American Authors, September 11th, and Civil War Representations in Historical Fiction

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Abstract

Scholars have hypothesized that historical fiction books are more a product of the author, author's nuanced world view, and the time period in which they were written than of the events and period depicted. This content analysis research examined how American historical fiction authors represented the Civil War and how the events of September 11th, 2001 impacted this representation. The data pool included books targeting intermediate elementary and middle level students and had four categories: Civil War-based books published prior to 1989, Civil War-based books published between 1990 and September 11th 2001, Civil War-based books published between 2002 and 2015, and a baseline of books targeting any war published at any time. Shifts in message, violence, perceptions of the enemy, and intended audience appeared. After September 11th, 2001, American historical fiction authors targeted younger audiences, wrote more pro-war messages, included less violence, and dehumanized or anonymized the enemy more frequently. Findings lend credence to previous scholarship that hypothesized historical fiction readers should consider the source and context of publication to better understand underlying messages.

Key words: Historical fiction, Civil War, Social studies education, Historical representation, September 11th 2001

Introduction

"A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth." Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Authors of historical fiction intended for children and young adults have a difficult task. They meld historical eras with imagined elements to engage a capricious audience with short attention spans and little prior knowledge. This is no simple feat. Readers, both young and old, grant considerable deference to authors of fiction (Power, 2003; Schwebel, 2011, 2014; Williams, 2009). Scholars from diverse fields—like social studies education, English education, and children's literature—concur that the figurative fingerprints of historical fiction authors are more conspicuous and the intended, underlying messages are particularly dependent to the publication date (e.g., Bousalis, 2016; Ghiso, Campano, & Hall, 2012; Rycik & Rosler, 2009;

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Power, 2003; Schneider, 2016; Schwebel, 2011, 2014; Williams, 2009). Sara Schwebel (2011, 2014), in particular, suggested the manifest violence, elements of patriotism, motivation to fight, and living conditions during a fictionalized account of war might be told differently during, say, the relatively anti-jingoistic period of the 1970s when compared with a tale on the same topic published in the relatively patriotic period of the 1950s. While no one would suggest that teachers and students are unaware of or disengaged from the narrative, readers can better understand a historical fiction novel if they consider context surrounding the publication date and author's background. This cognitive step is akin to a historian reading a presidential speech as she invokes historiographical details on that particular president and the specific circumstances surrounding the speech (Wineburg, 2001, 2007). This is complicated and unusual for young students who typically read to comprehend and struggle to scrutinize the subtext (Bickford, 2013; Wineburg, 2001, 2007); furthermore, trade books' historical representation is uneven, at best (Schwebel, 2011, 2014; Williams, 2009).

Demonstrable patterns of historical misrepresentations emerge in non-fiction trade books when researchers utilize quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods content analysis (e.g., Bickford & Schuette, 2016; Bickford & Silva, 2016; Eaton, 2006; Sakowicz, 2016), yet many historical fiction researchers rely on close readings and case studies (e.g., Bigelow, 1998a, 1998b; Collins & Graham, 2001; Power, 2003; Schwebel, 2011, 2014; Williams, 2009). While investigating how historical fiction trade books represented race, Native Americans, and war, Schwebel's (2011, 2014) work contained comparably small data pools and conflated wars separated by centuries. To inquire into the veracity of the hypothesis about publication date, data pools must be robust and the historical topics must be distinct. It would not likely be fruitful to review five American authors' historical fiction about the Vietnam War published in the late 1970s because the sample is too small and the publishing period is perhaps too close to the event. Previous research also explored trends over time; Paula Connolly (2013) examined the shifting representations of slavery-based books by 18th through 21st century and Gary Schmidt (2013) explored how early to mid-20th century children's literature explicitly invoked democratic principles and implicitly encoded contemporary social themes, to offer two examples. To enable distinction, this inquiry investigated how a singular event in American history—September 11th, 2001—impacted American authors' representation of the Civil War in historical fiction. Content, genre, and intended grade levels of the reader must be carefully selected. This

investigation examined only books intended for intermediate elementary (3rd-5th grade) and middle level readers (6th-8th grade) because they are impressionable, yet independent readers. Five interrelated elements contribute to the value of this research.

