A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE PORTRAYAL OF

BLACK MALE ADOLESCENT PROTAGONISTS IN

FOUR NOVELS FOR ADOLESCENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of
Black Male Adolescent Protagonists in
Four Novels for Adolescents

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This study examines the portrayal of black male adolescent
protagonists in four novels for adolescents, Sounder by Armstrong, The
Contender by Lipsyte, The Learning Tree by Parks and Durango Street by
Bonham.

Research reveals that reading can influence a person's attitudes,
behaviors, and self-image, and, therefore, teachers should be aware of
what effects the literature they teach may have on students. This study
focuses on black male adolescent protagonists in order to analyze what
kinds of literary role models black male adolescent readers are presented
with in school. This group is especially important to focus on because
many black male adolescents struggle without success in our society.

The researcher used a modified version of Havighurst's (1952)
developmental tasks for adolescents as the basis for the examination of
the four novels. The modifications to Havighurst's tasks were based on
an ethnic developmental model described by Cross (1971). Content
Analysis was the method used to study the developmental progress of the
black male protagonists in the novels according to the Havighurst
(modified) model. Before beginning the analysis, the researcher
determined reliability for conducting the analysis by comparing his

analysis of a novel for adolescents, _Nitty Gritty_ by Bonham, that was not a part of the study, with a panel composed of three teachers of English. This procedure determined that the researcher was reliable in using Content Analysis to analyze the selected novels.

The researcher then randomly chose three episodes from each novel and conducted a Content Analysis of each episode, indicating the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst's (modified) tasks. To check the researcher's reliability during the analysis, one of the raters (black male) also coded _The Learning Tree_, and the correlation from that check indicated a high degree of reliability. The researcher concluded that _Sounder_, _The Contender_, and _The Learning Tree_ are novels that have positive depictions of black male role models according to the Havighurst (modified) tasks, but _Durango Street_ does not. This researcher recommends the first three novels for classroom instruction.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Eleanor Goodwin and Michael Goodwin.
They offered continuing inspiration for this project.

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Introduction

One can teach literature at the secondary level in a myriad of ways and with a variety of goals in mind. A teacher can emphasize the aesthetic appeal of literature or its historical context or its sociological impact or its psychological implications. A teacher can use literature to teach vocabulary, grammar, and writing. The possibilities for the use of literature in the classroom are limited primarily by the imagination of the teacher.

No matter what purpose a teacher has or what the teacher's goals are when teaching literature, at some point a student may have a meaningful personal experience with the literature. This personal experience may, among other possibilities, produce a better understanding of his* own identity. Recognizing that literature may have an effect on an individual's self-identity, and recognizing that there have not been any studies on the possible impact that certain literary works may have on the self-identities of a specific group of students--black male adolescents--this study focuses on literature that may affect the self-identities of individuals in that group.

Rationale

A long-standing manner of educating adolescents about themselves and about society is through literature. One of the primary reasons for reading is to search for self-identification which Broderick (1973) says

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* The pronoun "his" is used in this study because the study specifically focuses on males.

is an important process for adolescents. As Rosenblatt (1968) suggests, literature can help adolescents become emotionally and intellectually aware of themselves, and it can serve as a guide for many of life's decisions because of the alternatives it presents. Readers do not feel as isolated as they might because they can read about emotions or about actual situations similar to their own. Thus, reading may be helpful in enabling adolescents to learn more about themselves.

As Gay (1985) indicates, positive self-identification for most members of American racial minorities does not happen easily. Gay emphasizes that if a person develops a positive self-identity, it is learned, and is, therefore, susceptible to instructional intervention in schools. As a result of the growing awareness of the struggles of minorities in American culture to foster positive self-identities in youth, schools are using more ethnic literature, but much of what is published is still not appealing or realistic enough to be helpful to a minority adolescent's self-development (Grambs, 1972). Anderson's (1981) research reveals that although some improvements have been made in school-selected stories for black adolescents since 1965, significant change has yet to be made. Anderson states that black adolescents, "must be afforded the opportunity to select fiction that is realistic, refreshing to the spirit, and written to project a positive image" (Anderson, 1981).

The National Council of Teachers of English stated over 40 years ago that literature instruction should "develop a keen sense of permanent social values and that literature should present problems that are realistic" (Basic Aims Committee of the National Council of Teachers of

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English, 1942). If not chosen carefully, the content of school readings can actually devalue black adolescents' self-esteem by erasing them from the world completely (Grambs, 1972). If black adolescents fail to read about other members of their race, they have little with which to identify. If students are to see literature as realistic, they should be able to view a variety of human experiences, including some similar to their own (Carr, 1972).

Most adolescents continue to read literature that centers around a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant view of the world and for a minority adolescent this exclusion or minimizing of blacks in literature can lead to an erosion of self-image. The possibility exists that when literary selections are limited, "blacks may come to see their own values undermined and undervalued" (Carr 1972). Carr suggests that it is an educator's responsibility to present students with realistic literature so that all students can see that blacks as well as whites are an active, meaningful presence in society.

Banks (1972), too, recognizes the importance of using literature that appeals to black adolescents. Banks suggests that black adolescents can better understand and perhaps solve some of their own personal problems by identifying with the struggles and problems of other black adolescent characters undergoing similar struggles. Banks also declares that glorification of whites and degradation of blacks in textbooks deflates black adolescents' self-concepts; he calls for experience with literature that encourages sound decisions and enables the shaping of positive identities. Literature that portrays blacks in an unfavorable manner can devalue adolescents' self-images and adversely affect their

out-of-class behavior (Grambs 1972).

Klah's (1980) research shows that several novels for adolescents fail to present black adolescent readers "with sufficient choices upon which to generate goals and values." Klah suggests that such novels should portray realistic experiences and they should present a less narrow view of the black experience.

Literature has been carefully examined for its portrayal of blacks and often the findings are discouraging. Seigal's (1976) study revealed that there is often a cruel and sadistic treatment of black characters in American literature. She concludes that black characters are often symbols of evil and are often victims of violence (Seigal, 1976). According to Seigal, Lee's (1960) novel To Kill A Mockingbird, which is often taught at the high school level, is a portrayal of a black man who is, "stupid, pathetic, defenseless, and dependent upon the fair dealings of the whites, rather than on his own intelligence." Gibson (1977) examined literature taught in schools that presents negative views of the black community. In Native Son by Wright (1940), the community which is depicted gives none of the positive supports which communities can give. The protagonist has no status, no security, no positive identity or assurance of self-worth (Gibson, 1977). The protagonist in the The Invisible Man by Ellison (1947), strives hard for his identity and the result is a man who is isolated, powerless, and lacking identity. Rufus in Another Country by Baldwin (1960), has no support system, no reliable community, no strong black friends. In these and many other examples that Gibson points out, one can see a lack of positive societal or individual viewpoints for a black child to consider. Undoubtedly, it was

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not the purpose of the writers to create role models in these works, but it is inevitable that impressionable adolescents who read them could be affected adversely by them.

It appears to be especially important to focus concern in the classroom on black male students. Black males are statistically in the highest categories of crime, drop-out rates, and unemployment (Holland, 1981). Approximately 50% of urban black males do not finish high school and are also unemployed. This situation leads to increased crime since many of those individuals grow dependent on illegal income for maintaining a basic life style. Although black men compose 6% of America's population, they make up 50% of male prisoners. Holland (1981) suggests the most common "reasons cited for their academic and social failing are that they have no positive male role models." Holland emphasizes that schools provide few black adult male role models and this may be the basis for students' "reluctance to pursue academic achievement" (Holland, 1981).

Efforts such as welfare reform, vocational training projects and various forms of counseling have been attempted to help black males, but the telling statistics continue to rise. Thus, schools are increasingly viewed as important places in which black adolescents should obtain basic academic learning, career and personal counseling, and instructive social interactions.

Recognizing that literature can have effects on adolescents, and recognizing that many black male adolescents are not having success in school, this researcher has chosen to analyze what kinds of literary role models black male adolescent readers are presented in school. This

study, then, focuses on four commonly taught novels for adolescents whose protagonists are adolescent black males. The study employs the adolescent developmental tasks identified by Havighurst (1952). Because Havighurst's (1952) developmental model was developed primarily by studying white adolescents, and because black males have additional unique experiences as they struggle to mature, this researcher has modified the Havighurst model to incorporate elements of an ethnic developmental model (Cross, 1971).

Research Question

How are black male protagonists depicted in four novels for adolescents, Sounder by William Armstrong, The Contender by Robert Lipsyte, The Learning Tree by Gordon Parks, and Durango Street by Frank Bonham, according to adolescent developmental tasks described by Havighurst and modified by this researcher based on studies by Cross?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze, through content analysis, the portrayal of black male protagonists in four novels for adolescents: Sounder by William Armstrong, The Contender by Robert Lipsyte, The Learning Tree by Gordon Parks, and Durango Street by Frank Bonham.

Significance of the Study

Since research suggests that the portrayal of black male protagonists in literature for adolescents may affect black male adolescent readers, it is important that teachers become more aware of what role models they are presenting in their assigned readings. Once an analysis is made, teachers' awareness may encourage or enable them to teach more literature that focuses on black characters; they may be more

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careful in their selection of literature so that it presents black male role models with whom students may identify; they may have more concern about their black students; and evaluation and selection committees may search for and approve more readings with positive male black role models/protagonists.

Key Definitions

Identity - a sense of being able to function as a separate person but with a close relationship to others. Having an identity means being one of a group but, at the same time, having characteristics that stand out from the group and identify the bearer of these characteristics as an individual. (Erikson, 1984).

Literature for Adolescents - literature written for the adolescent reader, ages 13-19 years old or in grades 7-12.

Content Analysis - an objective, systematic process used to identify specific items, ideas, or themes within specific content (Holsti, 1969).

Developmental Tasks - tasks which arise at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, and which failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks (Havighurst, 1952).

Role Model - an individual whose values, actions, and accomplishments are considered worthy of emulation by another person.

Protagonist - the chief character in a story. The character who is the leading figure both in terms of importance in the story and in terms of his or her ability to enlist interest and sympathy (Holman, 1981).

Havighurst Model (modified) - Havighurst's (1952) developmental tasks for

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adolescents is the model which this study employs. The model has been modified by the researcher to reflect new research by Cross (1971). Cross described an ethnic developmental model, parts of which were used to modify the Havighurst model to in order to accommodate recent research findings in ethnic adolescent development.

Assumptions of the Study

This study assumes the following:

1. Literature can be an influential medium in one's life.

2. Literature can provide role models.

3. Content Analysis can adequately describe, through its collection of data and resulting inferences, the overall impact of a given work.

4. The adolescent developmental tasks described by Havighurst are accurate and valid.

5. The ethnic model for adolescent development described by Cross is accurate and valid.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by the following:

1. The number and quality of the novels themselves.

2. Selected episodes in each of the novels.

3. Analysis of the episodes is limited by the model of adolescent tasks as outlined by Havighurst and modified by the researcher according to research by Cross.

