue in an oversized shape book with a colorful chromolithographed design on glazed paper.

Illustrator and author Elizabeth “Lizzie” Lawson wrote and illustrated *Bo-Peep and Little Boy-Blue* (1894), a narrative mash-up that combines two traditional nursery rhymes through rhyme and prose. At the beginning of the book, the reader is transported to “Golden Land,” where Bo-

³⁹³ “Visit of St. Nicholas” is categorized under poetry in the dataset. For more on the creation of the Santa Claus figure in the nineteenth century in children’s literature, see Ruth K. MacDonald, “Santa Claus in America: The Influence of ‘The Night Before Christmas,’” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1983): 4–6. Also, for “The Social Role of Santa Claus,” see James Harwood Barnett, *The American Christmas: A Study in National Culture* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1954), 24–48.

Peep and Little Boy Blue play together as friends. The plot involves the two children falling asleep after blowing on a magical horn that plays them a lullaby. Their slumber proves a mistake because Bo-Peep's sheep and Boy Blue's cow escape without their notice. The two children fail to mind the livestock, a task assigned to them by their parents. The narrative takes an amusing turn when it then incorporates Santa Claus, who takes the sheep and cow to "teach Bo-Peep/ Not to fall asleep,/ And as for little Boy-Blue/I'll give him a lesson too."³⁹⁴ Once the children awake to find their animals missing, they embark on a journey with Truthful Ali, a servant of Santa Claus, to retrieve the sheep and cow. The story ends with the children eventually retrieving the animals. In *Bo-Peep and Little Boy Blue*, Santa Claus is represented as a trickster figure rather than occupying the expected gift-giver role, but his inclusion reflects the magic and flexible quality of other McLoughlin Bros. inventory.

Santa Claus's appeal and his incorporation into the story may have been surprising (as it was for me as a reader) to see him participate in amusing antics. Meshing Santa Claus into the overall products as a regular feature reframed the figure as a fixture of childhood and not singularly a seasonal holiday enjoyment. Also, not unlike the brand appeal of the famous and popular magazine *St. Nicholas* (1873-1941), using representations of Santa reflected on the McLoughlin Bros. as a commercial source for gift-giving. Toy books and their eye-catching formats were supposed to make attractive presents for children.³⁹⁵ Representations of Santa Claus produced by the McLoughlin Bros. would even feature Santa Claus on the front cover of trade catalogs.³⁹⁶ The

³⁹⁴ Lizzie Lawson, *Bo-Peep and Little Boy-Blue* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1894).

³⁹⁵ MacDonald, "Santa Claus in America," 5.

³⁹⁶ *Season 1901-1902: McLoughlin Bro's 53rd Annual Catalogue* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1901).

trends in content recycling remain consistent, but even these separate designations do not reveal how particular texts in the McLoughlin Bros. stock combine these aspects in a single toy book, as *Bo-Peep and Little Boy Blue* demonstrate. Another approach used by the publisher relies upon the series strategy to fix these narratives, forms, and genres together as cohesive groups.

5.5.1 Content Recycling: Series Strategy

The publisher’s reuse of content extends to the series strategy in a few different approaches. Like the previous section, similar patterns of what is recycled by the publisher become clear once content narratives are recorded and traced from catalogs to catalogs (see fig. 22).

Series Books Story Count By Catalog Year

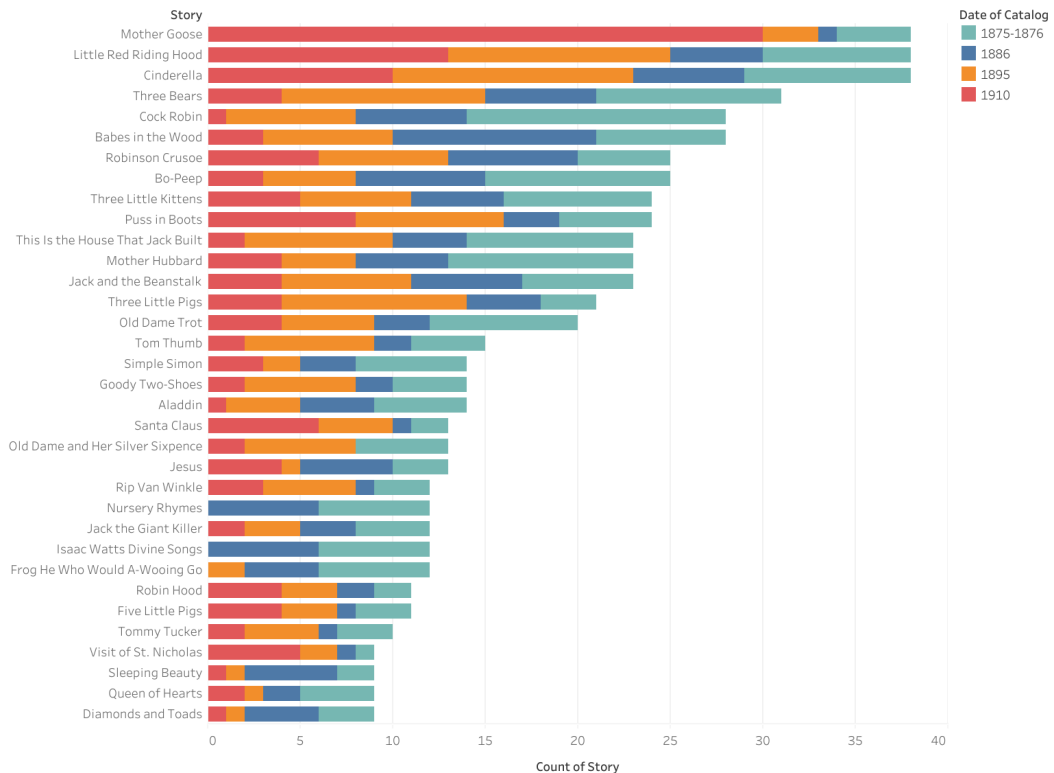


Figure 22. Most recycled content in series books advertised in four catalogs.

The figure lists thirty-four distinct stories or narratives, and twelve of those are related to and are part of the nursery rhyme tradition. “Mother Goose” again tops the chart for the series books overall. Most of the material is produced in the 1910 catalog, and this difference from previous years indicates a shift to increase “Mother Goose” nursery offerings in the series structure in addition to the single-volume collections most often advertised in the “Mother Goose” sections of the previous catalog years. “Mother Goose” also shares the same number count of reproduced content with “Cinderella” and “Little Red Riding Hood,” both of which have a more even distribution between the four surveyed catalogs. Otherwise, these rankings reflect very closely the count of repeated or recycled stories for all four catalogs’ toy book inventory (multi-book series, single-volume collections, and single-volume standalone books) (see fig. 23).

Series Books Type Count by Catalog Year

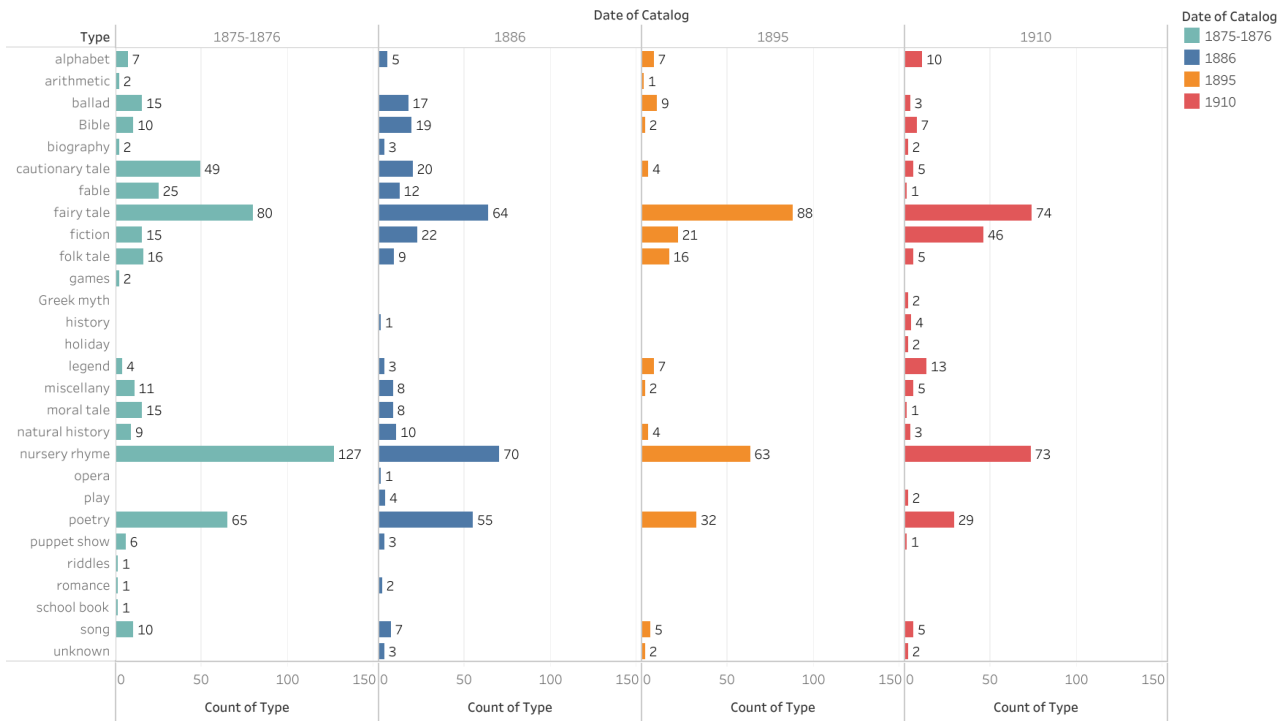


Figure 23. The types of forms and genres recycled in the series books in four catalogs.