First, education initiatives shift the emphasis of history, social studies, English, and language arts. Beginning in elementary school, a balance between fiction and non-fiction replaces the preponderance of fiction in English and language arts (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). Historical fiction is the point of convergence between history and fiction so its importance will not diminish. To supplement English and language arts changes, history and social studies students read diverse texts at every grade level (NCSS, 2013; NGA & CCSSO, 2010). This is a significant change for elementary teachers, where past emphases are largely in reading and math, and for middle level history and social studies teachers, where a single textbook has been common (McMurrer, 2008; O'Connor, Heafner, & Groce, 2007). These changes could possibly increase teachers' use of historical fiction which, as the introductory quote implies, is perhaps an inexact pathway to historical truth. Recognizing how current education policy might shape practicing teachers' curricula selection does not imply that either impacts authors' underlying message within historical fiction. No evidence was found to indicate that the aforementioned education initiatives shaped children and young adult authors' creations. This inquiry, to be clear, centers on if and how a singular event in American history influenced American authors' historical fiction narratives.

Second, education initiatives require dramatic changes, yet provide no curricular guides for teachers (Sapers, 2015). Intermediate elementary and middle level educators cannot likely turn to academia for guidance because research appears to focus more on secondary social studies (Bickford, 2017). Scholarship on history-based intermediate elementary and middle level curricula has not kept pace (Bickford, 2017).

Third, the Civil War is a convenient topic for these particular curricula and grade ranges. History and social studies classes are frequently organized into epochs or threats of war (Loewen, 1995; Matusevich, 2006; McMurrer, 2008). The Civil War, in particular, was the deadliest, has the most local monuments, and is the most reenacted (Loewen, 1999). Elementary and middle level schools often have elaborate interdisciplinary units that observe of Veterans Day and Memorial Day (Andrews, 2013; Wallace, 2007). Therefore, an interdisciplinary unit on the Civil War where intermediate elementary and middle level students read historical fiction in

English and scrutinize historical documents in history is quite possible. While it is unlikely that any teacher would use *only* historical fiction to teach about the Civil War, it is quite likely that historical fiction would be used.

Fourth, war-themed children's literature is a veritable industry, yet teachers and researchers likely view it differently. Pre-inquiry searches on popular literature websites—like Amazon, Scholastic, Booksource, and Barnes and Noble—and academic websites—such as, WorldCat and Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois—indicated more books on the search theme of *war* than any other search theme save *fiction*. With a seemingly inexhaustible selection, teachers likely remain unaware of each book's historical representation because, as pre-investigation inquiries revealed, publishers only reported trade books' reading level, content coverage, and presence of graphic content. A curious teacher cannot trust online summaries or reviews, which—a cursory review indicated and anecdotal experience suggests— appeared written by non-experts (likely teachers or parents) or those with a vested interest in the sale of the book (like authors and editors). During research preparation, no book reviews from established scholars appeared on the popular literature websites. Teachers are more likely to rely on the popular literature websites because they are not always aware of and have access to the scholarly reviews on the academic websites or within academic journals. Teachers, thus, are likely unaware of each book's historical representation when making selections.

Finally, there does not appear to be empirical research about the Civil War's historical representation within fiction, how it changes over time, and how a singular event in American history affected American authors' novelized accounts. While history *text*books have been empirically examined from a myriad of angles (e.g. Chick, 2006; Clark, Allard, & Mahoney, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2009; Lindquist, 2009; Loewen, 1995; Matusevich, 2006; Roberts, 2015), there is less scholarship on trade books within the field of social studies education. Many researchers have closely examined trade books and reported patterns of historical misrepresentation but there are concerns when research is not empirical. Schwebel (2011, 2014) selected trade books from specific state-based lists, which included less than 10 states and less than 15 trade books. Generalizable findings cannot be derived from such small, non-random samples, especially when one considers the vastness of her three foci—American race relations, Native Americans, and war—and that each focus had multiple subtopics. In examining one historical era, Williams (2009) selected books from a single publisher, did not address the politics surrounding

publication within specific companies that some have described as ubiquitous and powerful (Loewen, 1995; Matusevich, 2006), and made conclusions that were subsequently refuted (Bickford & Rich, 2014). Such research is illustrative, yet findings are questionable. Empirical research has been done on trade books' gender representation and characters' voice (e.g., Chick & Corle, 2012; Chick, Slekar, & Charles, 2010; Desai, 2014; Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014), within non-fiction trade books about particular people and eras (e.g., Bickford & Schuette, 2016; Bickford & Silva, 2016; Bousalis, 2016; Sakowicz, 2016), and within theme-based trade books over distinct periods of time (e.g., Connolly, 2013; Eaton, 2006; Schmidt, 2013). There appears, however, to be no research centering on how one consequential event impacted American authors' Civil War-based historical fiction.