Summary

The depiction of black male protagonists in literature for adolescents invites examination because of the possible effect their portrayal may have on young black male readers. Schools are seen as sources of assistance for adolescents, and teachers may be more helpful in instruction if they are aware of the possible role models they are presenting through the literature that they teach.

This chapter has introduced the study. Chapter Two presents a review of literature related to this study, Chapter Three presents the design of the study. Chapter Four consists of the data and results of the study, and Chapter Five contains a summary of the study and suggestions for further research and practice.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the study.
The chapter includes the following: a discussion on the effects of
reading on adolescents, a discussion of the effects of bibliotherapy on
adolescents, a review of educators' concerns about minority literature,
an overview of Erickson's research on identity formation, an overview of
Havighurst's developmental tasks, an overview of Erickson's research on
identity formation, a review of an ethnic developmental model based on
research by Cross, a presentation of the concerns of black psychologists
about the education of ethnic adolescents, and an explanation of Content
Analysis.

Effects of Reading on Adolescents

Books may be helpful in enabling adolescents to learn more about
themselves and the world. This theory has been researched with
increasing interest in recent years as educators look for new strategies
for helping today's youth. Rosenblatt (1968), one of the key
researchers in investigating the effects of reading literature on the
reader, emphasizes that literature offers an important source of possible
alternatives from which a person may choose. Books, through their
characters, present various situations that may influence adolescents and
actually help them through difficult times. Literature helps the reader
"to envisage new and more desirable patterns" (Rosenblatt, 1968). It may
help readers see their own personalities and problems more objectively,
and adolescents may be encouraged to establish goals that they had never

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imagined. Frequently, literature is the only way that adolescents can explore their own inner feelings, and by discovering that their thoughts and feelings are not unique, they may be better able to handle them (Rosenblatt, 1968). Rosenblatt calls for teachers to provide literature that will have relevance to the general emotional and intellectual level of the students, and reminds teachers that literature may not only provide a direct positive influence, but that it can help students resist unfavorable choices in their life experiences (Rosenblatt, 1968).

Lorang speaks even more strongly about the influence that literature has on the reader. Her research concludes that "reading effects and affects behavior for good or evil. The effect may result in socially acceptable behavior or anti-social behavior" (Lorang, 1968).

Bachner (1981) reveals that there are literary selections which a teacher may find desirable to share with black disadvantaged students so that they can have a realistic yet positive experience with which to identify. In Mary Jane by Sterling (1971), young black readers will recognize the painful conflicts and confrontations, yet at the same time the novel gives them some models of fair, flexible behavior (Bachner, 1981). In Harlem Summer by Vroman (1968), an adolescent can learn not to be ashamed of being black (Bachner, 1981). Thus, Bachner suggests that teachers can select novels which have positive portrayals of black characters.

Shachter (1976) reveals that only in the past two or three decades have black adolescents begun to see themselves in non-stereotyped literary portrayals. She calls for the publishing and teaching of fictional works in which characters are shown to be responsible for the

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resolution of their problems and "who show creative leadership without being paragons" (Shachter, 1976). Dorsey (1977) calls for minority literature to be taught at every level of the school curriculum and suggests that literature is ideal material for leading students to examine their own values and perceptions and for learning to comprehend and respect alternatives. Dorsey emphasizes that literature can "objectify one's own value system and teach one to distinguish the self and the self's values from the communal."

Cudjoe (1980) states that he teachs Afro-American literature in order to "give his students life-giving thoughts and to hate racial exclusiveness and the exploitation of people." Bresnahan (1976) too, recognizes that books can leave an adolescent with a lasting impression. Bresnahan suggests that perhaps black adolescents who do not have male role models whom they can admire will benefit from the exchange of love between such characters as Ronnie and his father in the novel Ronnie by Rosenbaum (1969) and that such novels can give insights into coping with a range of adolescent problems.

According to Small (1973), there is a need for books with black characters whose depiction can help black students develop a more positive self-concept. "Faced too often by the segregation and scorn of the surrounding white world, America's black children are in pressing need of books that will give them back their souls." Small suggests that black students will be more interested in books by and about blacks and will also be better able to identify with the characters in such books. "Teachers who have used works of black literature with black students seem to agree that their students showed and openly expressed far greater

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interest in and ability to identify with black characters" (Small, 1973).
Dodd (1968) states that it is an important mission of the English class
to help the black student have a better opinion of himself and his race.
Dodd reiterates that literature is a primary means of achieving this
goal, and the content of the literature which is taught should resemble
the life of the student. In order to produce a positive effect among
black students, appealing books with black characters should be added to
the curriculum (Dodd, 1968). Small adds that the quantity of black
characters in literature has increased but that there is much work to be
done in improving the characterization of these characters. Finally,
Hipple (1973) suggests that because literature develops attitudes, helps
influence opinions, helps shape goals and values, and may increase
self-respect, it should be chosen carefully.

Bibliotherapy

One strategy for helping adolescents mature is bibliotherapy.
Bibliotherapy is the practice of using selected readings in order to help
individuals cope more successfully with personal problems. Bibliotherapy
can help adolescents with problems that may affect their personal
development, socialization, and education (Davison, 1983). Identifying
with a character gives readers a chance to explore, understand, and share
motivation, emotions, and needs. Identification with a character may
have a positive effect on the reader's self-image. "If the character is
admired or if the character is troubled, identification can help the
reader discover, to his immense relief, that he is not the only one in
the world with a particular problem" (Davison, 1983). Brown (1975)
points out that through literature adolescents can gain insights and

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better understand their own emotions and needs. Readers can relive portions of their own experiences and gain new awareness of alternatives and solutions which they may not have recognized (Brown, 1975). Brown discovered that as adolescents identify themselves with characters in a story, they find guidance and learn problem-solving skills.

Witty (1968) suggests that bibliotherapy for adolescents is a means of preventing maladjustment and adds that teachers must realize what the effects of literature on an adolescent can be. Roy (1979) and Karlin (1985) found that books can be an avenue for helping adolescents who are suffering psychological problems, and Olsen (1974) strongly suggests using bibliotherapy to help adolescents with their problems for it can and often does have a "great influence on personality."

In 1983 Jalango presented the characteristics of books useful in bibliotheraphy: 1) Adolescents can identify with the plot, setting, dialogue and characters. 2) Events are portrayed accurately with sound psychological explanations. 3) Origins of emotional reactions are revealed and inspected. 4) Appreciation for individual differences is present. 5) Good role models are evident. 6) Crisis situations are presented in an optimistic, surmountable manner.

According to Krough (1983), adolescents begin life with a strong concern for self and, over a period of time, learn to look outward. To look outward adolescents need two tools: growth in congitive awareness and a benign and encouraging environment. The use of literature in the classroom can aid adolescents in looking outward while providing these tools (Krogh, 1983).

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Ethnobibliotherapy

A variation of bibliotherapy is ethnobibliotherapy.
Ethnobibliotherapy is bibliotherapy that is directed at helping
minorities by using ethnic literature so that minorities can read about
individuals who may be experiencing problems similar to their own. These
problems are directly related to racial concerns or incidents, which is
especially helpful if the person undergoing therapy is struggling with
similar concerns. "The suggested readings focus on situations in which
the protagonists experience an identity crisis with being Black, and
succeed in devising some constructive means of resolving these conflicts"
(Gay, 1985). The underlying premise is that by reading about situations
similar to those they are experiencing themselves, students will find
constructive outlets for their anxieties, will be exposed to behavioral
models with which they can identify, and will learn some useful
strategies for resolving their own ethnic identity problems (Gay, 1985).

Educators' Concerns About Minority Literature

Books, journals, and other publications are replete with writing
that is concerned with minority literature. Some call for authors to
write fiction that does not "confine a race's entire character to a
half-dozen narrow grooves" (Sterling Brown in Emanuel, 1968). Many
critics review minority literature or literature with minority
characters, and they complain of the stereotypes that are portrayed
(Stark, 1971; Wilkinson, 1987; Broderick, 1973; Jackson, 1976; Margolies,
1968; Gayle, 1975). All these authors examine black literature in
particular. Educators write and suggest the need for more ethnic
literature to be taught in the classroom and call for an examination of

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what is already taught (Grambs, 1972); (Carr, 1972); (Banks, 1972).

Snider (1981) states that what is needed is a curriculum "that has relevance to black students because they can see themselves in it." Snider emphasizes that some black students develop "negative coping mechanisms" in order to maintain their identity and that much can be done to prevent such negative behavior through schools and their curriculum. Finally, other authors express anger at the state of ethnic education in the United States (Grier, 1968).

Havighurst's Developmental Tasks

In order to help analyze the portrayal of black adolescent characters in four selected novels, this researcher chose Havighurst's (1952) model of adolescent development as a guide. Havighurst (1952) examined the various stages of adolescent human development for both males and females recognizing the stages as crucial steps in a person's emotional, psychological, social, and intellectual growth. Havighurst suggested that, "there are tasks that individuals must accomplish if they are to be judged and to judge themselves as reasonably happy and successful people" (Havighurst, 1952). Havighurst classified these tasks into three areas: psychosocial and psychosexual development, establishment of autonomy, and an orientaton for the future (Havighurst, 1952). These tasks include the following:

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with mates of both sexes.

2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.

3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.

4. Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults.

5. Achieving assurance of economic independence.

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6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation.

7. Preparing for marriage and family life

8. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.

9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.

10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior.

If the tasks are not achieved at the proper time, adolescents may experience partial or complete failure in the achievement of later tasks (Havighurst, 1952). Adolescents may also be regarded by their peers as immature, a label that carries a stigma at any age (Hurlock, 1980). Some of the tasks arise from physical maturation, others from cultural pressures of society, and the rest from the personal values and aspiration of the individuals. It is useful for educators to be aware of these tasks as they attempt to meet the needs of individuals at various stages (Havighurst, 1952).

Erikson and Identity Formation

Erikson (1950) reiterates the importance of the adolescent stage as a crucial time of identity formation. He states that the adolescent is "apt to suffer more deeply than he ever did before or ever will again from a confusion of roles." (Erikson, 1968). During this period, adolescents are often defenseless against outside influences, whether they be positive or negative. Erikson emphasizes that identity is based on an integration of past identification and roles, and that the adolescent "looks most fervently for men and ideas to have faith in during this period of his life" (Erikson, 1968).

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Erikson's research on identity formation also concerns itself with the difficulties black male adolescents often face with their racial identities in a society with a white majority. He quotes Robert Penn Warren to help voice his concern:

> Alienated from the world to which he is born and from the country of which he is a citizen, yet surrounded by successful values of that new world, and country, how can the Negro define himself? (Warren, 1965 in Erikson, 1968).

Erikson recognizes that black adolescents may have an even more difficult times as they struggle with their identities. Erikson alludes to the theme of "invisibility" that is expressed in works by black authors, especially Ellison. Erikson interprets these recurring themes as a demand for black males to be heard, seen, and recognized as individuals "with a choice rather than as men marked by...their color" (Erikson, 1968). Erikson emphasizes that black adolescents' self-identities are continually undermined by society, and that black adolescents from fatherless homes especially have difficulty in establishing their self-identities with a mother as their only immediate role model (Erikson, 1968). Thus, Erikson concludes that the search for identity during the period of adolescence is confusing for all but that for black males the struggle is especially difficult; finally, he states that role models may affect the search.

