The development of criteria for evaluating junior premarital pregnancy novels

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to develop criteria that could be used by classroom teachers and media specialists to judge the quality of junior premarital pregnancy novels. A secondary purpose was to demonstrate by means of model critiques how the criteria could be applied. The professional literature reflected five categories of concern relating to junior premarital pregnancy novels: adolescent sexuality, didacticism, sexism, pat solutions, and stereotyped adults. The researcher selected a panel of six experts to comment on the categories of concern and to identify the ten most widely read titles in the genre. The panel included practicing media specialists and professionals in related fields with expertise on literature for adolescents. From the thorough discussion of each category, a criteria statement was developed. The five criteria statements were then applied to the ten titles identified by the panel. They proved valid and usable for evaluating those ten titles.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING
JUNIOR PREMARITAL PREGNANCY NOVELS

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Connie Jo Barto
July 12, 1976

Read and approved by
Gerald G. Hodges
Elizabeth Martin

Accepted by Department
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop criteria that could be used by classroom teachers and media specialists to judge the quality of junior premarital pregnancy novels. A secondary purpose was to demonstrate by means of model critiques how the criteria could be applied. The professional literature reflected five categories of concern relating to junior premarital pregnancy novels: adolescent sexuality, didacticism, sexism, pat solutions, and stereotyped adults. The researcher selected a panel of six experts to comment on the categories of concern and to identify the ten most widely read titles in the genre. The panel included practicing media specialists and professionals in related fields with expertise on literature for adolescents. From the thorough discussion of each category, a criteria statement was developed. The five criteria statements were then applied to the ten titles identified by the panel. They proved valid and useable for evaluating those ten titles.
From the beginning of time, human sexuality has been a primary concern of law and society.¹ In the United States in the last decade, many long established sexual ethics, legal and social, have been seriously challenged. Masters and Johnson, the birth control pill, legalized abortion, weakening of parental authority, and the women's liberation movement have increased sexual freedom for male and female, adult and adolescent. This loosening of restraints has created conflicts for adolescents and their parents. For parents, the changing morality is an extremely confusing problem. Many find they have conflicting emotions about what proper adolescent sexual development is and how it can best be guided.² Most adolescents believe "that their parents refuse to acknowledge their sexual behavior or that their parents find their sexual attitudes so disagreeable that they refuse to discuss them."³

These changes and conflicts have been reflected in the literature for adolescents. Less than twenty-five years ago, the only sexual activity portrayed in the adolescent novel was a brief kiss. Then in 1952 the first novel to deal

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³Sorensen, p. 367.
with premarital sex and pregnancy appeared. The book, Henry Gregor Felson's *Two and the Town*, created some controversy and many librarians rejected it. No similar work was published again until 1968, when *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones* by Ann Head was offered in teen-age book clubs. Head's novel set sales records. The imitations that followed were equally popular. In 1970, Xerox Education Publications announced that four of their top five best-sellers for teens were about premarital sex and pregnancy. Paul Zindel's novel of 1971, *My Darling, My Hamburger*, was the first example to deal directly with the issue of premarital sex and abortion. One of the most candid treatments of sex so far is John Neufeld's *For All the Wrong Reasons*. This 1973 novel "... erotically describes intercourse, discusses fellatio, treats sex as pleasurable, alludes to the size of a man's penis, and uses 'the word.'"

Though the issue has been treated more and more boldly, many parents, authors, media specialists, teachers and reviewers disagree on how much discussion of sex should be included and from what point of view. Professional comment on the problem is scattered and unfocused. A media specialist or teacher looking through the professional literature for suggestions of selection criteria would have much analyzing and synthesizing to do.

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5 Kraus, p. 19. 6 Kraus, p. 21. 7 Kraus, p. 22.
Thus the purpose of this study is twofold:

1. To provide school media specialists and teachers with valid and useable criteria for judging the quality of the juvenile premarital pregnancy novel.

2. To demonstrate, by means of model critiques, how the criteria can be applied.

The junior premarital pregnancy novels have been described as "... most conspicuous leaders in the field of adolescent fiction." Because of their great popularity and controversial nature, they definitely merit careful consideration. This study is significant because it provides a set of selection criteria not previously available for evaluating the genre.

Sound criteria must evolve within some general frame of thought or attitude. The philosophical basis for the development of these criteria has been The Students' Right to Read statement and the School Library Bill of Rights. These two highly respected documents present attitudes about young readers that are widely accepted in the library and education fields.

The Students' Right to Read statement asserts that the right of an individual to read whatever he chooses is a fundamental right in a democratic society. The assumption is that an educated and well read man can be trusted to determine his own actions. His reading helps his decision making

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8Kraus, p. 18.
because it gives him the opportunity to meet characters, consider ideas and experience events that otherwise would be unaccessible to him. As the educated man gropes with life's dilemmas, his "search for answers may in part be found through reading." 9 The student's reading and searching cannot be meaningful if it is limited to inoffensive aspects of life.

The School Library Bill of Rights stresses the importance of considering students' individual needs, interests, abilities, backgrounds and maturity levels when selecting appropriate materials for them. The bill maintains that the school media center should include materials that help develop "ethical standards." 10 This point of view, as well as the attitude expressed in The Students' Right to Read statement, were considered as the criteria for evaluation were formulated.

Specific Problem Statement

Because the purpose of this study is to formulate criteria that can be used to judge the quality of junior premarital pregnancy novels and then to demonstrate how those criteria can be applied, the specific problem can be stated as follows:

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Can criteria be developed that can be applied to judge the quality of the junior premarital pregnancy novels published since 1952 and to be published in the future?

**Hypothesis**

The suggested solution to the preceding specific problem statement is this hypothesis:

Criteria can be developed that can be applied to judge the quality of the junior premarital pregnancy novels published since 1952 and to be published in the future.

**Conceptual Definitions**

The phrase "junior premarital pregnancy novel" that is used in the problem statement and hypothesis needs defining. To adequately do that, two concepts implied in the phrase must first be defined: literature for adolescents and junior novel.

A comment often made in professional articles discussing children's literature, adolescent literature or adult literature is the necessity to recognize that none of these categories is absolute. Books and readers cannot always be accurately categorized. For example, a book identified as a piece of children's literature may be enjoyed by adults as well. John Rowe Townsend, in the introduction to his collection of essays on leading writers for children, commented on categorizing books and readers:

... any line which is drawn to confine children or their books to their own special corner is an
artificial one. Wherever the line is drawn, children and adults and books will all wander across it.\textsuperscript{11}

Though categories cannot be absolute, they can be very useful for analyzing the work of authors and their audiences. Because of common characteristics, a certain amount of written work can be categorized as "literature for adolescents."

Dwight Burton's conception of adolescent literature is most appropriate for the problem in this paper. Burton, who has done extensive study of adolescent literature, defines it as:

\begin{quote}
... the rather substantial and highly important body of literature produced by predominantly serious writers specifically for the audience aged from about 12 to about seventeen, in other words principally junior and senior high school students.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Notice Burton's identification of the adolescent audience--readers from about ages twelve to seventeen, most of whom are junior and senior high school students. An overview of the professional literature used in preparing this study shows that the given age range for the adolescent reader varies from one writer to another. But in every case the difference is only a matter of one or two years from the range given by Burton. The few years difference is insignificant when users of the definition are alert to the uniqueness of adolescents as individuals. To better encompass the age range presented in the professional literature,

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
Burton's definition of the adolescent audience will be slightly modified. In this paper, adolescent will refer to young people from ages thirteen to eighteen, principally students in grades eight through twelve.

The broad concept of literature for adolescents necessarily includes fiction and nonfiction on all subjects and in all forms. Within this broad scope is a more specific category, the junior novel. Sometimes it is referred to as teen-age, juvenile or adolescent novel. Writing classified under the junior novel label has all the attributes of adolescent literature plus three other distinguishing characteristics. These can best be understood by comparing the junior novel with the adult novel.

Though the junior novel is written specifically for adolescents, it is not merely a diluted version of the adult novel. Many are shorter, but others surpass the average adult novel in length. Junior novel writers do not restrict their vocabularies nor oversimplify their writing styles.\(^\text{13}\) Junior novel writer Sylvia Engdahl believes, "A serious novel for adolescents is distinguished from adult material by its conceptual and emotional levels, not by its reading level."\(^\text{14}\) Most adolescents have not yet developed the background knowledge and experience to cope with some of the complex

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\(^{\text{13}}\)Sylvia Engdahl, "Do Teenage Novels Fill a Need?" \textit{English Journal}, February 1972, p. 51.

\(^{\text{14}}\)Engdahl, p. 51.
emotions, ideas and interrelationships presented in the adult novel. Engdahl cautions that this does not mean the novel written for them will lack depth. She explains, "A teen-age novel can and should have more than one level, the deeper ones will be noticed by the most mature readers alone."\(^\text{15}\)

A second distinguishing characteristic is the viewpoint. The junior novel has traditionally had an optimistic outlook, not necessarily a happy-ever-after ending, but the view that whatever suffering the characters have undergone has been in some way purposeful.\(^\text{16}\)

The junior novel, like the adult western or detective story, is a unique formulaic genre. One feature of the formula is a protagonist who is an adolescent himself or very close in age. He is always confronted by a personal problem. During the early years of the junior novel it was a purely personal one, but today it usually involves a social or moral conflict.\(^\text{17}\) The basic structure of the plot within the formula has not changed significantly:

1) After the introduction of the protagonist, the problem is dramatized by a brief episode, and then explicitly stated by an intrusion of the omniscient author.

\(^{15}\)Engdahl, p. 51.


2) Although the protagonist has managed to function adequately up to a point, now some event destroys the precarious equilibrium and precipitates a crisis.

3) The protagonist reacts with increasing frustration, refusing to heed the advice of wiser characters, and instead of approaching the solution of the problem, seemingly getting further and further away from it.

4) Just as a point of absolute hopelessness seems to have been reached, an accident, coincidence, or the sudden intervention of a "transcendent" character bring illumination and insight to the beleaguered protagonist.

5) The problem is solved by the protagonist and appropriate action is taken.18

The teen-age protagonist, the personal problem involving a social issue, and a plot of the above structure are unique to the formula of the junior novel.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of clarity in this study, the key concepts discussed in the preceding section are described here in specific, operational terms.

Adolescent is operationally defined as young people from ages thirteen to eighteen, principally students in grades eight through twelve. The terms adolescent reader, teen-ager and young adult are used interchangeably with the term adolescent.

The junior premarital pregnancy novel is a formula novel in which conceptual level and viewpoint focus on the needs of the adolescent reader, and in which the central problem involves the personal and social issue of a premarital pregnancy. The phrases, juvenile novel, adolescent

18Martinec, p. 341-342.
novel and teen-age novel will be used interchangeably with the phrase junior novel.

**Criteria** are guidelines used as the basis for critically analyzing the quality of something without necessarily implying comparison against a model. A criterion does not have the authoritativeness of a standard which does suggest comparison to a model for determination of worth.\(^{19}\)

A **useable** criterion is a guideline clearly stated and explained, flexible enough to adapt to specific materials, and nonrepetitious.

A **valid** criterion is a guideline that focuses evaluation on one of the five identified areas of concern relating to the quality of junior premarital pregnancy novels.

**Assumptions**

As the reader considers the design and conclusions of this study, he should keep in mind five assumptions made by the researcher.

1. The critic can apply two levels of criteria, one focusing on the literary merit of the book and the other on treatment of the personal and social problem. The nonliterary level of criteria dealing with the handling of the problem is particularly useful to the librarian or teacher. They are in the best position to judge what treatment is most suitable and

relevant to their students.²⁰ These two levels of criteria are not necessarily mutually exclusive. "Different kinds of assessment are valid for different purposes.²¹

2. The critic will not apply the developed criteria rigidly and insensitively. The overall purpose of the criteria is to give the critic one alternative for organizing his approach. This approach does not exclude literary evaluation nor sensitive personal response to the novel.

3. It is assumed that if the criteria are valid and useable when applied to the ten most popular juvenile premarital pregnancy novels, they will most likely be useable and valid when judging any novel fitting that definition.

4. Juvenile premarital pregnancy novels can present adolescent sexuality and behavior with the same frankness and freedom demonstrated in nonfiction literature for adolescents that discusses human sexuality. When the fictional treatment of adolescent sexuality and the problem of didacticism are discussed in the paper, comparisons to particular juvenile nonfiction selections are made. The selections were drawn from a list compiled by Eula T. White and Roberta Friedman.²² Eula White is an associate professor in the School of Library and Information Science at State


²¹ Townsend, A Sense of Story, p. 15.

University College in Geneseo, New York, and at the time the article was written, Roberta Friedman was in the masters program of that department. Their annotated list is a balanced, basic collection of accurate and, in most cases, up-to-date materials. The selections that will be referred to are *Love, Sex and Being Human* by Paul Bohannan, *Sex: Telling It Straight* by Eric Johnson, *Single and Pregnant* by Ruth Pierce, *Girls and Sex* by Wardell Pomeroy and *Sex Before Twenty* by Helen Southhard. All of the books deal with sexual feelings as well as facts. Together they represent the gamut of viewpoints covered.

5. The professional librarian and teacher accept the basic tenets of intellectual freedom in the *School Library Bill of Rights* and *The Students' Right to Read* statement.

**Limitations**

Just as the reader should keep in mind the five assumptions made, he must also place the conclusions of this study within the context of four limitations resulting from the study's design.

1. The criteria developed focus on how the personal and social issue of premarital pregnancy is handled, not on the literary and aesthetic merits of the novels.

2. The areas of concern identified in the professional literature are the result of the researcher's analysis and interpretation. The authors did not delineate in categories the flaws they saw in the genre.
3. The representation of the ten novels is a subjective value judgment by the researcher. The titles are to be considered a cross section of the genre, but the opinion is not based on any objective process, such as random sampling.

4. The interviewees were selected on the basis of the researcher's personal opinion of who best represents the range of professional expertise on adolescent literature. Though primary consideration was given to professional qualification, availability was another factor in the researcher's choices. This sampling of opinions cannot be regarded as a true random sampling.

THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Appearing throughout the located literature was criticism of the nonliterary content of the junior premarital pregnancy novels. None of the sources had summarized these concerns or developed possible criteria for evaluating the genre. As the literature was studied, five areas of concern were identified by the researcher. The concerns have been categorized under the subject headings adolescent sexuality, didacticism, sexism, superficial solutions and stereotyped adults.

According to social psychologist Dr. Robert C. Sorensen, "Adolescent sexuality is important because it greatly influences what young people think and do in all aspects of their lives." 23

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23 Sorensen, p. 3.
Dr. Sorensen conducted an in-depth study in 1973 of the relationships between the sexual behavior and sexual values of adolescents. Defining adolescents as thirteen to nineteen-year-olds, he drew a national probability sample that very closely approximated the make-up of the national adolescent population according to the 1970 census. Objectivity was of primary importance; a ground rule was that the study was about adolescents, not for or against them. Both the informal personal interview and a carefully refined, self-administered questionnaire were used. Dr. Sorensen's operational definition of adolescent sexuality will be used in this study: "When adolescents adopt certain beliefs and forms of behavior in response to their sexual desires, we call this adolescent sexuality."\textsuperscript{24}

Many writers express concern about the superficial, sometimes dishonest handling of adolescent sexuality in the junior premarital pregnancy novels. Lou Staneck, Assistant Director of the English Master of Arts in Teaching Program at the University of Chicago, maintains that emphasis is upon the consequences of sexual activities while sexual feelings and frustrations are nearly ignored.\textsuperscript{25} Barbara Wersba, author and children's book reviewer, agrees that

\textsuperscript{24}Sorensen, p. 3.

the treatment of sexuality is cursory. Assistant Chairman of the Department of English at State College in Pennsylvania, W. Keith Kraus, complains about how "... sex is treated as something frightening which should be avoided." In the New York Times Book Review, Carolyn G. Heilbrun notes the research insights gained about human sexuality are disregarded in the fictional presentations of adolescents' sexual experiences. Adolescent characters for example, engage in premarital intercourse as retaliation against parents, not because of a real sexual tension that exists. Both authors, John Rowe Townsend and John Neufeld, feel many of the novels evade the how's and why's of the adolescent sexual experience.

The only dissenting opinion is Josette Frank's. Frank, Director for Children's Books and Mass Media at the Child Study Association in New York, fears too much candidness about sexuality may confront adolescents with "... unnecessary, premature, unhealthy sexual stimulation, beyond their present maturity and capacity to manage."

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27 Kraus, p. 20.


30 Frank, p. 47.
Another area of concern is didacticism in the novels. Didacticism is the intention or tendency, obvious or subtle, to recommend certain moral values to the reader. During a speech at the 1971 Children's book Council, Natalie Babbitt objected to the excessive didacticism in junior novels dealing with social problems. She warned that the excessiveness was resulting in novels of despair.\(^{31}\) Nat Hentoff, prolific junior novel writer, declares adolescents are quick to recognize and reject a novel that attempts to persuade or direct. He does feel an author's goal can be to stimulate change in the thinking of young people, if the author is honest about how complicated life is in a society of many inequalities.\(^{32}\) In his overview of social problem junior novels, San Francisco State Assistant Professor of Education, Tom Finn, states, "The authors attempt not to moralize overtly, but few successfully accomplish this feat."\(^{33}\) Eli Oboler, American Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee member, urges librarians not to violate adolescents' right to intellectual freedom by restricting their reading of such novels. He reminds librarians that, to date, there is no proof that reading affects behavior.\(^{34}\) Several


\(^{33}\)Tom Finn, "The Now Young Adult Novel: How Will the Schools Handle It?" Phi Delta Kappan, April 1971, p. 471.

times, Oboler uses pertinent direct quotations that are attributed to a speaker, but are not identified in either the bibliography or footnotes. Unlike the others, Ken Donelson, an authority in the field of adolescent literature, is not too disturbed about fictional didacticism because he thinks most adolescents ignore it.35

A third category, sexism, "... includes all ideas and attitudes which are based on the fundamental belief in the natural inferiority of women."36 Ruth Rosen, University of California doctoral candidate in history, formulated this definition for her discussion of the biased portrayal of women in historical writing. Rosen criticizes the persistent portrayal of women as "... docile, passive, fragile, inane creatures."37 This criticism is repeated in articles focusing on the content of junior premarital pregnancy novels. Heilbrun contends the central female characters in the novels are acted upon, rather than acting for themselves. Their meaning in life is dependent upon male attention and affection.38 Gayle Nelson, English teacher at Edison High School in Minneapolis, asks if

35Opinion expressed by Ken Donelson, Arizona State University English Department, in an address ("The Problem Adolescent and the Problem Adolescent Novel") at NCTE Secondary Section English Curriculum Conference, April, 1973 (tape on file in Dr. Geralding LaRocque's office.)


37Rosen, p. 328. 38Heilbrun, p. 300.
the junior premarital pregnancy novels offer sufficient model diversity for girls. She concludes that the wife/mother role receives inordinate emphasis.  

Superficial solutions are an area of concern because of their frequent use in the novels. Superficial solutions are pat endings that are not justified by the plot or character situation. Writers in the professional literature caution that the junior novel's purpose is not to avoid realistic endings or to be a problem solver for the adolescent. Jane Yolen and Emily Neville, both authors of children's books, and Nat Hentoff firmly believe the writer's purpose is to enable the young reader to explore a realistically portrayed problem. The writer offers insights and information, not unlikely endings or decisive answers to personal problems.

The last category of concern, stereotyped adults, refers to the portrayal of adults—especially parents—as exaggerated, unreasonable authority figures. Insensitive and ignorant, fictional adults cause many of the teen-age characters' difficulties. They are usually portrayed as incapable of helping adolescents cope with their troubles. "Whatever the problem, inevitably it only requires two paragraphs to return it to the source— the unsympathetic adult," comments Richard Peck, juvenile novel writer. Staneck calls for more intensive

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41Richard Peck, "In the Country of Teenage Fiction,"
criticism of the distorted portrayal of adults in adolescent novels.\textsuperscript{42}

The process of categorizing revealed a significant degree of consensus among the writers about the flaws in the junior premarital pregnancy novels. A number of them had opinions regarding more than one category of concern. Only the emphasis of their articles were presented here. Some of their opinions and insights relating to other categories will be referred to in the expanded discussion within the paper.

THE METHODOLOGY

The first procedure carried out was the interviewing of media specialists and teachers. The purpose of the interviews was to identify the ten most commonly read junior premarital pregnancy novels and to gain added insight on the areas of concern categorized in the literature review. The five areas of concern discussed with the interviewees were adolescent sexuality, didacticism, sexism, superficial solutions and stereotyped adults. The researcher was alert to information or opinions that might lead to the formulation of additional or slightly revised categories, but no alteration was necessary.

The interviews were informal and unstructured. Interviewees were asked, on the basis of observation and

experience, to list the ten most widely read titles among adolescents. They were asked for general opinions of the premarital pregnancy genre, specific comments on the titles they listed, and reactions to the five categories of concern.

The people interviewed were:

1. Mrs. Barbara Blow, Individualized Reading Teacher, Cedar Falls Senior High School, Cedar Falls, Iowa.
2. Mrs. Virginia Thomson, Media Specialist, Peet Junior High School, Cedar Falls, Iowa.
3. Mrs. Doris Fistler, Media Specialist, Grundy Center Community High School, Grundy Center, Iowa.
4. Mrs. Linda Waddle, Media Specialist, Cedar Falls Senior High School, Cedar Falls, Iowa.
5. Dr. Geraldine E. LaRocque, Teacher of Literature for Adolescents (62:165g), Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Northern Iowa.
6. Mr. Gerald Hodges, Teacher of High School Library Materials (35:134g), Assistant Professor, Library Science Department, University of Northern Iowa.

The group selected is obviously not a random sample, but in the opinion of the researcher they represent a considerable range of professional expertise on literature for adolescents. All of the individuals named have worked directly with junior or senior high school students in the fields of library services or language arts. The three
practicing media specialists have developed media centers commonly regarded by other professionals as models. Mrs. Blow is a leader in the field of individualized reading in Iowa and has developed an extensive program at Cedar Falls High School. Both Dr. LaRocque and Mr. Hodges are training future English teachers and media specialists, respectively.

The researcher first contacted each expert by phone in order to introduce the study and to request participation. Each one was then sent an information sheet that included a statement of the hypothesis, the operational definition of the junior premarital pregnancy novel, explanations of the five areas of concern, and a list of the three goals of the study. Also, the expert's role in the study was explained in outline form. Thus the expert, prior to the interview, was able to identify titles that met the qualifications of the operational definition and to contemplate the categories of concern. A sample information sheet is included in Appendix A.

Every title suggested by the interviewees as most widely read was listed once. Then a check was made next to the title for each time it was suggested by the interviewees. The ten titles with the largest number of checks were used. In case of a tie, the researcher would have made the selection.

Data gathered from the interviews was categorized on five by eight inch notecards under the most appropriate subject headings. Subject headings were the labels used for the five areas of concern. For each interview, a set of
notecards was developed. On the first notecard of the set was a complete bibliographic citation: name of the interviewee, his identification, place and date of the interview. On subsequent notecards was the last name of the interviewee, the date, the subject heading and the data relevant to that heading. No card had more than one subject heading.

The classification of data in the professional literature was very similar. As an article was studied, pertinent information that related to one of the five categories was recorded on a five by eight inch card with the proper subject heading and abbreviated bibliographic information. The abbreviated bibliographic notation included author, title and page number. This information was adequate because bibliographic entries have already been written for the articles. As with the interviews, the researcher was alert for an area of concern that was overlooked or underestimated. No addition or revision was in order.

In the case of the juvenile nonfiction dealing with adolescent sexuality and its implications, the approach was somewhat different. Only two categories--adolescent sexuality and didacticism--were used. The nonfiction literature dealt directly with both. The researcher read the introduction, conclusion and related chapters in each of the books. The information was categorized under the appropriate subject heading. For each book, a set of notecards was made. Like the interview notecards, on the first was recorded a complete bibliographic citation: author, title,
city, publisher and date. Subsequent cards included just the subject heading and the author's last name.

When all the data was properly categorized, the cards were arranged in stacks according to subject headings, not by interviews, articles or nonfiction selections. From the organized information a thorough discussion of each area of concern was developed. Each discussion concludes with the formulation of a criterion statement.

A precise summary of explanation was written for each criterion statement. The list of five criteria statements has been set apart from the discussion in the text. Each is underlined and accompanied by a precise summary of explanation. The concise summaries focus for the reader the basic concepts from which the criteria statements evolved. The arrangement of statements and summaries set apart in Appendix B is intended to be a convenient reference for the reader when studying the model critiques.

The ten titles were read, or reread if that was the case, completely before specific evaluation by application of the criteria began. Each critique of the titles is two hundred to two hundred and fifty words long and relates to all the criteria. A plot synopsis of approximately fifty words precedes the critique. These are given in Appendix D.

The described methodology facilitated the solution of the problem in this study.
THE DISCUSSION

The detailed discussion that follows was developed by applying the described methodology. The data on which it is based was analyzed and synthesized in a systematic way. The three sources of data were the professional literature, juvenile nonfiction dealing with adolescent sexuality, and the interviews with the panel of media specialists and teachers.

Information from the professional literature and the interviews was carefully categorized according to the five categories of adolescent sexuality, didacticism, sexism, pat solutions, and stereotyped adults. In the case of the juvenile nonfiction, information relating to just the two categories of adolescent sexuality and didacticism was categorized.

Taking one category at a time, the researcher studied the selected information from each source to determine the specific organization most appropriate for the discussion of that category. The main discussion was divided into the five general categories of concern. The arrangement of the categories begins with adolescent sexuality, followed by didacticism, sexism, pat solutions, and stereotyped adults. The last four categories subdivide according to the sources of information: "Professional Literature," "Interviews," and in the case of didacticism, "Juvenile Nonfiction." All four also include the final subdivision "Criteria Statement." Within that subdivision the researcher
synthesized all the information relating to the category. From the synthesis the researcher formulated and justified a criteria statement.

The first category, adolescent sexuality, required a different type of subdividision because of its complexity. The first two subdivisions deal with the dual nature of human sexuality: "Physical Aspect" and "Psychological Aspect." The third subdivision, "Related Aspects," discusses how the problems of graphic explicitness and language must be considered when attempting to portray the physical and psychological aspects of sexuality. The discussions in these three subdivisions draw information from both the professional literature and juvenile nonfiction. The last two subdivisions are the same as for the other categories: "Interviews" and "Criteria Statement." Consequently, each category discussion concludes with a formal statement of criteria.

The last division of the discussion is the conclusion section. Treated in this section is the general quality of a novel toward which the five criteria statements point. Also presented are the results of the survey on the most widely read junior premarital pregnancy novels and recommendations for future study.

Adolescent Sexuality

The operational definition of adolescent sexuality used for this project defines adolescent sexuality as the particular beliefs and forms of behavior that adolescents adopt in response to their sexual desires.
The majority of writers identified in the literature review argue that human sexuality is emotional as well as physical, yet this dualism is frequently slighted or avoided in junior premarital pregnancy novels. The majority of them plea for junior novelists to explore the inner feelings and thoughts of a character in relation to his or her own sexuality. "... it is my belief," states Engdahl, "that today's teenagers want and need fiction that emphasizes the inner events of its characters' lives more than the outward ones." Neufeld, who has written the most candid junior premarital pregnancy novel to date, asserts that even though a significant part of adolescent lives are spent thinking, dreaming, and worrying about sex, novelists are only beginning to create characters conscious of this. Staneck focuses the concern when she points out that the emphasis of the novels seems to be on the consequences of sexual experimentation, not on the feelings and frustrations with which adolescents must deal. She suggests that the authors have "... failed to deal as deeply and sincerely with the problem as it merits. ..." Kraus agrees when he complains that in books of this genre "... any show of intimacy carries a warning of future danger." The implication always made, he believes, is that sex leads to unhappiness. Nelson laments the underlying hypothesis that sex equals pregnancy and pregnancy is punishment for girls who have

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violated their virginity.47 Heilbrun notes that in this genre of novel invariably the point is made that "good" girls can "get caught" if they indulge.48 Townsend illustrates the same point with his reference to Liz in My Darling, My Hamburger. Liz, a high school senior, dates a demanding boy, becomes pregnant, and disastrously attempts an illegal abortion. Townsend compares her to a moth that flits "... perilously round the flame . . . ," and later falls "scorched."49 In the opinion of these writers, it is the scorching that dominates the junior premarital pregnancy novels.

