The Intersection of Gender, Discipline, and the American One Room School House

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Wisconsin Historical Society, First School House in DeForest Wis, circa 1875, 27481, https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM27481
Abstract

The one-room schoolhouse of America is situated at the intersection of modern and historic education. What marked a mass movement of centralized education, involved government, and the conception of childhood also symbolized a playground of forced socialization and corporal punishment. The one-room schoolhouse and the educational concepts taught within them are the focus of this research which aims to comprehend the disciplinary disparities between male and female pupils in the United States from 1840 to 1910. This paper will moreover illuminate gender roles within education more broadly with an emphasis applied to the perceived morality of the student and how that transpires into educational instruction and discipline. The history of one-room schoolhouses within the United States proves to be extensive. Consequently, a plethora of scholarly work exists on the disciplinary tactics used in the schoolhouse and the intersection of gender and education in the United States. Primary sources such as educational handbooks made for both teachers and pupils, educational philosophy writings created by the time’s most outstanding teachers and educational leaders, diaries, and personal narratives from the eras pupils are utilized in this paper to illuminate the controversial ways of the rod, life in the one-room schoolhouse, and the understood morality of the children inside them. Using these sources, the paper will argue that the way male and female students in one-room schoolhouses and common schools from the Antebellum Period to the turn of the twentieth century were disciplined, enforces, and emphasizes societally generated gender roles of the time. The impact of these ideologies lingers in our current educational system. Educators and parents socialize their children with the conscious implantation of gender expectations. When children act against these natural laws they are scrutinized. The legacy of discipline and how it teaches our children about their place in our society is ongoing.
Introduction

What we teach our children speaks volumes about what we as citizens value in society. The implementation of westward expansion, the first Industrial Revolution, and centralized government in the United States allowed for a substantial shift in how people from the Antebellum period to the twentieth century viewed their youth. Schools transformed with these changing ideologies of childhood innocence and morality. The primary mode of education in the nineteenth century was the one-room schoolhouse or United States common school. Both institutions, used synonymously throughout this work, served as ways of regulating and socializing America’s youth. The “3 Rs”, "reading, writing, and 'rithmetic" along with corporal punishment became the center of these institutions. Children of all ages were punished in various barbaric methods, ranging from physical to psychological. However, the ways that children’s gender intertwined with their behavior and consequently their punishment is what this research aims to examine.

Gender differences and enforcement of perceived gender roles of children were visible in the one-room schoolhouse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Males and female pupils were often separated on opposite sides of the classroom; however, some schools did separate by age. Depending on the school in which the children attended there could be punishment for playing with the opposite gender at lunch or using the wrong gendered door when entering or exiting the coatroom. However, in that same schoolhouse, a child who misbehaved could be made to sit on the opposite gendered side of the room and don a garment associated with the opposite gender. Quickly the importance of separation dissolved, and a form of psychological punishment could ensue. Why was the punishment of misgendering utilized and why was it depicted in primary sources as being harsher than being struck with a wooden rod? What were
the expectations of male versus female children in the classroom? And what do the differences in discipline say about society’s belief of children’s gender roles? This research aims to give an answer to those questions while arguing that the ways in which boys and girl pupils in one-room schoolhouses and common schools from the Antebellum Period to the turn of the twentieth century were disciplined, enforces, and emphasizes societally generated gender roles.

It should be noted that this research focuses on predominantly white, Euro-American children in the Antebellum Period to the turn of the Twentieth Century. Though there were certain institutions that taught children of color at this time this work explicitly focuses on the institution of the one-room schoolhouse or “common school”. The main demographic of children within those institutions were white male and female rural middle-class children. This paper aims to tackle the social construction of gender and how it affected the children of the past, regrettably, the inclusion of diversity within this topic is few and far between.