Cross' Ethnic Adolescent Developmental Model

Cross (1971) concludes that the search for identity is especially crucial for blacks during the adolescent stage. Cross' model of ethnic identity development applies more specifically to the black adolescent group that is the focus of this study; therefore, the Havighurst model,

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which is the basis for this research, has been modified by this researcher to incorporate Cross' important, realistic analysis of black adolescents' stages of development. For ease of explanation, Gay (1985) compressed the stages described by Cross into a three-stage paradigm: Pre-Encounter, Encounter and Post-Encounter stages of adolescent development.

During the Pre-Encounter stage, the individual's ethnicity does not shape his reasoning, attitude or feelings significantly. In fact, Cross (1971) emphasizes that the development of an "American" identity involves affirmation of White-Anglo-Saxon Protestant characteristics, and negation, dilution and even demise of ethnic behavior. Developmentally, adolescents are too immature to appreciate the meaning of their ethnicity so they are easily swayed by the majority influence. Adolescents may, of course, be raised to recognize and be proud of their heritage, but they soon realize negative aspects of their existence as black persons. Towards the end of this stage, adolescents may begin to experience the negative beliefs and attitudes others associate with their ethnicity (Gay, 1985). It is during this time that self-denigration begins to occur.

During the Encounter stage, one major event or a series of events begins to disrupt adolescents' otherwise positive or innocent feelings about themselves; they may be rejected from an all-white birthday party, or they may not be chosen for an all-white baseball team...the possibilities are infinite. The results are often the same; ethnic adolescents will vacillate between feelings of rage and depression, pride and shame, anger and sadness. They may sometimes yearn for the company

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of another minority companion and at other times reject the possibility. "On the outside the person is generally very quiet, yet a storm is brewing inside." (Cross, 1971). They become confused and withdraw in order to cope. This stage often occurs during adolescence, and, of course, causes this already difficult stage of human development to be especially crucial and challenging for a black adolescent (Gay, 1985).

If adolescents are able to regain self control and psychological openness, they may move to the Post-Encounter stage. They are then able to control their rage and turn it to anger against racist institutions; they are able to move from feelings of inferiority to pride, and to self-acceptance. They are able to accept their black community but are also able to engage in multi-ethnic activities without losing their self-respect and to the degree that they may even strive to improve relationships between blacks and whites. (Gay, 1985) One of the most striking qualities of many people who are in this stage is the compassion they exhibit towards those who are still struggling to reach the Post-Encounter Stage (Cross, 1971).

There are several educational implications underlying these stages; one of the most significant is that since students learn best when they are psychologically ready and intellectually capable, some black adolescents may be having difficulty in school because of their struggles with their self-identities. It is evident that self-concepts and academic achievement are interrelated. To ignore these ethnic developmental stages and to then mis-diagnose a black students' needs at a particular stage of development can result in a depressed, angry, or undisciplined adolescent (Gay, 1985).

This researcher has chosen Havighurst's tasks as the model for the study, and two of the tasks have been modified by this researcher based on Cross' ethnic model. The third task described by Havighurst, which is to accept one's physique and to use one's body effectively, has been modified to reflect the need for black adolescents to accept and have pride in their physical blackness. Cross indicates that this task is crucial for black adolescents to achieve. The tenth task described by Havighurst, which is to acquire a set of values and an ethical system, has been modified to emphasize the need, according to Cross, for black adolescents to assume global responsibilities and to move against racial oppression in a legal manner.

Black Psychologists' Concerns for Education of Black Adolescents

Williams (1981), a black psychologist, reiterating the importance of helping black adolescents to achieve positive self-identities, explores the role that education can assume in this vital area. She suggests using materials in literature courses that reflect black contributions in order to instill positive attitudes among black students for themselves and their culture. She asks educators to help black adolescents develop "reflective attitudes and feelings and self-concepts about Black experience" (Williams, 1981). She hopes that students can learn to evaluate themselves and their roles in society. Williams emphasizes the importance of making the school experience a relevant one, and one that will help develop "pride, self-determination, dignity, the concept of self, and the liberation of the mind from racism" (Williams, 1981). Holland (1987) calls on the schools and community to "undertake the arduous task of training young black boys to be responsible for their

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actions and to take advantage of the tremendous opportunities that are available to those who are willing to accept schooling as the road to success." Holland emphasizes that the schools need more positive black male role models.

Content Analysis - The Method of Analysis for this Study

Content Analysis is one useful approach to the study of literature for adolescents because it is an objective, systematic, and quantitative method of describing content (Bekkedal, 1973). Content Analysis (CA) can be used to identify specific items, ideas, or themes within specific content. CA has been used in a variety of areas including studies of child development, history, humanities, psychology, and communication.

In 1952 Berelson outlined the characteristics of CA and advocated CA's scientific methods for use in communication research. The six major characteristics of CA that he presented are 1) syntactic and semantic requirement-what is said should be analyzed. 2) objectivity - categories should be defined so precisely that different analysts can arrive at the same results. 3) systematic - all occurrences of the categories must be studied to prevent biased or partial analysis. 4) qualification - numerical frequency of items should be maintained. 5) CA should be applied to social sciences 6) CA should study the effects of communication.

Berelson points out that there are several assumptions of Content Analysis: 1) Inferences can be made about the relationship between intent and content or between content and effect, or actual relationships can be established. 2) CA often reveals purposes, motives, and other characteristics of the communicator as they are reflected in the content.

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3) CA can identify the possible effects of the content upon the attention, attitudes, or acts of the readers 4) CA assumes study of content is meaningful. CA assumes meanings are ascribed to content by assigning content to certain categories. These categories correspond to the intentions of the communication and will be understood by the audience. 5) CA assumes quantitative descriptions of content is meaningful, and the frequency of occurrences of various characteristics of the content is meaningful.

One of the major uses of CA is to identify intentions and other characteristics of communication. In recent years there has been an increase in qualitative methods in analyzing the psychological aspects of communication. Inferences about population groups are made on the basis of content and the effects of content on attitude and behavior are analyzed. Much of the qualitative studies are quasi-quantitative as qualitative measures are based on the presence and/or absence of particular content (Berelson 1952). Words such as "repeatedly", "rarely", "usually" and "often" frequently emerge in such studies. Inferences are made as part of the analytic process, not after all data has been gathered as in more quantitative studies.

Most Content Analysis begins with coding of selected data and placement of that data in certain categories. Each category must reflect the intent of the research, and as Holsti (1969) indicates, each category must be independent of other categories. In qualitative analysis less formalized categorization takes place. Usually more complex themes are studied, and thus the study is not always precisely numerical (Berelson).

In developing the categories for qualitative analysis, Berelson

points out that one should try to exercise imagination in the invention and development of the categories, but the reseacher should accept full responsibility for the statement of the hypothesis. The researcher should state what indicators are relevant in the content for the categories and what sample would be appropriate. CA should employ the categories that are most meaningful for the particular problem at hand and although invention is looked for, specific and concrete categories are often the most meaningful. Categories may include what is said and/or how something is said.

It is necessary to count items carefully, especially in the following situations: 1) when a high degree of precision and accuracy is requested 2) when a high degree of objectivity is required 3) and if material would otherwise be unmanageable. However, restricting CA to number assumes that frequency is the only valid index of concern (Holsti, 1969). Ideally, according to Holsti, CA should be a balance of qualitative and quantitative methods. The recording unit used in CA is considered to be the smallest body of content in which the appearance of a reference is counted, and the content unit is the largest body of content that may be examined in the effort to characterize a recording unit. Units may be words or phrases, sentences, paragraphs, episodes, or even chapters. Sometimes the inter-relationship of these units is also studied (Holsti, 1969).

Reliability may suffer as the number of categories increases. To test the reliability of a study different orders should produce the same results, the results should be consistent over time, and the degree correlation between the researcher and subsequent researchers should be

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between .78 and .99 (Berelson, 1952).

The majority of content studies are grouped into three subject areas: 1) studies of human relationships depicted in books. 2) studies of values and cultural content incorporated into books. 3) studies concerned with the portrayal of specific racial and ethnic groups in books. A significant study in the first grouping reveals that the majority of fictional protagonists see "clean, white, healthy, handsome, Protestant, middle-class people, and villains are often non-Caucasian" (Shephard 1962). Shephard's study involves analysis of sixteen books that are frequently chosen by readers in upper elementary grades. Homze's (1963), study which centers on seventy-eight realistic fiction books, all of whose settings are in the United States, arrives at the same findings.

Among the CA studies involving values, one by Chambers (1965) examines two fictional books about juveniles. The purpose of her research was to find evidence of content that might influence the development of adolescents' social values as described by experts in adolescent development and psychology. Chambers concluded that the books examined allowed little opportunity for the exploration and acceptance of racial differences. The friendships that exist in the books are primarily between middle class Caucasians. Carmichael (1971) examined 120 books from the lists of "Notable Children's Books and Outstanding Children's Books of the Year 1949-64" and concluded that there is an effort to teach responsibility in the books, but that the least emphasized value is the belief in equal opportunity for all people.

In the study of the portrayal of racial and ethnic groups, Carlson

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(1968) reveals that there is little increase in the number of black characters in novels, especially main characters, but Carlson concludes that there are fewer racial stereotypes. Fisher (1968) investigated the depiction of black children in forty contemporary, realistic fiction novels with American settings. Fisher's findings show that the value of education is stressed and that there is more emphasis placed on career plans and personal development. Bekkedal (1973), however, indicates that there is a continuing lack of books for the black adolescent which give the reader an honest picture of the black experience in America. He suggests that CA continue to be used to evaluate the portrayal of roles that girls and boys assume in books for adolescents in order to determine whether the books are worthy of reading by impressionable adolescents.

Summary

The review of literature in this chapter examines the theoretical basis for the current study. The areas presented include: a discussion on the effects of reading on adolescents, a discussion of the effects of bibliotheraphy on adolescents, an overview of Havighurst's developmental tasks, an overview of Erickson's research on identity formation, a review of an ethnic developmental model based on research by Cross, a presentation of the concerns of black psychologists about the education of ethnic adolescents, and an overview of Content Analysis. This review of literature provides the background for answering the question: How are black male protagonists depicted in four novels for adolescents, Sounder, The Contender, The Learning Tree, and Durango Street according to adolescent developmental tasks described by Havighurst and modified by this researcher based on studies by Cross. In Chapter Three,

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the design of the study is presented.

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

This chapter presents the design of the study for determining how black male protagonists in the selected four novels for adolescents are depicted. The model used for the study is based on the adolescent developmental tasks described by Havighurst and modified by this researcher based on studies by Cross. Information about the novels used in the study is given, followed by an explanation of the over-all procedure for the study, the rater selection and reliability study, the unit of analysis, the categories for the study, and the evaluation sheets for the data collection.