The data possibly bears this consistency because 1) the series books make up the majority of the inventory, and 2) the series books with the collections of single-volume toy books advertised often mirror each other (see Appendix A for charts breaking down the volume structure for each catalog year). In a sense, the recycling is stretched to create individual and multiple texts for a single series, or, vice versa, a series is condensed to comprise a single-volume collection. Adaptation takes on a new efficiency when it cannot only reiterate but multiply in its reproduction. From an economic and commercial standpoint, reproduction and transformation via recycling may look like new book sizes, a certain number or exclusion of colored illustrations (and in what style: hand-colored, oil colors, etc.), and perhaps different types of covers and cover embellishments. The material transformations and combinations are numerous. As a result, different price points are available depending on the cost of materials and labor necessary to produce the toy books; yet, they often use the same base content. Let's walk through an example, the Aunt Lulu Series, which shows how a single series can reflect multiple format options and price points.

Aunt Lulu's Series, a set of 6 books with printed colored wrappers, was also concurrently offered in the same 1875-1876 catalog in a "mammoth" octavo size book comprised of ninety-six pages and 200 pictures. A dozen of these books sold by the dozen at \$12.00. The retail price would have been at least over a whole dollar, approximately. With "stiff board covers" and illustrations "printed in oil colors," *Aunt Lulu's Story Book* was the more expensive option than an individual book in the series. In a catalog approximately dated between 1871 and 1874, Aunt Lulu's Series books were sold for twenty cents per book.³⁹⁷ McLoughlin Bros. repeats processes like this with

³⁹⁷ *McLoughlin Bros., Publishers of Toy Books & Juvenile Books, : Manufacturers of Paper Dolls, Games, Building and ABC Blocks, Valentines, &c.*

another series, Aunt Louisa's Big Picture Books, the largest series collection in the catalog with fifty books in the 1875-1876 catalog year. Not only was this series offered alternatively in the linen format, but the firm also produced multiple collection editions bearing Aunt Louisa's label, including *Aunt Louisa's Oft Told Tales*, *Aunt Louisa's Wee-Wee Stories*, *Aunt Louisa's Fairy Legends*, *Aunt Louisa's Little Treasure*, and *Aunt Louisa's Child Delight*. This series and its assembled single-volume collections remain a catalog fixture in the 1886 catalog. By 1895, the series is scaled back significantly: only twelve books in the series are advertised with no collections. Even though the series does not play a significant role in the toy book inventory from the 1890s into the twentieth century, the content narratives recycled remain relevant in other series and collections during these decades. Examples include fairy tales like "Little Red Riding Hood," "Puss in Boots," "Cinderella," and fiction like "Robinson Crusoe," "Rip Van Winkle," and "Goody Two-Shoes." But Aunt Louisa's Big Picture Books' relevance lessens when other parts of its content like the ballads "Babes in the Wood" and "Frog He Who Would A-Wooing Go," moral tales, and poetry ("My Mother") lose significance within the competitive juvenile market. As shown in figure 6, ballads, fables, and moral tales reduce significantly by the 1910 catalog. Thus, it is phased out and replaced with others. The firm invests, for instance, in a couple of sections that distinctly advertise format: the Special Toy Book, which is a set of shape books created by the die-cut process, and the royal quarto toy books. Both promote full scale and, in some cases, shaped books and covers, advertising new illustrative printing processes and a new lithographic department. The data that focuses on content recycling demonstrates how the firm adapts to the cultural environment when demand for certain genres like moral tales lessened and produced others that emphasize the publisher's strengths in innovations in printing and illustration. Another

way of seeing these changes and how the publisher reinforces its brand as a hallmark of the nursery is to look closely at the firms' series labeling.

5.6 Series Labels: Promoting Content, Format, and Price

As shown in the four catalogs, McLoughlin Bros. brings together material and textual transformations under multiple series labels, which function to unite specific qualities associated with the publisher's recycled content and multiple formats. Series labeling enhances the nursery brand for McLoughlin Bros. toy books and closely mirrors the narrative recycling. The dataset comprises 220 series: fifty-six series in the 1875-1876 catalog, fifty series in 1886, fifty-three series in 1895, and sixty-one series in 1910. For each series, I have categorized each series with a descriptive label, listed below (see table 1), to isolate themes and concepts that each series name might represent. The goal was to locate commonalities between titles given certain keywords used that might point to "light" like "Bright Thoughts" and "Golden Light Series" or age with "Our Baby's Series" or "Young Folks' Series."

Table 1. List of labels assigned to toy book series in McLoughlin Bros. Catalogs.

Label				
Author	Character	Format	Aunt	Religion
Illustrator	Holiday	Old woman	Fairy tale	Father
Domestic	Animal	Light	Classic	Pleasure
Age	Mother	Nature	Woman	Uncle

Series Labels by Catalog Year

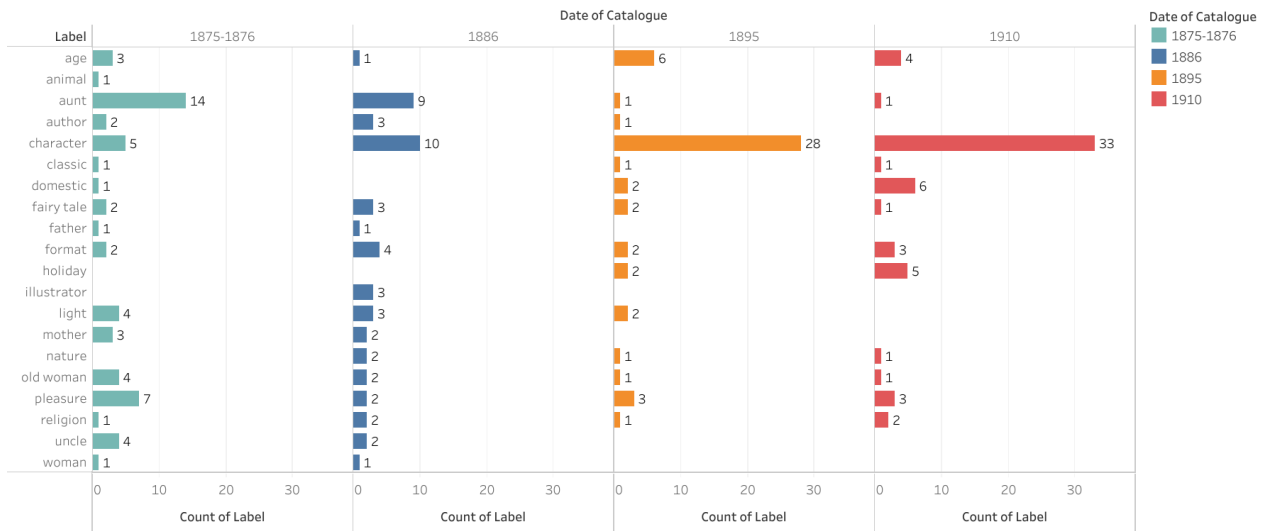


Figure 24. Categorized labeling for the 220 total series in the 1875-1876, 1886, 1895, and 1910 catalogs.