Literature Review

A surplus of scholarly work has been conducted and published on the institution of the one-room schoolhouse and its role in public education. Secondary texts utilized in this research range from an explanation of punishment methods documented in primary sources, understanding the American childhood through time, the perception of boys in the nineteenth century, and American public memory regarding the one-room schoolhouse.


discusses the broad history of the one-room schoolhouse but specifically focuses on the ways in which the American public clings to the image of the little red schoolhouse. He argues that the one-room schoolhouse takes a spot in American public memory because it symbolizes both community and individualism.\(^2\) Zimmerman looks at the No Child Left Behind 2001 education reform which utilized the little red schoolhouse as a visual model for its mission.\(^3\) Zimmerman concludes that the one-room schoolhouse symbolizes American patriotism and democracy and became such because of the threat of American foreign foes in the Cold War in the latter half of the twentieth century.\(^4\) *Small Wonder: The Little Red School House* assists this research by providing background context regarding the one-room schoolhouse such as its structure. Zimmerman includes passages regarding the physical layout of the classroom, as well as how education occurred within its walls. Moreover, Zimmerman touches on the ideologies pressed upon the pupils within its walls and how they themselves shaped public memory.

Additional knowledge regarding children is brought forth via Josephs Illick’s 2002 monograph *The American Childhood*. His book documents the change in the American childhoods through the Colonial Era to the Twentieth century.\(^5\) It is through Illick’s writing this research can provide a road map to the idea of the American childhood. Illick’s work demonstrates a clear shift in the perception of American Childhood through time. Illick’s monograph attempts to document every kind of child, whether wealthy or working-class, white, or black. His book provides evidence of clear class distinctions among children and clear

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\(^3\) Zimmerman, *Small Wonder*, 3.


disparities between the actions of white and black children. Gender is subsequently brought up in Illick’s writing as he describes the differences in which boy and girl children were socialized to act. His work assists this research by providing background context on the American child and how their role in society is shaped through time.

Michael Day’s monograph, *Punishment in the One Room School-House* published in 2013 examines primary source descriptions of punishment inflicted upon children in one-room schoolhouses from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Day’s monograph clearly depicts the methods of child punishment ranging from physical to psychological. *Punishment in the One Room School-House* contributes to the discussion of the nineteenth-and twentieth-century discipline in schoolhouses by providing contrasting information regarding girls’ punishment. Despite claims from other authors that girls were never punished, Day includes a primary source that notes that nothing could save a child from violent discipline, not age nor sex. However, later primary sources used present a contrasting argument, one that states that boys were disciplined with harsher methods and for longer. Day’s work allows for conclusions to be drawn that the perception of boy and girl punishment altered through time. That changing ideologies of male and female children allowed for a slowing and eventual stop of female physical punishment.

Ken Parille in his monograph, *Boys at Home: Discipline, Masculinity, and the Boy-Problem in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* published in 2009 explores the implicit
ideas of masculinity placed upon boys in the nineteenth century. Parille utilizes the work of popular literature and its male characters to draw conclusions regarding young male perception at this time. His writing clarifies the Victorian belief that little boys were inherently dissimilar compared to young females regarding their manner, personality, and morality. Parilles’ monograph highlights how boys in the nineteenth century were discriminated against due to their perceived lack of morality.

This presents a viewpoint in staunch opposition to current-day narratives which focus on female discrimination. His work does include the experience of girls at the time but solely to better prove his argument regarding male discrimination in one-room schools. His work argues that males experienced the most corporal punishment and faced punishment in schools for longer than girl students, which altered the way that boys were seen in society. Boys at Home: Discipline, Masculinity, and the Boy-Problem in Nineteenth-Century American Literature aids this research by providing evidence of the differences in male and female perceptions and their discipline methods in schools. Parilles’ book verifies this research with aims to document the disparities in male and female discipline in the one-room schoolhouse.

Despite writing being created regarding gender and the one-room schoolhouse, Parilles book explicitly focused on boys and their perception based on popular American literature. This work, however, though fining similar conclusions to Parille utilizes primary source documents by the era’s educators and students. This research aims to add to the study of one-room schoolhouse discipline by adding in the intersection of gender. By explaining how society’s

perception of children’s gender altered the ways in which they were disciplined in the past, more can be understood of the ways in which current-day children are being disciplined due to their gender.