Selected Novels

This study examines four novels for adolescents taught in secondary English classes, whose main character is an adolescent black male. The novels are Sounder by William Armstrong, The Contender by Robert Lipsyte (1967), The Learning Tree by Gordon Parks (1963), and Durango Street by Frank Bonham (1965). These are the only novels with adolescent black male protagonists which are approved for classroom use in grades 7-9 in a suburban Middle Atlantic school district to which the researcher had access during the school year 1987-88. The school district is an affluent community. Although the community's ethnic and soci-economic diversity is growing, it is still largely a white upper middle class community. The school district has a policy for improving minority achievement and for recognizing cultural diversity.

Each of the authors of the novels has received literary recognition:

Armstrong

Newberry Award 1970 for Sounder

Mark Twain Award 1972,

Lewis Carroll Shelf Award 1976

Bonham

American Library Association Notable Book Award 1965 for Durango Street

George Stone Center for Children's Books Recognition of Merit 1957

Lipsyte

Child Study Children's Book Committee at Bank Street College Award, 1973,

American Library Association Notable Book Award

Parks

Springarn Medal for Literary Achievement (1972).

Procedure Overview

Content Analysis is the method used for the examination of each novel. After the novels were read and briefly summarized, they were divided into three parts: beginning, middle, and end; one episode was selected randomly from each part. Selecting episodes in this manner allowed for a study of the progression in the protagonists' development. Details from each episode were placed in appropriate categories outlined on separate rater sheets for each novel. (See Appendix 1). The categories for the study were Havighurst's (1952), ten adolescent developmental tasks (modified) as described below. Tasks #3 and #10 were modified by the researcher using a composite ethnic development model based on research by Cross (1971). After each episode was coded for a

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presence or absence of developmental tasks, the examiner described the protagonists' progress with self development and self-identity according to the Havighurst (modified) model.

Rater Training and Reliability Study

To test the reliability of the researcher's examination of the novel, the researcher asked a panel of three secondary English teachers to analyze episodes in a novel that was not part of the study. Each of these teachers has the following minimum qualifications: 10 years of teaching secondary English, a master's degree, teaching experience in a multi-racial setting, teaching experience with a range of students with varying academic abilities, and high evaluations from school administrators. The panel included one black male, one black female, and one white male. The researcher met with each rater individually for a training session. The meetings were on an individual basis because the raters' work schedules did not make a group meeting possible. Before the session each rater read chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation in order to have a context for the research. The raters also received information describing Havighurst's developmental tasks (modified), an explanation of how to code episodes for each novel, and sample rating sheets. To ensure that each rater received the same information and instructions, the same written instructions were provided for each rater (see Appendix 2). At the training sessions, the researcher answered questions regarding the theoretical background for the study and questions concerning the method of analysis. To ensure the researcher's reliability in categorizing the episodes in the study, the raters were given copies of a novel not used in the study, Nitty Gritty by Bonham (1968), with three episodes marked

for coding. Then the raters and researcher individually coded the three episodes and the researcher completed a reliability check with the raters' which resulted in a .9189, .8648, .8484 correlation respectively. Based on Berelson's (1952) research, the correlation co-efficients between the researcher and the rater should be between .78 and .99 in order for results to be considered reliable. The formula used for the reliability check between two raters is Holsti's (1969) formula ($R = 2M/N1 + N2$). (See Appendix 3 for rater sheets and for calculations.) In this formula, M is the number of coding decisions on which the two raters are in agreement, and N1 and N2 refer to the number of coding decisions made by raters 1 and 2 respectively. The resulting correlations provided evidence that the researcher is a reliable rater. The researcher then completed the analysis of the four selected novels. To check the researcher's reliability during the analysis of the four novels, one of the raters (black male) also coded The Learning Tree, and the correlation from that check was .9286. (See Appendix 3)

Unit of Analysis

The units selected for the content analysis consist of three episodes from each novel. According to Holman (1981), an episode is defined as an incidental event within a longer narrative or an incident presented as one continuous action. The episode has a unity in itself but is usually combined with other episodes to create a short story, play, or novel. In the current study, an episode is equal to one chapter.

Selection of Unit

The chapter is the unit used for analysis. After dividing each

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novel in the study into three sections, beginning, middle, and end, three episodes were randomly chosen, one from each section. To conduct the random selection, the researcher put the number of each chapter on separate file cards by section. After placing the cards in a box, the researcher drew out one card from each section and analyzed the chapters whose number was selected.

Categories: Havighurst's Developmental Tasks

Havighurst's (1952) ten developmental tasks of adolescent development are listed below, and tasks #3 and #10 have been modified by the researcher to accommodate developmental tasks, as described by Cross (1971), that are unique to black adolescents.

Tasks of Adolescents

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with mates of both sexes.

2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.

3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively. This task has been modified by the researcher to encompass that part of the ethnic developmental model which suggests the importance of accepting one's physique as a black. This acceptance entails the adolescent understanding that although his color may not be accepted by others as a positive characteristic, the adolescent accepts his color and feels proud of his color.

4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.

5. Achieving assurance of economic independence.

6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation.

7. Preparing for marriage and family life.

8. Developing intellectual skills an concepts necessary for civic

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competence.

9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.

10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to

    behavior. This task has been modified by the researcher to

encompass that part of the ethnic developmental model which suggests that

as a black adolescent acquires a set of values, he will complete this

developmental task if he accepts himself and is able to assume more

global responsibilities and move against racial oppression in a legal

manner.

Using the rater tables the selected chapters in each novel were

coded for the presence or absence of each task by the researcher. These

tables may be found in Appendix 1. After the coding, the researcher

described which tasks the protagonist had attempted, achieved or not

attempted in each chapter, based on the Havighurst model, the researcher

then described the progress in self-development that each protagonist had

made. An example of a rater table follows.

Rater's Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified)
in
<u>Nitty Gritty</u> (Bonham)

<u>TASKS</u>   <u>EPISODES</u>

                                        <u>Chapter 2</u>   <u>Chapter 8</u>   <u>Chapter 15</u>

1.   Relationships with peers

2.   Achieving a masculine social role

3.   Accepting and using one's body

4.   Achieving emotional independence

       of parents and adults

5.   Achieving economic independence

6.   Selecting and preparing

       for an occupation

7.   Preparing for marriage and

       family life

8.   Developing intellectual skills

9.   Desiring social responsibility

10. Gaining values and ethnics

* Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task

         O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

Summary

In this chapter the design of the study is presented. Information about the novels examined in the study is given, followed by an explanation of the procedures of the study, including the method of analysis, selection of categories, and an explanation of the rater training and reliability study. The data and results from the study are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study whose purpose is to determine how black male protagonists in four novels for adolescents are depicted. The model used for the study is based on the adolescent developmental tasks described by Havighurst and modified by this researcher based on studies by Cross. A summary is provided for each novel, and the coding of each episode in each of the novels is described and analyzed.

Sounder by William Armstrong

Sounder, which takes place in a small Southern farming community called Green Hills in the 1960's, is the story of a young black adolescent, his family, and his coon dog, Sounder. Sounder received his name because of his characteristic howl. He has a deep sounding howl that resonates across the rolling land whenever he tracks or trees an opossum or a raccoon. The family members are not given names but are referred to as boy, the boy's mother, father, sister and brother.

The father in the story is a poor, black sharecropper. The family lives in the middle of a vast estate that they and many others like them are responsible for tilling, planting, and harvesting in return for their squalid quarters. The quarters are rough, broken-down cabins, with windows that rattle because they are loose and floorboards that let in the cold.

The family is so poor that they pay for the few provisions and food they buy with the skins and meat of animals tracked by Sounder, the adolescent protagonist, and his father. At the beginning of the novel,

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it is windy and cold, which makes hunting difficult. No possums or coons are to be found, so the family subsists on corn meal mush.

One night, the father leaves without any explanation to his wife and family. In the morning, when the children wake, they smell boiling ham and frying sausages, and everyone, including Sounder, eats well.

Three days later the sheriff and his deputies come to the little cabin. They find the remains of the ham and sausages that the father stole from the estate owner's smoke house. Such thievery is a punishable offense, and the father is handcuffed and taken to the sheriff's wagon. Sounder becomes enraged, and although the young boy tries to hold him back, Sounder breaks loose and runs baying down the road trying to jump into the wagon to help free his master. Sounder is shot by the deputy's large bore shotgun and half of his head and part of his shoulder are torn away. Sounder gets up and tries to drag his body after the wagon, but soon gives up and crawls under the cabin. The boy looks for him the next day to fix the dog's wounds, but Sounder is gone. The mother says, "Likely, he has gone away to die alone."

The father is put in jail although the mother tries to make amends by returning the uneaten portions of the ham and sausage. She keeps her family together and fed by taking in washing and selling picked walnut kernals.

Two months later, it is Christmas and the father's case has been to trial; he has been found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment. He has to work on road gangs and work crews until his sentence is over. After visiting his father in jail, the young boy goes home and tells his mother, "He says don't come no more, he'll get word through the visiting

preacher." The boy vows to begin learning to read so he can rise above being a sharecropper and provide food for his family.

The next day Sounder comes home. Crippled by the shotgun blast, his left leg is completely useless, and the left side of his head and shoulder have been blown away. Where his left eye was is now a shattered bone. Worst of all, Sounder's wonderful howl is gone. He can only whine and wag his tail.

Years pass, and the boy makes frequent journeys in an effort to find his father. The boy hears that the father may be in a town several miles distant, working on a road gang, but by the time he gets there, the road gang has gone.

During his many trips to find his father the young boy tries to learn how to read, picking up old newspapers and spelling out words. In one town, he finds a book of essays by Montaigne that someone has discarded. He can read the words, but he does not understand them until an old white man befriends him and teaches him about many things, including the teachings of Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, and the Bible. The boy is mesmerized. He returns home to work the land, but every winter he returns to the old man's cabin to learn more. He reads to his brothers and sisters to share with them what he is learning.

One hot August day, Sounder roams constantly around the house in search of a comfortable place. The mother comments that Sounder must be going mad, and suddenly Sounder bounds out of the house, racing towards a speck on the horizon. The speck grows into the shape of a man, and Sounder begins to bay and bark. His howl has come back. His master has come home.

The father is as crippled as Sounder. He had been hurt in a quarry

blast, and buried under stone for several days. When the rescuers

finally dug him out, there was no feeling on his left side and the

doctors thought he would die. Finally, the prison authorities released

him and sent him home.

After reuniting with his family, the father slowly begins to

decline. One October night, he goes on a possum hunt, and the father dies

peacefully in the woods. Sounder comes home alone from the hunt and leads

the young boy to his father's body. They bury the father in the old

church yard and at the same time the boy digs a grave for Sounder whom he

feels will die soon. Two weeks later, Sounder dies. The story ends with

the boy acknowledging to himself that he has learned much from his

reading and that his life must move on.

Analysis

Chapters 1, 4, and 8 were randomly chosen as the episodes for

analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an

attempt or an achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks

(modified) in the novel Sounder.