Series labeling plays a role in adapting the nursery toy book brand throughout the decades of McLoughlin Bros (see figure 24 above). It is also used to reflect the company’s continual innovation in toy book production with illustration and printing techniques that systemized its contribution to children’s literature as an adaptation producer. The *Aunt Louisa* model discussed earlier is a useful example to start with here. The use of aunt as a series label significantly reduces between the 1886 and 1895 catalogs. This trend, in turn, affected its other inventory that is condensed and expanded between series and collections. Collections also sold in the 1895 and 1910 catalogs tend to lean towards titles that omit the aunt label. The collections possess titles like *Echoes from Storyland*, *Heroes from Fairyland*, *Wonderland Stories*, *Old Nursery Stories*, and *Our Baby’s Book*. A few titles identify popular fairy tale authors, including Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm and, much more frequently, the collections name “Mother Goose” and “Santa Claus.” Fairy tale and fictional escape are essential elements for the

McLoughlin Bros. toy book brand. The illustrations of these toy books cast a spotlight on the magic the characters either experience or reflect.

McLoughlin Bros. noticeably does not attract too much attention to authors or illustrators. In a few instances, the author or illustrator are labeled on the title of the series as is the case for the following: *Aesop's Fables in Words of One Syllable* (author), *Crowquill's Fairy Tales* (author), *Dr. Watt's Divine and Moral Songs* (author), *Grimm's Fairy-Tale Series* (author), *Shakespearean Tales in Verse* (author), Caldecott Series (illustrator), and *Greenaway Mother Goose Series* (illustrator).³⁹⁸ In the book or series blurbs, an author or illustrator may be mentioned. Innovators in the one-syllable book genre, Mary Godolphin and Josephine Pollard, are occasionally attributed as the one-syllable book authors for several of the texts published, likely to distinguish between imitators and the “real” material McLoughlin Bros. published under its imprint. They are the only adapters that come to mind that are recognized in the catalogs to attract the attention of potential trade buyers. But cautionary tale writer Heinrich Hoffman is omitted from any reference to the Slovenly Peter series and toy books reproduced and adapted by McLoughlin Bros despite publishing significant numbers of Anglo-American versions of Hoffman's *Struwwelpeter* books.³⁹⁹ C.E. (Charlotte Elizabeth) Bowen or C.E.B. is often not listed in the blurbs either as the

³⁹⁸ Dr. Watts' Divine Songs and Morals series are printed in the 1875-1876 and 1886 catalogs. The Caldecott Series appears in two formats (toy book and half-bound book) in the 1886 catalog. In total, the author and illustrator labels accounts for 9 series across the four catalogs. These series represent approximately four percent of the 220 total series surveyed.

³⁹⁹ See Walter Sauer, “*Struwwelpeter* Naturalized: McLoughlin Imprints of *Slovenly Peter* and Related Books,” *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 62, no. 1 (2000): 16–30. These books are printed in the series Slovenly Peter Series that appear in the 1875-1876 and 1886 catalogs in addition to *Struwwelpeter*-related stories. Sauer traces these

author of recycled poems, “Hector the Dog,” “Frisky the Squirrel,” and “Robins’ Christmas Eve,” verse content typical of several of the Christmas, holiday-themed series. This lack of attribution and lack of respect for copyright earned McLoughlin Bros. its notorious status of book piracy. The firm clearly favors promoting an image with figures associated with wonderment rather than creators’ intellectual and artistic productions.

The most common way, then, for McLoughlin Bros. to distinguish the toy book series is to rely on character labeling, which is the application of recognizable characters to the series titles (see table 2). The publisher selected a character from a toy book narrative represented in the series and used that to name the entire collection. Characters chosen by McLoughlin Bros. producers reinforce fantasy and wonder elements that the firm regularly reproduces and recycles. Unsurprisingly, Mother Goose dominates by far as the most used character label, an attractive and consistent icon with national and timelessness status for the series books and the overall toy book inventory. Then, there are at least seven more nursery rhyme character labels, solidifying inventory selections as marketed for younger ages. The nursery rhyme characters like Bo-Peep, Cock Robin, Dame Trot, Kitten, and Little Pig only emerge with the 1895 catalog. The group to reappear in 1910 are Cock Robin, Dame Trot, Jack and Jill, Kitten, and Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe. The nursery rhyme series options are expanded even further beyond the Mother Goose offerings.

origins. Individual Heinrich stories are absorbed into other series (e.g., Little Red Riding Hood series) and collections (*Echoes from Storyland*) in later catalog years (1895 and 1910), especially the story “Pauline and the Matches.”

Table 2. Character labels for seventy-six toy book series in McLoughlin Bros. catalogs.

Character Labeling	# of Series
1. Mother Goose	22
2. Slovenly Peter	5
3. Cock Robin	5
4. Kitten	5
5. Little Pig	4
6. Cinderella	4
7. Santa Claus	3
8. Little Red Riding Hood	3
9. Topsy	2
10. Robinson Crusoe	2
11. Robin Hood	2
12. Dame Trot	2
13. Hop O' My Thumb	2
14. Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe	2
15. Yellow Dwarf	2
16. Peter Prim	2
17. White Cat	1
18. Jack and Jill	1
19. Bo-Peep	1
20. Red Rose	1

21. Little Red Hen	1
22. Aladdin	1
23. Jack and the Beanstalk	1
24. Gulliver	1
25. Punch and Judy	1

After Mother Goose, the character labels are more evenly distributed. The characters from fiction titles like Topsy from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Robinson Crusoe, Rip Van Winkle, and Lemuel Gulliver present interesting options given that these are four characters from three novels and one short story. They also are incorporated into series and sold along with other inventory that primarily leans towards little readers and the nursery, a domestic site in the middle and upper classes separated and protected from the harsh realities of the tenement or factory floor.⁴⁰⁰ This content and character labeling contribute to the publisher’s brand with clear associations with immersions in fantasy, adventure, and, in some cases, whimsy.

⁴⁰⁰ Age is another relevant series label because it emphasizes and imagines an audience of infants and young children for its products. Series titles that recognize or summon little readers include, Our Baby’s Series, Little Dot’s Series, and Little Folk’s Series. Indeed, diminutive titles comes into play with several of the series that are not necessarily reflective of an infant, toddler, or young child but are certainly suggestive. These series include Little Bright Thought Series, Little Delights, Little Fairy Series, Little Linen Series, Little Pig Series, Little Pleasewells, Little Red Hen Series, Little Slovenly Peter, and even Hop O’ My Thumb Series. Hop O’ My Thumb, or *Le petit Poucet*, meaning Little Tom Thumb, is one of the original tales from Charles Perrault’s fairy tale collection *Histoires ou Countes du Temps Passé*. All of these titles share the word “little” in its titles. Except for series books that were mounted on linen or printed on linen, the “little” series books generally have a retail price of two, five, or six cents each, so the series

Like other nineteenth-century publishers producing material for the juvenile market, McLoughlin Bros. appropriates the narratives *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travel*, and the tale of Robin Hood for adaptation. Another character welcomed into the fold is Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle, a character appearing in a short story bearing the name of this folk figure. "Rip Van Winkle" first appeared in *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-1820) as a short fiction piece, featuring the story of old man Rip Van Winkle who falls asleep in the magical Catskill Mountains for twenty years. When he wakes up, he returns to his home village a stranger, and he realizes the rule of the British monarchy has ended given the American Revolution took place. Reunited with his adult daughter, Rip Van Winkle reconnects with the village, becoming an elder telling tales of pre-Revolution life. The adaptation of these stories typically follows abridgment or versification. Notably, the processes do not reflect the gatekeeping strategies of prior adaptations analyzed in this dissertation that emphasize the initiation and supervision of child readers into "productive" reading protocols.

McLoughlin Bros.' *Gulliver's Travels in the Kingdom of Lilliput* (1886) exemplifies the strategy to condense and simplify eighteenth-century irregular syntax or unfamiliar vocabulary for the shorter toy book format and its implied younger, "nursery" reader audience. The toy book focuses on part one of Jonathon Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. It clearly shows evidence of abridgment in which prose is directly lifted (ranging from specific word choices, phrases, and even

labels may not only identify the content as suitable for younger children but also the size and cost of the book. For the series books that are printed with more expensive materials like the linen format of The Little Folks' Series, the books' littleness is captured by the age group the books are marketed for and the book's size. Linen books and books mounted on linen were costly to produce. These books, which could stand up to very young children handling its soft pages, costs from twenty cents to thirty cents each.

in some cases complete sentences or paragraphs) from Swift's travel narrative and satirical novel, which is then transplanted into the toy book.⁴⁰¹ But abridgment for the shorter toy book form also reveals how portions of the narrative are condensed, removing details or events from the adaptation.

Pre-text contents excised from this edition are details that may be considered crude or inappropriate for younger readers: excreting bodily waste in the Lilliput's temple and on the Lilliputian rulers' palace to put out a fire; several, though not all, alcohol references; and the Lilliputians laughter at Gulliver's indecent exposure from well-worn, damaged britches. These examples together transgress taboos associated with the regulation of the body, violating norms of decency.⁴⁰² Removing these details qualifies for meeting the threshold of appropriateness, but their elimination also reflects the adaptive shift from incisive political and social satire to imaginative adventure. The print-based adaptation of the McLoughlin Bros. *Gulliver's Travels in the Kingdom of Lilliput*, I would argue, does not push the boundary of social constraints in the most shocking means possible, as Swift attempts to do with the novel. Yet, censoring for violence or unruliness does not appear to be a clear-cut motivation. The firm incorporated into its brand adaptations of

⁴⁰¹ An event or episode from each chapter is represent in the adaptation, with the exception of chapter six, "Of the Inhabitants of Lilliput; their Learning, Laws, and Customs, the Manner of Educating their Children. The Author's Way of living in that Country. His Vindication of a great Lady."

⁴⁰² For more on adaptations for children of *Gulliver's Travels* with a specific focus on censoring bodies and excrement, see Jackie E. Stallcup, "Inescapable Bodies, Disquieting Perception: Why Adults Seek to Tame and Harness Swift's Excremental Satire in Gulliver's Travels," *Children's Literature in Education* 35, no. 2 (2004): 87–111. Apparently, this kind of censorship was not limited to children's editions, but other "adult" editions (likely implying a mixed-age audience).

texts present in popular culture, like the song “Ten Niggers More,” and Americanized versions of Heinrich Hoffman’s *Struwwelpeter* stories in the Slovenly Peter books. Thus, the toy book presents the voyage to Lilliput more as a fictional fantasy or curiosity akin to the adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe*, which also figures Crusoe’s adventure and island as an object of exotic interest. The removal of those details is a preferred social choice, yet the result still yields an engaging travel narrative to a new, curious land through the first-person perspective of Gulliver (as Swift initially constructs it in the pre-text version).

5.6.1 “Find their way straight to fairyland”: Distinguishing the McLoughlin Bros. Brand

In other adaptations covered in this study, imaginative immersion is to be avoided or limited for child readers in favor of a didactic reading mode. This mode poses too much of a threat of transgression or resistance to cultivating the embodied cultural capital necessary to reproducing middle-class norms and values. In chapter 2, the term “dreaming” was applied to both child misreaders Robert and Marian as a means to highlight their “unproductive” engagement with Defoe’s and Bunyan’s novels. Nearing the end of the century, this kind of immersion in which children may imaginatively engage the narrative does not bear the same sources of anxiety and fear.⁴⁰³ While the paper doll shape books in chapter 4 function as a bridge between negotiating didactic reading and fantasy play, immersive storytelling would not be wholly embraced as a cultural norm for children’s writing until later in the century.

⁴⁰³ For more on the culture of bedtime stories, dreaming, and reading, see “Coda.” Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America*, 171–76.

Indeed, Lewis Carroll's own adaptation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), titled *The Nursery "Alice"* (1889), bears traces of this shift within a couple of decades. As Hannah Field points out about the adaptation's gorgeous cover artwork, which reflects a dreaming Alice, lying under a tree and next to an open book, "Alice's dream is private, the result of her own silent reading, whereas in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* the dream occurs as Alice sits beside a reader, her sister."⁴⁰⁴ Absent of an authority figure or mediator, Alice engages in the book, and her dreams fill the page with the story's most intriguing creatures (pictured above her, prostrate form on her dream cloud). The text bears no correction or chiding for this indulgence. Nor is this scene treated with anxiety. It is romanticized as an ideal and embraced for the nursery readers (ages 0-5) that Carroll identifies as the implied audience in the adaptation's preface "Addressed to Any Mother."⁴⁰⁵ This pivot to value immersion in storytelling without privileging didacticism via adaptation is reflected by other players in the cultural economy of adaptation for a juvenile market after 1860.

Selecting such stories as the main attraction for the series itself is consistent with McLoughlin Bros. competitors. While McLoughlin Bros. distinguishes itself as a toy book producer that adapts and reproduces familiar and culturally valued numerous narratives, other publishers of the juvenile market compete in the print market of fairy tales, folk tales, nursery rhymes, and cautionary tales. Author and editor Clara Doty Bates produced a single-volume collection that adapts multiple stories (most often in verse) that reflect many of the selections in the McLoughlin Bros. inventory. Published by D. Lothrop and Company, Bates's *Child Lore: Its*

⁴⁰⁴ Field, *Playing with the Book*, 34.

⁴⁰⁵ Lewis Carroll, *The Nursery "Alice,"* People's Edition (London: MacMillan and Co., 1889).

Classics, Traditions, and Jingles (1879) positions itself as an escape for little readers. In the “Preface,” Bates draws her readers into the text: “in dim corners secret doors are opened, and wonderland is spread before our eyes. That land, we know, is the one where people wear wishing-caps, invisible cloaks, shoes of swiftness, swords of sharpness; where Aladdin’s lamp is in every hand, and a magic carpet is ready at any instant to take passengers round the world for an airing.”⁴⁰⁶ Bates cleverly summons the anatomy of the book and maps the pages’ content on the imagination of the child reader. With reference to Aladdin’s magic carpet, she begins to construct a fanciful geography for child readers to traverse. Also, note that “Aladdin” is not the only story referenced in this preface. Bates summons several characters that serve as labels for McLoughlin Bros. series books, including Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Robinson Crusoe, and Jack and the Bean Stalk, showing that this content and the approach of adaptation is not unique to McLoughlin Bros. *Child Lore*, however, was advertised as a gift book, costing three dollars. An advertisement in *Publisher’s Weekly* states that *Child Lore* is “the most Unique and Elegant Child’s Book ever issued in America,” so clearly Bates’s book appeals to a more expensive consumer class.⁴⁰⁷ While McLoughlin Bros. fits within other publishing trends by their competitors, the New York firm’s clear advantage is the variety of formats, prices, and content choices. Inviting children to “find their way straight to fairyland” is part of the brand McLoughlin Bros. builds with the character labels in addition to the reproduction of content associated with it.

⁴⁰⁶ Clara Doty Bates, *Child Lore: Its Classics, Traditions, and Jingles* (Boston, Mass: D. Lothrop & Co., 1879).

⁴⁰⁷ “Elegant and Satisfactory Gift-Books for Everybody,” *The Publisher’s Weekly*, 1879.

5.7 Access to Cultural Capital

The McLoughlin Brothers adaptation system elevates content that had long been advertised, produced, and associated with lower-class consumers of the chapbook and toy book formats of prior decades. Chapbooks were cheap: from the paper they were printed on to the crude woodcut illustrations they reproduced. Yet, they appealed to children across socioeconomic backgrounds. Writing against arguments that the “new” didactic children’s literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries supplanted the plebian chapbook tradition, M.O. Grenby insists that the evolution of the chapbook “form...indicates the continuing engagement of children, even affluent children, with popular literature even after the emergence of a distinct literature for children...The new children’s literature, in other words, did not immediately supplant popular literature in children’s lives, nor suddenly sever children’s connections with chapbook literature.”⁴⁰⁸ The toy book, a term interchangeably used with “chapbook” in the United States, similarly endured. The supply did not slow, showing that the material production and the cultural reproduction of recycled content did not stop. McLoughlin Bros. expanded and upgraded it.

McLoughlin Bros. toy books adapt the chapbook tradition, appealing to and reflecting the ideals of middle- and upper-class childhood using material of popular culture. The firm capitalizes on the popularity of the material content and the cheaper manufacturing costs of the format itself, at least for some material price points (not all). McLoughlin Bros. continues with a time-tested approach to sell content focused on adapted folk tales, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and fiction, among other genres, including cautionary and moral tales. McLoughlin Bros. succeeded with a

⁴⁰⁸ Grenby, “Before Children’s Literature: Children, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Early Modern Britain,” 43.

well-established practice of toy book production and excelling in its reach to broaden a consumer base with the diverse price structure. Recycling the content and using the savvy series strategy with its complementary labeling made the approach economically possible and lucrative.

Such an audience expansion affects how adaptations for children constitute cultural capital. Indeed, competing adapted children’s editions from chapters 2 and 3 frame literature popular with child readers to restrict and supervise reading consumption and interpretation. McLoughlin Bros. and the strategies used to multiply series and book product options provide access to the cultural capital of the middle-class and upper-class nurseries. The adapted toy books created by McLoughlin Bros. then were not only intended for privileged precious tikes. Middle and upper-class consumers likely remained the most common buyers and audience members of the McLoughlin Bros. brand, given that the average price for a series book is twenty cents (see fig. 25).



Figure 25. Average prices for toy books in series, collections, and standalone volumes.

The firm may have aspired to tap into a consumer base that adult reformers and philanthropists had begun to defend earnestly.⁴⁰⁹ A breakdown of three McLoughlin Bros. catalogs shows that the most popular prices are fifteen cents and under (see fig. 18 earlier in the chapter). Perhaps, then, McLoughlin Bros. had its metaphorical finger on the social pulse concerning child labor and reform that argued that all children deserved easygoing and imaginative childhoods free from responsibility and work. The sentimentalization of the child and its impact on reform movements associated with child labor and compulsory education sought to elevate laboring children from mean working and living conditions. This cultural valuing of the child as “priceless” objects was reflected in the production of children’s books, but not just in terms of the laboring child’s representation as a reformed or rescued figure.⁴¹⁰ For publishers like McLoughlin Bros., these children are not a social problem to solve but a potential lucrative base for consuming its products.

McLoughlin Brothers’ adaptation system of toy book production, which employed the series and recycling strategies, may also serve as evidence of valuing to cater to the lower-class child consumer, giving access to similar content of their more economically advantaged peers. It would make business sense to appeal to this sentimentalization with eye-catching products for the aspirations of working-class parents looking to improve their children’s economic present and future and for working-class children looking to spend some preciously withheld earnings.⁴¹¹ A childhood dedicated to education and play was an investment in higher wage-earning jobs in

⁴⁰⁹ Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*, 56–72.

⁴¹⁰ Zelizer, 3.

⁴¹¹ On the possibility of withheld earnings, see Clement, *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890*, 145–46.

addition to stable marriage prospects. From the McLoughlin Bros. approach, adaptation in this sense may be understood as a publishing practice that enables child consumers, particularly from the lower classes, to access the sentimentalized childhood their recycled content celebrated.

The problem is: would the cost of these books be out of the working child's reach? Did the McLoughlin Bros. toy book take the chapbook's place effectively to remain desired reading material and a justified purchase? Were the print and illustrative innovations and the symbolic promise of imagination and wonder enough to attract these buyers? Do the adaptations into toy books maintain the value of transmitted texts as cultural capital? I conclude with a quick look at two series, the Topsy series and the one-syllable book series, that appear in the catalogs, representing opposing sides of the spectrum. On the one side is an adaptation process that undercuts children's accessibility to cultural capital. McLoughlin Bros. baldly extracts profit from signs of literary value that their brand appropriates. Then, on the other side is a process of adaptation that presents the opportunity for the working-class to gain access to cultural capital. The Topsy series privileges material adaptation over textual adaptation, and the one-syllable series exemplifies a transparent pedagogical approach to adaptation *yet* is significantly more *expensive*.

As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, the Topsy series demonstrates how the efforts to draw purchasers with recognizable character labels do not always equate to adaptation processes that make explicit connections to the pre-text narratives themselves beyond superficial signs or textual references. *Topsy* from the Topsy series is in direct contrast to the more thoughtful *Uncle Tom's Cabin* adaptations examined in chapter 3 with *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe's mark on the latter adaptations is clear from the abridged prose reincorporated into both adaptations. Or, with *Pictures and Stories*, the spirit of activism is reaffirmed in the toy book version, which relates to the ending of the novel's initial

publication as a serial. Even as a textual *and* material transformation, it also has its shortcomings. *Topsy*'s remediation as a paper doll shape book bears a similar format as the L. Prang & Co. paper doll shape books designed by Lydia L.A. Very and Gustav Seitz with internal illustrations and poetry. Yet, *Topsy* does not contain the narrative continuity, fantastical intrigue, or the moral thrust discussed in chapter 4 with the L. Prang & Co. adaptations. The connection to Stowe's *Topsy* is essentially nonexistent except for *Topsy*'s transmedia appropriation as a minstrel character in the postbellum, Jim Crow eras.⁴¹² *Topsy* is literally and figuratively reshaped to embody racialized depictions of black people via racist assumptions about black intelligence and morality.

In an era in which the backlash against Reconstruction progress for formerly enslaved black persons meant severe restrictions on black liberties and white mob violence, this shape book obscures those threats under a veil of offensive racialized comedy. For instance, in a two-page spread, a chromolithographed illustration shows black children riding donkeys. Captioned with "The Little Darkies' Derby Day," this illustration erases black horse men's participation in the famous Kentucky Derby and infantilizes it as a child's game, an imitation. Such a depiction is consistent with the racing world's postbellum shift to reaffirm white supremacy via their domination of the sport at all levels except for low-level menial jobs. In other words, they made

⁴¹² This detachment from the novel's origins is consistent with other postbellum adaptations and evidenced in readers' engagement with the novel. See Hochman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911*, 158–59. Hochman explains, "Eliza, Topsy, and Tom became the debased common coin and stuff of racialized banter."

horse racing a white man's sport, forcing successful and competitive black horse riders out.⁴¹³ Divorced from the pre-texts, the creation of *Topsy* (in addition to *The Last of the Mohicans*) possesses numerous examples in which black and indigenous people are caricatured.⁴¹⁴ Ultimately, a shape book like *Topsy* has an affordable and novelty format, but its contents do not maintain attention to the narrative transmission itself. Instead, socializing readers into the ideology of white supremacy is the primary function of using the sign of the "Topsy" as an appeal or draw. In the case of the *Topsy* series, it barely qualifies as literary, cultural capital.

This series is in direct contrast to the one-syllable books authored by Mary Godolphin. Initially published with at least two other publishers in the 1860s, Godolphin's books stand out because they combine two genres of childhood reading—adventure and moral stories with one-syllable literature. Godolphin rewrites these staples of early children's literature and popular literature as literacy tools for emerging readers, as indicated by the address from the author, who

⁴¹³ For more on black men's participation in horse racing from the colonial period to the 1920s, see Katherine C. Mooney, *Race Horse Men: How Slavery and Freedom Were Made at the Race-Track* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁴¹⁴ Another illustration and poem in *Topsy* undercuts the rise in black literacy rates in the postbellum period. An image of a black girl reading to her doll could be a powerful image, akin to the teacher Goody Two-Shoes, just miniaturized as a toddler or very young child. The speaker observes, "But here is the good little Topsy, look,/ She's teaching her dolly out of a book;/ We can't tell quite what the lesson may be,/ Perhaps it's the black-a-moors' 'A, B, C.'" The juxtaposition of illustration to verse functions similarly to the juvenile jockeys illustration. Black children's enrollment in school jumped significantly in the postbellum period with illiteracy among the black population steadily lowering. See *Bicentennial Edition: Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Part 1*. (Washington D.C.: US Bureau of the Census, 1975), 370; 382.

states that the books are for “the use of the youngest readers.”⁴¹⁵ Godolphin asserts that her adaptation and pedagogical project creates both stimulating and challenging texts for beginning readers in the preface.

She posits her work against other texts of its kind as difficult to read despite the monosyllabic nature *because* the texts are disengaging for the audience. Indeed, the adapter states, “it is believed that the idea and scope of its construction are entirely novel, for the One Syllable literature of the present day furnished little more than a few short, unconnected sentences, and those chiefly in spelling books.”⁴¹⁶ Godolphin explains that her text connects sentences via the adaptation of a novel narrative. Her adaptive intervention is to enable child readers in their literacy competency with more engaging works than the traditional one-syllable literature, which predates her own. Thus, she asserts the novelty of her own creation, transforming *Robinson Crusoe* and other books that follow in the series from its original form to present something “new” into the literature of one-syllable books published since at least the seventeenth century.

Like other toy books in the McLoughlin Bros. inventory, the one-syllable books attempt to immerse the little readers in the narratives, despite the one-syllable mode. This accessibility to cultural capital for young readers and potentially working-class readers reflects a thoughtful and innovative adaptation process, which is consistent with the adaptive impulses of other producers in this study. Not only may children reap moral capital, but they may also continue to build on their skills with a progressive model while engaging safely with the fiction. Adaptation enables the youngest readers to tap into popular stories independently (albeit with adult mediated texts).

⁴¹⁵ Mary Godolphin, *Robinson Crusoe In Words of One Syllable* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1882).

⁴¹⁶ Godolphin.

Godolphin's books are also advertised in the same 1895 catalog in which the Topsy series appears. The one-syllable books include *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Sandford and Merton*, and *Swiss Family Robinson* in quarto, half-bound formats, sold for fifty cents apiece. Each volume contains six full-page illustrations in colors.⁴¹⁷ The cost of the format and the increase in cultural capital for this series pales compared to the Topsy series. Then the price difference is also striking: a six-cent shape book vs. a half-bound 50-cent toy book. The cost of even a two-cent book from a series may have been too much of a frivolous expenditure that working-class families, dependent on family-wage economies to survive, could potentially not afford. More books are offered at lower price points for series books, but the most produced were sold at fifteen cents per book, more expensive than the dime novel and certainly more expensive than penny papers well within economic reach. The price structure of the series may have only further enabled affluent middle-class and upper-class consumers to purchase more affordable reading material to gift their youngsters. The distribution of cultural capital then potentially remains uneven through this adaptation model, leaving middle and upper-class children, particularly readers who comply with productive reading protocols, prepped to reap the symbolic profits.

Furthermore, with the adaptation processes like those that rely on an abridgment process like *Gulliver's Travels* discussed above, immersion with adventure and imaginative content is presented to the child readers with less explicit gatekeeping strategies for compliance with "productive" reading protocols, lessening the value of print for child readers. An adaptation machine like the McLoughlin Bros. extracted profit from their approaches, including content recycling and the series strategy. Thus, the production of adaptations systematized and mechanized

⁴¹⁷ *McLoughlin Brothers' Catalogue*, 30.

with incredible efficiency appear, in this case, to outweigh the didactic and moral underpinnings of nineteenth-century adaptation processes for child readers.

6.0 Coda: Beyond a Field of Print-Based Adaptations in 19th Century Children's Literature

From the outset of this project, I have been invested in the multitude of print-based adaptations produced for children in the nineteenth century, mainly from a conviction that they reveal more than the desire to abridge, simplify, or censor books we would now identify as adult or “classic” literature. They do more. From the reversions, frame narratives, and textual frameworks to the remediations and newly improved and elevated formats explored in these chapters, the material and textual transformations that accompany adaptation highlight the innovative pedagogical, ideological, and material experiments conducted by adapters. They occur on two levels. First, they occur at the textual transcoding of the narrative for child audiences from one text to another. Second, they are made with the material book in the print object. Together, the adaptations in these chapters showcase how they are part of a category of writing that also rely on similar impulses to adapt and advertise adaptation, whether it is from the representations and ideological approaches to model ideal reading practices or the actual publishing strategies and forms including the die-cutting process, chromolithography, the publisher's series, and savvy marketing approaches.

Through these case studies, I introduce lesser-known adaptations like Oliver Optic's *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, the American Sunday-School Union's *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, and L. Prang & Co.'s paper doll shape books, as well as reconsider adaptations already charted by scholarship in American studies, childhood, and children's literature, namely the toy books produced by John P. Jewett's publication firm, *Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book* and the extensive corpus of McLoughlin Bros. My intervention has been to study these adaptations alongside other adaptations, regardless of the pre-text narrative they

change for child audiences. At the same time, I locate them within an American juvenile market, adapting British and European imports like *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and others, to reinterpreting and reimagining politically and socially pressing popular fiction of the moment as shown by the adaptation of sentimental literature including *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter*.

To take into account the complexities of products and processes charted in this dissertation, I relied on a mixed-methods approach that looks at single texts and groups of adaptations, engaging in their pre-text sources, placing them in relation to other material and print forms, including toys, conduct manuals, schoolbooks, and other children's books, and locating them within common social practices linked to reading, recitation, and play. This study builds upon methods and approaches that already demonstrate these types of comparative readings, and now, they have been brought to bear pointedly on nineteenth-century adaptations of Anglo-American children's literature.⁴¹⁸

This study remains committed to opening up the study of adaptation in a critical application of these mixed-methods, specifically to broaden scholarship's conception of print-based adaptations for children beyond derivative simplifications, retellings, and bowdlerizations. My intervention has been to study these adaptations alongside other adaptations, beyond the common

⁴¹⁸ For models of comparative study of a diverse selection of texts or corpora, see Carr, Carr, and Schultz, *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States*; Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America*; Weikle-Mills, *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence, 1640-1868*; Field, *Playing with the Book*; Stephens and McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture, Volume 5: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature*.

approach in adaptation studies to shape the contours of a study by the focus point of a pre-text narrative to chart and follow. Where Linda Hutcheon points out the appeal of repetition, variation, and familiarity that draws producers and audiences to adaptation products and processes, I also locate this recognition and reiteration of adaptations for children in a shared economic and cultural context of nineteenth-century print, within a commercial industry as well as part of a reading culture with varying social practices that traded, circulated, and consumed them.⁴¹⁹

My research shows the possibilities of adaptation were not limited to a single process. As a writing and publishing practice, the material conditions of the print industry, the shifting conceptions of childhood and child readers, and the specific details of the material and textual transformations of the books themselves come together to show that adaptation did not remain in stasis, nor were they universal. Just as the wide array of print forms was reprinted, reproduced, and recreated, new texts emerged in a variety of forms, continuing a tradition established with the foundations of children's literature as a sustainable market in the eighteenth century, directly addressing child readers, and appealing to adult and child consumers. Adaptation, like the juvenile market, grew and texts proliferated, especially as new strategies and conceits emerged to market and sell books, including the publisher's series.

The persistence of adaptation via print indicates several ideas revealed in this study that deal with different facets of interactivity and reading that are ideological, theoretical, and historical. Following in the footsteps of Patricia Crain, Karen Sánchez-Eppler, Courtney Weikle-Mills, M.O. Grenby, Jacqueline Reid-Walsh, and Hannah Field, I also contribute to the study of the child reader, particularly the child as imagined and implied through adaptive processes and

⁴¹⁹ Hutcheon and O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 6.

address.⁴²⁰ Adaptation is a material and textual process that produces age-specific products, which usher children into “sharing a common cultural heritage,” an oft-repeated assertion in adaptation studies of children’s literature.⁴²¹ But these processes also importantly reveal how children as readers continue to be imagined as participants in literary culture, ones that are not so passive or compliant as adults might wish them to be. The repetitive prescriptions of reading circulated in nineteenth-century textbooks, conduct manuals, and child-rearing manuals with the reiteration of adaptation processes betray adult concerns as anxieties about control of print dissemination and transmission.

The specifics of the different chapters reveal that certain adapters approached this participation with severe caution, looking to contain child readers’ autonomy and transgressive or resistant modes of reading. They did so under the guise of asserting children’s vulnerability and predisposition to misreading, or what Samuel Goodrich would identify as a form of indiscriminate reading. The fictionalized child readers of chapter 2 are both ultimately disciplined and rescued from their solo journeys inspired by the readings of *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Serving as cautionary tales for potentially resistant readers to the “productive” reading protocol or what I refer to as reading labors described at length in the introduction, *Robinson Crusoe Jr.* and

⁴²⁰ Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America*; Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child’s Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*; Weikle-Mills, *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence, 1640-1868*; Grenby, *The Child Reader, 1700-1840*; Jacqueline Reid-Walsh, *Interactive Books: Playful Media Before Pop-Ups* (London: Routledge, 2017); Field, *Playing with the Book*.

⁴²¹ Müller, *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children’s Literature*, 1. See also Geerts and Van den Bossche, *Never-Ending Stories: Adaptation, Canonisation and Ideology in Children’s Literature*, 6.

Little Marian's Pilgrimage appropriate the novels without adult guidance or supervision. While some adaptations raise the alarm on children's dangerous independent interaction with appropriated novels, others prohibit such an outcome with textual methods of control and supervision that explicitly mediate the stories. Joachim Heinrich Campe's translations and adaptations of *Robinson the Younger* and Aunt Mary's *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* from chapter 3 represent and imply receptive and submissive auditors to the retold stories in a supervisory, mediated communal reading in the family circle. At the same time, they assert patriarchal structures of power as well as the maternal influence of the domestic sphere as sanctuaries from threats of the corrupting public sphere, monitoring the content that enters that space, a realm deeply symbolically associated not only with the feminine but also the child.

Child readers are not strictly imagined within this restrictive schema of adaptation. The adaptations *Pictures and Stories of Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Lamplighter Picture Book*, for instance, highlight how the same supervisory and pedagogical apparatus of communal reading can be reimagined yet still retain its instructive potential. These adaptations shift towards a child-centered model that restores a spirit of juvenile political activism via the voice and performance of the child's reading. Thus, the processes of adaptation for these adaptations in chapter 3—along with the paper doll shape books in chapter 4, which are also liberatory and enabling of young readers—showcase the agential potential of child readers to engage in adapted narratives without being subject to or constrained by gatekeeping strategies. A didactic lesson or moral may be present, but their value as symbolic currency is not dependent on that reading mode.

I acknowledge that books for children are written by adults and selected for children by adults. Indeed, children do not always read what they are given as independent readers or always listen as auditors. Nor are they compelled to respond as expected. I have not made any bold claims

as to what real children did with these books, only what the adaptations' material and textual forms invite them to do in a culture of reading that emphasized productivity and usefulness according to the development of character that catered to a dominant Protestant Christian morality. However, the innovative work exists in locating children's evidence of their reading in the annotations of margins or on the page, in material disassembly or destruction, and in diary writing. With this evidence, we may, as Crain argues, interpret these "marks" and practices as a "site of children's own engagement with, encounter with" the material book.⁴²² For adaptations that bear the markings of ownership can also possess other inscriptions, "a registry of human encounters," as Crain calls them.⁴²³ For instance, the scenario where a child is gifted an adaptation for Christmas constitutes one of the encounters. My personal copy of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage* bears the inscription "Samuel Biddle from his Aunt Francis. Christmas—1852—." Was this written in Samuel's own hand or his Aunt Francis? How did Aunt Francis acquire the non-commercial publication? Given the prominence of the maternal aunt figure from the mediator of *A Peep* to series of adaptations labeled with the "aunt" persona as discovered in the McLoughlin Bros. data, what kind of authority does the "aunt" as a figure wield, especially in gifting an adaptation from a non-commercial publisher? What public records exist tracing Samuel Biddle? Left unexplored is evidence of how children may or may not have interacted with their adaptations, the potential traces of their engagement preserved. Is the pristine condition of an adaptation evidence of a child's rejection of the content it adapts? Maybe it is rejection in favor of an alternative version? Depending on the adaptation, a near-perfect copy can indicate a careful reader as well as a

⁴²² Crain, *Reading Children: Literacy, Property, and the Dilemmas of Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America*, 113.

⁴²³ Crain, 111.

completely disinterested one (a lack of an audience). The torn head of *Robinson Crusoe* discussed briefly in chapter 4 from the University of Pittsburgh's Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection remains a mystery. At what point did the paper doll become decapitated? Is it incidental damage from years of uncaredful handling or storage? Such insights would provide additional context for the traces of modes of engagement and answer questions of reception that remained on the edges of this study.

The introduction then anticipates starting a map and connecting the adaptations products and processes that reflected on and contributed to cultural production in a commercialized print market. This map of transatlantic and domestic production centers on the American market, but future work can shift from the "imports" and internal production to see how adaptations entered circulation as exports from the American print market. *A Peep into Uncle Tom's Cabin* is not the only adaptation of an American novel to move outside of the United States; Sampson, Low, Son, Marston published a heavily abridged version of Maria Susanna Cummins's *The Lamplighter* under the title *Little Gerty, or the First Prayer* (1869), for instance. Lines of inquiry concerning circulation and reception remain for longstanding "popular" adaptations like the American versions of Joachim Campe's *Robinson the Younger* (under titles of *The New Robinson Crusoe*) or the potential reach of *Little Marian's Pilgrimage*, a publication produced by the American Sunday-School Union, an institution well known for its missionary activities in the Caribbean, in other colonized locations in the world, and among indigenous nations and groups in North America.

For the majority of the dissertation, I have zoomed in on select texts that transform appropriated novels and stories before zooming out to examine over a thousand books using a digital method that Matthew Jockers refers to as macroanalysis, distinct from the microanalysis of

close reading.⁴²⁴ This is the other methodological intervention I make with the study of adaptations for children to shift towards a quantifiable method, sampling of a larger corpus of texts. The challenge of adaptation more broadly is ubiquity, and in nineteenth-century adaptation for children, even in a juvenile market establishing itself and growing, that manifests in countless texts in varieties of formats and print venues throughout the century. An important point to emphasize is that reproduction processes of adaptation covered in this study do not touch the influence of copyright with specific examples; they are not located more specifically among the complex intricacies and development of domestic and international copyright laws in the nineteenth century. Meredith McGill's work shows the complicated and competitive civic, moral, and legal debates surrounding considerations of intellectual property and sanctioned and unsanctioned appropriation.⁴²⁵ Adaptation begs to be located within these debates and concerns with specific case studies. I suspect this information may be found in the archive through publisher's records and possible legal proceedings.

Adaptation's repetition, reproduction, and vast proliferation, especially in the case of the McLoughlin Bros. toy book enterprise I study in chapter 5, shifts into an exciting source of big data. Matthew Jockers, a proponent of the digital humanities as a methodological mainstay in literary studies, argues that "a microanalytic approach helps us not only to see and understand the operations of a larger 'literary economy,' but, by means of scale, to better see and understand the degree to which literature and the individual authors who manufacture that literature respond to or

⁴²⁴ Matthew L. Jockers, *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History* (Baltimore, UNITED STATES: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 24–32.

⁴²⁵ See McGill, *Material Texts: American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853*.

react against literary or cultural trends.”⁴²⁶ By a combination of manual and digital coding, I organized and visualized a data set that revealed interesting trends. The data, with selections of close reading, points to how the adaptations McLoughlin Bros. produced run counter to the for-profit reading discourse in the nineteenth century for child readers, showing how the company instead turned adaptation as a publishing and writing strategy into an undisguised source of profit. Adaptation is not deployed to navigate the flood of print; it contributes to it.

There is more data to be mined in relation to the McLoughlin Bros. catalogs, especially on specifics regarding formats and pricing. With the learning curve in Excel literacy, coding and controlled vocabularies, and a new-to-me software like Tableau Public, I am better prepared to take into account, for instance, the alphabet primers and concept books and other novelty content that initially appeared to defy my selected categorizations, especially since several of them were difficult to trace to libraries, special collections, and archives. For a brand that appropriates and elevates a format associated with young readers of the nursery, I require quantifiable data about the firm’s investment in alphabet books and primers. The more catalogs that are entered as a data set, the clearer we may recover the effects of their operations, especially with the absence of corroborating archival evidence.

The real potential in this approach for further study in adaptations for children is exciting, for McLoughlin Bros. was not the only firm to rely on strategies like the series, nor was it the only firm to specialize in adaptation. While not all publishers self-published trade circulars of their inventory like McLoughlin Bros., other means of gathering the data exist through bibliographic resources, including WorldCat and the individual enterprises of bibliographers that create open-

⁴²⁶ Jockers, *Macroanalysis*, 28.

access lists tracing series. Other digital macroanalysis opportunities also include topic modeling, a means of text mining, of the paratext of adaptations like titles, prefaces, and addresses that often append and inform the adaptation process and the modes of reading. That approach may potentially yield trends in rhetoric and language in how to address and construct adaptation, according to format, content, etc. Now at the end, I can visualize an expansive map with only a small area highlighted and covered. For several years I have collected titles of adaptations, and it has been a significant challenge in covering unique, fascinating, and compelling adaptation approaches. With the McLoughlin Bros. catalog digital project, I set the stage to fill in more details, provide the contours of additional portions of this map in print-based adaptation.

Like the nineteenth-century print-based adaptations covered in this study, a representative impulse fails to capture every single one produced (that's impossible). Instead, the methods and approaches used in this study prod researchers and scholars to respond to Gregory Semenza's call for adaptations locally in children's literature: to apply "a long-term historical analys[is]" and "locate the patterns of historical development and change" in print-based adaptation processes and products.⁴²⁷ A look at the literary field of contemporary print-based adaptations reveals many adapted "classics" for little readers worth exploring for longer patterns, including the BabyLit board books, Once Upon a World books, Lit for Little Hands books, Usborne's Illustrated Originals, Penguin Bedtime Classics, and Cozy Classics. Print-based adaptation has perpetuated in a culture in which transmedia has proliferated, yet "bookishness," according to Jessica Pressman, "share[s] and teach[es] a love of books' materiality, even for those who might appreciate

⁴²⁷ Semenza, "Towards a Historical Turn?: Adaptation Studies and the Challenges of History," 64; 63.

other forms of reading and writing.”⁴²⁸ With adults making consumptive choices for little readers, like the infant and toddler audiences that several of these series imply, these books reposition and initiate child readers into a digital world and a literary field with more flexible distinctions of taste and aesthetics. Indeed, they might initiate child book handlers into a cultural capital that is both materially bookish and content-oriented, ranging from literary to pop cultures. This form of study does not need to remain rooted in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the material and textual transformations of adaptation, the interactivity of reading, and the transmission of beloved stories for little readers can be further explored and connected to our present moment.

⁴²⁸ Jessica Pressman, *Bookishness: Loving Books in a Digital Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 13.