The American Child

The American rural East and Midwest are scattered with the remains of once prevalent one-room schoolhouses. A preservation effort has been made to renovate those schoolhouses and use them as educational tools for modern-day children. Americans cling to the metaphoric walls of these schoolhouses as a reminder of a seemingly wholesome past. A plethora of research suggests that reverting back to the system of the one-room schoolhouse could save the fractured education of the twenty-first century. The No Child Left Behind education reform of 2001 plays on this idea, even making a little red schoolhouse their logo. Rod Paige a spokesperson for the project under President George W. Bush, stated in a rally, that the No Child Left Behind Act aims to “serve the ideal of the little red schoolhouse ‘a symbol that every child must be taught, and every child must learn’”. However, the institution of the one-room schoolhouse, as evidence suggests was not a consistently positive learning atmosphere for all children. Children of the lower working classes did not always obtain the privilege of attending these schools, and if they did, it was for a short period of time. Their function in society was not to learn, but rather to assist in the economic success of the family. Americans cling to a false reality of the little red schoolhouse, often the seemingly materialistic entities within them used physical force to obtain control over the pupils. However, Americans visualize the one-room schoolhouse as a stable, close-knit family structure, one that they yearn for but rarely obtain. The reality is that the

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9 Zimmerman, Small Wonder, 2.
American one-room schoolhouse was not a structure that preached equal opportunity and the importance of scholarship for all children, from all geographic regions, classes, and races. The American child experienced vastly different lives depending on those above circumstances.  

The concept of being an American child was heavily influenced by a myriad of historical changes. The Enlightenment, industrialization, the urbanization of cities, the rise of the middle class, consumerism, and capitalism all influenced the way that parents viewed their offspring and altered how children fit within the great puzzle of society. For much of history, European children and their needs were a mystery. Nobody quite knew what to do with children despite their prevalence. Before the start of the colonization of the Americas by the English, children made up a large chunk of their population. “Almost half of the early seventeenth century English were children, typically distributed at 6.4 per family”. That number certainly dropped as Europeans migrated over to establish residency in the Americas. The wilderness of New England was not the ideal place to raise a child, with resources low and the rate of disease high. Once permanent settlements were staked out by Europeans in the Americas, their children slowly began to repopulate, although the death rate was all but optimistic. European-American toddlers were not pampered, parents believed “indulgence to be the engine of the Devil. Children were then expected to submit to parental authority and the church. The idea of childhood at this time could be understood by the principles of Calvinism. The child was born good or evil, destined for salvation or damnation. As further colonization and permanent settlement in North America become more prevalent, then too did the socialization of children alter.

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By the late seventeenth century in America, there is evidence of a well-defined distinction between child and adult, and that notion was held up by the law. Though it was not the childhood modern era children have, to say there was no concept of childhood at this time would be a failure to consider the evidence. “Although it is a matter of debate, there is persuasive evidence that by the late seventeenth century a youth culture existed, distinct from the adult world.” The eighteenth-century Enlightenment birthed a distinct divide in the colonist’s childrearing methodology. Evangelicals carried on the Puritan practice of breaking the child’s will. Alternatively, those who sided with the Enlightenment ideas created a new “moderate” form of childrearing. A third subsection of parenting emerged, which produced the “Genteel Childhood.” This structure of childrearing emphasized a strict patriarchal hierarchy and manifested itself in the families that owned land and slaves. “Genteel childhood was qualitatively different from other childhoods in that the progeny of planters had power over other human beings—and they knew it.” These three forms would shift as class divides within America become prevalent. Affecting the idea of adolescent and their roles within society.

The nineteenth-century brought forth western expansion, as white settlers moved out of the colonies and into the newly acquired land west of the Mississippi. Though the idea of child labor and the economic benefit was not unheard of in the centuries before, work became more normalized for children at this time. Gendered tasks were assigned to children, and they were expected to perform their duties as their mother or father did. The rise of the Industrial revolution meant more people in cities and the birth of the middle class. An aura of openness to novelty,

12 Illick, American Childhood, 29.
13 Illick, American Childhood, 31.
14 Illick, American Childhood, 31.
dedication to reason, and willingness to alter the environment emerged among the white upper
class Americans. However, this was not the case for all. Middle-class parents had the resources
to do so, while working-class parents did not. The latter were too busy trying to survive, and
their children were expected to contribute to this effort by holding jobs.