The ubiquity of war within diverse curricula for various grade levels contributes to the need for research about how American historical fiction authors novelize the Civil War. Education initiatives magnify this need. Authors of children's and young adult literature are not expected to match historians' detail; fiction writers can and should take authorial liberties. It is important, though, to study how underlying messages within novelized war stories change over time and are shaped by an unrelated event. This research is especially meaningful for educators who teach young students with faint historical schemas and for researchers interested in the patterns within the text and subtext of common curricular resources.

Method

Content analysis research methods enabled consideration about how publication date impacted American authors' underlying messages about war (Krippendorff, 2013; Maxwell, 2010; Pillow 2003; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). All titles of both in-print and out-of-print Civil War-centered young adult historical fiction trade books were located using the search term "Civil War" on popular literature websites—specifically, Amazon, Scholastic, Booksource, and Barnes and Noble—and academic websites devoted to literature, specifically WorldCat and Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois. To consider how American authors fictionalized the Civil War, only books by American-born authors were considered. Individual books' reading levels were triangulated using Advantage/TASA Open Standard and, where available, Lexile, Grade Level Expectations, and Developmental Reading Assessment. Seeking a data pool of only historical fiction targeting intermediate elementary (3rd-5th) and middle level (6th-8th) readers, all other genres and grade ranges were jettisoned. The data pool ($n = 121$) was

established of in-print and out-of-print young adult historical fiction centering on the Civil War published by American authors and targeting intermediate elementary and middle level students.

To explore how historical fiction novels published in distinct periods of time represented the Civil War differently, the data pool was organized into three periods: books published prior to 1989, books published after 1990 but before September 11, 2001, and books published after 2002. The former was to serve as a baseline of Civil War-only books; the latter two are juxtaposed to see if and how the Civil War was represented differently before and after September 11, 2001. A control group of comparable books fictionalizing any American war was included using the same aforementioned popular and academic websites. The study, thus, had four sets of ten randomly-selected books published by American authors: a control group of books fictionalizing any American war published at any time, a baseline group of books fictionalizing the Civil War published prior to 1989, a group of books published in dozen years before September 11th, 2001, and a group of books published in dozen years after 2002. Bibliographical information is reported within *Data Pool References*; topical information—such as the depicted war and publication date—is reported within *Background Information about Books'* (Appendix A).

Open coding and axial coding were incorporated to generate empirical findings (Krippendorff, 2013). I first read each book and recorded observations about the main character, motivation to fight, patriotism, race, social class, violence, conditions of war, and the enemy. I considered authors' intended message(s), whether denoted or connoted, during this initial open coding. A second reviewer—a graduate research assistant with elementary classroom teaching experience—engaged in similar, independent open coding reading. Discussion ensued, disputes were reexamined and settled, and notes about emergent patterns from both initial readings were synthesized, which then became tentative codes for axial coding. Each book was reread to determine the presence (or absence) of the tentative codes and their frequency. No inconsistencies or disagreements appeared after the axial coding.

An adult writer could explicitly include historical details that a young reader bereft prior knowledge might not fully grasp; an adult writer might subtly encode a message that a young reader failed to decode. Therefore, attention was paid to *how* content was included and if it would be clear to the reader. Distinctions were made between clearly and frequently included details and underlying message(s) with those that were mentioned once in passing, implied

through connotation, or included only in the Afterword, a section that a child might not read. In this way, I distinguished content using designated positions on Likert Scale—*explicitly detailed*, *included but minimized*, *implicit or vague*, and *omitted*—which mirrored previous research (Bickford & Schuette, 2016; Bickford, Schuette, & Rich, 2015; Sakowicz, 2016). This pattern of reflection, revision, reexamination, and recognition of nuance is necessary in content analysis research (Krippendorff, 2013). The final *Content Analysis Tool* is included within Appendix B.

This inquiry followed best practice research methods (Krippendorff, 2013; Maxwell, 2010; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The steps correspond with similar, multidisciplinary trade book research (Bickford & Schuette, 2016; Bickford, Schuette, & Rich, 2015; Bousalis, 2016; Chick & Corle, 2012; Chick, Slekar, & Charles, 2010; Connolly, 2013; Eaton, 2006; Sakowicz, 2016; Schmidt, 2013) and social studies eduction textbook research (Chick, 2006; Clark, Allard, & Mahoney, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2009; Lindquist, 2009; Loewen, 1995; Matusevich, 2006). While close readings are incorporated (Schwebel, 2011; Williams, 2009), findings are quantified.