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Sounder

TASKS   EPISODES

                              Chapter 1   Chapter 4   Chapter 8

1. Relationships with peers   0   0   0

2. Achieving a masculine social role X   X   X

3. Accepting and using one's body   0   0   0

4. Achieving emotional independence X   X   X

   of parents and adults

5. Achieving economic independence   0   0   0

6. Selecting and preparing   0   0   0

   for an occupation

7. Preparing for marriage and   X   X   X

   family life

8. Developing intellectual skills   X   X   X

9. Desiring social responsibilty   0   X   0

10. Gaining values and ethics   X   X   X

Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task

      0 = absence of attempt or achievement of task

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Sounder - Chapter 1

In Chapter 1 of the novel Sounder, the boy begins to fulfill some
of the developmental tasks (see table). While standing on the front
porch with Sounder in the late evening, he recognizes that he is allowed
to be out in the dark with Sounder, unlike his younger sibling, and this
privilege makes him feel important (task 4). He also demonstrates his
growing physical strength (task 2) as he walks 16 miles a day to and from
school. Unfortunately his desire to learn (task 8) is not achieved
because he becomes ill, and his mother says he must stay home and not
attend school until he is older; however, he resolves to himself that
"one day I will learn to read" (task 8). He also accepts his share of
family responsibilities (task 7), most of which entail chores such as
helping during harvest and planting time and caring for Sounder. He also
assumes a traditionally masculine role (task 2) as he learns to hunt for
food with Sounder as a partner. Finally, he shows keen interest in
Biblical stories (task 10) and enjoys listening to his mother tell him
about King David.

Although he has attempted some tasks in this early stage of the
novel, the protagonist also has yet to attempt or achieve certain other
tasks. He has no known relationships with peers (task 1), and although
he is becoming physically stronger as indicated by his long walks and his
hunting, there is no evidence that he is thinking about his blackness
(task 3). He has also not yet concerned himself with tasks 5, 6, or 9.

<u>Sounder - Chapter 4</u>

In Chapter 4, the boy continues to attempt certain tasks but does
not come to terms with others. He frequently prepares food for himself
and the younger children, and he helps his mother earn an income by
collecting nuts which she sells (task 7). Upset by his father's
imprisonment, he asks his mother to comfort him by telling him a Biblical
story about Joseph's imprisonment (task 10), and he also spends his days
looking for Sounder in order to give him a proper burial (task 10). As
he walks to deliver a cake to his father, he remembers that he used to
help his father sell mistletoe and berries at Christmas (task 7), and he
expresses a desire to own a book (task 8) knowing that the only chance of
obtaining one is if one of his mother's employers gives him one.   Upon
reaching the jail, he is mistreated by the jailer who crushes the cake,
swears at the boy, and makes him pick up the crumbs from the floor. The
boy fantasizes at great length about retaliating but does not (task 9).
His searching for Sounder, his caring for his younger siblings, and his
journey into town all indicate his growing independence (task 4).

In Chapter 4 then, several attempts at achieving certain tasks are
evident; however, the protagonist still does not interact with peers
(task 1), he is not directly preparing for an occupation (task 6) or
achieving economic independence (task 5). Perhaps most importantly, he
shows no sign of thinking about coming to terms with his blackness even
though he suffers greatly at the hands of the white jailer (task 3).
Lastly, although he does nothing that is specifically masculine (task 2),
his journey in the woods and caring for his mother and siblings, suggest

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masculine behavior in the context of the novel.

Sounder - Chapter 7

In Chapter 7, peer interaction is still absent (task 7), and again
the boy does not think about or come to terms with his blackness (task
3). He also does not prepare for a specific occupation (task 6) or
achieve economic independence (task 5), but he has become an avid reader
(task 8), and he enthusiastically attends school (task 4). He also
continues to help support his family (task 7) by coming home and working
during the summer harvest. The harvest work and journeys from home
suggest that he is assuming some traditionally masculine roles (task 2),
and his interest in educating himself (task 8) suggests that he is
attempting to avoid certain menial occupations (task 6). Finally, he
finds comfort in his Christian beliefs when his father and Sounder both
die (task 10).

Sounder Summation

This novel's protagonist is never named by the author and is
referred to in a non-derogatory manner as "boy". Overall, the boy
manifests mostly positive characteristics, but he does not attempt or
achieve all of Havighurst's (modified) tasks. He demonstrates strong
emotional independence and achieves a traditional masculine role as he
works hard to care for his family. His love and concern for the family
is strong and so is his desire to learn as much as he can by going to
school. He has deep moral values and a basic positive outlook on life.
The boy does not, however, have any peer relationships in the novel nor
does he attempt to think about or come to terms with his blackness
although he is treated harshly because of it. He does not think about a

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specific occupation, but because of his desire to better himself, the researcher assumes he will someday achieve economic Independence. An adolescent may benefit from reading this novel for the strengths the boy demonstrates such as his love for his family and his ability to endure without the presence of his father, and because of his love for school. However, the novel will probably not help a black male adolescent who is attempting to understand his blackness and society's reaction to it. The protagonist also shows no inclination to wider social concerns or responsibilities. For these last two reasons, the novel is limited as an exemplar novel for students who are struggling against adverse reactions to their ethnicity.

<u>The Contender</u> by Robert Lipsyte

    <u>The Contender</u> by Lipsyte (1967) is a story about a black adolescent named Alfred living in Harlem in the middle 1960's. Harlem is rife with protests against white people. Everywhere Alfred goes he hears that white people are trying to keep the black man down and that he, as a black adolescent, should be angry and rebellious. Alfred has quit high school and is working for a Jewish family at their grocery store. He has been living with his Aunt Pearl because his father left the family when Alfred was ten and his mother died of pneumonia when he was thirteen.

    Alfred is a troubled young man. James, his one good friend, is mixed up with a gang that is involved in thievery, drinking and drugs. Most of the members of the gang do not work; they just "hang out" at the clubhouse to make che time pass.

    As the story opens, it is a Friday night, and Alfred is waiting for James to go to the movies. When James doesn't show up, he goes to the clubhouse to look for him. At the clubhouse, Alfred runs into Major, the gang leader, a large, muscle-bound bully, who lords over everyone. He wants to rob Epsteins', the grocery store where Alfred works, because Alfred accidently reveals that the Epsteins leave money in the store on Friday night, rather than touch it after sundown and violate Orthodox Jewish Law. Major wants Alfred to be the lookout during the robbery but Alfred refuses. During the course of the conversation, James appears, and he, Major and two other gang members leave to rob the store.

    When the boys attempt to rob the store, a silent alarm alerts the police but Major and his gang escape, with the exception of James, who is caught and jailed. The gang searches for Alfred and after finding him,

they beat him because he did not warn them about the alarm. When Alfred

wakes the next morning, he is home because Henry, another young man,

found him and brought him there.

Henry is also an outcast. He had polio as a child and since his

parents couldn't afford medical care he walks with a limp. He has a job

working for Mr. Donatelli, the gym owner, who manages boxers. He tells

Alfred that Mr. Donatelli is always looking for new people-that he

(Alfred) should come over to the gym sometime. Alfred decides to do

this, if nothing more than to try and learn how to defend himself.

Several months go by and Alfred is in training. He has put on

weight and has strengthened himself. He is running several miles each

morning before work, and is eating a balanced diet instead of the junk

food he used to eat. He has begun to feel good about himself. Mr.

Donatelli says Alfred is a good enough fighter to be a contender for a

boxing title, although he hasn't been in any fights yet. Alfred feels as

though he may never fight and become famous, like Mr. Donatelli's other

fighters.

One evening Major invites Alfred to a club saying that James may be

there. Alfred goes that night and although Alfred knows he shouldn't, he

drinks wine and smokes marijuana in an effort to be accepted by his

peers. Alfred quickly becomes intoxicated and nearly passes out. James,

now a heroin addict, comes into the club to purchase heroin from a

dealer. He ignores Alfred who tries to convince him not to use heroin.

For Alfred the rest of the weekend passes in a blur, spent drinking and

joy riding with the gang in a stolen car. Although the police stop the

stolen car, Alfred escapes and returns home. After such an exciting

evening, Alfred has serious reservations about continuing with boxing.

Alfred returns to the gym to tell Mr. Donatelli that he is quitting. He asks, "If I had kept going, would I have been any good?"

Mr. Donatelli say, "Who knows?"

Alfred says, "If...if I had wanted to, would I have...you know, been a contender?"

Mr. Donatelli says, "Don't ask me."

"Then who", said Alfred.

"Yourself. Ask yourself. Anyone can be taught to fight. A contender, that you have to do yourself."

After the conversation with Mr. Donatelli, Alfred decides to stay. He works out for the rest of the summer and in the fall he has his first two boxing matches, and he wins both of them.

Suddenly, he is popular and self-confident. Neighborhood children look up to him, and his uncle finally talks to him in a kind manner. Alfred decides to go back and finish high school and give up boxing after one more challenging match.

In his last match, Alfred loses by a decision; his opponent is larger, older, and heavier. After the fight, Alfred decides to give up boxing, but he is proud of himself for not giving up in the middle of the match.

Alfred feels good when he returns home that evening, in spite of being badly battered and bruised. His Aunt Pearl meets him at the door and tells him that the police are looking for James who broke into Epstein's through the front window. So far, the police have not apprehended James, although they have found a trail of blood.

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Alfred runs to a nearby park to a secret cave where he and James used to hide. Alfred finds James, bleeding from a cut and shaking because of his dependency on heroin. James is frightened; he doesn't want to go to the hospital because he fears the police. Alfred encourages James to let him take him to the hospital and face the problems of drugs and his crimes. The book ends with Alfred leading James out of the cave and through the park to the lights of the main street and freedom.

Analysis

Chapters 1, 10, 20 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel.

The Contender

TASKS	EPISODES		
	Chapter 1	Chapter 10	Chapter 20
1. Relationships with peers	X	X	X
2. Achieving a masculine solial role	X	X	O
3. Accepting & using one's body	X	X	X
4. Achieving emotional independence	X	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	X	X	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	O	X	O
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	O	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	O	O	X
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	O	X
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task

  O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

The Contender - Chapter 1

Early in the novel, Alfred shows that he is maturing in many ways.
He respects his Aunt Pearl with whom he is living, and he contributes to
the household income by giving her money he earns (task 7). While his
job at the grocery store is a menial one, he at least has a job; most of
his peers do not (task 5). He has one close friend James with whom he
has shared many happy times (task 1), but his other peer acquaintances
are bad influences. Alfred demonstrates a strong sense of ethics when he
ignores peer pressure to participate in a robbery at the grocery store
where he works (task 10). He also is accepting of his blackness and is
not self-denigrating as are his peers (task 3). Alfred is not physically
intimidated by his peers, but as a result he does not run from unfair
odds, and he is badly beaten (task 2). Alfred has not attempted tasks 6
or 8 because he has dropped out of high school.

The Contender - Chapter 10

In Chapter 10, Alfred assumes a strong masculine role as he
vigoriously trains to be a boxer (task 2). Physically he becomes
stronger (task 3), and shows a high degree of emotional independence
since he has resolved to train (task 4). He has new friends at the gym
with whom he practices and goes to movies (task 1). He is still working
at the grocery store (task 5), and he thinks that he has selected an
occupation (boxing) for which to strive (task 6).