Industrialization and modernization posed a new threat to the veil of innocence placed
upon the era’s youth, particularly its young girls. Suddenly in the industrial city, temptation was
everywhere. Public institutions of learning were established by the government to attempt to
socialize the middle class, though, kids of the working class “might be fortunate enough to
absorb a few years of public schooling, which was not compulsory until the turn of the twentieth
century”. At school students were expected to mechanize their productivity with compulsory
attendance, uniformity, and age grading. The middle-class childhood became a kind of
“profession”. Parents became warier regarding their behavior towards their children.

Instructional booklets on the concept of family and child-raising became popular in upper-class
white households. Subsequently, the idea of gender and discipline becomes clear here,

“Antebellum theorists of childhood discipline were acutely concerned with gender, and they
talked at length about why differences necessitated different disciplinary strategies.” Here lies
the budding mentality of the fiery devil inside the boy and the fragile innocence within the girl.

The separation of male and female children was not a concept that strictly emerged in the
nineteenth century alone. Both the seventeenth and eighteenth-century upheld strict gender roles

15 Illick, American Childhood, 58.
16 Patricia Crain, “Childhood as Spectacle,” American Literary History 11, no. 3 (1999): 546,
17 Crain, “Childhood as Spectacle”, 547.
18 Parille, Boys at Home,19.
for their inhabitants. Children were expected to assist their like-gendered parents in chores and daily tasks. “Girls were socialized into their subordinate roles as women, and boys were coached to be dependent upon their fathers for their very identity”. The idea of children’s clothing was strictly gendered, boys in the colonial era could stop wearing skirts at the age of eight whereas girls “remained skirted, symbolizing their continued (indeed lifelong) subordination to males”.

The Antebellum period pushed domesticity for women and “physicalized boys”. Young girls of the upper class would be expected to master needlework, play the piano, dance, and most crucially, ascertain the skills to be a marriable woman. Young upper-class boys would become educated on world languages, reading, writing, and mathematics. Middle-class boys would raise livestock, cut wood, assist in building the family farm or business and become educated. It was believed that sending boys away to become educated was one way of managing the general intolerable nature of growing boys. “It will be necessary to send them away to school, or to adopt some other plan for rounding the house of their turbulence”. In place of education, the “other plan” for working-class boys would be to obtain work, at a factory or mill, to contribute economically to the family. Gender expectations could be observed at all class levels of children.

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The Privy Problem

The structure of the nineteenth and twentieth-century one-room schoolhouse followed a similar structure with little variation based on profit and geographic region. The structure was relatively little, most schools were boxlike squares rectangles with one or two doors in the front of the building. Coatrooms were located at the front of the building where children were able to store their personal belongings. Tight rows of desks or benches adorned each side of the room with a heating device, usually in the form of a wood-burning stove, located in the middle of the classroom. Larger boys attending schools were often made to obtain wood for the stove before class commenced. Sitting next to the stove meant intense heat and sweating throughout the day, whereas sitting away from the stove meant shivering through lessons. The head of the classroom contained the desk for the instructor. The walls of the classroom contained blackboards and maps. Children were expected to bring their own slate for writing and the state reader of choice, failure to do so could result in punishment.

24 Zimmerman, Small Wonder, 17.
25 Zimmerman, Small Wonder, 22.
27 Johonnot, Our School House, 206.
The separation of male and female children was the norm in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. When separation did not occur, an outcry from parents or educators could flourish. The Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, Horace Mann faced harsh criticism when he seemed to allow children of different genders to intermix within school and within the community. A sermon from 1846, Reverend Matthew Hale Smith protests the horrors of male and female students meeting outside of school. “The boys and girls, some of them, have a room in this city, furnished with all that panders to base and wicked passions, where the youth of both sexes, belonging to public schools, assemble at night”. The fear of intermixing opposite gender children stems from the idea that “when children grew into girlhood and boyhood, the halo of innocence, or at least of potential for goodness, hung much more over girls than boys”. Some went as far as to say that boys should be kept isolated from adult men, women, and children from the ages of twelve to eighteen. Lyman Cobb, a mid-nineteenth-century educational philosopher argued that boys at this stage were most vulnerable, and though they gave a robust appearance, they are more developed physically than mentally. Women and girls were similarly sheltered fearing that their fragile innocence may be tainted by the world around them.

