

Trade Books' Historical Representation of Eleanor Roosevelt, *First Lady of the World*

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Contemporary education initiatives require English language arts educators spend half their time on non-fiction and history and social studies teachers to include diverse sources. Beginning in the early grades within the aforementioned curricula, students are to scrutinize multiple texts of the same historical event, era, or figure. Whereas trade books are a logical curricular resource for English language arts and history and social studies curricula, the education mandates do not provide suggestions. Research indicates trade books are rife with historical misrepresentations, yet few empirical studies have been completed so more research is needed. Our research examined the historical representation of Eleanor Roosevelt within trade books for early and middle-grades students. Identified historical misrepresentations included minimized or omitted accounts of the societal contexts and social relationships that shaped Mrs. Roosevelt's social conscience and civic involvement. Effective content spiraling, in which complexity and nuance increase with grade level, between early and middle-grades trade books did not appear. Pedagogical suggestions included ways to position students to identify the varying degrees of historical representation within different trade books and integrate supplementary primary sources to balance the historical gaps.

Key Words: Children's trade books, young adult literature, Eleanor Roosevelt, historical representation, primary sources, informational texts

Introduction

On November 9, 1962, the General Assembly of the United Nations held a memorial service to celebrate Eleanor Roosevelt's involvement, interests, and ideals. Adlai Stevenson's eulogy illustrated the worldwide admiration she evoked.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt is dead; and a cherished friend of all mankind is gone. Yesterday, I said that I had lost more than a friend—I had lost an inspiration: for she would rather light candles than curse the darkness and her glow had warmed the world. ... I don't think it amiss...to suggest the United Nations is in no small way a memorial to her and her aspirations. To it, she gave the last 15 years of her restless spirit. She breathed life into this organization. The United Nations has meaning and hope for millions thanks to her labors and her love, no less than to her ideals—ideals that made her, only weeks after Franklin Roosevelt's death, put aside all thoughts of peace and quiet after the tumult of their lives to serve as one of this nation's delegates to the first regular session of the General Assembly. Her duty then, as always, was to the living, to the world, to peace. ... This is not the

time to recount the infinite services of this glorious and gracious lady. The list is as inexhaustible as her energies. But devotion to ... the principles of the United Nations, to a world without war, to the brotherhood of man, underscored them all. ... [T]his great and gallant human being who was called “The First Lady of the World.” (Stevenson, 1962, para. 1, 2, 4, 6, 8)

Students born more than half a century after Eleanor Roosevelt’s death do have the time to learn about “the infinite services of this glorious and gracious lady” whose life offers lessons in social justice and civic involvement (Stevenson, 1962, para. 6). Mrs. Roosevelt’s decades-long efforts to minimize poverty and maintain lasting peace were interspersed with situational initiatives, like the pre-war anti-lynching efforts and the post-Holocaust refugee crisis. These endeavors were literally unprecedented and figuratively incomparable for a president’s wife, prompting unsanctioned titles such as the First Lady of the World, America’s Conscience, and the Conscience of a Generation (Hareven, 1968; Hoff-Wilson & Lightman, 1984). Teachers have a unique opportunity to integrate civil rights, human rights, and poverty initiatives using this principled lady that rejected the social conventions of affluence, residual Victorian gender norms, and race restrictions in order to hoist humanity upwards (Cook, 1992, 1999; Goodwin, 1995; Lash, 1964, 1971; O’Farrell, 2011).

Eleanor Roosevelt’s accomplishments and experiences typically are discussed in high school history content. There is space, also, within early and middle-grades curricula where teachers sometimes use designated months of observance, like Women’s History Month, as catalysts for specific social studies topics or interdisciplinary units. While focus on science, reading, and mathematics previously pushed history curricula to the shadows (Heafner & Groce, 2007; McMurrer, 2008; Wilton & Bickford, 2012), recent state and national educational initiatives expect students to spend no less than half their reading time on diverse, interrelated non-fiction texts (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2013; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010). Social studies, history, and English language arts teachers, however, are provided no curricular resources to adjust for the new mandates (Sapers, 2015).