Alfred does not demonstrate any significant social responsibility
(task 9) nor is he developing his intellectual skills (task 8). Even
though he attends church with his aunt (task 10), the family is not a

focus in his life (task 7).

The Contender - Chapter 20

In Chapter 20, Alfred achieves many developmental tasks. He is concerned that he has upset his Aunt Pearl by coming home late and by being injured in a boxing match (task 7). When he hears that James is hurt and in trouble, he runs to the park to find him (task 1). Alfred counsels James to turn himself in to the police and to get medical attention (task 10). He tells James that he is returning to school by attending night school, and he asks James to join him (task 6). Alfred has decided to work with young children in a recreation center (task 9), and he is determined that he and James do well in spite of any obstacles that white persons put in front of them (task 3). Alfred demonstrates emotional independence in his successful efforts to help James (task 4), and although Alfred has not yet chosen an occupation (task 6), one senses that he will succeed at an occupation and that he will help others in whatever he does (task 10).

The Contender Summation

This novel has several positive aspects for a black adolescent male reader. Alfred, the protagonist, is a struggling adolescent who achieves or begins to achieve several of Havighurst's tasks (modified). Alfred is emotionally independent, and he has had to be strong since he does not have parents for a reason that is never explained. He lives with his Aunt Pearl whom he loves and respects and whom he helps by contributing his pay to the household income. Alfred demonstrates that he is emotionally independent by his decision not to join some of his peers when they decide to rob the store where he works. Alfred has friends,

and he has an especially good friend named James whom he begins to help at the end of the novel to break free of drugs and to return to school. Alfred's decisions not to steal and to help James show a high degree of social responsibility, and his decision to work with children in a recreation center reflects his growing global concerns. Alfred's efforts to become a boxer in order to improve himself show him in a traditionally masculine role, and a role that involves controlled violence, not gang violence as is the case with many of his peers. Alfred also stands above many of peers because he is accepting of his blackness whereas they often make self-denigrating remarks. Alfred also recognizes his limits when he decides to stop boxing, and at the same time he recognizes his need for a better education by returning to school. Although he has not selected an occupation, the reader is left with the assumption that because he obviously recognizes the importance of working and the importance of schooling, he will succeed and he will probably reach out to help others.

The Learning Tree by Gordon Parks

    The Learning Tree is a story about a black adolescent named Newt
Winger who lives in a small farming community called Cherokee Flat,
Kansas in the 1960's. In the beginning of the novel, a storm hits
Cherokee Flat and claims many lives. During the storm Newt is rescued
and seduced by Big Mable, a teenage neighbor. The next day Newt's
father, Jack, and his brother, Pete, help repair town buildings damaged
by the storm, and Newt's mother, Sarah, returns to work for Judge
Cavanaugh for whom she has worked for twenty years. That same day, Sarah
saves the Judge's son, Chauncey, from being punished by the Judge by
removing Chauncey's drunk girl friend from the Judge's house. When Sarah
returns home from work, she discovers that her husband Jack is in the
hospital donating some of his skin to a girl in need of skin grafts. The
girl was badly burned during the storm.

    Later that week Newt and his friends attempt to steal peaches from a
neighbor's yard. They are discovered by the owner Jake, and Marcus, one
of Newt's peers, beats up Jake badly enough for him to require
hospitalization. Later Marcus is captured and placed in a reformatory,
angry that the other boys told the police he had beaten Jake.

    Newt then develops a crush on a girl named Arcella, and she and he
begin spending a lot of time together. After Newt gives a stirring
graduation speech at his junior high school, he and Arcella go to a soda
shop, but they are forced to leave because they are black. After his
graduation, Newt's parents struggle to have Newt admitted to a white high
school that has better equipment, books, and courses than the black high

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school to which Newt has been assigned.

Meanwhile, Marcus is finally released from the reformatory, and he gets a job at a local house of prostitution called Chappie's. Newt's brother Pete finds Marcus the job at Chapple's because he is trying to help Marcus avoid the life of an alcoholic that Marcus' father leads. Marcus discovers a pistol while he is cleaning one of Chapple's rooms and he stores that fact in his memory for possible future use. Marcus is still angry at Newt for telling the police about Jake's beating and he won't forgive him.

Arcella begins to ignore Newt, and he sees little of her. Later he discovers that she is pregnant by her new boyfriend Chauncey, the judge's son. Newt gets a job, to help him forget Arcella, after school at a farm called Kiner's Place. Here he secretly witnesses Marcus' father, Booker, kill Kiner, but Newt is afraid to tell anyone, and the murder is blamed on Newhall, a man who was recently fired by Kiner.

Newt finally decides to tell his mother about the murder, and later decides to testify at Newhall's trial. After testifying that Booker is the murderer, Newt is glad he told the truth, but the trial ends tragically when Booker grabs the sheriff's gun and kills himself.

Shortly after the trial, Newt's mother dies. A few days after the funeral, Newt goes to the river with his friends to talk and relax, but they are confronted by Marcus who tries to shoot them. Newt is saved when the sheriff shoots and kills Marcus.

Analysis

Chapters 5, 9, and 15 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an

attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel.

The Learning Tree

TASKS	EPISODES		
	Chapter 5	Chapter 9	Chapter 15
1. Relationships with peers	X	X	O
2. Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	O
3. Accepting and using one's body	X	X	O
4. Achieving emotional independence	X	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	O	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	X	O	O
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	X	O
8. Developing intellectual skills	X	X	O
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	X	X
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task

O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

The Learning Tree - Chapter 5

In Chapter 5 Newt's thoughts and actions suggest that he is beginning to mature. He assumes a masculine social role (task 2) as he learns to use his father's horse to effectively move a herd from one field to another. He also shows interest in his first girlfriend as he flirts with Arcella (task 2). Newt has also developed a blossoming friendship with Rodney, a white adolescent, whom he frequently visits (task 1). Rodney and Newt enjoy discussing various scientific topics and enjoy using Rodney's microscope and books to help them in their explorations (task 8). Newt enjoys the times they spend together.

Newt spends much of his time assisting his family by helping his blind uncle, Rob Winger, sell brooms, and he also rises early each morning to complete a variety of chores (task 7). In his conversations with his Uncle, Newt reveals a growing emotional independence from his parents when he expresses a desire to travel to faraway places (task 4), and he begins to discuss his desire to be a musician (task 6). He also asks his mother numerous questions about religion and death (task 10). In another episode, Newt reacts violently when called a nigger and thus shows no sign of accomplishing task 3 or 9. In addition, New is not working at all towards becoming economically independent (task 5).

The Learning Tree - Chapter 9

In Chapter 9 Newt continues to reveal positive steps in his development. His peers at school indicate their respect by selecting him to give the class' graduation speech (task 1), and his relationship with Arcella is strengthening (task 2). In a moment of masculine bravado,

Newt expresses that he "ain't scared of Marcus" (p. 111) and his brother Pete gives him boxing lessons (task 2). Newt continues to develop his intellectual skills as indicated by his graduation and by the thoughtful speech he wrote (task 8).

In his graduation speech Newt reveals that he has achieved task 3 when he says to the audience, "We are proud to be black" (p. 120). He asks his peers to hope for a better world and to be active in making the world a better place (task 10). He states that the need for more knowledge is important (task 8), and he asks that his peers contribute something to the future (task 9).

After giving his speech and receiving his diploma (task 6), Newt and Arcella go to a soda shop for ice cream, but they are asked to leave because they are black. Remarkably, Newt shows great restraint and does not react violently, and he resolves to work on this racial problem (task 9). Newt matures in Chapter 9, but he still is not close to economic independence (task 5).

The Learning Tree - Chapter 15

In Chapter 15, Newt only displays evidence of achieving 3 tasks, but they are all significant. Newt feels guilty, and he confesses to his mother that he was a witness to the murder for which Silas is charged (task 10). He says he was reluctant to say anything because he did not want to cause trouble between the black and white people in the town (task 9). He then resolves to testify at the trial. (task 4). In his testimony he tells the truth about Booker Savage's role in the murder, thus saving Silas' life (task 9). Newt's decision to tell the truth under difficult circumstances reveals that he values justice (task 10).

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The Learning Tree Summation

In this novel the protagonist achieves or begins to achieve several of Havighurst's tasks (modifed). The protagonist, Newt, assumes a traditionally masculine role as he rides horses, works on the farm, and as he develops a relationship with a girl named Arcella. Newt has many other friends with whom he associates, and he has one good friend with whom he studies several scientific topics. His peers respect him so much that they select him to give the class' graduation speech. Newt, who struggles with racism in the novel, shows great strength in this speech as he proclaims pride in his blackness, and as he asks for his peers to help each other and society in the future.

Newt also loves his family and helps them by doing his share of the chores and by helping his uncle sell brooms. Newt also works for money when he can on neighboring farms. After witnessing a murder, Newt hesitates but finally exercises his social responsibility and expresses his strong moral character when he testifies at a trial and reveal the murderer. Newt is a positive role model because of his pride in his blackness, his love of family, and his concern for others, and because of his love of learning. He does not attempt all of Havighurst's tasks because he does not think about a future occupation, and thus the reader does not see him moving towards economic independence. However, one assumes that because of his strength of character, Newt will provide for himself in a worthy way in the future.

Durango Street by Frank Bonham

Durango Street a story which takes place in the ghetto of a large

American city, concerns a black adolescent named Rufus. When the novel

begins, Rufus is in a reform school because he stole a car. A counselor

is talking to Rufus, but he is not getting many responses except for

finding out that Rufus never knew his father. He tells Rufus that he is

being released. Rufus is excited, but he is dismayed to find out that

his mother has moved to an even tougher neighborhood, and he's upset that

the counselor has found out through one of Rufus' friends that Rufus has

kept a private scrapbook for years about a football player named Ernie

Brown.

When Rufus is released and returns home, he is pleased that his

mother has moved the family into a small house instead of an apartment.

Although the house is in a tougher neighborhood than he lived in before,

Rufus enjoys seeing his brother and sister, and he enjoys having his own

bedroom. Upon returning, Rufus is warned by his parole officer to stay

out of trouble and not to join one of the neighborhood's many gangs.

Unfortunately, Rufus gets into trouble with a gang named the

Gassers. The Gassers are angry with him and his sister for telling the

police about some vandalism they caused. Rufus is forced to join a gang

called the Moors in order to protect himself and is initiated by being

beaten by several of its members. Eventually, the leader of the gang,

challenges Rufus to a fight, and after Rufus wins, he becomes the gang's

leader.

Rufus is determined to assert the gang's influences in the

neighborhood. He especially wants to confront the leader of the Gassers,

Simon, who cut off Rufus' sister's ponytail. Rufus devises a plan that results in the destruction of Simon's car and the successful beating of several of the Gassers.