28 Matthew Hale Smith, “O The Bible, The Rod, and Increase of Intemperance, Crime, and Juvenile Pepravity-Its Cause and Cure”, transcript of sermon delivered at Church and Society of the Pilgrims in Boston, October 10, 1846. https://books.google.com/books?id=VneQfIsadKAC&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=O+the+bible+the+rod+and+increase+of+intemperance+and+juvenile+depravity&source=bl&ots=9ZQ7SM0IBJ&sig=ACfU3U1pBBZYEDW4N0xVsiUwz0GrTmiG0Yg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi4wO2Ns5z3AhVNg4kEHS4kAy8Q6A6BAgsEAM#v=onepage&q=O%20the%20bible%20the%20rod%20and%20increase%20of%20intemperance%20crime%20and%20juvenile%20depravity&f=false.

29 Parille, Boys at Home, 22.

The structure of the one-room schoolhouse was crafted to exenterate the disparities in gender. Prestigious educators of the era published books regarding the proper placement and architecture of schools to help aid in the segregation of the genders. Despite a lack of resources and money, schools that could afford it built two entrances into the schoolhouse. “In most cases, it will be observed that separate entrances for boys and girls have been provided, this arrangement is regarded as highly important, it prevents improprieties between the sexes.”

Even more regulated was the outhouse, or privy, which became a concentration of the era’s educational reform. Outhouses proved to be the epicenter of gender interaction. Despite being segregated in the schoolhouse the privy was unregulated and ungendered, causing a fracture in strict gender formalities. Depending on the school and climate, an outhouse for the children could simply not be provided. The children regardless of gender would wander out to the woods to do their business. Parents and educators became furious with this seemingly barbaric practice. A visitor to an 1840 New York schoolhouse noted how there was no privy, “In most cases in this town the scholars, male and female, are turned promiscuously and simultaneously into the public highway, without the shelter as so much of a stump for a covert to the calls of nature.”

This practice especially generated turmoil regarding the female student’s use of the outhouse or lack thereof. Occasionally parents stopped sending their daughters to school to attempt to combat this atrocity. The Superintendent of Connecticut schools wrote in 1850 regarding the horrors of this practice. “Who can duly estimate the final consequences of the first shock given to female delicacy from the necessary exposure to which the girls in public school are inevitably


32 James Johonnot, Our School House, 220.
Nervousness was sustained even when a privy was included on the property. Females were meant to use the same outhouse as their male counterparts which were often dirty and unmanaged. “Only one building is furnished for the accommodation of the two sexes so that there can be no surety that the delicacy of young girls will not be outraged by the contact of grossness and brutality”. Boys had earned the reputation of unsanitary creatures with troublesome morals. Conversely, the purity and cleanliness of girls remained perpetual.

**The Idle Fool is Whipt at School**


Although controversial since its beginnings, corporal punishment was recurrent in one-room schoolhouses and remains legal in nineteen states today. Popular culture references of one-room schoolhouses play up the punishment, however, there exists substantial evidence to suggest that corporal punishment was a reality. “Evidence of corporal punishment in schools is apparent from the beginning of formal education.”

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33 James Johonnot, *Our School House*, 220.
34 James Johonnot, *Our School House*, 221.
35 James Johonnot, *Our School House*, 219-221
education.” Though the harshness of disciplinary tactics decreased in the nineteenth century, it was not until the mid to late twentieth century that it stopped completely.

Punishments ranged based on the severity of the offence and the age of the child. However, as Charles Francis Adam recalls, “Both at home and in school the rod was freely used; nor did either sex or age afford any immunity from corporal punishment.” This changed as education in America continued where girls became less likely to be stuck or hit as forms of punishment. Commonly a ferua, a long flat wooden rod used to draw straight lines, would be used to beat a disobedient child. Birch switches, rods, canes, rulers, or a simple slap with the palm of the hand could be used to beat the child anywhere from the top of their head to their shins. Other physically painful methods included “anti-whispering” devices. This included “setting the jaws at a painful distance apart, by inserting a chip perpendicularly between the teeth”. Additional methods included standing with your nose pressed against a hard surface for as long as the teacher felt necessary, being forced to extend an arm and heavy books placed upon the up facing palm of the offender, or “standing in a stooping posture, with a finger on the head of a nail in the floor. It was a position not particularly favorable to health of body or soundness