Textbooks, primary sources, and trade books are available options; each has distinct complications. Although textbooks are wide-ranging in coverage, they are expensive, dense, and teeming with historical misrepresentations (e.g. Chick, 2006; Clark, Allard, & Mahoney, 2004; Eraqi, 2015; Lindquist, 2009, 2012; Loewen, 2007; Matusевич, 2006; Miller, 2015; Roberts, 2015). Primary sources are free for use in the classroom and represent novel, diverse, and sometimes competing perspectives; inexperienced learners, however, find their syntax antiquated and prose dense (Bickford, 2013b; Wineburg & Martin, 2009; Wineburg, Smith, & Breakstone, 2012). Ascertaining insights from an archaic source is an acquired skill (Seixas & Morton, 2012; Wineburg, 2001), but discipline-specific techniques can assist young students (Bickford; Nokes, 2011). Early and middle-grades students may view textbooks as boring and primary sources as antediluvian, yet appreciate trade books’ engaging narratives (McMurrer, 2008; Schwebel, 2011). Teachers value trade books’ low cost, capacity to connect different curricula, ability to condense complex historical topics, and that dozens—if not hundreds—of titles are written at diverse reading levels. Their popularity and ubiquity, however, conceal an untrustworthy historicity, which is a combination of historical accuracy and representation.

Historical accuracy and representation are distinct yet linked. It is historically inaccurate to state Columbus *discovered* the Americas or that Hitler *brainwashed* ordinary Germans; neither statement is factual. It is historically misrepresentative to disregard entirely the peoples Columbus contacted or to state *six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust* when the Holocaust had 11 million victims, six million of whom were Jews. Historical inaccuracies are conspicuous, yet rare; historical misrepresentations are hidden, yet common. Trade books' historicity is variable and largely dependent on genre and topic. Historical fiction typically has misrepresentative elements, but readers expect to exchange historical nuance for an engrossing yarn (e.g. Connolly, 2013; Eaton, 2006; Powers, 2003; Schmidt, 2013; Schwebel, 2011; Williams, 2009). Non-fiction trade books' historical misrepresentations, though, are unanticipated, unpredictable, and frequent. Historical misrepresentations were ubiquitous in trade books about Rosa Parks, Helen Keller, Anne Sullivan, and Christopher Columbus, whereas books about Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart, and Abraham Lincoln had only a few conspicuous misrepresentations (Bickford, 2013a; Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015; Bickford & Rich, 2014a; Bickford & Silva, 2016). Trade books about child labor in America largely achieved historicity, yet books about Thanksgiving, the Civil Rights Movement, the Holocaust, slavery in America, and Native Americans did not (e.g. Bickford, 2015; Bickford & Hunt, 2014; Bickford & Rich, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b; Bickford & Schuette, 2016; Bickford, Schuette, & Rich, 2015; Connolly, 2013; Schwebel, 2011; Williams, 2009).

Unlike genre and reading level, trade books' historicity, or historical accuracy and representation, is not reported by publishers. Online reviews, which are often written by untrained contributors or those who profit from the sale, are unreliable (Schwebel, 2011). Published research is both sporadic and problematic. It is sporadic because less than two dozen historical eras, events, and figures have been empirically examined. It is problematic because many researchers mixed (but did not distinguish) genres or combined (but did not juxtapose) the targeted grade range of the reader. Readers of historical fiction and non-fiction have distinctly different expectations, just as early-grades students have dramatically different schema and literacy skills than middle-grades students. These limitations emerged in the only research identified on trade books' historical representation of Eleanor Roosevelt (Bickford & Rich, 2014a). The study also did not thoroughly consider impactful figures, contextual variables, and Mrs. Roosevelt's varied civic involvement; findings were more illustrative than systematic (Bickford & Rich).

Previous limitations informed our methodological approach, which is based on four assumptions. First, Eleanor Roosevelt is a significant figure worthy of inclusion in both early and middle-grades social studies, history, and English language arts curricula. Second, trade books are an age-appropriate curricular tool for early and middle-grades students in social studies, history, and English language arts, yet they contain problematic elements. Third, early and middle-grades trade books cannot match historians' detail, yet teachers should be aware of sterilized or misrepresentative elements of the narratives. Finally, meaningful findings require juxtaposition of comparable grade ranges and consideration of genre.