Meanwhile, a social worker named Alex Robbins tries to change the destructive patterns of Rufus' gang. One of his attempts is to take both the Moors and the Gassers to see Ernie Brown, a well-known pro football player, during one of the team's practices. The event is an exciting one for Rufus because earlier his mother told him that Ernie Brown was his father, but that she and he had never married, and they had been separated for years. While at the field, the boys practice catching and kicking the ball. Rufus is complimented by Ernie for his playing ability, but Rufus does not tell him who he is. The day ends with a fight which ensues at the playing field when Simon teases Rufus about his scrapbook.

Alex Robbins's influence slowly takes shape, and Rufus decides to hold a neighborhood dance. The dance is a success even though the Gassers try to disrupt it. After the dance is over, the novel ends abruptly with Rufus' decision to return to high school.

Analysis

Chapters 1, 14, and 31 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel. In Durango Street the adolescent protagonist achieves few of Havighurst's developmental tasks (modified).

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Durango Street

	TASKS	EPISODES		
		Chapter 1	Chapter 14	Chapter 31
1.	Relationships with peers	X	X	O
2.	Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	O
3.	Accepting & using one's body	X	X	O
4.	Achieving emotional independence	X	X	X
5.	Achieving economic independence	O	O	O
6.	Selecting and preparing for an occupation	O	O	O
7.	Preparing for marriage and family life	O	O	X
8.	Developing intellectual skills	X	O	X
9.	Desiring social responsibility	O	X	X
10.	Gaining values and ethics	O	O	O

Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task

O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

Durango Street - Chapter 1

In Chapter 1, Rufus reveals that he is becoming emotionally
independent (task 4) because in the reform school he is sticking up for
himself. He is respected by the other boys at the school because he is a
crew leader (task 2); and his counselor respects hims also. He is
described by the counselor as having an athletic grace (task 3) and an
above-average intelligence (task 8). Rufus is also excited about seeing
his best friend Baby Gibson when he finds out that he is being released
(task 1). Unfortunately, Rufus obviously has not concerned himself with
tasks 5, 6, 9, or 10 because he has been imprisoned for auto theft, and
his feelings for his family (task 10) are not favorable.

Durango Street - Chapter 14

In Chapter 14 Rufus asserts his masculinity (task 2) by beating up
Bantu and assuming the leadership of the gang. The members of the Moors
like and respect Rufus (task 1), and his best friend Baby Gibson even
protects him from Bantu's knife (task 1). Rufus is good with his fists,
so physically he is well-developed, and he fights to protect his
ethnicity against other ethnic groups such as the Mexican gang called the
Aztecs (task 3). Rufus also makes several independent decisions (task
4); however, none of them are socially responsible (task 9), concerned
with his family (task 7), aimed toward an occupation (task 6), or toward
economic independence (task 6), or concerned with decent values (task
10). His one effort at exercising social responsibility occurs when he
decides not to fight with a knife because he does not want to return to
jail (task 9).

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Durango Street - Chapter 31

In Chapter 31, Rufus finally shows some indication that he may mature in a positive manner. He agrees to return to high school (task 8), and he has arranged and conducted a successful party for adolescents from several gangs (task 9). He also respects his mother's wishes for him to stay at home and to return to school (task 7). Rufus continues to exercise emotional independence (task 4) ad he makes the decisions about the dance and about school by himself. In this chapter, he has no interactions with peers (task 1) nor does he do anything that demonstrates his masculinity (task 2). He is far from being economically independent (task 5) or interested in a specific occupation (task 6). There is also no indication that he is thinking about ethical or value ladened concerns (task 10).

Durango Street Summation

Although Rufus achieves some of Havighurst's tasks (modified) in the novel, there are many that he does not achieve. Rufus has already been in reform school for auto theft, and he wants to stay out of trouble; however, he joins a gang in order to protect himself, and there he assumes a traditionally masculine role as he demonstrates his fighting ability and as he assumes the leadership of the gang. Rufus loves his family, but his effort to revenge the mistreatment of his sister gets him more involved in gang treachery. Throughout the novel he shows emotional independence, but many of decisions are at the expense of rival gangs. Rufus has many friends, but the friendships for the most part do not lead towards positive ends. Rufus admires a football player, whom he discovers is in fact his father, and whom his mother never married. The

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two meet only twice but not as father and son, only as fan and football star. By the end of the novel, Rufus has displayed some social responsibility by trying not to use weapons when fighting, by holding a community dance, and by returning to school; however, he has not achieved many of Havighurst's tasks (modified).

Rufus is proud to be black, but his pride is reflected by fighting other ethnic gangs. His decision to return to school is admirable but suspect because he has shown no previous intellectual discipline other than deriving schemes for revenge. He has not selected an occupation nor has he indicated that he will ever become economically independent although the reader sees that he is intelligent and has leadership skills. He has shown no deep moral or ethical thoughts or strong sense of sound responsibility except that he has decided to stay out of trouble.

Rufus is not all bad. He loves his family and he is caught up in a realistic struggle to try to stay out of trouble; however, the novel's realism results in only a glimmer of hope at the end after several pages of gang rivalry when Rufus finally decides that he will continue working with social workers in an attempt to keep himself and his gang out of trouble and when he decides that he will return to school.

Conclusions for the Four Analyses

In the novels Sounder (S), The Contender (C), The Learning Tree (L), the protagonists attempt or achieve several of Havighurst's developmental tasks (modified), whereas the protagonist in Durango Street (D) attempts or achieves few of the tasks. The protagonists in the first three novels (S, C, L,) attempt or achieve many of the same tasks except none of them

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chooses an occupation or becomes economically independent. The protagonist in Sounder demonstrates strong emotional independence and assumes a traditional masculine role as he works hard to care for his family. His love and concern for the family is strong and so is his desire to learn as much as he can by going to school. He has deep moral values and a basic positive outlook on life. The protagonist in The Contender is emotionally independent, and he demonstrates social responsibility and a desire to learn. He is also accepting of his blackness and he also assumes a traditional masculine role. The protagonist in The Learning Tree loves his family and he has many friends who greatly respect him. He shows tremendous pride in his blackness and he demonstrates strong moral feelings and social responsibility. He also assumes a traditional masculine role, and he loves learning. In contrast, the protagonist in Durango Street attempts or achieves few tasks. He loves his family, and he decides to return to school and to allow a social worker to help him stay out of trouble. Overall, however, he does not demonstrate many positive characteristics.

Summary

In this chapter, the summaries of each novel and the results of the Content Analysis were presented. Chapter 5 will present a summary of the study, conclusions from the study, and recommendations for practice and further research.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, discusses conclusions and implications from the study, and presents recommendations for practice and further research.

Summary of the Study

This study examines the portrayal of black male adolescent protagonists in four novels for adolescents, Sounder by Armstrong, The Contender by Lipsyte, The Learning Tree by Parks and Durango Street by Bonham. Research has shown that reading can influence a person's attitudes, behaviors, and self-image, and, therefore, teachers should be aware of what effects the literature they teach may have on students. This study focuses on black male adolescent protagonists in order to analyze what kinds of role models black male adolescent readers are presented in school. This group is especially important to focus on because so many black male adolescents struggle without success in our society.

The researcher used a modified version of Havighurst's (1952) developmental tasks for adolescents as the basis for the examination of the four novels. The modifications to Havighurst's tasks were based on an ethnic developmental model described by Cross (1971). Content Analysis was the method used to study the developmental progress of the black male protagonists in the selected novels according to the Havighurst (modified) model. Before beginning the analysis, the researcher determined reliability for conducting the analysis of each novel by comparing his analysis of a novel for adolescents, Nitty

Gritty by Bonham, that was not a part of the study, with a panel of three teachers. This procedure determined that the researcher was reliable in using Content Analysis to analyze the selected novels.

The researcher then randomly chose three episodes from each novel and conducted a Content Analysis of each episode, indicating the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst's (modified) tasks. To check the researcher's reliability during the analysis of the four novels, one of the raters (black male) also coded The Learning Tree, and the correlation from that check was .9286. Conclusions were then drawn by the researcher concerning whether or not the depiction of each protagonist was a positive one, according to Havighurst's (modified) tasks.

Conclusions

Sounder

This novel offers a somewhat positive role model, according to Havighurst's (modified) tasks. The protagonist does not attempt to understand his blackness and society's reaction to it, nor does he show any inclination to wider social concerns or responsibilities. He does, however, demonstrate strong emotional independence, love for his family, deep moral values, and a driving desire to learn. These traits may create a positive role model for some black male adolescents.

The Contender

Overall, this novel is an excellent choice for instruction because of the positive role model it presents. Alfred achieves several of Havighurst's (modified) tasks. He is emotionally independent, physically strong, and has a strong sense of family. He also accepts his blackness,

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and he demonstrates a high degree of social responsibility and global
concern. He also recognizes the importance of working and schooling.
Lipsyte depicts Alfred in a realistic fashion that would appeal to
adolescent readers, and his portrayal could be a positive influence on
many black male adolescent readers.

The Learning Tree

This novel, too, is an excellent choice for classroom instruction
according to Havighurst's (modified) tasks. As a role model, Newt's only
short-coming is that he does not consider a future occupation, but the
reader is left with the impression that Newt will succeed in whatever he
attempts. Newt demonstrates love of family, concern for others, and
pride in his blackness. He has many friends, a deep feeling of social
responsibility, strong moral values, and a love of learning. Newt could
serve as a positive role model for many black male adolescent readers.

Durango Street

According to Havighurst's (modified) tasks, this novel would not be
a good choice for instruction. Rufus has some positive qualities such as
a love for family and a desire to stay out of trouble. By the end of the
novel, he also exercises some social responsibility, and he determines
that he will return to school. Rufus, however, spends much of his time
as a gang leader fighting or planning to fight. What few positive ends
he attempts or achieves are marred by the means and sometimes by the
outcomes. A black male adolescent reader would only find hints of a
positive role model in this novel.

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Recommendations For Practice

Educators may wish to consider several practices related to this
study: 1) Teachers and curriculum specialists should make an effort to
find novels for classroom use that depict positive role models for black
adolescents. Some of those books could be required reading to ensure that
students are exposed to such models.

2) All genres of literature should be examined for the depiction of
negative role models. Any literature with negative portrayals of blacks
should be considered for removal from instruction, or the literature
should have carefully designed teaching materials developed for
instruction in order to avoid a negative impact on black readers.

3) Educators should also conduct in-service courses for entire faculties
on the subject of negative role models. Texts from all aspects of the
curriculum should then be examined, and all texts with negative role
models removed.

4) In-service courses should be conducted for teachers to present
strategies for presenting positive black role models.

5) Sounder, The Contender, and The Learning Tree are novels that
have strong depictions of positive black male role models according to
the Havighurst (modified) tasks, and they are highly recommended by the
researcher for use in the classroom. Overall, Durango Street's
protagonist is not a positive role model, and this researcher recommends
that it not be used for instruction.

6) Authors should also consider new practices. Authors could strive to
write literature for adolescents that have positive black male role

models. These authors should present realistic situations, but they should avoid dialogue with profanity because most school systems will reject novels for adolescents that use profanity.

7) Schools could also invite authors who depict ethnic characters in a positive manner to meet with students for group discussions about character development, the art of creative writing, and other appropriate topics.

8) School librarians should also consider adding literature with positive black role models to their school libraries.

9) Publishers should look for and encourage authors to write literature with positive black role models.

Overall, positive role models can be important influences in an adolescent's personal development. Educators should consider the use of such models in daily instruction.

Recommendations For Further Research

There are several possibilities for research related to this study.

1) Educators could study other genres of literature, such as short stories and plays, with the intention of reviewing selections that may convey negative impressions to black readers.

2) A researcher might consider the depiction of black characters during selected periods of time; for example, one could compare novels written from 1950-1960 with novels written from 1970-1980, assessing the depictions of major black characters for significant changes between the two decades.

3) One could also compare the depiction of black characters in selected settings; for example, compare black characters in novels of the south to

the black characters in other settings.

4) Reseachers could also study the depiction of black female adolescents in literature or the depiction of black male or female adult characters.

5) A researcher could also expand this type of study to other ethnic groups. The diversity of groups in a society is wide, and several groups suffer from negative sterotypes or portrayals in literature; for example, researchers could examine the portrayal of Hispanic adolescents or adults in the various genres to determine whether they are depicted in a positive or negative manner.

6) Researchers could also examine students' attitudes towards characters in selected works of literature. Such a study could determine the effects certain portrayals have on student readers.

7) The quality of literature with minority characters could also be examined. The assumption is often made that because a book appears on an approved curriculum list that the book is of literary worth. This assumption could be questioned by examining the themes, logic, style, aesthetic appeal, and expression of ideas in novels with minority characters.

8) Adolescent and adult literature need not be the only areas of research. Researchers could also analyze the depiction of blacks and other minorities in other disciplines. History texts and science texts (among others) could be examined to determine whether minorities are negatively portrayed or omitted in selected books.

9) Researchers could also examine literature in elementary schools to look for negative role models or inadequate representation.

There are several possibilities for practice and research in the

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area of minority literature. Overall, educators and authors should join together in an effort to help struggling black male adolescents and other minorities as well. Literature and the schools can have a profound impact on an impressionable adolescent.

APPENDIX 1

Researcher's Table – Presence/Absence *
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in:
<u>Sounder</u> (Armstrong)

Included in this appendix are the tables from each novel showing the presence/ absence of an attempt or an achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified), and a cumulative table which provides a summary of the four tables.

ANALYSIS OF SOUNDER

Chapters 1, 4, and 8 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an attempt or an achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel <u>Sounder.</u>

TASKS	EPISODES		
	<u>Chapter 1</u>	<u>Chapter 4</u>	<u>Chapter 8</u>
1. Relationships with peers	O	O	O
2. Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	X
3. Accepting and using one's body	O	O	O
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and adults	X	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	O	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	O	O	O
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	X	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	X	X	X
9. Desiring social responsibilty	O	X	O
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

* Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task
        O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

Researcher's Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in:
The Contender (Lipsyte)

ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENDER

Chapters 1, 10, 20 were randomly chosen as the episodes for
analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an
attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks
(modified) in the novel.

TASKS	EPISODES		
	Chapter 1	Chapter 10	Chapter 20
1. Relationships with peers	X	X	X
2. Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	O
3. Accepting & using one's body	X	X	X
4. Achieving emotional independence	X	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	X	X	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	O	X	O
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	O	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	O	O	X
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	O	X
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

* Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task
       O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

Researcher's Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in:
The Learning Tree (Parks)

ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNING TREE

Chapters 5, 9, and 15 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel.

TASKS	EPISODES		
	Chapter 5	Chapter 9	Chapter 15
1. Relationships with peers	X	X	O
2. Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	O
3. Accepting and using one's body	X	X	O
4. Achieving emotional independence	X	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	O	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	X	O	O
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	X	O
8. Developing intellectual skills	X	X	O
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	X	X
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

* Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task
        O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

ANALYSIS OF DURANGO STREET

Chapters 1, 14, and 31 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel. In Durango Street the adolescent protagonist achieves few of Havighurst's developmental tasks (modified).

TASKS	EPISODES		
	Chapter 1	Chapter 14	Chapter 31
1. Relationships with peers	X	X	O
2. Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	O
3. Accepting & using one's body	X	X	O
4. Achieving emotional independence	X	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	O	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	O	O	O
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	O	O	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	X	O	X
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	X	X
10. Gaining values and ethics	O	O	O

* Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task
       O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

Cumulative Table: Presence/Absence
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified)
in
Sounder (S), The Contender (C), The Learning Tree (L),
and
Durango Street (D).

The table presents which tasks each protagonist attempted or achieved in the early, middle, and later episodes of each novel. The terms "early", "middle, or "later" are used because the chapter numbers varaied from one novel to the next. This table provides a cumulative look at all of the novels together. If the designated letter of the novels (S,C,L,D) appears below, it indicates that a task was attempted or achieved in that chapter.

	Early Chapter	Middle Chapter	Later Chapter
1.	C,L,D,	C,C,D,	C
2.	S,C,L,D,	S,C,L,D,	S
3.	C,L,D,	C,L,D,	C
4.	S,C,L,D,	S,C,L,D,	S,C,L,D,
5.	C,	C,	
6.	L,	C,	
7.	S,C,L,	S,L,	

APPENDIX 2

NOTE: To ensure that each rater received the same instructions, the
       following direction sheet was given to each rater.

RATER'S INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank you for agreeing to assist me in this study. Please read
    Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the study so that you can understand the
    intent and background of this research. Let's meet again on
    _____ to discuss these chapters and to discuss the next
    step. Please keep your copy of these directions so that you can
    have an overview of what will be expected of you.

2. Now that you have read Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the study, do you
    have any questions? Do you need anything clarified?

3. Please read the novel Nitty Gritty by Frank Bonham. It is this novel
    that you will analyze portions of as part of the study. After
    reading the novel, please meet with me on _____.

4. Do you have any questions about the novel Nitty Gritty?

5. To examine the protagonists' development according to Havighurst's

(modified) tasks, I have randomly selected three chapters for you
to analyze. Using the table which lists these books, please re-read
each of the three episodes and indicate the attempt or achievement of
each of the ten tasks. Please remember that tasks 3 and 10 have been
modified to reflect Cross' ethnic development model. Upon completion
of your rater sheet, please meet with me on _____.
Do you have any questions?

6. Thank you for conducting this study. Do you have any questions about
your results? I will share the results of this study with you as
soon as they are completed.

APPENDIX 3

Included in this appendix are the rater sheets and calculation sheet from the reliability analysis.

Researcher's Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in:
Nitty Gritty (Bonham)
Chapters 1, 9, and 19 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis.

Tasks	Chapter 1	Chapter 9	Chapter 19
1. Relationship with peers	O	X	X
2. Achieving a masculine social role	O	X	X
3. Accepting & using one's body	O	X	O
4. Achieving emotional independence	O	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	X	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	X	X	X
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	O	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	O	O	X
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	X	X
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

* Key X = presence of an attempt or achievement of a task
       O = absence of attempt or achievement of a task

Rater's Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in:
<u>Nitty Gritty</u> (Bonham)
(BLACK MALE TEACHER)

Chapters 1, 9, and 19 were randomly chosen as the episodes for

analysis. Please use the following table to indicate the

presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst

developmental tasks (modified) in the novel. Please indicate with the

appropriate marking if you think any of these tasks are present/absent in

the selected chapters.

Tasks	Chapter 1	Chapter 9	Chapter 19
1. Relationship with peers	O	X	X
2. Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	X
3. Accepting & using one's body	O	X	O
4. Achieving emotional independence	O	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	X	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	X	O	X
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	O	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	O	O	X
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	X	X
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

* Key X = presence of an attempt or achievement of a task
        O = absence of attempt or achievement of a task

Rater's Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in
<u>Nitty Gritty</u> (Bonham)
(WHITE MALE TEACHER)

Chapters 1, 9, and 19 were randomly chosen as the episodes for

analysis. Please use the following table to indicate the

presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst

developmental tasks (modified) in the novel. Please indicate with the

appropriate marking if you think any of these tasks are present/absent in

the selected chapters.

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Chapter 1</u>	<u>Chapter 9</u>	<u>Chapter 19</u>
1. Relationship with peers	O	X	X
2. Achieving a masculine social role	O	X	O
3. Accepting & using one's body	O	X	O
4. Achieving emotional independence	O	O	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	X	O
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	X	X	X
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	O	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	O	X	X
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	O	O
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

* Key X = presence of an attempt or achievement of a task
    O = absence of attempt or achievement of a task

Rater Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in
Nitty Gritty (Bonham)
(BLACK FEMALE TEACHER)

Chapters 1, 9, and 19 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. Please use the following table to indicate the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel. Please indicate with the appropriate marking if you think any of these tasks are present/absent in the selected chapters.

Tasks	Chapter 1	Chapter 9	Chapter 19
1. Relationship with peers	O	X	X
2. Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	X
3. Accepting & using one's body	O	O	O
4. Achieving emotional independence	O	X	X
5. Achieving economic independence	O	X	X
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation	X	X	X
7. Preparing for marriage and family life	X	O	X
8. Developing intellectual skills	O	O	X
9. Desiring social responsibility	O	X	O
10. Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

* Key X = presence of an attempt or achievement of a task
       O = absence of attempt or achievement of a task

Rater's Table - Presence/Absence*
of
Havighurst's Developmental Tasks (modified) in:
The Learning Tree (Parks)
(BLACK MALE TEACHER)

Chapters 5, 9 and 15 were randomly chosen as the episodes for analysis. The following table indicates the presence/absence of an attempt or achievement of each of the Havighurst developmental tasks (modified) in the novel.

	Tasks	Chapter 5	Chapter 9	Chapter 15
1.	Relationship with peers	X	X	O
2.	Achieving a masculine social role	X	X	O
3.	Accepting & using one's body	X	X	X
4.	Achieving emotional independence	X	X	X
5.	Achieving economic independence	O	O	O
6.	Selecting and preparing for an occupation	X	O	O
7.	Preparing for marriage and family life	X	X	O
8.	Developing intellectual skills	X	X	X
9.	Desiring social responsibility	X	X	X
10.	Gaining values and ethics	X	X	X

Key: X = presence of attempt or achievement of task
       O = absence of attempt or achievement of task

RATER CALCULATIONS
For <u>Nitty Gritty</u>

Formula

$$\frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$ = number of categories both agree on
= number of categories assigned an X

Black Male Teacher $\frac{2(17)}{18 + 19}$ $= \frac{34}{37}$ = 91.89

Black Female Teacher $\frac{2(16)}{18 + 19}$ $= \frac{32}{37}$ = 86.48

White Male Teacher $\frac{2(14)}{18 + 15}$ $= \frac{28}{33}$ = 84.84

N1 = categories of researcher
N2 = categories of rater

RATER CALCULATIONS
FOR <u>The Learning Tree</u>

Formula $\frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$ $= \frac{2(19)}{41}$ $= \frac{38}{41}$ = 92.86

Researcher = N1
Black Male Teacher = N2

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