Findings

This inquiry does not imply or suggest that readers are unmindful of underlying messages, key symbolism, and rhetorical devices within the narratives. It is an exploration into how the context of publication shapes the narrative. This was not an investigation of historical facts within literature; children's and young adult historical fiction authors cannot—and are not expected to—provide historians' detail. This was an examination of how American authors' underlying messages of war change over time within historical fiction, a common curricular resource for intermediate elementary and middle level teachers. Attention was paid to contextualizing factors related to American authors' lived experiences and date of publication. The subsequent subsections are organized around meaningful findings, only some of which confirm the hypothesis.

Overall Message and Intended Audience

The two most conspicuous changes were the overall message about war and the intended audience. The former was determined by multiple close readings and content analysis questions Four, Five, Six, and Seven (Appendix B). Scholars of literature have long hypothesized that historical fiction is best understood if one considers the author's background and context, specifically the time and place in which the trade book was published (Bousalis, 2016; Ghiso, Campano, & Hall, 2012; Rycik & Rosler, 2009; Power, 2003; Schneider, 2016; Schwebel, 2011,

2014; Williams, 2009). The subsequent table (Table 1) reports the overall message of American authors' Civil War-based historical fiction organized by time period in comparison with baseline data derived from comparable literature. American authors' historical fiction are not principally anti-war in message. Data indicate a balanced mix of implicit and explicit jingoist and bellicist meanings. Stated differently, American authors appeared to construct narratives that espoused war-skeptic, non-conformist messages in similar proportion to unbridled, unquestioning patriotic lessons; a closer reading of the data, though, indicates important distinctions. In the century prior to 1990, American authors' fictionalized war narratives were predominately (70%) jingoist. September 11th, however, appeared impactful. Historical fiction with anti-war messages were the slight majority (60%) in the decade or so prior to September 11th. Gary Paulsen's (1998) *Soldier's Heart* represents this pattern; Paulsen's character Charley's eager, unbridled patriotism encountered the ferocity of war and was forever changed by it. Most novelized war stories (80%) carried pro-war messages after September 11th, 2001. Anne Ylvisaker's (2014) *The Curse of the Buttons*—in which a young boy enthusiastically and constructively contributes to the cause showing anyone can be a hero if they want to be badly enough—typifies this pattern. Data are organized by a control group (CG; $n = 10$), all Civil War historical fiction within the sample (Total; $n = 30$), and the three periods of publication that make up the total (1880-1989, $n = 10$; 1990-2001, $n = 10$; 2002-2016, $n = 10$).

Table 1

Message and Intended audience

	CG	Total	1880-1989	1990-2001	2002-2016
	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)
Overall Message About War					
Explicitly Anti-War	3 (30%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
Implicitly anti-war	2 (20%)	9 (30%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
Explicitly pro-war	2 (20%)	6 (20%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)
Implicitly pro-war	3 (30%)	13 (43%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Intended Audience					
Intermediate (3rd-5th)	3 (30%)	17 (57%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	9 (90%)
Middle Level (6th-8th)	7 (70%)	13 (43%)	7 (70%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)

Note. CG denotes Control Group, which included any war with any publication date, and encompasses 10 books; Total signifies all Civil War books combined, and contains the 30 books within the three eras (1880-1989, 1990-2001, 2002-2016); 1880-1989 indicates Civil War books published between 1880 and 1989; 1990-2001 designates Civil War books published between 1990 and before September 11, 2001; 2002-2016 denotes Civil War Books published after 2002 until 2016.

Findings appear more curious when one considers the change in intended audience. A trade book's intended audience should be considered for analysis much like a historical letter's recipient. As noted in the Methods section, various objective data were triangulated to determine the likely intended age of the reader of the randomly-selected trade books. Historical fiction authors constructed narratives intended for younger readers more frequently after September 11th; this pattern was more conspicuous than any other examined element. Findings originated from the second content analysis question. Civil War-based historical fiction published after 2002 targeted intermediate elementary students (90%) far more than middle level students (10%); it was balanced in the decade before. This sample of the pool—Civil War books published after 2002 and intended for intermediate elementary students—was noticeably larger than both the baseline (30%), which were books fictionalizing the Civil War published at any time, and the control group (30%), which were books centered on any war published at any time. Taken further, most Civil War books published before 1989 (70%) were intended for middle

level readers and, after 2002, the vast majority (90%) were intended for intermediate level readers.

Data-based patterns about message and intended audience were intentionally positioned together to illustrate the subtle impact of September 11th on American authors of historical fiction: novelized Civil War accounts were more pro-war and targeted younger students far more frequently after September 11th than before. While not implying that messages within historical fiction narratives are dependent to context of publication or that an authorial conspiracy is afoot, data indicate historical fiction narratives are shaped to some extent by context of publication. Other demonstrable patterns emerged, yet none provided credence to the hypothesis.