Method

We employed qualitative research methods from the original data pool through data collection and analysis (Krippendorff, 2013). Our approach mirrored analogous empirical research about historical (mis)representations within textbooks (e.g. Chick, 2006; Clark et al.,

2004; Eraqi, 2015; Lindquist, 2009, 2012; Loewen, 2007; Matusевич, 2006; Miller, 2015; Roberts, 2015) and trade books (e.g. Chick & Corle, 2012; Chick, Slekar, & Charles, 2010; Desai, 2014; Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Although scholars have explored patterns of historical representation over time (Connolly, 2013; Eaton, 2006; Schmidt, 2013; Schwebel, 2011), we included only in-print trade books because teachers would not likely seek or obtain a class set of out-of-print trade books.

To generate a sizeable and inclusive data pool, we collected titles from the largest warehouses of children's literature, specifically Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Booksource, and Scholastic. Trade books' readability and age-range was determined by triangulating Advantage/TASA Open Standard, Lexile, Grade Level Expectations, and Developmental Reading Assessment, which are various diagnostic measures of text complexity. We separated the data pool into two categories, early and middle-grades, to investigate patterns of representation; early-grades are designated as kindergarten through fourth grade and middle-grades are signified as fifth through eighth grade (NCSS, 2013). *Systematic sampling* was employed to randomly gather a sizeable, representative sample that was equal parts early and middle-grades ($n = 22/71$; 30%) (see Appendix A, *Data Pool*).

Both open coding and axial coding were used during analysis. During open coding analysis, we independently made observations, noted patterns of content included and excluded, and recorded variances in patterns. Upon individual completion of the entire sample, we used our notes to collaboratively construct a list of tentative, testable codes. During axial coding analysis, we individually reexamined each book to determine the frequency and reliability of the codes. This second reading enabled consideration of *how* content was included in order to determine if a young reader would likely digest and decode details encoded by an adult author. We reconciled disagreements or dissimilar observations through collaborative reexamination of the disputed content. Multiple readings and revision to the content analysis tool are necessary because trade books' historicity is difficult to determine (see Appendix B, *Content Analysis Tool*). Our steps align with best practice methods to ensure empirical findings (Krippendorff, 2013).

Findings

The data sample intentionally balanced books intended for early-grades students ($n = 11$; 50%) with those intended for middle-grades students ($n = 11$; 50%). The sample was almost entirely non-fiction ($n = 20$; 91%) and predominantly the subgenre of biography, which was expected considering the focus. Subsequent thematic subsections were organized around two central findings: the context of and important relationships within Eleanor Roosevelt's life and her involvement in social, political, and international issues. The former centered on both the relational turmoil she navigated and the social conventions she rejected; the latter focused on her assistance to and interest in humanity in its myriad forms (Cook, 1992, 1999; Goodwin, 1995; Lash, 1964, 1971; O'Farrell, 2011).

Contexts and Relationships

Many factors and figures impacted Eleanor Roosevelt's life. Mrs. Roosevelt's birth in the Victorian era to a wealthy, prominent family shaped her profoundly. Students today might struggle to understand the contemporaneous nuances of elite Victorian society in late 19th century America. Society's class-based partition, the inconspicuous yet distinct separation between *old money* and *new money*, cultural and class traditions like a young woman's societal

debut and noblesse oblige, and social norms based on gender, race, ethnicity, and religious denomination all shaped young Eleanor’s words, thoughts, and actions, yet are foreign to 21st century students (e.g. Black, 1995; Cook, 1992, 1999; Hareven, 1968; Lash, 1964, 1971; Pottker, 2005).

Victorian America and the Roosevelt family’s wealth were ubiquitous and inconspicuous to Eleanor Roosevelt. Victorian America and its implications were detailed explicitly in a small portion of trade books ($n = 3$; 14%) as most minimized ($n = 5$; 23%) or omitted it ($n = 14$; 64%). Almost half of trade books explicitly detailed Roosevelt family wealth and the implications of its place in society ($n = 9$; 41%), while some included it minimally ($n = 2$; 9%), and half disregarded it entirely ($n = 11$; 50%). Table 1, entitled *The Historical Representation of Victorian Society and Roosevelt Family Wealth*, shows how trade books targeting different grade ranges contextualized these two interrelated contextual elements.

Table 1

The Historical Representation of Victorian Society and Roosevelt Family Wealth

	<u>Detailed Both</u>	<u>Minimized Both or Detailed Only One</u>	<u>Omitted Both</u>
Early Grades		Kulling (1999) Rappaport (2009) Thompson (2004) Vercelli (1995)	Adler (1991) *DeYoung (1999) Ellwood (1999) Koestler-Grack (2004) Merchant (2006) *Ryan (1999) Trumbauer (2005)
Middle Grades	Fleming (2005) Freedman (1993) Lazo (1993)	Cooney (1996) El Nabli (2006) Faber (1985) Santow (1999) Winner (2004)	Feinberg (2003) Kimmelman (2014) Weil (1965)

Note. The asterisk (*) denotes a historical fiction text or literature trade book.

