Abstract

In her *Dinny Gordon* series (1958–1965), junior novelist Anne Emery's heroine manifests intellectual desire, a passionate engagement in the life of the mind along with the desire to connect with like-minded others. Within a genre which focused on socialization and dating, in Dinny, Emery normalizes a studious, inner-directed, yet feminine heroine, passionate about ancient history rather than football captains. Emery's endorsement of the pleasure Dinny takes in intellectual work, and the friends and boyfriends Dinny collects, challenge stereotypes of intellectual girls as dateless isolates while suggesting an alternative model of girlhood operating within apparent conformism to postwar “good girl” standards.
JILL ANDERSON

DINNY GORDON, INTELLECTUAL: ANNE EMERY'S POSTWAR JUNIOR FICTION AND GIRLS' INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

In Anne Emery's 1961 junior novel Dinny Gordon, Sophomore, high school sophomore Dinny Gordon and her friend Melinda Jones stop by their town's public library, where Dinny happily checks out a new book on the Dead Sea Scrolls, held for her by the librarian. When Melinda, surprised, asks about her reading choice, Dinny replies, "Oh, I like books about finding the ancient world. . . . I'm going to be an archaeologist someday." Melinda, who has never heard the term, asks, "Why, for goodness' sake?" Dinny, hugging the book, responds, "Oh, well. . . . I'm just queer for that sort of thing. I think it would be more fun than anything else," then adds, for the sake of the friendship, "Who knows? Maybe next year I'll decide to be a teacher," the more typically feminine profession Melinda hopes to pursue, though Melinda carefully adds that she would rather be a wife and mother. What is remarkable about Emery's Dinny Gordon series is that Dinny never changes her mind. The character's passion for ancient history is established in Dinny Gordon, Freshman (1959) and continues throughout the series. Though her original circle of friends fails to understand her fascination with Latin and ancient history, beginning in Sophomore Dinny amasses like-minded friends—girls and boys alike—who share her intellectual orientation and support her progress toward her long-term goal of becoming an archaeologist.

Emery published four books in the Dinny Gordon series, the last of several junior novel series she wrote, with the final book, Dinny Gordon, Senior, coming out in 1965, two years after the publication of Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique. One of a number of authors who made names for themselves by writing for teenage girls, Emery, a former schoolteacher with five children of her own, wrote over twenty junior novels between 1946 and 1965. Emery consistently used the formulaic nature of the junior novel, with its emphasis
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Dinny Gordon, Intellectual: Anne Emery's Postwar Junior Fiction and Girls' Intellectual Culture, the weathering bark, at first glance, has a superconductor.

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