Perceptions of the Enemy and Violence

Considering the apparent and emergent pro-war messages within historical fiction trade books published after September 11th, 2001 by American authors, it stands to reason that other related patterns would surface. The main characters' perceptions about the enemy and the brutality of war, which are inextricably intertwined with war, were explored. Both emerged within the fictionalized war narratives.

If killing the enemy in war is compulsory, dehumanizing the enemy contributes to the psychological detachment needed to kill. In other words, viewing adversaries as evil or inhuman assists in deadly tasks (Browning, 1998, 2004; Goldhagen, 1997, 2009; Power, 2002). One complication, though, is if the enemy is a former (and, potentially, future) countryman. A second is if this enemy is fictive, not literal, character created more than a century after the event by an author who knows the war's outcome. Content analysis questions Five and Seven shaped this element. There was a discernible decrease in fictionalized main characters who viewed Civil War enemies as normal people in books published after September 11th, 2001 in comparison to books published in the decade and the century prior. Nearly three-quarters of Civil War books published the century before 1990 (70%) and the decade prior to September 11th (70%) viewed the enemy as analogous and akin to himself; after September 11th, less than half did (40%).

Before September 11th, 2001, novelized Civil War stories largely recognized the enemy's humanity and, at times, viewed him with compassion. Mary Pope Osborne's (2000) *Civil War on Sunday* is a representative example; "When someone is hurt, you give them a helping hand, no matter who they are...I have seen courage and kindness on both sides of this war" (p.47-48). A former Southern slave named Abraham meets, assists, and eventually

befriends a wounded Confederate soldier named Lamar in Sara Harrel Banks's (1999) *Abraham's Battle: A Novel of Gettysburg*. In both the decade and century preceding September 11th, less than a third of the books viewed the Civil War enemy as inherently different or malevolent (30%) and none viewed the Civil War enemy as inhuman. Gary Paulsen's (1998) *Soldier's Heart* is an example of the former ("He wanted to kill them. He wanted to catch them and run his bayonet through them and kill them. All of them. Stick and jab and shoot them and murder them and kill them all, each and every Rebel.", p. 50).

After the terrorist attack in 2001, almost two-thirds of the trade books viewed the Civil War combatant as either evil and dissimilar (50%) or inhuman (10%). For example, Rosemary Wells's (2009) *Lincoln and His Boys* articulates how former countrymen—and their sympathizers—were given no consideration ("The Copperheads are border staters. They've got rebel hearts. They hate real hard, and they wanted to kill Pa because he will stand against slave states.", p. 46). When compared to control group data, however, the emergent pattern in post-September 11th books does not appear as stark (50%; 40%). This pattern regarding main characters' perceptions of the enemy was not as robust as previous findings about overall message and intended audience; however, it appeared to be subtly related to September 11th, 2001. When combined with previous findings, fictionalized Civil War stories became more bellicist and more disparaging of the enemy as the intended audience became younger. The subsequent table organized data through control group (CG; $n = 10$), all Civil War historical fiction within the sample (Total; $n = 30$), and the three periods of publication that make up the total (1880-1989, $n = 10$; 1990-2001, $n = 10$; 2002-2016, $n = 10$).

Table 2

Representation of the Enemy

	CG	Total	1880-1989	1990-2001	2002-2016
	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)
Perceptions of the Enemy					
Evil and Different from Main Character	4 (40%)	11 (37%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Evil and Different from Main Character	5 (50%)	18 (60%)	7 (70%)	7 (70%)	4 (40%)
Evil and Different from Main Character	1 (10%)	1 (3%)	0	0	1 (10%)
Perceptions of the Ferocity of War					
Exciting and invigorating	0	8 (27%)	2 (20%)	0	6 (60%)
Difficult, yet manageable	4 (40%)	13 (43%)	3 (30%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
Incongruous with civilization	5 (50%)	4 (13%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
Omission of all violence	1 (10%)	5 (17%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)

Note. CG denotes Control Group, which included any war with any publication date, and encompasses 10 books; Total signifies all Civil War books combined, and contains the 30 books within the three eras (1880-1989, 1990-2001, 2002-2016); 1880-1989 indicates Civil War books published between 1880 and 1989; 1990-2001 designates Civil War books published between 1990 and before September 11, 2001; 2002-2016 denotes Civil War Books published after 2002 until 2016.