Family wealth, Victorian society, and their accompanying societal implications impacted Eleanor Roosevelt even as she refused to accept the rewards. Roosevelt family wealth provided Mrs. Roosevelt, and others in a similar social class position, with countless opportunities and Victorian society offered women like her unbending restrictions. While family money and social norms shaped individuals, findings indicate trade books in both grade ranges did not adequately historicize the contextual variables of Mrs. Roosevelt’s social position.

Many individuals influenced Eleanor Roosevelt both positively and negatively. A thorough review of the historiography determined seven significantly influential persons whom early and middle-grade students could grasp (e.g., Black, 1995; Cook, 1992, 1999; Hareven, 1968; Lash, 1964, 1971; Pottker, 2005). Eleanor Roosevelt’s parents, Anna and Elliot, consequentially shaped her life even though they were only present in her early childhood. Anna

Hall Roosevelt was critical, emotionally distant, and unsympathetic to her shy, sensitive, and introverted daughter. Anna Roosevelt died when Eleanor Roosevelt was eight. Elliot Bulloch Roosevelt was loving and supportive but rarely present due to his alcoholism and reckless choices; he died just before Eleanor turned ten. Theodore Roosevelt, her paternal uncle and President of the United States, was involved and encouraging, especially after her parents' deaths. Marie Sovestre, her teacher and mentor at the private Allenswood Academy in England, was the fulcrum for Eleanor Roosevelt's intellectual awakening and emergent confidence. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, her fifth cousin and eventual husband, was loving and supportive of her social conscience and compassionate actions; Franklin Roosevelt also was complicit in the painful imprints Sara Delano Roosevelt and Lucy Mercer left on her. Sara Delano Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt's mother and Eleanor Roosevelt's mother-in-law, was financially supportive but controlling. Sara Roosevelt marginalized Eleanor Roosevelt in the eyes of her children and regulated her and her husband in various ways. Lucy Mercer, later Rutherford, was first Eleanor Roosevelt's social secretary and later Franklin Roosevelt's mistress. After Eleanor Roosevelt discovered the relationship, Franklin Roosevelt and Lucy Mercer did not communicate or see each other for perhaps two decades. Unbeknownst to Eleanor Roosevelt, Lucy Mercer Rutherford was with Franklin Roosevelt when he died. Eleanor Roosevelt later learned that her daughter, Anna, organized Franklin Roosevelt's and Lucy Mercer Rutherford's various, and inadequately concealed, encounters during his presidency.

The impacts of Anna Roosevelt and Lucy Mercer Rutherford were decidedly negative; Marie Sovestre and Theodore Roosevelt were unambiguously positive; Elliot Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Sara Roosevelt were perhaps cumulatively constructive with particularly adverse aspects (e.g., Black, 1995; Cook, 1992, 1999; Hareven, 1968; Lash, 1964, 1971; Pottker, 2005). Other individuals, specifically Louis Howe, Lorena Hickok, or Malvina Thompson, were carefully considered but not deemed to be essential for early and middle-grades students. Howe encouraged Eleanor Roosevelt's public speaking and advocated for her to pursue her social interests; Hickok was an intimate, supportive friend; Thompson was Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary, companion, and confidant (Cook, 1992, 1999; Lash, 1964, 1971; Streitmatter, 2000). Their individual contributions were more situational in adulthood than developmental throughout Mrs. Roosevelt's life. They were supportive but not change-inducing, and their contributions were arguably less tangible to early and middle-grades students than the seven selected. Table 2, entitled *The Inclusion of Historical Figures Who Shaped Eleanor Roosevelt*, reports the occurrence of notable individuals in the trade books organized by grade level.

Table 2

The Inclusion of Historical Figures Who Shaped Eleanor Roosevelt

	<u>Detailed Seven</u>	<u>Detailed Four to Six</u>	<u>Detailed Three Or Fewer</u>
Early Grades	Vercelli (1995)	Koestler-Grack (2004) Kulling (1999) Rappaport (2009) Thompson (2004)	Adler (1991) *DeYoung (1999) Ellwood (1999) Merchant (2006) *Ryan (1999) Trumbauer (2005)

Middle Grades	Faber (1985) Feinberg (2003) Fleming (2005) Freedman (1993) Lazo (1993) Santow (1999) Winner (2004)	Cooney (1996) El Nabli (2006) Weil (1965)	Kimmelman (2014)
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Note. The asterisk (*) denotes a historical fiction text or literature trade book.

A clear pattern based on the grade level of the intended reader appears in the above table. The majority of middle-grade trade books explicitly detailed all seven historically consequential individuals ($n = 7/11$; 64%) and most every middle-grade trade book incorporated a simple majority ($n = 10/11$; 91%). A majority of early-grade trade books explicitly characterized a few notable individuals ($n = 6/11$; 55%) and only one detailed all seven historically consequential individuals (9%). Further, all middle-grade trade books included at least Louis Howe, Lorena Hickok, or Malvina Thompson. The authors' inclusion of numerous historically consequential figures appeared contingent on, or at least shaped by, the intended reader's age and cognitive development. The children's authors appeared concerned about overwhelming young students with too many names while young adult authors included more impactful figures, which was likely due to the readers' cognitive development.

Social Conscience and Civic Action

Eleanor Roosevelt was empathetic to victims of inequality. She was curious about local, national, and international conditions and considered active and frequent involvement a civic duty of all citizens (Cook, 1992, 1999; Goodwin, 1995; Hareven, 1968; Hoff-Wilson & Lightman, 1984; Lash, 1964, 1971; O'Farrell, 2011). At different times in her life, Mrs. Roosevelt taught poor children of immigrants and supported legislation to end child labor; she worked at soup kitchens and advocated federal intervention when states failed to meet their citizens' basic needs. She visited with injured soldiers and demanded better care for soldiers from Congress. Mrs. Roosevelt actively picketed in support of workers' demands for higher pay and nurtured congressional allies to enact minimum wage legislation; she entered coal mines to better understand working conditions and encouraged New Deal legislation to incorporate workers' compensation and safety regulation. Mrs. Roosevelt assisted innumerable desegregation efforts and publicly resigned from social organizations that maintained segregation; she argued vehemently against her husband's unwillingness to provide sanctuary for Jewish refugees and both initiated and maintained international dialogue about post-war refugees throughout the world. Evoking both veneration and vitriol for her anomalous civic involvement, Mrs. Roosevelt (1935) famously defended her curiosity in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

A short time ago a cartoon appeared depicting two miners looking up in surprise and saying with undisguised horror, "Here comes Mrs. Roosevelt!" In strange and subtle ways, it was indicated to me that I should feel somewhat ashamed of that cartoon, and there certainly was something the matter with a woman who wanted to see so much and to know so much. Somehow or other, most of the

people who spoke to me, or wrote to me about it, seemed to feel that it was unbecoming in a woman to have a variety of interests. Perhaps that arose from the old inherent theory that woman's interests must lie only in her home. This is a kind of blindness which seems to make people feel that interest in the home stops within the four walls of the house in which you live. Few seem capable of realizing that the real reason that home is important is that it is so closely tied, by a million strings, to the rest of the world. That is what makes it an important factor in the life of every nation. Whether we recognize it or not, no home is an isolated object. (Roosevelt, 1935, para. 1-4)

To Eleanor Roosevelt, the world was an interconnected village. Her interests in, and initiatives to improve, this figurative village were both innumerable and in direct conflict with particular societal forces. The tensions between change and continuity, between radical transformation and reactionary resistance, are perhaps perpetually manifest (Seixas & Morton, 2012). Trade books for children and young adults are expected to incorporate an age-appropriate level of details; they are not expected to include every nuance, yet should not omit germane content. A careful review of the historiography indicated five of Mrs. Roosevelt's decades-long pursuits and three consistently robust resistances that early and middle-grades students would likely find engaging and digestible (see questions 17, 18, and 22 of Appendix B, *Content Analysis Tool*). The five interests included gender issues, poverty prevention and labor rights, civil rights based on race and ethnicity, support in various ways to military members, and human rights. The three tensions—resistance to Jewish refugees, Asian immigrants and Asian Americans, and African Americans—originated from popular American sentiment and emerged within various legislation, social norms, mob action, and immigration codes. Table 3, *Eleanor Roosevelt's Diverse Initiatives and the Encountered Reactionary Resistance*, reports the detailed occurrence of the five initiatives and three resistances within trade books of distinctly different grade ranges.