40 Day, Punishment in the One Room Schoolhouse, 23.
42 Burton and Johnson, The District School, 65.
of mind; the head being brought about as low as the knees, the blood rushing to it, and pressing
unnaturally on the veins, often caused a dull pain, and a staggering dizziness”43. Children would
occasionally have their hair pulled or yanked out, noses tweaked, ears pinched and boxed of
snapped”.44

Psychological punishments were also commonplace, with dehumanization and
humiliation used to detour future misbehaviors or shame a child into doing his or her work
properly. This practice often involved placing “a pupil on a stool, to be gazed at and become the
object of ridicule”.45 The punishment of misgendering a child also falls under this category of
punishment. “Boys were made to sit in the girls ‘seats, amusing the school with their grinning
awkwardness; and girls, were obliged to sit on the masculine side of the aisle with crimsoned
necks, and faces buried in their aprons”.46 Being misgendered was described as being the “worst”
due to the removal of the child’s dignity and the reversal of the ideology they had been taught all
their lives to obey, the roles of their own gender.

Not all punishments involved pain or mental anguish. Like the ones Emma Woodworm
documents using in her teaching diary, some involve simply redirecting the students or having
them repeat the lesson after school. Emma reports frequently about the boy’s mischief that
happened within the walls of her Iowan schoolhouse. “Roy and Irwin acted a little contrary.

43 Burton and Johnson, The District School, 64.
44 Burton and Johnson, The District School, 66.
45 Cobb, The Evil Tendencies, 73.
46 Burton and Johnson, The District School, 66.
Gave them a lecturing,"47 however, she never mentions the use of corporal punishment to discipline.

Though there were milder forms of discipline, the corporal punishment inflicted upon children in the one-room schoolhouse walked a thin line between child abuse and torture. Its implantation and harshness did not go unnoticed or unprotested. Prominent educational figures such as Horace Mann, the head of the Massachusetts school board and later a US senator fluctuated his beliefs on the use of the rod during his time in office. He writes in his 1839 lecture regarding school punishments about how schools have the right to act in punishment of a child but should do so sparingly.48 Others such as Lyman Cobb, who wrote a book solely dedicated to the evil tendencies of corporal punishment, or Jacob Abbott who argued that though children needed to be educated on the submission to authority, bodily punishment shocked the child’s fragile nervous system which could result in distress and prolonged health issues.49 Mann also discusses this by stating, “And if such are the consequences of intense fear in grown men, what must be the effect upon the delicate texture of a child's brain?50 Mann’s point being if adults cannot handle harsh corporal punishment, how can they expect children to endure it

50 Mann, Lectures on Education, 313.
Interestingly laced within the sources on corporal punishment created in the nineteenth century there is the underlying notion that girls were exempt from punishment. Mann argued that the use of the whip or rod against the girl was “exceedingly rare.”\(^{51}\) Cobb wrote bluntly about girls and corporal punishment in 1847, “I wish it to be distinctly understood, that, my remarks are directed entirely to the management of boys, believing as I do, that no female pupil or child, (unless abandoned beyond any hope) will ever require physical force to cause her to submit to whole rules and regulations”.\(^{52}\) This was believed due in part to the concept that “girls would respond to appeals to their reason and emotion.”\(^{53}\) The elevated moral feeling of perceived of girls at this time meant that only boys should be corporally punished. Discipline for girls followed a trend of gentile kindness, “The differences of organization and temperament which the individualize the sexes” meant that girls needed kindness and not force.\(^{54}\) The medical sentiment at this time believed girls to have more sensitive nervous systems, which bodily punishment could set off. The use of physical punishment on girls was thought to create resentment and anger in the child.\(^{55}\) Despite needing to adhere to strict gender normality, girls within the one-room schoolhouse were met with kindness and gentile reminders rather than bodily punishment.

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\(^{51}\) Mann, *Lectures on Education*, 315.