Consequently, Townsend asks, "We've seen the flitting and the scorching; what about the flame?"50 By "flame," Townsend means the inner sexual tensions adolescents experience before, during and after sexual experimentation. Adolescent girls do not simply become pregnant. They are sexually aware human beings who respond to their own bodies and emotions, and interact with other human bodies and emotions. Authors who leap across this reality of the adolescent experience are not dealing with the problem of teenage sexuality and pregnancy in any depth.

For clarity, the physical and emotional aspects of adolescent sexuality are discussed separately. In real life, biological and emotional reactions are very interrelated. Rarely do they operate independently.

Physical aspect. Adequate fictional treatment of the physical aspect of adolescent sexuality means acknowledgement of the

47Nelson, p. 54. 48Heilbrun, p. 300.
49Townsend, "Pot and the Pill," p. 2. 50Ibid.
sexual urges teenage males and females experience. "The subject of youthful sex drives," Staneck deplores, is usually poorly handled or misunderstood.\(^{51}\) She reminds readers that "... a teenager can have a strong sexual urge without an outside stimulant."\(^{52}\) By outside stimulant she means such motivations as revenge against parents or excitement about a football game. Referring to the Kinsey studies, Obler points out that the biological capacity of the male peaks during adolescence.\(^{53}\) Pomeroy, one of the writers of juvenile nonfiction, verifies this observation.\(^{54}\) This reality, Obler says is directly confronted by adult imposed sanctions on adolescent literature dealing with sexual subjects.\(^{55}\) Heilbrun too describes male adolescents as being in "... the most sexually demanding period of their lives..."\(^{56}\) Sex for a boy, she says, is an on-going process and an encounter with a new girl will be similar to what he has already experienced. For a girl, sex does not begin until intercourse, she explains. Only after experience with a boy whom she loves or at least of whom she is fond, does a girl discover her sexual being. Heilbrun sees this resulting problem for adolescents:

\(...) the tension between a boy who will demand sex in the rear of a car with a girl whose name he does not know, and a girl who wishes to awaken to true sexuality is a real tension. ... \(^{57}\)

\(^{51}\)Staneck, "From Gestation to the Pill," p. 4048.

\(^{52}\)Staneck, p. 4049. \(^{53}\)Oboler, p. 103.


\(^{55}\)Oboler, p. 103. \(^{56}\)Heilbrun, p. 301. \(^{57}\)Heilbrun, p. 302.
Roiphe believes that with today's apparent openness about sex and the availability of contraceptives "... 'going all the way' is thought to be a sign of that much-desired adulthood." She wonders if this attitude results in peer pressure demands for performance, demands that may be very difficult for teenagers who still feel awkward and anxious about their own bodies.

All of these writers—Staneck, Oboler, Heilbrun and Roiphe—are asking adults to be honest with teens and themselves and acknowledge that teenagers can feel basic biological urges that create physical tensions and challenging situations. They are saying that to avoid dealing candidly with the adolescent sexual experience is to avoid reality as adolescents face it each day. They are not saying that junior pre-marital pregnancy novels should focus candidly on the sexual activities of adolescent characters, but that authors must be honest about the how's and why's of teenage pregnancy.

Frank seems to fear that writers calling for this kind of honesty are calling for a candidness that could be harmful. Considering a girl of 13 or 14, Frank questions, "How much vicarious sexual experience is she ready for? What will she do with her feelings thus aroused?" Speculates Frank, "... are we in effect saying 'Try it—you'll like it'"?

Yolen most precisely answers Frank's argument. "Exposure does not automatically equal temptation," she declares. Speaking with the same attitude as the majority, Yolen

58 Roiphe, p. 23. 59 Frank, p. 46. 60 Frank, p. 47. 61 Yolen, p. 79.
denounces the kind of protection Frank advocates. Adults are the ones who are threatened by such candidness, not children she contends. Children have already heard much about subjects such as sex. She asks, do we prefer to have them whisper about sex in dark corners? Or do we want them to read about such subjects "... in a well written novel that sheds light and truth. ..." 62

Pomeroy, author of Girls and Sex, in his introduction for parents submits that a decision not to discuss a taboo subject is to suggest that it is something frightful and ugly. 63 He further suggests that children who are confused about sex because it is treated so secretively are more likely to explore and experiment.

The writers in the nonfiction have much to say to teens about their biological urges. Bohannan, Johnson, Pomeroy and Southard all discuss in detail the difference in male and female sexual natures, but the similarity in their capacity to experience strong sexual urges. The sex drive is healthy in itself, adolescents are told. Bohannan describes it as "... an integral part of our personalities ..." that can "... inform our emotions and enrich our experience of life." 64 He feels that one keenly felt lack for the adolescent is approved sex. 65 Interestingly, Pomeroy maintains that many girls are uncertain how they feel about

62 Ibid. 63 Pomeroy, p. 19.
64 Paul Bohannan, Love, Sex and Being Human (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc.), p. 56.
65 Bohannan, p. 137.
sex because society has taught them restraint. Eric Johnson acknowledges the physical tensions adolescents have in his discussion of masturbation. After puberty almost all boys and most girls, he reports, masturbate because it relieves the sexual pressure they feel. Says Helen Southard, "New, more intense or more localized sex feelings usually occur in adolescence . . . ." These four nonfiction writers have somewhat different conclusions about sexual conduct but all agree that sexual urges are real for adolescents.

Two points, then, can be made about junior premarital pregnancy novels in regards to their treatment of adolescent sexuality. First, novelists must acknowledge that adolescent sexual urges are real. Substituting "outside stimulants" as a reason for intercourse in order to circumvent reference to physical feelings is dishonest. Probably some teens do make love only to revenge parents, but this unnatural motivation should not be used only as an avoidance technique. Second, novelists should not dwell on the consequences of sexual intercourse while ignoring the naturalness and healthiness of the physical feelings that preceded the act. None of the writers, from Townsend to Southard, deny that sexual consequences exist, but all encourage teens to regard their sexual feelings as natural, not unhealthy or shameful. Emphasis on consequences

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66 Pomeroy, p. 30.
implies that something is dangerous.

The demand is that junior premarital pregnancy novelists place their emphasis on the inner character. In relation to the physical aspect of adolescent sexuality, this means acknowledging the biological urges teens feel and exploring some of the physical tensions that result.

Psychological aspect. Exploration of the inner character in relation to his own sexuality involves looking at the psychological as well as biological aspect. In fact, writers in the professional literature are especially concerned about the handling of the psychological aspect of adolescent sexuality in the juvenile literature. Wersba, a junior novelist herself, wants very much to see sex in young adult novels treated in a different way. American fiction, she feels is preoccupied with the genital aspect of sex when sex in humans is primarily an interaction of human minds. "Sex in humans," she insists, "succeeds or fails because of mental response.... People respond to one another because of what is in their heads -- and hearts." Because of our genital preoccupation we have not been able to ask and deal with some important questions for young people about sexual intercourse: "Is it terrific? Or is it awful? Or can it be both? Is it beautiful? Is it degrading? Is it ridiculous?" Preoccupied with the intent to tell it like it is, American novelists and some young adult novelists often end up discussing the interaction of parts not

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69 Wersba, p. 44. 70 Ibid.
human beings. For this reason Wersba sincerely considers *Wuthering Heights* much more erotic than *Portnoy's Complaint*. Sex in *Wuthering Heights* is an interworking of heads and hearts, not merely biological parts.\(^{71}\)

Neufeld perceives the problem in the same way as Wersba. Neufeld says he has read no junior premarital pregnancy novels in which the heroine is allowed to do more than wake up with a case of morning sickness. "How, pray did she get that way?" he asks.\(^{72}\) He wonders: Was it enjoyable, or unhappy? Was it a first time? What were her thoughts before and after? Concludes Neufeld, "Sensuality, as well as babies, exists, after all."\(^{73}\)

Townsend's question, "What about the flame?" implies the same specific questions Wersba and Neufeld ask. In the junior premarital pregnancy novel, *My Darling, My Hamburger*, Townsend protests, the novelist jumps from Liz's flitting near the flame to her collapse as a scorched pregnant girl. In other words, the reader is made aware by Liz's veiled comments that she is probably having intercourse with her boyfriend, but from that disclosure the story jumps to her announcement that she is pregnant. The novelist misses the opportunity "... to supersede at last the row of asterisk or strictly clinical account or the romantic euphemisms."\(^{74}\) Why couldn't we see these two as lovers, perhaps even happy ones?, Townsend asks.

\(^{71}\)*Wersba, p. 46.  \(^{72}\)Neufeld, p. 147.  \(^{73}\)Ibid.  
\(^{74}\)Townsend, "Pot and the Pill," p. 2.
Junior premarital pregnancy novelists who make the kind of jump Zindel makes overshoot "... the heart of the story ..." in Townsend's opinion. Jumping over questions about the quality of the sexual relationship between the novel's adolescent lovers leaves young readers with the distorted, oversimplified impression that sexual activities create problems, usually the very serious one of pregnancy. Yet, certainly the way the heroine handles the dilemma of pregnancy is directly affected by the quality of relationship she and her lover had. Young readers are more curious and concerned about their sexual relationship than how each of them informs his parents. Young readers desire not just how-to information, but trustworthy insight into what sexual intercourse between adolescents is like. What kind of emotional experience is it? Not, how do you do it? But, how does it affect you—before, during and after? Writers must give adolescents the opportunity for this insight into the subject of sex, Wersba proclaims. As human beings, what they need to explore "... is not outer space but inner space."76

The human quality is what is missing in junior premarital pregnancy novels, Heilbrun affirms. Referring to six novels in particular, Heilbrun submits that they are "... honest in their way but so achingly hollow at the center where a human being is supposed to be. ..."77 She notes a variety of problems with how the girls in the stories see themselves,

75 Ibid. 76 Wersba, p. 46. 77 Heilbrun, p. 302.
but one is their attitude toward their own sexuality. Not one girl is able to view herself as a special human being, only as a collection of female organs or a "throbbing womb."\(^{78}\)

Neufeld, too, is concerned that novelists emphasize the "inner space" of their adolescent characters. He admires Townsend's handling of an adolescent sexual experience in Townsend's novel *Good Night, Prof, Dear*.\(^{79}\) The central character, a shy, conservative, middle class adolescent dreams and worries about sex. Then he makes love with a girl somewhat older and much more worldly. He actually enjoys intercourse and repeats it. There is little explicitness about physical activities, but much reporting of Graham's thoughts and emotions. The focus is on how Graham is affected as a human being.

"... Kids in books," Neufeld summarizes, "... should be allowed the same freedom of their imaginings they are allowed in real life. Anything less is, to me, dishonest."\(^{80}\)

Related aspects. Dealing honestly with the physical and psychological aspects of adolescent sexuality is difficult because our culture frowns upon sexual experimentation during adolescence.\(^{81}\) The junior novelist anticipates two fears among adult evaluators, graphic explicitness about sexual activities and candid, coarse language. Writers in the professional literature remind junior novelists and other adults that honesty about sexuality does not directly relate...

\(^{78}\)Heilbrun, p. 300. \(^{79}\)Neufeld, p. 150. \(^{80}\)Ibid. 

\(^{81}\)Staneck, "From Gestation to the Pill," p. 4047.
to graphicness. Wersba says outright, "... I'm not asking for graphic explicitness in children's books, but for depth and truth."\textsuperscript{82} Matter of fact, sometimes sensuous, explicitness is needed to move the plot or to background thoughts and emotions. Neufeld complains about the novelists who start in the direction of a sex scene and then awkwardly shy away from it. Due to their "oblique references," young readers miss whole incidents or wonder at what particular incidents mean.\textsuperscript{83} As noted before, sexual scenes in Townsend's novel \textit{Good Night, Prof, Dear} are not very explicit but the reader understands what happened and generally how. Thus, some explicitness is necessary, but an emphasis on the psychological side of sexuality, as compared to a preoccupation with the physical, precludes the need for numerous graphic details.

The particular problem the psychological side presents is language. While American culture frowns upon sexual experimentation during adolescence, it does allow sex to be talked about quite freely in public and in varying degrees of frankness in the media. This public dialogue on sex ranges from the tasteful to the sordid. Consequently, adolescent peer groups today exhibit a freedom of language probably not experienced by their parents at the same age. What sexual vocabulary an adolescent does not acquire at home or at the movies, he will most likely learn from his peer group. Some adults try to shield adolescents from this language that bothers them, but not the

\textsuperscript{82}Wersba, p. 46. \textsuperscript{83}Neufeld, p. 151.
adolescents who frequently use such language themselves. Roiphe, the parent of teenagers, speaks to that situation: "Much of the mystery of sex may be gone. Its taboos have been broken and adolescents use street language the way pediatricians of my childhood used violet-gentian on anything at all." 84

Honest portrayal of the sexual thoughts and feelings of teenage fictional characters sometimes requires language that is offensive to some adults. One nonfiction writer, Eric Johnson, includes a brief glossary of slang words related to sex and a chapter entitled "Words and Sex." In that chapter, of his book Sex: Telling It Straight, Johnson recognizes the problem of sexual language and suggests how young people might deal with it:

Most of the words a lot of people use when they talk about sex never get written down in books like this one. This is funny because most kids know and use the words. But many people believe they are bad words.

You see, a lot of people think it is bad to talk freely about sex. They also think words about sex are bad. They think the short, easy words are the worst. But let us play straight: It is not bad to talk about sex. Sex and sex words are not bad unless you use them badly. 85

Surely this advice is suitable for junior novelists and adult evaluators. Candid sexual remarks and explicitness are at times warranted. To deliberately avoid them can create incredibility. Equally incredible would be any effort to use teen sexual language simply in an effort to reach the adolescent reader. If junior novelists are to portray human adolescents,

84 Roiphe, p. 88. 85 Johnson, p. 13.
they must be able to use the language that reflects their characters' humanity. Speaking on the subject of the problem adolescent novel, Ken Donelson expresses the view that "... adolescents in many contemporary novels do sound like real human beings with all the linguistic faults and virtues of real people." At the same time, Townsend and Neufeld express dissatisfaction with the style of language in such novels. Townsend observes that novelists have yet to supersede the asterisks, the clinical accounts, and the euphemisms. Neufeld feels that adolescent characters are not yet really free to use the words and play with the ideas that make them whole people.

If fictional adolescent characters are allowed to be whole human beings, their sexual experiences will be communicated as steps toward adulthood. Among some adults exists the myth that having sex means automatic entry into adulthood. Among adolescents too is the false notion that "going all the way" is the sign of adulthood. Yet, clearly, an act or two of intercourse does not transform an adolescent into an adult. Novelists have an obligation to portray sexual experiences as maturing processes. A dishonest portrayal seems to communicate that touching sex flings one into the adult world, and often a world with overwhelming adult problems. Sexual experiences are maturing processes, not immediate maturation. Adolescents

87 Neufeld, p. 152. 88 Roiphe, p. 23.
and adults may confuse sophistication with maturity. They are not synonymous. For example, information from the public dialogue and the media may have hastened adolescents' sophistication in regards to sexual behavior, but probably has not enhanced their understanding of their own sexuality.\textsuperscript{89} According to Richard Beck:

\begin{quote}
\ldots the best youth novels portray adolescence as a maturing process. Though the focus may be upon being young, there is a sense of future—a sense of becoming as well as being.\textsuperscript{90}
\end{quote}

The conclusions of writers in the professional literature, supported by opinions from writers of juvenile nonfiction on sexuality can now be summarized more precisely. Honest treatment of adolescent sexuality looks deeply into the subject of sex. In such treatment, the focus is on the inner character and the physical urges and emotional reactions generated from within, with which he must cope. Such honesty presents problems of explicitness and language. The novelist must not be intimidated by either, and must use the type of language and degree of explicitness necessary to create human adolescent characters. An honest portrayal will depict sexual experimentation as a maturing process, not simply as an initiation into full-fledged adulthood.

\textbf{Interviews.} The interviewees were not given a detailed analysis of why the writers in the professional literature considered the portrayal of adolescent sexuality in junior premarital pregnancy

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\textsuperscript{89}Wersba, p. 47. \textsuperscript{90}Peck, p. 205.
\end{flushright}
nove ls as generally dishonest. They were simply told, by
means of the information sheet and the researcher's introductory
remarks, that treatment of adolescent sexuality is considered,
in many cases, to be dishonest and unrealistic because it is
dealt with on a superficial level, a level that focuses on
consequences and neglects frustrations.

The interviewees' opinions do not show the high degree
of concensus existent in the professional literature. But all
six on the panel, directly or by implication, agreed that the
psychological or emotional side of adolescent sexuality does
not receive adequate attention.

Linda Waddle, high school media specialist, states this
opinion most directly. Citing examples of highly popular books
with allusions to sex, she says they appeal to today's sophis-
ticated high schoolers because they are more realistic than the
junior premarital pregnancy genre. She attributes their
realism to the fact that they go into more detail about sex as
a relationship between a couple. In these books, "... pregnancy
is the result of an affair," she stresses. Discussion of
intercourse is more detailed and covers the emotional as well
as the physical aspects. Concludes Waddle, "Emotion is part of
the whole experience. I'd like to see more books with it."  

The other high school media specialist on the panel,
Doris Fistler, also thinks the novels deal inadequately with

91 Statement by Linda Waddle, high school media specialist,
personal interview, Cedar Falls, Iowa, April 22, 1976.
92 Ibid. 93 Ibid.
adolescent feelings and frustrations. She describes the novels' treatment of adolescent sexuality as "fairly consecutive." 94

Junior high school media specialist Virginia Thomson's remarks reflect a concern for the emotional aspect. Junior high girls are very interested in nonfiction books on maturing, physical and emotional, she observes. 95 Often embarrassed to be seen with nonfiction, the girls go to fiction for information about sex and for insight about relationships with boys. Because she was frequently, sometimes blushingly, asked by junior high girls for junior premarital pregnancy novels, Thomson put the subject heading Pregnancy-Fiction in her card catalog. "Girls are seeking information," she repeats. 96 In her opinion, the genre is widely read by junior high girls because it is a source of information for them.

Her rationale for describing the junior premarital pregnancy novel _Growing Up in a Hurry_ as an honest book further reflects concern for the emotional aspect. The featured couples' lovemaking almost seems right, she states, because their sexual experience is a process in which they grow to know one another and themselves. 97

Empathy with fictional characters, specifies reading teacher Barbara Blow, is what makes a book meaningful for young

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94 Statement by Doris Fistler, high school media specialist, personal interview, Cedar Falls, Iowa, May 21, 1976.

95 Statement by Virginia Thomson, junior high media specialist, personal interview, Cedar Falls, Iowa, April 15, 1976.

96 Ibid. 97 Ibid.
When they can hear a fictional character think a thought they had actually had, and had felt guilty about, the book becomes meaningful for them. Like Thomson, the junior premarital pregnancy novel, Blow identifies as especially good, is a novel she describes as "introspective." The Longest Weekend, she asserts, is especially good because it examines the girl's feelings before, during, and after her premarital pregnancy.

"Human sexuality in adolescence is a human, curious, questing thing," remarks university instructor Gerald Hodges. Referring to his list of the genre, he feels John Neufeld in For All the Wrong Reasons, comes the closest to honest treatment of the subject. Neufeld offers an "... honest representation of feelings." Says Hodges, Neufeld most openly discusses the feelings of the involved adolescents in a fairly positive way. As a generalization, he confirms the assertions of writers in the professional literature that there is more dealing with consequences than feelings.

"I won't say that the treatment is superficial," Dr. LaRocque maintains. To say the novels' portrayals are

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99 Ibid.

100 Statement by Gerald Hodges, assistant professor of library science, personal interview, Cedar Falls, Iowa, April 12, 1976.

101 Ibid.

102 Statement by Dr. Geraldine LaRocque, professor of English, personal interview, Cedar Falls, Iowa, April 26, 1976.
unrealistic is difficult when they are evaluated as a whole. For example, she explains, not all teenagers get pregnant after one act of intercourse, but it is still a possibility. "Where does realism lie?" she persists.\textsuperscript{103}

By implication, Dr. LaRocque recognizes the significance of examining feelings in such novels. According to a study by Shores and Harlan, she reports, young people go to friends and other people for information. From novels, they want a vicarious experience. The desire for a vicarious experience seems synonymous with the desire for empathy. Though it appears that Shores and Harlan's study conflicts with Thomson's observation on the desire for information, perhaps not directly. In the researcher's opinion, Thomson speaks of information in a broad sense. She does suggest girls seek factual information from fiction, but also insight into emotions and behavior. Thomson, Dr. LaRocque, and Blow, Hodges, Fistler and Waddle all agree in spirit, that young readers want and need access to the inner thoughts and feelings of their fictional characters.

No panel members, except Hodges and Thomson, allude specifically to physical urges as a point of consideration. Hodges observes that there seems to be a Puritanical rejection of a purely physical attraction. Yet, he suggests, "Physical attraction can be a kind of love."\textsuperscript{104} Some writers in the professional literature consider retaliation against parents as a motivation for sex, to be a denial of physical tensions by the novelist. Thomson, though, regards retaliation as a

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. \textsuperscript{104} Hodges, interview, April 15, 1976.
realistic motive.  

Explicitness, language, and accompanying censorship are issues discussed by panel members under this category of concern. Blow sees little sexual explicitness in the genre. Due to possible censorship and an audience of young people, junior novelists avoid explicitness, she speculates. She contrasts the junior premarital pregnancy novel to The Cheerleader by Ruth Doan MacDougall, one of the highly popular novels in Cedar Falls High School. While the junior premarital pregnancy novel avoids explicitness, The Cheerleader, copyrighted in 1973, is "too uncomfortably realistic" for some parents. The goal of the junior premarital pregnancy novel, anyway, is not to serve as a sex manual, comments Blow. "We must take a step at a time. Writing about premarital pregnancy was a step."  

For the same reasons given by Blow, Thomson guesses that novelists approach the subject with fear. She adds the interesting note that for seventh graders the subject "... maybe should be toned down, but not made unreal."  

Waddle objects to the genre particularly because it does avoid explicitness. Sophisticated high schoolers are not interested in the generalizations of the junior premarital pregnancy novel, she reports. They are reading the more explicit novels like The Cheerleader, the book mentioned by Blow. "You could read these books..."  

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105 Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.  
107 Ibid.  
108 Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.
premarital pregnancy novels] and still not know what makes you pregnant," Waddle complains. The most frustrating thing, she continues, is that there are no details about what you should or should not do. She prefers for girls to read books like The Cheerleader. Junior premarital pregnancy novels are "... kind of old hat."110

Hodges' response reflects ideas in both Waddle's and Blow's comments. "Some authors may have been brave in just dealing with the topic, even if they have not dealt explicitly with it," he suggests.111 Junior premarital pregnancy novels do not have to be totally explicit, but neither should they be so implicit as to be unrealistic. To support his point, Hodges remarked about Pennington's Heir, a junior premarital pregnancy novel: "I had to read it seven times in order to determine that they had sex."112

Fistler tends to think a problem an author must have is the concern about censorship, on the one hand, and concern about intellectual freedom on the other. "Still, in our communities we are concerned about the language our students use openly and commonly in the halls or on the streets."113 We are concerned, she elaborates, if that language is put in print and handed to students. The community's view, if this happens, is that the school has "approved" the language. An attempt to portray feelings realistically requires that the

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110 Ibid. 111 Hodges, interview, April 12, 1976.
112 Ibid. 113 Fistler, interview, May 21, 1976.
author use the student language. But if he does, he may run into opposition. "Adults reading this adolescent material run into their own hang-ups about the type of language used." Fistler's thoughts on the problem of language are very close to those expressed in the professional literature.

Hodges and Waddle generally confirm the concern in the professional literature that adolescent sexuality, in many cases, is treated in a superficial way. On the contrary, Dr. LaRocque does not confirm the assertion. She feels reality is too complicated an issue on which to generalize. Neither does Thomson. She thinks the novels adequately meet the needs of the junior high girls who are patrons of her instructional media center. She is more concerned about how the novels neglect the boy's point of view. She feels junior high boys seek a source of information too, but do not find the junior premarital pregnancy novel an acceptable one. Fistler and Blow perceive a deliberate conservativeness in the treatment, but concede that it may be necessary.

Criteria statement. Obviously, not all on the panel agree with the writers in the professional literature about the quality of the treatment of adolescent sexuality in junior premarital pregnancy novels. However, all attest to the importance of examining the emotions associated with sexuality. Though consideration of physical urges does not receive much support from the panel, the point is well enough substantiated in the professional

\[114\] Ibid.  \[115\] Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.
literature to be included in the criteria statement. Another point sufficiently validated by the professional literature, and by some panel members, is that honest, in-depth treatment sometimes, not always, requires a degree of explicitness and style of language offensive to some adults. Thus, from the entire discussion on this category of concern, the researcher evolves this criteria statement:

Using the explicitness and language necessary, the novel explores the physical and psychological aspects of adolescent sexuality.

Didacticism

The second area of concern is didacticism. Didacticism is the intention or tendency, obvious or subtle, to recommend certain moral values to the reader. A junior novel dealing with the sensitive problem of teenage premarital pregnancy is very susceptible to didacticism, obvious or subtle. An obvious example of this tendency appeared in the preceding category of concern. Novelists have tended to dwell on the negative consequences of premarital intercourse instead of exploring the how and why behind the act. Focus on consequences unquestionably supports the strict social standard for premarital chastity.

Professional literature. The writers in the professional literature are unanimous in their opinion that the genre in general is didactic. Since every writer reports its existence, what do they see as the general symptoms? A loud, clear theme, Kraus offers. In many of the novels in the genre "... the
theme comes through clearly that girls who indulge in premarital sex are 'asking for trouble.'"116 Another loud theme, poses Heilbrun, is that "good" girls are usually the ones who get caught.117

The "last chance" attitude is another symptom. "When our children come into their teens," explains Babbitt, "we have a kind of last chance . . . feeling that now is the moment to drum away, because obviously their personalities are not formed and they are desperately in need of moral instruction."118 No where is this attitude more apparent than in recent teenage problem fiction, she maintains.

The general purpose of the novel can be symptomatic of didacticism. Some junior novels are written to perform a community service, proposes Hentoff.119 Such novels are deliberately shaped to instruct or influence. Kraus complains that some of the novels of the early 1970's "... are virtually instructional booklets presented in a fictional format." 120 Behind this purpose lies the belief that fiction has the power to teach and to dramatize values.121 For the junior novel's power to be used virtuously, it must promote the traditional values of the community.

A subtle symptom that genuinely concerns Wersba is camouflaging the Old Morality with the New Sex. Explains

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119 Hentoff, "Getting Inside," p. 528. 120 Kraus, p. 21.
121 Burton, p. 250.
Wersba, in the old books, the couple went to the movies and afterwards had a Coke. In the contemporary novels, they smoke pot and go to bed. How liberal the recent novels seem.

"But when you examine these books closely, you find that the morality is still the same; that a judgmental quality pervades." 122 Those who are pregnant are sorry and those who were promiscuous are guilty. Heilbrun identifies this fallacy too. Juvenile novel publishers are kidding themselves if they think their recent junior premarital pregnancy novels are being more honest and informative than earlier ones, she exclaims. The novels are still making the same didactic points. 123

Young readers can tell when a book deliberately attempts to instruct and they tend to resist that, Hentoff submits. 124 Engdahl argues, "... teenagers scorn books that are not honest." 125 They are "... quick to spot a phony," enjoins Babbitt. 126

However, Kraus cites the example of a moralistic junior premarital pregnancy novel, A Girl Like Me, that has sold fairly well in spite of its didactic nature. 127 Donelson concedes that problem adolescent novels ultimately make a relatively obvious point, but without sermonizing. The didactic tendency is not a serious fault, he maintains, because "... most adolescent readers skip that junk anyway." 128

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122 Wersba, p. 46. 123 Heilbrun, p. 299.
The argument about whether young people reject novels with didacticism or not seems superfluous. The crucial issue might be this: How does didacticism limit the meaningfulness of the adolescent reading experience? Even if an adolescent chooses to read a didactic junior premarital pregnancy novel, how wide a view of life is he allowed?

Didacticism does not effectively regulate human behavior; it perpetuates narrowness of vision. "I do not suggest that authors advocate premarital sex for teens, but neither do I believe . . . narrow views of the situation teenage premarital pregnancy will in any way control, limit, or help with the problem," proposes Staneck.129 Rather than attempting to dictate behavior, the intent of their fiction should be to get young people to ask questions, responds Hentoff.130 Wholesome adolescent growth involves the widening of the mental horizon. Engdahl expands on this point. Junior novels of quality, she says, have ideas worth pondering and discussing. "Themes are confined to neither traditional ideas or fashionable ones."131 A didactic approach restricts the choice of themes.

To avoid a didactic approach is to accomplish a feat, Finn states.132 In fact, Babbitt thinks it is useless to outlaw instruction altogether in books for young people. "Such a ban

129Staneck, "From Gestation to the Pill," p. 4050.
132Finn, p. 471.
would put too great a strain on human nature."\textsuperscript{133} She can tolerate some "gentle instruction," but, she demands:

It is time we stopped yelling at teenagers about the wetness of the water, and started trying to share with them the continual process of discovery of all the elements of life, a process through which we are endlessly passing, all of us together--regardless of age.\textsuperscript{134}

This sharing encourages questions, speculations and thoughts that will help adolescents sort out some kind of purposeful pattern for themselves. The junior premarital pregnancy novel's purpose then, is not to direct, but to help its adolescent readers discover a meaningful life direction for themselves.\textsuperscript{135}

\textbf{Juvenile nonfiction.} The statements of purpose in the juvenile nonfiction validate this approach. The nonfiction authors, with one exception, consciously try to avoid didacticism. "I do not try to make any decisions for the reader," declares Johnson.\textsuperscript{136} He does not tell his readers how they should behave. He tries, instead, to present all the facts and discussions the reader needs in order "... to make his own choices responsibly."\textsuperscript{137} He tells readers he makes this assumption: sex is a power that can be used in a good or bad way, but people will use their sexual power responsibly if they have adequate information.

In a familiar refrain, Pomeroy notes there has been too much emphasis on the question of premarital intercourse, especially

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{133}Babbitt, p. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{134}Babbitt, p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{135}Hentoff, "Back to You, Nat," p. 38.
\item \textsuperscript{136}Johnson, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{137}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
for girls, and little on how they feel about what they do. He does not prohibit premarital intercourse. He advises a girl to learn about all the consequences and preventions before she makes any decisions about intercourse. She is then better able to make a decision and handle the results, if any. 138

"I am not advocating any specific moral behavior," enjoins Bohannan. 139 "In this book I have not said 'Don't' or 'Wait for marriage.'" 140 Like Johnson and Pomeroy, he advocates decisions based on accurate knowledge of alternatives instead of fear or superstition. He advises teenagers to make conscious decisions about their own moralities, and to consider community standards as they do so. They do not have to adhere to community values but they need to be prepared to handle a negative community attitude if their sexual values differ. Bohannan makes the interesting observation that finding one's own morality is a constant on-going process in life. 141

Even Pierce, who specifically addresses single, pregnant girls, states that her goal is to describe all the alternatives so the girls can make their own responsible choices about their present and future. 142 Pierce's book is extremely objective, almost impersonal in places. There is no hint of chastisement or judgment.

138 Pomeroy, p. 123. 139 Bohannan, p. XIII.
Southard's approach is more didactic. She, like the others, presents a wide range of information and encourages personal decision making. But she goes the next step and recommends that young people decide on premarital chastity.¹⁴³ Her reasons for not having premarital intercourse dominate her discussion of the pro's and con's. Her recommendations seem to be an attempt to direct, and thus contradict her claim that individuals should make their own decisions.

The view in the professional literature that adolescent fiction should stimulate questions, speculations, and thoughts seems very compatible with the approach of the first four non-fiction writers. Careful, personal decision making based on accurate information and balanced discussion, as advocated by them, is definitely a discovery process. In such a process, an adolescent sorts out for himself a meaningful pattern of values and behavior.

**Interviews.** Though most writers in the professional literature consider didacticism to be a definite problem with the genre, suprisingly, the majority of panel members do not. Authors are not being "too preachy," Blow remarks.¹⁴⁴ They are "... trying to offer a sympathetic view of a situation that could happen to anyone."¹⁴⁵ Their intent, she adds, is not to present moral guides.

"I didn't feel they were preaching at me about the rights

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and wrongs," Waddle comments in regards to her list of most widely read titles.\textsuperscript{146} Fistler, too, specifies that the five titles she listed do not preach.\textsuperscript{147}

Thomson bases her response on observations of her junior high readers: "Teenagers reading them \textit{[junior premarital pregnancy novels]} don't seem to regard preaching as a problem."\textsuperscript{148} They read the novels and recommend them to friends, she reports.

Dr. LaRocque and Hodges express somewhat different views from the majority and each other. Dr. LaRocque submits that the genre is still didactic. The novels use some scare techniques. But she is not convinced that didacticism should be too serious a concern. After all, she reports, the adolescent novel has always been didactic. Plato, she adds, thought all literature should be.\textsuperscript{149}

Hodges, more than any other member of the panel, regards didacticism as a problem. "As a genre, they are cautionary," he generalizes.\textsuperscript{150} The theme—don't have sex—comes through loud and clear. The theme is moralistic and preachy. If a girl reads five and takes them seriously, speculates Hodges, she could have a problem.

Fistler and Thomson do not perceive such negative effects from the approach in junior premarital pregnancy novels. Unless didacticism is very obvious, Fistler doubts whether a young

\textsuperscript{146} Waddle, interview, April 22, 1976.
\textsuperscript{147} Fistler, interview, May 21, 1976.
\textsuperscript{148} Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.
\textsuperscript{149} LaRocque, interview, April 26, 1976.
\textsuperscript{150} Hodges, interview, April 12, 1976.
reader feels she is being preached at. "I'm not convinced that a young person involved in this, the girl who is pregnant or in love, is looking for a lesson in this, though we as adults do."\(^{151}\) Fistler suspects girls are relating to the novels after the fact. They are not necessarily being guided by the books.

In contrast, Thomson remarks, "I think kids are looking for messages on the subject. These kids will forgive these books a lot."\(^{152}\) Adolescents may even want some preaching, she affirms.

Dissatisfied with what he considers a didactic approach, Hodges pleads for a genre that is "in-between." Young people need to know that consequences are not always happy. That kind of didacticism is positive, he concedes. But because sex is a developmental thing, adolescents need to see all sides of human sexuality, he asserts. He pleads for a book which "... deals with the theme from many points of view, but has one idea coming through loud and clear in a way that doesn't preach."\(^{153}\)

Criteria statement. Establishing a criteria with this diversity of opinion is difficult. First, is didacticism a valid category of concern? Looking at the views of all the experts on the panel and in the professional literature, the majority of the

\(^{151}\)Fistler, interview, May 21, 1976.

\(^{152}\)Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.

\(^{153}\)Hodges, interview, April 12, 1976.
total number regard didacticism as a problem. Though differing views put the issue in a better perspective, by majority opinion, didacticism qualifies as a valid concern.

As noted earlier, the issue of whether adolescent readers reject junior premarital pregnancy novels because of didactic approaches is superfluous. Obviously preachy novels probably are rejected. But in the opinion of many of the experts, adolescent readers overlook the more subtle didacticism and read the novels anyway. If this is the more common case, perhaps here is more reason for concern. The larger issue then becomes: How meaningful is the reading experience? In other words, how much thinking and self-awareness does the novel encourage?

A criteria statement for didacticism does not have to forbid all trace of the quality. As one expert pointed out, didacticism can be positive. A novel can reflect a viewpoint on life or offer some "gentle instruction" while still presenting a variety of information and ideas. The goal of the junior premarital pregnancy novel is not to help direct the sexual behavior of adolescents. The novel's goal should be twofold: to share with adolescents insights about life and to encourage them to sort out a meaningful life pattern for themselves. With these goals in mind, the researcher formulates this criteria statement:

Rather than instructing, the novel shares information and insights with the adolescent reader, and encourages him to discover his own direction in life.

Sexism

As defined in the introductory section of the paper,
sexism exists when the ideas and attitudes in the fiction reflect a belief in the natural inferiority of women. Women in sexist literature are portrayed as passive, fragile and inane, more creature than human being.

Professional literature. Certain writers in the professional literature assert that sexist ideas and attitudes in the genre prevent it from meeting the needs of its female adolescent readers. Heilbrun attacks the sexist presentation in the six junior premarital pregnancy novel she has examined:

... the girls... like slaves, like once-loved animals pathetic in their suffering, are acted upon. There is not one of them with the smallest sense of destiny, ... not one of them who could imagine herself as an autonomous being.154

Resumes Heilbrun, if we go on telling adolescent female readers that women are not much more than throbbing wombs, then we can anticipate trouble with adolescent females until we have them safely married. We should be communicating that our adolescent heroines have a sense of destiny and their sexual life is only one part of that destiny. Heilbrun gives specific examples of the problem as she sees it in the novels she reviewed: School bores each of the girls. For each, her personal status depends upon a boy's attention. The girl thinks of her shame and longs for the past. The boy thinks of his career, and regards fatherhood as just one facet of his future. With

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154Heilbrun, p. 300.
today's population problem, pregnancy cannot be the major event in a girl's life, insists Heilbrun. Like a boy, she must regard it as just one of several major events. Also like a boy, she must learn that her life can be directed toward a career she finds rewarding or maybe simply necessary. How can we help our female readers become aware of their right to be autonomous beings, if we portray their fictional counterparts in such a pathetic way?, Heilbrun demands.

Nelson is as concerned about sexism in junior pre-marital pregnancy novels as Heilbrun. To the extent that the three novels she read are representative, this genre is not meeting the needs of adolescent women, she contends. The heroines, she observes "... are acted upon and are unable to stand up to their own values." Reluctantly, they submit to a boy's demand for sex and afterwards feel intense guilt. They desire protection but are incapable of actively seeking some method of birth control. The girls are not able to make decisions and carry them out.

Once they discover they are pregnant, the girls seem unable to control their own lives. One grasps futilely at marriage. Another drops out of school to keep house while her husband goes to college. This heroine "... does not read, write poetry, visit friends, attend art galleries, or go to the movies." She spends most of her time

\[155^{\text{Ibid.}} \quad 156^{\text{Nelson, p. 54.}} \quad 157^{\text{Ibid.}} \quad 158^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
cooking and grocery shopping. Becoming a part of the boys' lives instead of seeking to go ahead with their own seems to be the heroines' goal.

A "... dichotomy proclaiming what is right for boys is not right for girls" operates in the novels, states Nelson. The boys suffer few consequences but the girls are soundly punished for breaking the rule that a girl should be a virgin on her wedding night. Pregnancy is apt punishment for their violation.

In spite of the novels' suggestion to the contrary, all teenage girls do not dream about pleasing a boy or talk mainly about weight control, clothes and dates, Nelson complains. They are thinking about who they are, where they are headed, and what alternatives exist for them. Considering the sexism in the novels and the needs of female adolescents today, Nelson summarizes:

If we expect adolescents to function sanely in our complex, pluralistic, ever-changing society, a society having an increasing number of choices for both men and women, we must offer our adolescents more model diversity. A woman no longer has to become a wife and mother.

Neither does Kraus view junior premarital pregnancy novels as offering female readers much model diversity or sense of destiny. He says the novels have perpetuated a Cinderella motif that includes a strong moral. "The girl's Cinderella dream is to become popular and win the

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159 Ibid. 160 Nelson, p. 55.
heart of the attractive boy."\textsuperscript{161} She is a nice girl who disapproves of peers who "sleep around." She has always been somewhat on the outside, and when the popular boy discovers her she enters a new, exciting social world. The dates lead to petting which leads to sex which leads to pregnancy. Marriage, at first, seems to be the happy ending to the Cinderella dream. Unfortunately the boy, even if he consents to marriage, feels trapped. He may mistreat the girl or just walk out. In the end, the girl suffers alone—the worst consequence of her misconduct. "Thus, the old double standard is reinforced by the so-called new realism.\textsuperscript{162}

In summary, these writers in the professional literature see three reflections of a sexist attitude in junior premarital pregnancy novels. First, a double standard operates. The heroines pay dearly for their misconduct, while the boys suffer few consequences. Second, the girls lack a sense of destiny. They do not ask who they are or where they are going. They do not assert themselves; instead, they are acted upon. Third, the heroines identify only with the role of housewife and mother. They demonstrate little awareness, that they, like boys, can direct themselves toward a work that is rewarding and purposeful. These sexist ideas prevent the genre from meeting the needs of its female adolescent readers, the writers complain.

\textbf{Interviews.} The interviewees are not nearly as emphatic

\textsuperscript{161}Kraus, p. 22.\textsuperscript{162}Ibid.
about sexism being a significant fault with the genre. They feel that, as a whole, the situation of the pregnant teenager, as presented in the novels is true to life. "Only a few adolescent novels are not sexist," comments Dr. LaRocque. "It's just a reflection of our culture."¹⁶³ Fistler explains that because her community does not accept premarital pregnancy very well, a pregnant girl is pretty much alone and bound by tradition.¹⁶⁴

Pregnant girls are limited to a few alternatives, corroborates Thomson. She too states that the novels reflect our culture in that our culture says it is a female responsibility to stay at home. If a girl decides to do so, she is just patterning herself after her own family.¹⁶⁵

Like the three preceding experts, Blow will not label the genre as sexist. Yet she believes that one reason junior premarital pregnancy novels are no longer so popular in her school is because pregnant girls are not socially ostracized as they once were. Today, girls have access to more open, advertised help.¹⁶⁶

Even so, generalizes Waddle, of the same school, teenage girls in Cedar Falls do not seem to take advantage of the options they have. She suggests that they are more sophisticated in

¹⁶³ LaRocque, interview, April 26, 1976.
¹⁶⁴ Fistler, interview, May 21, 1976.
¹⁶⁵ Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.
their reading than they are in real life. They hold their parents' views and not many parents are nontraditional.\textsuperscript{167}

A girl does not have many options, confirms Hodges. Any decision that is made involves her body. If the novels are to reflect reality, he notes, the reality seems to be that there is a decision to be made and the girl makes it. A pregnant teenager may be faced with lots of sacrifices and agonizing decisions. If this is life, perhaps the female reader should know this.\textsuperscript{168}

Both Hodges and Thomson make observations that relate to the double standard. The boy is not very involved, in most cases, remarks Hodges. And if you force a young man to compromise, how well can he handle the compromise?\textsuperscript{169} The girl's situation should not be blamed on the boy, points out Thomson. Usually, the girl is not bullied into it. She allows it or even invites it.\textsuperscript{170}

Waddle makes a suggestion relating to the Cinderella myth. "There's nothing more conservative than a teenage girl," she begins.\textsuperscript{171} One trait of her conservatism is her old-fashioned belief in romantic love, Waddle continues. To revise her view would be quite difficult, but junior premarital pregnancy novels could expand her horizons some. Few, if any, do, concludes Waddle.

\textsuperscript{167}Waddle, interview, April 22, 1976.\textsuperscript{168}Hodges, interview, April 12, 1976.\textsuperscript{169}Ibid.\textsuperscript{170}Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.\textsuperscript{171}Waddle, interview, April 22, 1976.
Dr. LaRocque has a more specific suggestion for dealing with the romantic love notion. "I want a book that's really realistic," she says. The novel would feature two girls but be weighted in another way. Both girls would be good people. But good people who are not realistic can get hurt. One girl is a romantic. She does not think sex should be planned. Surrender to sex, she believes, should be romantic. She is the one who gets pregnant. Her life is ruined because of her romanticism. The other girl, independent and strong minded, knows she wants to have intercourse. She acknowledges her feelings and uses contraceptives.\textsuperscript{172}

Criteria statement. The interviewees make a strong case about the impact of culture on the genre. The insistence of the writers in the professional literature that more model diversity be presented in the genre may be more idealistic than realistic. Perhaps most pregnant teenagers do find their alternatives limited. On the other hand, some girls, because of family viewpoint or social class, may have much more freedom of choice.

Junior premarital pregnancy novels may need to present heroines in situations of limited opportunities, if they are to be realistic. But limitation of alternatives does not necessarily mean loss of personal autonomy. A pregnant girl faces some critical decisions about her present and future. They should not be made without her active participation, or

\textsuperscript{172}LaRocque, interview, April 26, 1976.
at least her consent. As a functioning human being, citizen, perhaps mother and housewife, a girl must be able to exert some control over life. From a sense of self-control, a sense of self-worth evolves. Heroines in junior premarital pregnancy novels should make female adolescent readers more aware of their worth as human beings. They cannot if they are incapable of asserting themselves.

Also inherent in the concept of self-control is the idea of self-expression. Even if a girl is relegated by society to the role of mother and housewife, she does not sacrifice all personal interests. She is not forced to cook and forbidden to read. To perform well in such demanding roles requires some attention to self.

Junior premarital pregnancy novels should portray heroines who are attentive to personal needs and assertive about decision making. In the harsh situation a pregnant girl may find herself, she definitely needs these qualities. No sensitive novel could present these qualities and simultaneously permit the double standard to operate. Granted, the double standard exists, and realistically its existence cannot be denied. Yet the heroine can acknowledge its existence without using it to condemn herself. To accept the condemnations of the double standard, is to deny one's own worth. The following criteria statement develops from this summary:

Without glossing over the heroine's difficult situation, the novel allows her to maintain a sense of self-worth and self-assertiveness.
Pat Solutions

Pat solutions are the fourth category of concern. Pat endings are superficial conclusions, not justified by the plot or character situation. The preceding discussion on sexism evinced concern about how the junior premarital pregnancy novel ends. That concern focused on the heroine's final situation and her implied future as they related to the status of women. Certainly, both are major parts of the novel's resolution, but several other writers in the professional literature look at the ending in a broader way.

Professional literature. These writers feel that adolescent problem novels, such as junior premarital pregnancy novels, are simply prone to pat solutions. Everything works out too neatly or accidently to be credible. States Peck, "The best juvenile novels . . . raise human questions without providing pat solutions and stock scapegoats." 173 The adolescent problem novel is a curious mixture of personal/social problem and formula structure. What ramifications, the writers in the professional literature ask, do that combination and the demand to be honest about life, have for the outcome of the novel?

According to Martinec, the formulaic nature of the junior novel points toward pat solutions. The formula implies that all problems can be successfully solved, she explains. The successful solutions are "... either brought about by others or discovered by chance." 174 The protagonist does not

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173 Peck, p. 207. 174 Martinec, p. 344.
do too much of the problem solving for himself.

Novelists, by skillfully executing the elements of the formula, can move away from these implications, argues Staneck. The formula does not bind an author to a pat solution, she insists. She admits that the subject matter of the junior premarital pregnancy novel and the implications of the formula create a particular problem for the novelist. The adolescent reader wants to know how to deal with his sexuality and the formula, with which he is well acquainted, promises a solution. Yet society frowns on sexual experience in adolescence. The situation puts the author in the position of trying to solve "... the problem without evoking more anxiety than is reasonable and without betraying society." 176

The novelist can find a compromise, continues Staneck. The formula, she says, is not an excuse for ending the novel on a tidy note or didactic point. The formula does not dictate emphasis on consequences nor even that a solution must be presented. By skillfully manipulating the pattern, the novelist can still explore the problem in depth, and if he chooses, leave the ending open. 177 To leave the ending open does not mean to leave it hanging, adds Staneck. If a specific solution is not worked out by the end of the novel, the lack of decision should be a convincing outgrowth of the particular plot and characters.

Whether a specific solution is offered or not, these

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175 Staneck, "From Gestation to the Pill," p. 4047.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.
writers in the professional literature feel that the resolution should reflect a sense of hope. Frank does not request a so-called happy ending, but she does request "... that the characters ... come through their experiences, however grim or seamy, with a feeling that somehow he or she will cope." In regards to a book of "high sexual content," this is her most important criteria of acceptability. Peck agrees with Frank's view: "It is dishonest to conclude a story about fifteen year olds with '... and they lived happily ever after.' No one does. The best and worst usually lie ahead." Yet Peck cautions against the other extreme of a totally pessimistic conclusion. Engdahl also calls for keeping a perspective on pessimism in adolescent problem novels. She does not want a "sugar sweet happy ending" but she asks that "... the portrayal of whatever griefs they are left with, as being in some way purposeful—as leading somewhere." The grim accounts of the human condition relayed by the media have made today's teenagers well aware that reality is apt to be unpleasant and that not everyone's problems are resolved happily. Says Engdahl, "What they do not hear is any suggestion that there may be grounds for hope." Pat solutions that ring of happy-ever-after may be unrealistic, but extremely pessimistic conclusions may be equally oversimplified.

178 Frank, p. 47. 179 Peck, p. 205.
181 Ibid.
The author's goal then, is not to neatly dispose of the problem, summarizes Neville. "The author's job is to throw sharp light on how some real people act in a particular time and place." The adolescent reader may not be shown a specific solution to a problem, but he may be motivated to observe the problem situation more closely. Yolen makes a similar point about the problem solving approach in fiction, such as junior premarital pregnancy novels. The best book, she feels,

... leads the young reader to deeper insights and knowledge into problems, some of which he or she might share directly. And through these insights may come a gradual solving of some of those problems. Hentoff resists a book that provides "neatly universal answers." He is delighted to hear from teachers and librarians who understand that his junior novel, I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down, is "not supposed to come to the same conclusion for every reader."

The formulaic nature of the junior novel does not dictate that the problem must be solved and solved happily. Neither does the formula mandate an ending that emphasizes consequences. The important consideration in regards to the novel's resolution, say these writers in the professional literature, is that it offer hope and motivate thinking. The novelist's goal is not to solve specific problems for adolescents but to lead them to a

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deeper understanding of those problems.

**Interviews.** Fistler and Blow, on the panel of experts, generalize that pat solutions are characteristic of the genre. Fistler, however, does mention several exceptions to her generalization.\(^{185}\) And Blow stipulates that despite having that characteristic, the novels have enough other realistic elements to be of value to young readers.\(^{186}\)

Dr. LaRocque does not perceive pat solutions as a general characteristic of the genre, and, moreover, she does not regard the junior novel as a formula novel. To her, a formula novel is a very stereotyped fiction such as the Nancy Drew series. She describes the type: "You actually get the situation in your hands and you can tell the whole story from then on out."\(^{187}\) Adolescent novels today, she feels, have more original plots and more developed characters. One can't be sure of the ending from the beginning. Even the occasional *deux ex machina* she sees in the genre is believable. Life's situations are sometimes solved by chance. When the ending goes directly against the character, then the ending becomes unbelievable and superficial, she states.

Waddle and Hodges do accept the definition of the junior novel as a formula novel, but they do not feel that junior

\(^{185}\)Fistler, interview, May 21, 1976.

\(^{186}\)Blow, interview, May 13, 1976.

\(^{187}\)LaRocque, interview, April 26, 1976.
premarital pregnancy novels are plagued by pat solutions. Authors are making an effort for variety in treatment, Waddle comments.\textsuperscript{188} The themes may be the same, but the plots are different. Hodges verifies her perception. "Junior novels are now getting away from others intervening and working things out for the protagonist," he states.\textsuperscript{189} The central character now works out his own problem. The endings of the novels in the genre are more "downbeat and open-ended," Hodges explains, alternative resolutions are presented and the one chosen may not be the best one. The ending may be left open, and the reader is not sure which way it will go.

Thomson feels she has not read enough of the genre to make a judgment. Despite that reservation, she cites examples of two junior premarital pregnancy novels that, in her opinion, conclude well. The endings were not happy-ever-after, but open ended, leaving the reader contemplating the possible outcomes.\textsuperscript{190}

Criteria statement. As with other categories, the opinion of the panel is divided. Two generalize that pat solutions are characteristic of the junior premarital pregnancy novel. Three others disagree and the sixth makes no judgment. The majority of writers in the professional literature do not comment as specifically on the issue of pat solutions as they have on

\textsuperscript{188} Waddle, interview, April 22, 1976.

\textsuperscript{189} Hodges, interview, April 12, 1976.

\textsuperscript{190} Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.
preceding categories. The opinion of the panel does not very strongly confirm the researcher's perception that the presence of pat solutions was still a significant criticism. From the evidence presented then, it may be inaccurate to generalize that pat solutions are characteristic of the genre. Even though that generalization should not be made, the opinions in the professional literature and the interviewees' opinions provide insight on the sort of ending a junior premarital pregnancy novel should offer. An appropriate ending is not happy-ever-after but neither is it one of despair. The ending evolves naturally from the actions and personalities of human characters. The adolescent reader can better understand how and why the final situation resulted. Whether specifically resolved or left open ended, the novel's resolution stimulates question asking by the adolescent reader. The researcher can safely generalize that the ending of the junior premarital pregnancy novel warrants examination. A valid criteria for that evaluation can be this statement:

The hopeful resolution of the novel stimulates the adolescent reader to question why the novel ends as it does.

Stereotyped Adults

The last category of concern, stereotyped adults, refers to the portrayal of adults—especially parents—as exaggerated, unreasonable authority figures. Besides having an implication for the resolution of the novel, the formula also implies how adults in junior novels will be portrayed. According to the formula, adults are ineffectual when trying to help adolescents
with problems. Furthermore, the implication goes, "True communication, true community is possible only with one's peers."\textsuperscript{191}

**Professional literature.** To be shackled by these formulaic implications is to be counter productive, asserts Staneck.\textsuperscript{192} Too many adolescent authors are, she proposes. Too many are presenting distorted or exaggerated adult behavior. In a lopsided way adolescents are presented as far more kind, wise, and competent than the adults they encounter. Definitively being made is the statement that there is not much value in being an adult. In general, adolescent novelists are helping adolescents stereotype adult authority figures as the enemy.\textsuperscript{193}

Peck's viewpoint that adults are usually made the scapegoats for adolescent problems supports Staneck's opinion. "Whatever the problem, inevitably it only requires two paragraphs to return it to the source—the unsympathetic adult," complains Peck.\textsuperscript{194} Repeatedly, parental neglect and insensitivity cause greatly exaggerated personal problems for adolescents. Peck is tired of the overly dramatic junior novels that present "...a young protagonist dominated by a wicked adult establishment."\textsuperscript{195} The same concern is voiced

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{191}Martinec, p. 344.
\item \textsuperscript{192}Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents," p. 22.
\item \textsuperscript{193}Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents," p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{194}Peck, p. 207.
\item \textsuperscript{195}Peck, p. 205.
\end{itemize}
by Kraus:

In many of the adolescent-girl problem novels, the parents are depicted as too strict, argumentative, or selfish, and this is offered as the reason the girl turns to her boyfriend for love.  

Stereotyped parents are noticed by Heilbrun and Nelson in the genre. Heilbrun observes that typically the girl has trouble communicating with her parents. She may even have "... one of those impossible mothers who never understands anything." Nelson generalizes that most of the heroines are in conflict with their conventional, middle class parents because they are spending too much time with one boy.

Certainly, ignorant and cruel parents do exist in this world, Staneck admits. And she does not feel adolescents should be shielded from this reality. Her objection is that parental characters, and especially villainous ones, are poorly drawn and unbelievable. Says Staneck, the reader needs enough clues to understand why the parent or adult character behaves as he does. Some adult characters may be harsh and eccentric. Others may be well meaning but ineffectual. Still others may genuinely communicate with adolescents and sensitively respond to their problems. All these adult characters can exist, she explains, but not as stick figures. The reader needs

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196 Kraus, p. 22. 197 Heilbrun, p. 299.
198 Heilbrun, p. 300. 199 Nelson, p. 54.
200 Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents," p. 23.
enough information to understand why the characters are the people they are.\textsuperscript{201}

Do not overemphasize the adult impact, adds Peck. Allow the junior novel to explore the problems of the young with the wider world of adults as a backdrop. Too few books reflect adolescents' need to grow independently without the tyranny of peers and "... without looking back at their parents in anger."\textsuperscript{202} If youth is a "... part of the continuum of life ..." adolescents do share with adults similar frustrations, hopes, and curiosity.\textsuperscript{203} With this awareness, a junior novelist should present adult characters that are real but peripheral.\textsuperscript{204}

Thus, two points are made about adult characters in the professional literature. First, novelists must begin to communicate why their adult characters are the way they are. Unless adequate information is given, the presentation---especially of villainous adults---becomes distorted. Second, the adult impact should not be overdone. Not all adolescent problems are caused by adult errors. Not all adolescents are dominated by adults. When needed, adults, as parents or acquaintances, can offer valuable support or friendship to adolescents.

\textbf{Interviews.} Two of the six panel members do not regard

\textsuperscript{201}Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents," p. 21-22.  
\textsuperscript{202}Peck, p. 207.  \textsuperscript{203}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{204}Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents," p. 24.
stereotyped adults as a significant weakness within the genre. Waddle maintains that parents in the novels she listed "... didn't seem stereotyped." None were "terribly well developed," but they were all different and met situations differently. 205

In another dissenting opinion, Dr. LaRocque says the negative view of adults in the genre may be a pandering to adolescents on the author's part or an honest attempt to reach the heart of the adolescent. As a member of the Editorial Board of the Teenage Book Club (TAB), Dr. LaRocque recently wrote TAB that in many of the books she was reviewing for them, parents were unpleasant characters. She asked whether it was wise to perpetuate that view. Yet Dr. LaRocque definitely does not want to make the blanket statement that adults in the genre are stereotyped. What is reality? she asks again. For example, she said, the current child abuse statistics indicate that abusive parents exist in large numbers. 206

The other four panel members note exceptions but generalize that adults, especially parents, are poorly presented. Commonly, parents are "stupid, selfish, and blind in relation to kids," Thomson remarks. 207 "They abound in stereotyped adults," corroborates Hodges. 208

205 Waddle, interview, April 22, 1976.
206 Dr. LaRocque, interview, April 26, 1976.
207 Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.
208 Hodges, interview, April 12, 1976.
Blow comments that parents in the novels are very interfering and complicate the protagonist's situation. She too suggests that authors choose this negative view because they are trying to reach young people. Authors assume that young people often view parents in this way.209

Fistler reports that while she was once doing an intensive reading of adolescent novels, she became frustrated by the broken home syndrome. "Maybe you can't get a story on a normal, every day home situation," she speculates.210 "The nagging mother always seems to be present."

Thomson and Hodges explain how they would like to see more parents portrayed. Thomson looks for a novel that "... doesn't boil anyone..." particularly parents.211 Her example is the junior premarital pregnancy novel Sycamore Year. The parents, she notes, are warm and supportive. They seem sensitive to what their teenagers are doing.

Hodges' description is similar. Model parents, he states, are understanding and empathetic. They are willing to not get uptight about the quick, intense reactions of adolescents. "A parent must try to help a child come to good decisions," he states.212 Parents can have awful feelings about what their adolescent has done, but they can control those feelings and be

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211 Thomson, interview, April 15, 1976.
212 Hodges, interview, April 12, 1976.
supportive. Many junior premarital pregnancy novels, he concludes, simply add another layer of guilt or frustration. Look at what parents will do, they seem to say.

The opinion that adult characters are often stereotyped is well supported by both the professional literature and the panel. The purpose of the genre is obviously not to reinforce stereotyped thinking. Even if adolescents tend to view adults negatively, the author should not try to reach the adolescents by catering to the view. The novelist's goal should be to create complete, believable adult characters, not stick figures, so adolescents can understand why the adults behave and think as they do. Definitely there is a need for perspective. Not every bad adult must be balanced with a good one, but neither should a wicked, dominating adult establishment be presented. Sensitive, supportive adults do exist. There are other adults who will become more sensitive and supportive, if adolescents will encourage instead of condemning them for their occasional failings. These conclusions about how adults should be portrayed are the basis for the criteria statement:

While keeping a perspective on adult impact, the novel provides the details necessary for understanding why the adult characters behave as they do.

THE CONCLUSION

The five criteria statements, taken together, suggest a junior premarital pregnancy novel that deals honestly with all the facets of the problem. Such a novel presents ideas and information in an appropriate perspective. The novel portrays
human characters and treats them sympathetically. The goal is to increase adolescent awareness of the complexity of a particular human problem.

Probably every existing junior premarital pregnancy novel can be faulted by at least one criteria statement. This is not to say that the novels are poor reading matter. The criteria statements are not rigid indicators of acceptability. They are intended to be guidelines for evaluating how suitable the novel is for a particular recreational or instructional situation.

The criteria also offer guidance about the direction in which future junior premarital pregnancy novels should move. The opinion that this genre has come a long way is not a reason for being satisfied with its present state. The application in this study of the criteria statements to the ten most widely read novels indicates there is a need for improvement.

The ten most widely read junior premarital pregnancy novels were identified by the panel of experts upon the basis of personal observation. They were careful to select only titles that fit the operational definition: a formula novel in which conceptual level and viewpoint, focus on the needs of the adolescent reader, and in which the central problem involves the personal and social issue of a premarital pregnancy. The previously described methodology was used to compile the cumulative list of ten titles. The ten most widely read titles identified by the panel were Bonnie Jo, Go Home by Jeanette

The qualification, "most widely read," lost meaning because most of the experts indicated it was difficult to compile a total of ten titles that fit the definition. Specifically, Blow, Hodges, Thomson, and Waddle could name only nine titles. Dr. LaRocque identified seven and stipulated that she was uncertain how widely read they actually are. Fistler reported that only five titles in her media collection fit the definition.

Four panelists made pertinent observations about the popularity of the genre. Thomson commented that in her junior high, the novels are very popular and probably always will be. Fistler specified that the five titles she named are mostly read by junior high students. Blow and Waddle agreed that the genre is not at all a popular item at Cedar Falls High School. Blow felt this could be, in part, because the novels have already been read on the junior high level. She noted that four or five years ago, there was no more popular book than the junior premarital pregnancy novel *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones.*
1968-1974 individualized reading statistics put it in the top ten of 2200 titles.

Another consideration in regards to the final list of ten is the inclusion of the title *The Girls of Huntington House*. Five of the experts named the title, but two seriously questioned how closely the book fit the definition. The researcher included the title, because the book does deal specifically with the problem of premarital teenage pregnancy, it focuses on the adolescent reader, and it qualifies as fiction.

The specific conclusion of this study is that the five criteria statements developed in the discussion are valid and useable for evaluating the ten most widely read junior premarital pregnancy novels. Each statement focuses on the area of concern for which it was formulated. Each is flexible enough to apply to all ten titles.

The hypothesis of this study states that criteria can be developed that can be applied to judge the quality of the junior premarital pregnancy novels published since 1952 and to be published in the future. The conclusion confirms the hypothesis in regards to the ten most widely read titles. The conclusion does not confirm that the developed criteria can be applied to all junior premarital pregnancy novels already published. Neither does it confirm that they will apply to all future novels. How widely these criteria can be applied is a matter for further study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


B. INTERVIEWS


LaRocque, Geraldine. Personal interview. Cedar Falls, Iowa, April 26, 1976.


C. PERIODICALS


D. DOCUMENTS


E. TAPED SPEECH

APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A. Information Sheet

Explanation of the main points in my research proposal:

**Hypothesis:** Criteria can be developed that can be applied to judge the quality of the junior premarital pregnancy novels published since 1952 and to be published in the future.

**Operational definition of the junior premarital pregnancy novel:** a formula novel in which conceptual level and viewpoint focus on the needs of the needs of the adolescent reader, and in which the central problem involves the personal and social issue of a premarital pregnancy.

**Five areas of concern in relation to the genre (as identified in the literature review):**
1. Superficial, sometimes dishonest handling of adolescent sexuality.
2. Didacticism - intention or tendency, obvious or subtle, to recommend certain moral values to the reader.
3. Problem of sexism - central female characters in the novels are acted upon, rather than acting for themselves.
4. Superficial solutions - pat endings that are not justified by the plot or character situation.
5. Stereotyped adults - portrayal of adults, especially parents, as exaggerated, unreasonable authority figures.

**Goals:**
1. To develop valid criteria.
2. To apply the criteria to the ten most widely read junior premarital pregnancy novels.
3. To write model critiques of the ten novels utilizing the developed criteria.

Explanation of the role of the panel experts:

A. In each interview situation, the expert will be asked to identify, on the basis of personal observation, the ten junior premarital pregnancy novels most widely read by adolescents. The chosen novels must fit the operational definition.
B. Results from the six interviews will be compiled into one list of the most frequently named titles.

C. Each expert will be asked to react to the five identified areas of concern. His comments may be used in the discussion in the paper.

D. The interview is informal and will be approximately one hour in length.
APPENDIX B. Criteria Statements

Criteria Statement I:

Using the explicitness and language necessary, the novel explores the physical and psychological aspects of adolescent sexuality.

Summary. The novel recognizes the dual nature of sexuality, that it is emotional as well as physical. Rather than emphasizing consequences, the novel focuses on the inner character's emotions and thoughts as he or she matures sexually. The novel does not dodge the words and details necessary for an honest, indepth exploration of the subject.

Criteria Statement II:

Rather than instructing, the novel shares facts and insights with the adolescent reader and encourages him to discover his own direction in life.

Summary. Though the novel reflects a view of life in the form of a theme, the theme does not restrict the presentation of facts and insights. The novel stimulates questioning and speculation about the information it offers. The novel does not advise the individual to behave in a certain way. The novel encourages the reader to make meaningful decisions for himself.
Criteria Statement III:

Without glossing over the heroine's difficult situation, the novel allows her to maintain a sense of self-worth and self-assertiveness.

Summary. Reflecting our culture, the pregnant heroine may find herself with few alternatives from which to choose. However, the limitations do not negate the importance of her actively participating in decisions about her present and future. To have a sense of worth as a human being, she must have some control over her own life. She should never passively accept the condemnation of the double standard. She should be an example to female adolescent readers in that she is attentive to personal needs and assertive about decision making.

Criteria Statement IV:

The hopeful resolution of the novel stimulates the adolescent reader to question why the novel ends as it does.

Summary. The heroine is not left in a situation of total despair. She sees some meaning in her suffering and feels some hope for the future. Her final situation evolves believably from her actions and personality and those of the characters around her. Whether the novel
specifically solves her problem or leaves the outcome uncertain, the resolution does not clamp a neat closure on consideration of the problem. The novel ends in such a way that the adolescent reader is prompted to ask why.

Criteria Statement V:

While keeping a perspective on adult impact, the novel provides the details necessary for understanding why the adult characters behave as they do.

Summary. The novelist needs to communicate why his adult characters are the kind of people they are. Unless he provides adequate clues, the presentation—especially of unpleasant adults—becomes distorted. The novelist also needs to keep a perspective on adult impact. Adults do not cause or complicate all adolescent problems. Though there are many cruel and indifferent adults, there are sensitive and supportive ones as well.
APPENDIX C. Ten Most Widely Read Titles

The bibliographic information given here is the most recent available. The source is Bowker's *Books In Print, 1975*.

**Bonnie Jo, Go Home**
by Jeanette Eyler
Hardback: Lippincott, J.B., Co. 1972 $4.95
Paperback: Bantam 1973 $0.95

**Fair Day and Another Step Begun**
by Katie L. Lyle
Hardback: Lippincott, J.B., Co. 1974 $4.95
Paperback: Dell Publishing Co., Inc. 1975 $0.95

**The Girls of Huntington House**
by Blossom Elfman
Hardback: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1972 $5.95
Paperback: Bantam 1973 $1.25

**Growing Up In a Hurry**
by Winifred Madsion
Hardback: Little, Brown and Co. 1973 $5.95
Paperback: Archway Paperbacks 1975 $0.95

**The Longest Weekend**
by Honor Arundel
Hardback: Nelson, Thomas, Inc. 1970 $4.95
Paperback: Grosset and Dunlap, Inc. 1973 $0.95

**Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones**
by Ann Head
Hardback: Putnam 1967 $6.95
Paperback: New American Library 1973 $0.95

**My Darling, My Hamburger**
by Paul Zindel
Hardback: Harper and Row 1969 $4.95
Paperback: Bantam 1971 $0.95
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Pennington's Heir</em></td>
<td>by K. M. Peyton</td>
<td>Thomas Y. Crowell Co.</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
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<td><em>Phoebe</em></td>
<td>by Patricia Dizenzo</td>
<td>McGraw-Hill</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$4.95</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bantam</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Too Bad About the Haines Girl</em></td>
<td>by Zoa Sherburne</td>
<td>Morrow</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>$4.95</td>
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APPENDIX D. Synopses and Critiques

BONNIE JO, GO HOME
Jeanette Eyerly

Plot Synopsis
Small town Bonnie Jo goes alone to New York for an abortion, only to be informed that her pregnancy is too advanced for a routine operation. The desperate sixteen-year-old finally locates a doctor who agrees to help. The operation is delayed until Bonnie's father send his written consent.

Critique
Eyerly attempts to present many facets of the problem of a teenage abortion, but her melodramatic inclinations get in the way. She candidly and objectively presents information and considerations relating to a decision about abortion. Simultaneously, Eyerly utilizes situational irony that adds layers of guilt. Incredibly, strangers detect that Bonnie Jo is contemplating an abortion and they indicate their disapproval. At the hospital a very much wanted baby dies as Bonnie Jo anxiously waits for her own to be aborted.

Sex is definitely not enjoyable for Bonnie Jo. She has intercourse twice with a boy she intensely dislikes. The first time she is drunk and is virtually raped. The second time she indulges to spite the boy she really loves. And though her periods are extremely irregular, she becomes pregnant.
Bonnie Jo shows some assertiveness. Though her stepfather pressures her to have an abortion, she decides for herself to have the operation. She painfully perseveres in New York despite the many obstacles. She is interested in a secretarial career, but ultimately hopes to marry a nice boy.

Bonnie Jo's father is supportive to the best of his ability. Her mother and stepfather are negative, under-developed characters. A variety of adults move in and out of the story, but Eyerly keeps a perspective on their impact and natures.

As throughout her experience, Bonnie Jo is terribly alone in the final scene. She has more than matured. She has aged significantly. There is still hope for the future, particularly in the person of a nice boy she met on the plane.

FAIR DAY AND ANOTHER STEP BEGUN
Katie Letcher Lyle

Plot Synopsis

Teenage Ellen Burd loves John Walters with all her heart. She is thrilled about carrying his baby, but John is so shaken by the prospect of a wife and child that he runs away. Ellen follows him to Fair Day, a commune. As Ellen delivers their son, John comes to accept them both.

Critique

Lyle based her novel on an English ballad in which
a young man resists a patient girl's love. Her enchanting story slips in and out of reality. Ellen's faith in the magic of old Virgil, a mountain man, further clouds the distinction between reality and fantasy.

The story flows smoothly along with no didactic intrusions. Ellen serenely ignores John's accusation that the child is someone else's or a mistake that abortion will correct. She had not intended to conceive, but she loves her unborn child. Her innocent joy makes her pregnancy seem natural and wholesome.

Adults are peripheral, except for Virgil. Reminiscent of King Arthur's Merlin, he is Ellen's confidant and mentor.

The description of John and Ellen's lovemaking is very sensuous, though hardly explicit. Lyle combines sensory details of touch, smell and color for a soft, sensuous picture of the event.

John is all Ellen wants in the whole world. Though repeatedly spurned, she never doubts her worthiness of his love. Her certainty about the baby's sex implies that special children are always boys. At times, Ellen seems to be the personification of motherhood.

The ending is a fairytale ending. The theft of John's horse triggers a series of coincidences that conclude with John's personal christening of his son. Yet, whether his change of heart comes from within or by the charm of Virgil's magic is left for the reader to decide.
THE GIRLS OF HUNTINGTON HOUSE

Blossom Elfman

Plot Synopsis

Dissatisfied with regular classroom teaching, the author, an English teacher with a masters degree, transfers to a position at Huntington House, a maternity home. By the end of the school year, her class of pregnant teenage girls has taught her a significant lesson.

Critique

In every respect, this novel is compassionate and honest. The author does not judge the girls. She becomes personally involved with them. They are irresistibly human: funny but frustrating, desperate yet hopeful, naive yet wise. The girls of Huntington House lead the author and reader to the recognition that the human need for one another supersedes subject matter and common sense. The author candidly presents the girls. They discuss sex, drugs, and religion in language that is always frank, and sometimes harsh or obscene.

At first, the girls seem rather pathetic. Baby wants a puppy, not a child. Cookie gets excited over a new hair-do. Sara moons for a boy in a VW van. Their personal problems are obvious. Yet each girl, in one way or another, communicates the desire to be respected as a special human being.

The author perceives this need and responds to it.
Occasionally, she stumbles and falls, but she keeps trying. The author is an example of the sensitive adult who can genuinely contribute to an adolescent's discovery of who he is and where he is headed.

The ending is beautiful. The author confirms by her own behavior the truth of the girls' insight.

GROWING UP IN A HURRY
Winifred Madison

Plot Synopsis

Ignored by her well-to-do parents and successful sisters, sixteen year old Karen longs to be loved. Karen's flute solo attracts the attention of Steve, a poor but intelligent Japanese boy. Karen blooms under Steve's love. Yet his love is waning when Karen discovers she is pregnant. Alone, she informs her parents, who arrange an abortion.

Critique

This is almost a model. Madison permits the reader to see Karen and Steve as lovers, happy lovers. They care deeply for one another and their lovemaking is an extension of that feeling.

At times explicitness is used and very tastefully. The reader sees just enough of the couple's foreplay to understand their feelings before intercourse and their reactions afterwards.

The dialogue involves the reader in Karen's feelings
and thoughts. Karen, quiet and cultured, does not use language offensively but is occasionally exposed to it.

Karen's assertiveness comes slowly, but it does develop. She determines to get a prescription for the pill until she learns that an acquaintance of her mothers is a volunteer at the clinic. She briefly weighs a music career against the prospect of raising a child, but her parents decide for her that she will have an abortion. Fortunately, the appointed psychiatrist helps Karen to think through whether it is her decision too.

The fading of Steve's love does not make the abortion easier. Things work out, but not without some definite anguish. The future is rightfully hopeful.

The author humanizes Karen's mother more in the last chapters, but overall the woman remains distorted. Incredibly, she adores Karen's two sisters and detests, almost hates, Karen. In the last scenes, Karen better understands her mother's attitude and her mother exhibits more compassion toward her. The change seems to be a rather contrived effort to balance the mother's character.

Madison's sensitive treatment enables her central character to share a meaningful and maturing experience with the reader.
Plot Synopsis

Eileen's illegitimate daughter is already three years old when Eileen begins her story. Eileen is on her way to a weekend rendezvous with the child's father, Joel. At the village cottage, alone with her willful daughter, Eileen reminisces about her premarital pregnancy and her rejection of Joel. Joel arrives and persuades Eileen that they should marry.

Critique

The story is told from Eileen's viewpoint. Her feelings, not any moral point, are at the center of the story. Perceptively and candidly, she relates her reactions toward her past and present, as she sorts out a future direction for herself.

Eileen's sexual relationship with Joel had been passionate. She knew the dangers of pregnancy, but she recalls she had not realized that the facts about sex could be so different from the feelings of love.

Eileen is not very ambitious. Her parents had hoped she would qualify for the university. She herself aspired to a secretarial job. When she accepts Joel's offer of marriage, she anticipates a comfortable life as a doctor's wife. But Eileen has a positive self-assertiveness. She will not marry just for the sake of respectability. When she realizes she has left her baby's care up to her mother, she determines to
take on the responsibility herself. She intends to take control of her child and her future.

Eileen's parents are exceptionally reasonable, loving, and helpful. Eileen sometimes wishes they did not behave so admirably. She could better accept her own lack of self-control. As Eileen matures, she comes to understand her parents and deeply appreciates them.

The only flaw is an ending verging on the happy-ever-after. Joel, rebuked many times by Eileen and intent upon a successful career, returns anyway after a three year absence. His return creates a happy, proper family of three.

MR. AND MRS. BO JO JONES
Ann Head

Plot Synopsis

When July learns she is pregnant, she and Bo Jo elope despite their young age and differing social backgrounds. Bo Jo goes to work and July keeps house. The couple's premature baby dies and their parents urge the teenagers to get a divorce. They decide for themselves to stay together.

Critique

July's first person account is engrossing because of her detailed description of persons and events. Still, fundamentally, the story is about a good girl getting caught, suffering hardships, and growing up with her young husband.
Very much involved in July's account are the two sets of possessive, interfering parents. Unable to leave decisions to the teenagers, they are the cause of much of the couple's marital strife. Yet, the reader can understand from July's details the way in which the parents think. Unfortunately, July and Bo Jo do not, and their stubbornness and unwillingness to compromise further convinces their parents of their immaturity.

The parents consider the pregnancy a catastrophe, and they make that clear to July and Bo Jo. July's sister cannot believe the terrible public insinuations that her sister married because she is pregnant. July's girlfriend is shocked by the news because she and her boyfriend never considered not waiting until they were married. July feels sorrowful, but she is not weighted down by guilt.

MY DARLING, MY HAMBURGER
Paul Zindel

Plot Synopsis

Maggie, her best friend, is the first person Liz tells about her pregnancy. When Sean, Liz's boyfriend, is informed, he at first offers marriage and then insists on an abortion. Maggie accompanies Liz to the abortionist. After the abortion Liz becomes seriously ill, and Maggie rushes for the nearest help, Liz's parents.
Critique

My Darling, My Hamburger is a cleverly written story, but a depressing one. Sean and Liz's experience communicates that sex and parents can make life unbearable. Liz is annihilated by her experience. As she lies hemorrhaging in the car, she screams at Maggie not to tell her parents, just to let her die. Sean, a potentially sensitive person, is dehumanized by his father's attitudes.

Sean's father is detestable. Coarse, heartless, and dishonest, he cultivates the same qualities in Sean. Liz's stepfather is unequivocally evil. He despises Liz as a person and desires her sexually. He has frightened Liz's weak mother into siding with him against Liz.

Despite her stepfather's inferences to the contrary, Liz struggles to resist Sean's advances. Sean wants to be able to talk to his father about controlling his sexual urges, but never can. When Liz is again unreasonably accused by her stepfather, she deliberately acquiesces to Sean.

Liz has little confidence in herself. Ironically, she apologizes to Sean for not having sex with him. Often she acts out of desperation. For example, she risks rape in order to pique Sean's jealousy. To her, marriage is the security for which she longs and when Sean deserts her, her world crumbles.
PENNINGTON'S HEIR
K. M. Peyton

Plot Synopsis

Ruth, seventeen, begins to live again when her beloved Patrick Pennington is released from prison. They decide to marry when she learns she is pregnant. Their marriage ends Professor Hampton's effort to promote Pat's career as a concert pianist. Despite many obstacles, the couple works together to make their marriage and Pat's career succeed.

Critique

The omniscient point of view in this novel focuses attention on the thoughts and feelings of all the major characters. Peyton gives the reader an indepth look at what is happening. The reader comes to know and understand the people in the story. He is free to draw his own conclusions about their behavior.

The adults are very different as people, and even the most heartless ones are fairly well developed. Even selfish Professor Hampton generously helps Ruth and Pat when they call upon him in a genuine crisis. Ruth's critical mother is a bit overdone, but the awareness of how she thinks makes her credible. Ruth and Pat know when they have created their own problems and do not lay blame on adults.

While the psychological aspect of Ruth and Pat's
sexual relationship is fully presented, the details about their first and only intercourse before marriage is vague enough to seem evasive.

Ruth can be admired for her inner strength, but pitied for making Pat's well being the purpose of her life. Always, she suffers and toils for him. At least, she admits to herself she has no confidence. She is aware of the subservient role she has accepted.

The future looks bright, but not easy for Ruth and Pat. Their final situation is a convincing result of their earlier decisions and efforts.

PHOEBE
Patricia Dizenzo

Plot Synopsis
Phoebe, sixteen, is afraid to tell anyone about her pregnancy. She finally confides in a school friend, vainly hoping the girl's sister can refer her to an abortionist. Desperate, she calls her boyfriend. She informs Paul and hangs up before he can speak. His return call wakes her parents who demand an explanation.

Critique
Phoebe's story is a desperate one. She is completely alone, ashamed, and dreadfully afraid.

She longs for someone older and wiser to turn to but such an adult does not exist in her world. Both parents
are generally kind to Phoebe but they are unexplainably oblivious to her hints that something is very wrong. Adults on the school faculty are openly critical of premarital sex or just unapproachable.

One other adult to whom Phoebe turns, Dr. Jansen, is manipulated to make a central didactic point. The broad minded doctor will not say that sex before marriage is sinful, but ironically, he will say that he has never seen an unmarried pregnant woman who was not terribly sorry. He intensifies Phoebe's shame.

Phoebe has had a relationship with Paul for several months, but they do not have sex during the course of the story. She recalls how badly she felt about the experiences. Denying Paul made her feel as guilty as going all the way with him.

Phoebe can barely cope with what is happening to her. She moves in a daze, hoping that her good daydreams will actually come true.

The conclusion only seems to be open ended. The reader can predict that on the basis of how they have earlier behaved, Phoebe's parents will be fairly supportive, definitely not abusive. Yet, Phoebe feels her future has closed in upon her. She collapses in horrible fear and clutches herself, waiting for the terrible emotional blows from her parents.
TOO BAD ABOUT THE HAINES GIRL
Zoa Sherburne

Plot Synopsis

Melinda Haines, seventeen, tells only her boyfriend that she is pregnant. Jeff, a high school senior, provides the cash for an illegal abortion, but Melinda abruptly changes her mind. When she learns she has been voted Queen of the Valentine Ball, she informs her parents she cannot accept due to her pregnancy.

Critique

This novel illustrates why it is wrong to have premarital sex. The characters are merely mouthpieces for an author who moralizes at every opportunity. Each time Melinda tries to justify why she had sex with Jeff her subconscious answers that there are no excuses. She finally concedes that what they have done is "shoddy and second rate."

Didacticism intrudes upon the treatment of sexuality. The author lets Melinda recall how excited she and Jeff felt when "necking," but she has Melinda add that such activity was foolish and reckless. Melinda confides that she and Jeff no longer trust themselves to be alone together. Sexual descriptions are vague because Melinda is too ashamed to recall details.

Though stilted, Melinda's parents are presented positively. They are sensitive and affectionate. Yet Melinda sees a moral in their kindness. They trusted her and she betrayed them.
The double standard is promoted. Jeff is not so much to blame, because it is up to the girl to keep her head. If they marry, Melinda will compensate by being a very good housewife and mother.

The author contrives the ending to make one more point. Though a decision has not been made when the story ends, marriage is the most likely choice. Getting married is the respectable thing to do, and the couple's professed love makes it nicely convenient. Still, they must pay a price. They will love one another as long as they both will live, but nothing about their married life will be as good as it could have been.