A soldier's success depends on killing the enemy, it also relies on surviving the brutalities of war. Successfully traversing the tenuous, merciless battleground is any soldier's goal. Violence is unavoidable. The above table (Table 2) reports how the main characters experienced and viewed violence, which were obtained using data collected from content analysis questions Four, Six, and Seven. The vast majority of trade books, whether about the Civil War or any war, did not omit violence. Control group data obtained from trade books about any war indicate similar portions viewed the violence of war as either incompatible with civilized society (50%) or as arduous but surmountable (40%). Notably binary, the former aligns with pacifist sentiment and the latter is associated with tolerance of war or support for a

righteous war. While only one trade book in the control group data sample omitted violence, no books celebrated or glorified it. Notably, a majority of trade books (60%) published after 2002 presented war as an exciting, invigorating adventure. Tom McGowen's (2008) *Jesse Bowman: A Union Boy's War Story*, published after September 11th, 2001, largely portrayed exhilaration for a noble cause ("Jesse and the other members of the 19th Regiments were proud of themselves and felt their regiment was something special", p. 31) with little, if any, violence ("One of the regiment's supply wagons carried bloody wounded men, and another wagon contained a number of bloody dead men", p. 32). Similarly, Candice Ransom (2004) *Willie McLean and the Civil War Surrender* hid the violence behind tertiary details ("Then Willie remembered the lean faces of Lee's men, the lame horses. He remembered the deserted who wanted to go home.", p. 33) with scant features that detailed more sounds than scenes ("Boom! Kaboom! Willie jumped off the porch. Cannons! War is here!", p. 5). This was distinctively different than the decade prior to September 11th, 2001, where most books (80%) characterized the violence as ubiquitous. Representative examples include James and Christopher Collier's (1992) *With Every Drop of Blood* ("The bodies in the fields and orchards were so think you couldn't hardly put your foot down without tromping on one.", p. 10) and G. Clifton Wisler's (1991) *Red Cap* ("Mags thrust his bayonet into the old rebel and flung him away like so much chaff at threshing time. He grinned to me as he fired off a shot and dropped a second confederate," p. 47). These are but two points in a conspicuous pattern. Books published before September 11th, 2001 compelled the reader to recognize the violence and death in far different ways than those published after.

Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

Teachers, like most parents purchasing books for their children, recognize that historical fiction writers take authorial liberties. Messages encoded within the narratives are possibly shaped by date and country of origin. Data-based findings indicate American authors wrote historical fiction novels about the Civil War differently after September 11th, 2001 than before. There are many elements to consider and numerous interpretations to explore, which have implications for researchers and teachers.

Importance for Researchers

The trade books were more pro-war after September 11th, 2001; many were even considered bellicist during this period. American authors of historical fiction constructed pro-war narratives more frequently after the events of September 11th, 2001 than before.

Conspiracy, or an intentionally collective action, is not as logical an explanation as the idea that intended, underlying messages are shaped by publication date, which many scholars contend (e.g., Bousalis, 2016; Ghiso, Campano, & Hall, 2012; Rycik & Rosler, 2009; Power, 2003; Schneider, 2016; Schwebel, 2011, 2014; Williams, 2009). American authors were impacted by events and subsequently wrote narratives celebrating sacrifice, valor, and patriotic love of country. This seems a logical inference when one juxtaposes the post-September 11th America with the previous decade. The 1990s can be (simplistically) characterized as a period of relative international calm for America; the Cold War had ended after the Soviet Union collapsed, Desert Storm was a short, anodyne war with comparably few deaths, and America enjoyed a burgeoning economy with relatively few international tensions. Historical fiction novelists' understandings of the Civil War had not changed after September 11th, but Americans had.

The fictionalized narratives vilified the enemies more frequently after September 11th; combatants were viewed as adversaries, not former and future countrymen. In the historical fiction narratives published after September 11th, 2001, soldiers were also more excited to go to war and experienced less violence during war. One logical explanation is that American authors responded to the events on and after September 11th with conspicuous patriotism and wrote fictionalized accounts that minimized the perils of war. Another explanation would connect the notable decrease in violence to the apparent decrease in age of intended audience. It stands to reason that authors would include less violence when writing fictionalized war narratives for younger audiences.

American authors did, in fact, target younger audiences in books published after September 11th, 2001. If historical fiction should be read like a diary entry (Schwebel, 2011, 2014), the reader should consider what is known about the writer, when it was written, and how context shaped content. This line of thinking suggests that American authors—influenced by the events of September 11th, 2001—wanted younger students to read about the Civil War, an incomparably unsettling period in American history. Data indicate Civil War historical fiction drifted from middle level grades to the intermediate level grades, from young adult literature to children's literature. Coupled with the previous finding, American authors' historical fiction was both more pro-war and intended for younger readers after September 11th than at any other time. Some might suggest American authors sought to instill patriotic conformity in young readers, but the intent of the authors cannot be determined from the methodology employed in this study.