Table 3

Eleanor Roosevelt's Diverse Initiatives and the Encountered Reactionary Resistance

<u>Detailed Seven</u>	<u>Detailed Three Or Eight</u>	<u>Detailed Two to Six</u>	<u>Or Fewer</u>
Early Grades		Adler (1991) Ellwood (1999) Rappaport (2009) Thompson (2004) Vercelli (1995)	*DeYoung (1999) Koestler-Grack (2004) Kulling (1999) Merchant (2006) *Ryan (1999) Trumbauer (2005)
Middle Grades	Fleming (2005)	El Nabli (2006) Feinberg (2003) Freedman (1993) Santow (1999) Winner (2004)	Cooney (1996) Faber (1985) Kimmelman (2014) Lazo (1993) Weil (1965)

Note. The asterisk (*) denotes a historical fiction text or literature trade book

Eleanor Roosevelt spent her adult life bettering humanity, or at least laboring intensely towards these ideals. The innumerable causes she championed—and the formidable resistance she confronted—cannot all be included in early-grades trade books; the historical details are perhaps too numerous and too complex for young children. Predictably, no early-grades trade books included all of the initiatives she advocated and opposition she encountered. Almost half of the early-grades trade books included a sizeable portion ($n = 5/11$; 45%) and most of the trade books included two or fewer ($n = 6/11$; 55%). Surprisingly, middle-grades trade books had curiously similar results; it would be reasonable to suggest that more can be expected from adolescent readers.

Distinct patterns emerged regarding trade books' historical representation of the reactionary resistance Eleanor Roosevelt encountered. Whites' resistance to integration and civil rights was included in more than half the trade books ($n = 12$; 55%), but only detailed in a small portion of books ($n = 3$; 14%) (Feinberg, 2003; Vercelli, 1995; Winner, 2004) and minimized in almost half ($n = 9$; 41%) (Adler, 1991; Ellwood, 1999; Fleming, 2005; Freedman, 1993; Kulling, 1999; Lazo, 1993; Rappaport, 2009; Santow, 1999; Thompson, 2004). The trade books, however, largely ignored reactionary resistance to other marginalized groups. Only a tiny portion of trade books ($n = 2$; 9%) included any context about the anti-Semitism and xenophobia that contributed to the refusal of the United States to admit Jewish refugees prior to or during World War II (Feinberg, 2003; Fleming, 2005). Nearly every book ignored, one middle grade trade book detailed (Fleming, 2005), and one middle grade trade book minimized (Winner, 2004), content about anti-Asian sentiment, restrictive immigration policies for Asian immigrants, Japanese-American Internment, or xenophobic vitriol targeting Asians and Asian Americans. Both early and middle-grades trade books largely included many, if not all, of Mrs. Roosevelt's activism for women's rights, poverty prevention and labor rights, civil rights based on race and ethnicity, support in various ways to military members, and human rights. To present Mrs. Roosevelt as anomalous for her civic involvement is accurate; it is not exceptionalism, a common historical misrepresentation in trade books. To disregard the various societal tensions that Mrs. Roosevelt defied, though, is the historical misrepresentation of omission. Detailing Mrs. Roosevelt's initiatives but not the reactionary resistances she encountered is akin to a story about a victim sans bully, a story of slaves but no mention of slave owner.

Discussion

Considering the burden for change placed on teachers to adjust curricula, it is important for researchers to examine the historical representation of oft-included topics. While teachers may have the motivation and interest, they likely may not have the time or expertise to engage in inquiry. Three subsequent subsections, entitled Patterns, Pedagogy, and Conclusion, contextualize our findings.

Patterns

Three meaningful patterns within the trade books about Eleanor Roosevelt emerged. First, the historical representation of Victorian social norms, Roosevelt family wealth, and their impact on Mrs. Roosevelt were minimized or disregarded in early-grades trade books and detailed or minimized in middle grades (with a few conspicuous omissions). This spiraling was expected and likely determined by authors' judgment of content deemed to age-appropriate. If

students, however, are mature enough to learn about a civic-minded heroine perhaps they are old enough to learn about the entangling benefits that came with her gender and social position at birth. Teachers can provide students with primary source material to illuminate these contextual elements.

Second, the inclusion of historical figures who shaped her life, whether positively or negatively, was spiraled with increasing complexity. More historical characters were detailed in greater degree in the middle-grades trade books than in those intended for early-grade readers, which is appropriate. Teachers might want to inform students that not every supplementary character had a positive impact on Eleanor Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt's poise and fortitude in the face of deleterious people are perhaps as important as her accomplishments and ideals. To include other germane figures, teachers can introduce students to the voluminous, now digitized, correspondence Mrs. Roosevelt both wrote and saved.

Third, Eleanor Roosevelt's various initiatives and the resistance she encountered were not historically inclusive nor was there effective, grade-based spiraling of content. Content was minimized or omitted in middle-grades trade books just as it was in books for early-grades. The former was expected and perhaps developmentally appropriate but not the latter. Teachers can position students to consider Mrs. Roosevelt's initiatives and the resistances she encountered using various primary sources.

Teachers are not limited by their selected trade books' historical representation of Eleanor Roosevelt. Trade books with problematic elements need not be discarded; they do have positive attributes like engaging narratives and they are age-appropriate secondary texts. Teachers can balance historical misrepresentations by using primary sources and carefully positioning the selected trade books. The subsequent suggestions can be combined or completed independently; they conform to contemporary educational initiatives.

Pedagogy

Literacy circle and twin text formats are constructive, common, and encouraged. Students, however, might appreciate the novelty in a new approach. Give each student a book that aligns with their individual reading level; a typical class may have students collectively reading a dozen or more different titles. Engage students in multiple and shifting cooperative learning groups whereby students work with different peers, who are presumably reading different books, on successive days as they complete their individual book. Task students with inspecting their individual trade book for historically consequential material; questions three through 15 of the *Content Analysis Tool* (see Appendix B) direct students to consider the content included and omitted. Individual students' answers are based on their comprehension of the book, yet each group's discussion will be different because the various titles have dissimilar degrees of historical representation. Similar questions using different trade books evoke disparate answers. These inconsistencies will likely elicit confusion over why non-fiction trade books historically represent Eleanor Roosevelt so differently; the inconsistencies will also evoke speculation about which one is correct. This cooperative learning format enables each student to read a developmentally-appropriate book, yet masks who is reading the most difficult or simplest book. Based on differentiation, this tactic shields students from peers' judgment about reading ability. This format ensures diverse answers, which originate from different trade books' distinct degrees of historical representation. It generates confusion and disagreement about which story is more accurate. Confusion and disagreement are formidable curricular tools; they spark

curiosity and position students to view history as a mosaic of competing interpretations and divergent accounts (Barton, 1996; Bickford & Bickford, 2015).

Primary source material could resolve confusion and disagreement. Close readings of primary sources add texture and nuance to the secondary source, the trade books. Complementary historical documents position students to scrutinize sources like a historian and, in doing so, view history as a construct, a story reliant on evidence and the narrator's choices (Barton, 1996; Seixas & Morton, 2012). The trade books invariably gave Eleanor Roosevelt labels like First Lady of the World and Conscience of a Generation; such prose can imply to young students with little prior knowledge that everyone cherished Mrs. Roosevelt. Primary sources—like letters to the editor or images of oppositional campaign buttons stating, *I don't like Eleanor either!*—can alert young readers to the vitriolic attacks and tangible resistance she encountered. Students can read a trade book and grasp the challenges and challengers Mrs. Roosevelt faced, but divergent sources can position students to *discover* the breadth, depth, and vitriol behind the resistance. Visual sources, like photographs and campaign posters, readily evoke students' attention and interest. Text-based primary sources, such as speeches or excerpts from Mrs. Roosevelt's *My Day* column, could be modified to age-appropriate levels, which is encouraged to ensure digestibility so long as the original intent is maintained (Wineburg & Martin, 2009; Wineburg et al., 2012). Teachers could also select newspaper headlines and accompanying dates; these succinct text-based sources enable students to determine distinct perspectives and contexts. Numerous guides can assist teachers' implementation of history literacy tasks and facilitate students' historical thinking (e.g. Austin & Thompson, 2015; Loewen, 2010; Monte-Sano, De La Paz, & Felton, 2014; Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, Martin, & Monte-Sano, 2011; Seixas & Morton, 2012).

Primary sources are freely available on various websites. *American Experience: Eleanor Roosevelt* is a documentary video with supplementary primary sources. *The Library of Congress: American Memory* and the *Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library's Digital Collection* each have enormous collections connecting Mrs. Roosevelt to the Great Depression, the New Deal, race relations during the Great Depression, World War II, and the United Nations. The *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project* has countless videos and primary sources, most unique are the entire collection of her *My Day* daily columns and *If You Ask me* monthly columns.

These suggestions are intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. We hope to spark teachers' curiosities as they adjust their pedagogy and historical content. For various reasons, we do not suggest teachers use (or discard) any particular book. A historically misrepresentative trade book is an opportune curricular resource for students' discovery of its deficiencies. An accurate, representative trade book enables students' comprehension of historical events, but does not evoke students' curiosity and motivation to engage in historical scrutiny like an ahistorical trade book. Regardless of their degree of historicity, all trade books can be a valuable curricular resource and no single trade book is flawless.

Conclusion

This inquiry of Eleanor Roosevelt's representation within history-based trade books intended for early and middle-grades students is important to various groups for many reasons. Many have argued that Mrs. Roosevelt is the most consequential American woman of the 20th century (Cook, 1992, 1999; Goodwin, 1995; Hareven, 1968; Hoff-Wilson & Lightman, 1984; Lash, 1964, 1971; O'Farrell, 2011). Her contributions are unmatched by any First Lady and

warrant students' inquiry. Contemporary educational initiatives amplify the curricular position of trade books. Social studies and history teachers must incorporate diverse sources; a single textbook is insufficient. English language arts teachers must increase the proportion of non-fiction topics and texts within their classroom. Early and middle-grades teachers, whose teacher preparation is broad and generally focused on multiple disciplines, are perhaps more impacted by these required adjustments than secondary teachers whose teacher preparation is typically grounded in a single discipline. Trade books are a logical curricular tool, yet teachers—especially early and middle-grades educators—are perhaps unaware of their problematic elements. This research contributes to the pedagogical content knowledge of early and middle-grades social studies, history, and English language arts teachers.

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Appendix A – Data Pool

Early Grades

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Middle Grades

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Appendix B – Content Analysis Tool

1. Expected grade of the reader:
 - a. Early Grades (1-4)
 - b. Middle Grades (5-8)
2. Genre:
 - a. Literature: historical fiction
 - b. Informational Text: narrative non-fiction, expository, biography
3. Did the author represent E. Roosevelt's dispositions, attitude, motivation, and behavior? If so, how?
4. Did the author characterize E. Roosevelt's mother, her mother's treatment of E. Roosevelt, and her mother's death? If so, how?
5. Did the author characterize E. Roosevelt's father, her father's treatment of E. Roosevelt, his alcoholism, his involvement with a female servant, his death? If so, how?
6. Did the author characterize E. Roosevelt's uncle, T. Roosevelt? If so, how?
7. Did the author characterize E. Roosevelt's husband, F. D. Roosevelt? If so, how?
8. Did the author characterize E. Roosevelt's teacher, M. Sovestre? If so, how?
9. Did the author contextualize the Victorian norms that likely influenced E. Roosevelt's actions and beliefs about gender, family, and home life? If so, how?
10. Did the author contextualize the palpable difference between the poor and members of Society? If so, how?
11. Did the author contextualize early to mid-20th century American popular sentiment about race, ethnicity, and religious affiliation along with accompanying events:
 - a. Jewish, anti-Semitism, FDR's refusal to admit Jewish refugees, etc.
 - b. Asian, Asian American, immigration quotas, Japanese-American Internment, etc.
 - c. African-American, segregation, anti-lynching, etc.
12. When contextualizing E. Roosevelt's social activism prior to F. Roosevelt's death, did the author denote her involvement with:
 - a. Women, women's suffrage, right to work, etc.
 - b. Poverty, labor unions, child labor, etc.
 - c. Segregation by race or ethnicity, desegregation, anti-lynching, etc.
 - d. Military service, Bonus Army, treatment of injured veterans, etc.
13. Did the author characterize E. Roosevelt's relationship with Sara Roosevelt? If so, how?
14. Did the author characterize E. Roosevelt's awareness of FDR's relationship with Lucy Mercer (Rutherford)? If so, how?
15. Did the author describe E. Roosevelt's contributions to the United Nations, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and other international projects?

Author Bios

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