Appendix A

Story Count in 1875-1876 Catalog

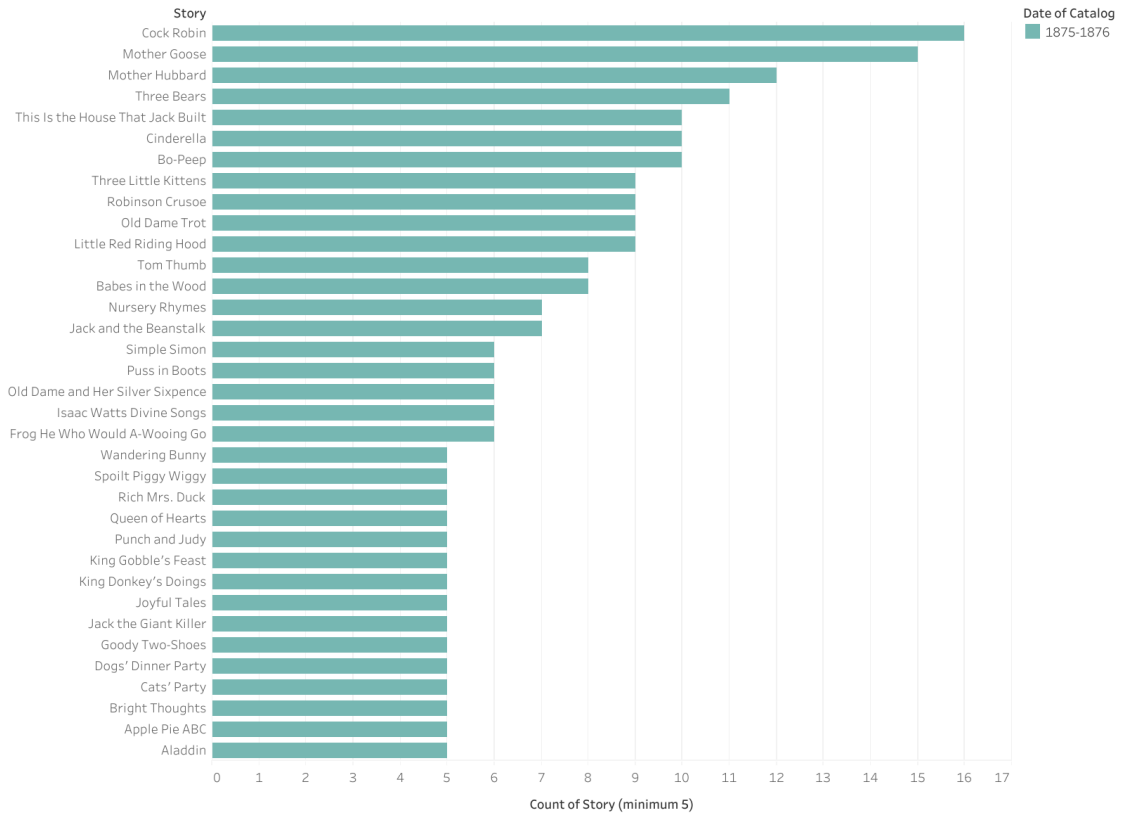


Figure A 1. Most recycled content in 1875-1876 catalog.

Story Count in 1886 Catalog

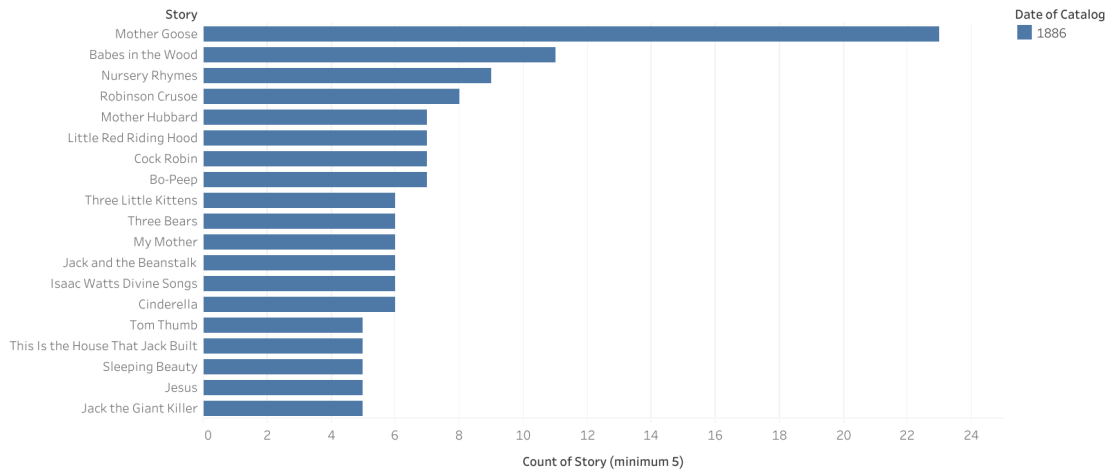


Figure A 2. Most recycled content in 1886 catalog.

Story Count in 1895 Catalog

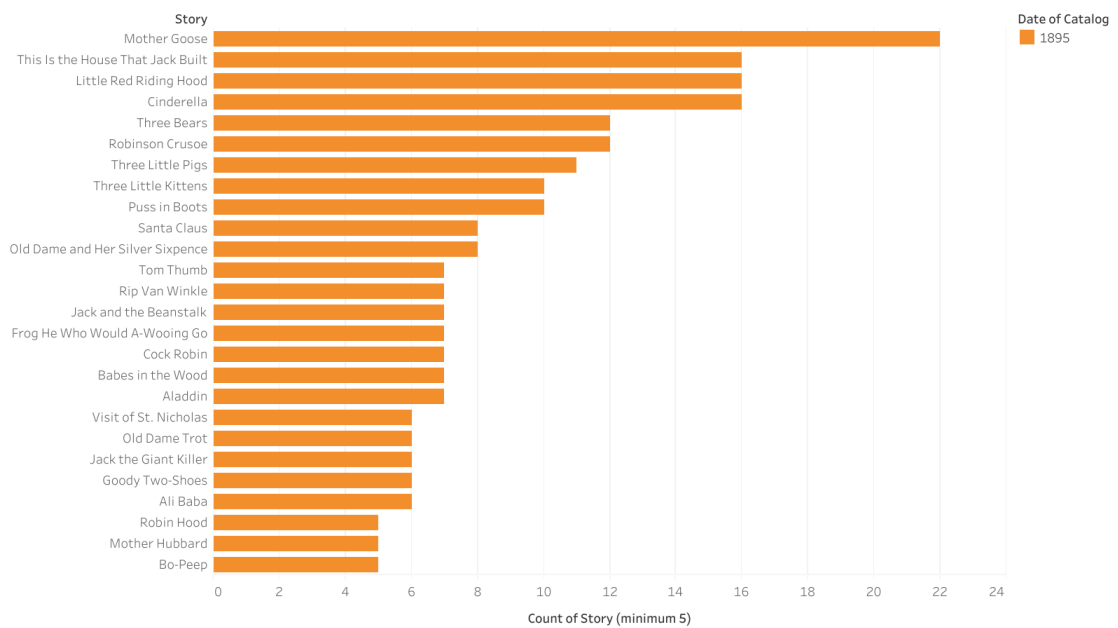


Figure A 3. Most recycled content in 1895 catalog.

Story Count in 1910 Catalog

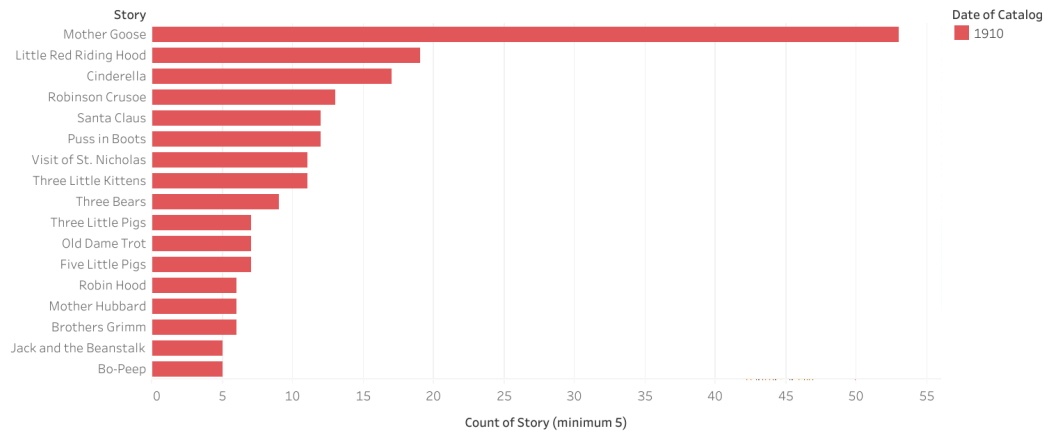


Figure A 4. Most recycled content in 1910 catalog.

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