Another interpretation is American authors of fictionalized history gradually targeted younger audiences during a period of time that included September 11th, 2011. This interpretation does not contribute to the veracity of the hypothesis posited by numerous theorists (e.g., Bousalis, 2016; Ghiso, Campano, & Hall, 2012; Rycik & Rosler, 2009; Power, 2003; Schneider, 2016; Schwebel, 2011, 2014; Williams, 2009). It, however, is supported by data. Less than one-third of Civil War trade books published prior to 1989 targeted intermediate elementary students (30%), half the books published after 1990 but before 2001 targeted intermediate elementary students (50%), and the vast majority of books (90%) published after 2002 targeted intermediate elementary students. This suggests an emerging position for historical fiction for intermediate elementary readers. It seems more logical that this pattern targeting younger audiences is in response to students' reading interests (McMurrer, 2008), particularly young males (Brozo, 2002; Cavazos-Kottke, 2005), than shifting education policy (Graham, 2013). This is not to imply that American authors of children's and young adult historical fiction are immune to changes in educational initiatives, but it appears less likely. These patterns suggest readers should consider the date and context in which historical fiction is published because authors' figurative fingerprints appear prominent upon inspection.

This is not to suggest the hypothesis applies to every element; many trade books did not show marked differences before and after that fateful day in September of 2001. For instance, average soldiers' social class consciousness, motivation to fight, and the conditions in which they fought did not appear to be impacted at all; no conspicuous changes were noted (Appendix C). Similarly, military leaders' class consciousness, motivation, and experienced conditions showed no discernable change (Appendix C). Disaggregated data before and after September 11th were juxtaposed with baseline data derived from comparable literature. Data were then comparatively analyzed with Civil War-based trade books published in the century preceding 1989. Findings suggest September 11th shaped American authors' overall message, intended audience, perceptions of the enemy, and violence within Civil War novels. Schwebel's (2011, 2014) findings relied on close readings of a dozen or so trade books about Native Americans, war, and race relations, specifically slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. More empirical research can determine when, where, and to what extent the narratives shifted. As these samples considered historical fiction intended for intermediate and middle level readers, future research should explore historical fiction intended for secondary students. Such inquiries could consider

how the authors' and publishers' geographic location may have shaped the narratives, specifically juxtaposing Southern authors and publishers with Northern authors and publishers. Researchers might want to consider if and how patterns emerge in other historical topics and how they are impacted by key contextual events. This can and should be done for common curricular areas in social studies, history, English, language arts, and reading.

Guidance for Teachers

Intermediate elementary and middle level teachers can use findings and resultant implications to evoke students' interest in the curricular materials. The following suggestions align with—and extend in novel ways—social studies education pedagogy, specifically history literacy (Austin & Thompson, 2015; Bickford, 2013; Loewen, 2010; Wineburg, Martin, & Monte-Sano, 2011). Imagine a Civil War unit in which the history or social studies teacher had all students independently reading a different book. Students would select from narratives they found particularly interesting or, to ensure differentiation, the teacher could assign each student a book that fits an appropriate level of challenge. A typical class will consume more than two dozen different historical fiction titles for homework. Think of all the nuanced angles that could emerge during a weekly whole-class discussion *because* of the distinctly different messages within the trade books. Historical fiction may not be the principal curricular resource for history and social studies teachers, but fiction can shine a light on history, as the introductory quote alludes.

The teacher will likely have students scrutinize various primary sources to complement the historical fiction trade book or the social studies textbook during the week. Envision, however, the emergent discussion when the teacher poses questions about the areas of convergence and divergence between individual students' historical fiction and the collectively reviewed primary sources and textbook. The queries can be general: Which historical sources appeared in your trade book? Or, what was unique in your historical fiction—an event, a person, a concept—that was dissimilar to what we talked about in class? The questions can be specific: How did your book historically contextualize Abraham Lincoln's election? Or, did your book historicize, minimize, or skim the soldiers' living conditions? These discussions will likely be productive *because* of the distinctly different underlying messages within the historical fiction narratives.

These above questions are not typical for history and social studies teachers because, generally, students do not read much historical fiction in history and social studies; it is more common in English and language arts (Bennett & Sanders, 2016; McMurrer, 2008). In the case suggested above, each student has a different book of historical fiction. When discussing previously analyzed historical documents, some quiet, reserved, shy, or slower students might defer to bold, confident, or popular students. Typically, during whole class discussion, students may play a guess-what-the-teacher-is-thinking game. These same students, though, may be more open to discussing their historical fiction book because no one else has read it. They do not have to compete with the quickest wit or loudest mouth. They symbolically own their trade book. They alone grasp the understandings that originated within that specific narrative in ways unlike the community-owned historical sources.

These distinct historical fiction books also share the same era and will most certainly converge in opportune ways that benefit the discussion. The source's perspective, bias, and context will be at the forefront of the literature discussions just as the historical source discussions will likely center on the tensions between radical change and reactionary response, rights of states and federal government, and the meaning of freedom, patriotism, and loyalty, to name but a few. Visualize the students' wonder when posed questions from *Content Analysis Tool* (Appendix B), organize answers based on publication date, and are asked to consider emergent patterns. In doing so, students will be positioned to view history as a narrative constructed from sources by a storyteller at a particular period in time. Historical fiction should not replace the evocative primary sources necessary for history literacy and historical thinking. Historical fiction, however, can act as a fine curricular supplement, especially when the context of its publication impacts the narrative as much as the singular perspective of the main character.

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Appendix A – Background Information about Books

<p align="center">Depicted War</p>

	Baseline		Civil War	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
American Revolution	6	60%	0	0
Civil War	1	10%	0	0
World War One	1	10%	30	100%
World War Two	1	10%	0	0
Korean War	0	0%	0	0
Vietnam War	1	10%	0	0
Other	0	0%	0	0

<p align="center">Publication Date</p>

	Baseline		Civil War	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2002-2015	1	10%	10	33%
1990-2001	0	0	10	33%
1980-1989	4	40%	3	10%
1970-1979	3	30%	3	10%
1960-1969	1	10%	1	3%
1950-1959	0	0	2	7%
1940-1949	1	10%	0	0
1930-1939	0	0	0	0
1920-1929	0	0	0	0
1880-1899	0	0	1	3%

Appendix B – Content Analysis Tool

1. Author's name, publication date, title, company.
2. For (about) what age/grade was this book intended?
3. Who were the main characters? Describe the main characters' demography including name, age, gender, geographic location, occupation, and any other identifying features or significant elements.
4. How did the author portray:
   a. Average American soldiers
      i. Their social class and class consciousness,
         1. Explicitly detailed
         2. Included but minimized
         3. Implicit or vague
         4. Omitted
      ii. Their motivations or willingness to participate,
         1. Explicitly detailed
         2. Included but minimized
         3. Implicit or vague
         4. Omitted
      iii. Conditions of their involvement?
         1. Explicitly detailed
         2. Included but minimized
         3. Implicit or vague
         4. Omitted
   b. Leaders of American soldiers,
      i. Their social class and class consciousness,
         1. Explicitly detailed
         2. Included but minimized
         3. Implicit or vague
         4. Omitted
      ii. Their motivations or willingness to lead soldiers,
         1. Explicitly detailed
         2. Included but minimized
         3. Implicit or vague
         4. Omitted
      iii. Conditions under which they led?
         1. Explicitly detailed
         2. Included but minimized
         3. Implicit or vague
         4. Omitted
5. How did the author represent enemies of American soldiers? Give examples.
   a. Evil people who sought war
   b. Regular people forced to fight or motivated to defend their homeland
   c. Anonymous figures without families or lives beyond war
   d. Did not represent enemies of American soldiers
6. How did the author portray the violence and mayhem inherent in war? Give examples.
   a. Realistic action and graphic details (i.e. gruesome deaths and gory details)

b. Realistic action but not graphic details (i.e. deaths but few, if any, details)
c. Unrealistic action
d. Did not portray violence and mayhem of war
7. What was the author's overall message about this American war? Give examples.
 a. Was it implicitly encoded or explicitly expressed? Where does this message lie on a continuum:
  i. Explicitly anti-war, pacifist, anti-jingoist, or skeptic/questioning non-conformer
  ii. Implicitly or vaguely anti-war
  iii. Indeterminable
  iv. Implicitly or vaguely pro-war
  v. Explicitly pro-war, jingoist, unbridled or unquestioning patriot
 b. Was the cause worthy?
  i. Support for a righteous cause
  ii. Indistinct or uncertainty about what is right
  iii. Omitted
 c. Was the nation and the nation's leadership worthy of support?
  i. Bellicist, jingoist, and/or unbridled patriotic loyalty to America's leaders
  ii. Pacifist, anti-jingoist, and/or a skeptical, questioning non-conformer?
  iii. Indistinct or vague
  iv. Omitted
8. Were any primary sources incorporated? If so, what specifically? If so, were they located in the foreword, narrative, and/or afterword?
 a. Yes
 b. No
9. Were any parts of the book problematic, implausible, or historically inaccurate?