\(^{52}\) Cobb, *The Evil Tendencies*, 11.


\(^{55}\) Abbott, *Gentle Measures*, 21,
Boys on the other hand escaped this philosophy, the vast majority of education literature depicts boys as being the primary recipient of harsh punishment. Boys were considered outside of the circle of sentiment, meaning they did not count as children. They were understood to be less affectionate, less sensible, and lacking morality that came naturally in girls.\textsuperscript{56} Boys become the target of schoolteachers’ aggression, having the bulk of the punishment applied to them. Though taking the position previously fiercely against corporal punishment, Cobb later states “Girls should NEVER BE WHIPPED [sic] whatever may be done with boys.”\textsuperscript{57}. Boys carried the ideology of static immoral troublesome creatures. Girls, however, were moldable, and having them near boys could potentially lead to their downfall. The sources make it clear that regardless of how atrocious the implementation of corporal punishment may be, it will be tolerated if done to boys, but under no circumstances will girls ever be subject to these brutalities.

\textit{Conclusions on Corporal Punishment}

When first drafting this research topic my hypothesis was predetermined. Based on what I knew as a twenty-first-century female, I concluded that girls would have received more punishment due to society’s strict rules. Today, little girls are socialized to be more obedient and agreeable while speaking their mindless. Women are expected to be modest, respect their elders, and understand that their place in society is below that of men. I went into this research thinking that girls in one-room schoolhouses would have been disciplined more, to better adhere to their spheres of domesticity. However, my initial hypothesis was proven to be incorrect.

\textsuperscript{56} Parille, \textit{Boys at Home}19-24. \\
\textsuperscript{57} Cobb, \textit{The Evil Tendencies},81.
The discipline used by teachers within American one-room schoolhouses from 1840 to 1910 was inflicted more often on male pupils than females. Male pupils faced longer and harsher punishments due to the perception that society had of them compared to their female peers. While corporal punishment was disputed by the era’s top educational instructors, the idea of punishing a girl was never called into question. There was a previously established ideology that girls did not need corporal punishment to behave. The reasoning behind tolerance of male corporal punishment and the banning of females is due to due to societies perception of gender and children. Nineteenth-century parents saw their girls as inherently moral humans who could sprout into the marriable poised woman that society yearned for with the right childrearing. Girls were assumed as being the “gentler, hobbler, and lovelier sex”. Boys however were thought to have been born with those same circumstances. The socialization of boys homed in on the fact that they would be the backbone of the next generation. While white middle-class girls were expected to be married and have children, boys were expected to be in the public sphere. Boys required more than simply gentle reminders to blossom into society’s next doctors, lawyers, educators, and fathers. Though both male and female students had strict roles to adhere to and live up to, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw males as more useful for the continuation of society.

The purposeful misgendering of children was used to humiliate children and strip them of an identity to which they had their whole lives been meant to adhere. Due to the strict separation policies in children at this time were made to follow, this rapid disintegration of the gender divide was quite jarring. Children experiencing this punishment not only felt embarrassment but

58 Cobb, The Evil Tendencies, 81.
were also stripped of their own personal identity that had been long upheld by the society around them. This punishment would not have been nearly as effective in humiliating the pupil, had there not been the enforced separation and if there were not such a perceived polarity in the morality of male and female children.

Despite most one-room schoolhouses closing their doors in the late 1970s, Public education continues today in the United States. Gender inequalities of the past however did not disappear with the closing of these schools. Today school still provides socialization for the young, oftentimes the differences between male and female students are taught alongside math, reading, and writing. There are continued perceptions of little boys as being inherently naughty that did not pass with the changing of the institution of public schooling. Boys are still thought of as being immoral, troublesome, and unwilling to listen to directions. Disciplinary actions are more often acted upon if the perpetrator is a boy rather than a girl. Boy students are still more likely to receive physical punishment from an educator today than a female is.\textsuperscript{59} It can be clearly noted here that the patriarchy benefits nobody. The ways in which we view little boys has not changed since the creation and use of the one-room schoolhouse. If educators today wish to obtain a more equal education setting for both males and females, they ought to consider their historical preconceived notions of children based on their gender.

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Secondary:


