Masculinity, Morality, and National Identity in the "Boy's Own Paper", 1879-1913

Date
2016-01

Author
Penner, Elizabeth

Abstract
This thesis explores the representation of Victorian masculinity in the Boy's Own Paper. While the Boy's Own Paper (1879-1967) is widely recognised as being one of the most successful juvenile periodicals of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries there remains very little critical analysis on the publication's literature. This thesis aims to contribute to the advancement of the study of nineteenth-century juvenile periodicals by providing the first in-depth textual study of the Boy's Own Paper. Focusing on the Boy's Own Paper during George Andrew Hutchison's editorship (1879-1913), this project brings together masculinities studies and current research on nineteenth-century periodicals. By examining the reoccurring themes of masculinity in the Boy's Own Paper, this study reveals how the Boy's Own Paper struggled to balance Christian beliefs, changing social demands, and growing imperial objectives. Each chapter delivers a close reading of selected texts ranging from illustrated fictional stories written by leading authors of the day, such as G. A. Henty and Talbot Baines Reed, to letters sent to the editor by Christian missionaries living overseas. The first chapter outlines the editorial practices of Hutchison and addresses the publication's implied readership. Chapter 2 examines physical masculinity as explored through the paper's representation of the schoolboy and the athlete as national hero-figures. The relationship between masculinity, self-help, and philanthropy is studied in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 analyses how the racial stereotypes featured within the Boy's Own Paper perpetuated the ideologies of British masculine superiority. Finally, Chapter 5 broadens the study of gender by addressing the participation and representation of female contributors and characters. I conclude by considering the future of Boy's Own Paper research and the implications of periodicals studies in the digital age. In doing so, this study offers a holistic and up-to-date reading of the Boy's Own Paper.

Description
URI
http://hdl.handle.net/2086/12394

Collections
PhD [1353]