

Chapter One

Toys Make a Nation: An Introduction to Toys and Childhood

In 2006, the US toy industry earned a whopping \$22.3 billion in domestic retail sales, with nearly half those sales earned during the fourth quarter – the all important Christmas toy shopping season.¹ Despite this seemingly impressive sales figure, not everyone in the industry was pleased with their annual sales. Mattel, the world's largest toy manufacturer, continued to see sales of its iconic Barbie doll falter, a trend that was in part blamed on the introduction of a series of rival dolls called Bratz in 2001. To add insult to injury, the Bratz dolls were designed by a former Mattel employee, Carter Bryant. He reportedly developed the idea for Bratz in between stints at Mattel, while he observed teenagers in his hometown of Springfield, Missouri. His idea was a line of fashion dolls that dress like contemporary teenagers, including a heavy dose of teenage attitude.² Bryant never shared his idea with Mattel, and instead sold the concept to MGA Entertainment, a small family-owned toy company in California.

Make no mistake, the toy business is not just fun and games. Indeed, it is a hypercompetitive industry, striking for its secretive product development practices and the occasional accusations of corporate espionage that seem more fitting for military contractors than toymakers. Thus, it was no surprise when Mattel filed lawsuits against Bryant in 2004 and MGA in 2006 primarily based on the claim that any of Bryant's designs developed while he worked for Mattel are legally theirs. However, Mattel's complaint included a range of accusations including: "copyright infringement, violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (or RICO), misappropriation

of trade secrets, aiding and abetting breach of duty of loyalty, and unfair competition.”³ Mattel set its sights on taking out the troublesome Bratz.

The Bratz dolls were no strangers to controversy. Though they arrived on retailers’ shelves in 2001, this series of dolls with four core characters did not gain widespread attention until 2003 when their popularity skyrocketed to the point of controlling 31.7 percent of doll sales in the United States.⁴ With this popularity came increasing scrutiny of the dolls’ appearance. By design, the Bratz are every bit Barbie’s opposite. If Barbie is sweet, the Bratz are tart. But like Barbie before them, the Bratz have been subjected to scathing critiques of their clothing, makeup, and bodies. The language used in these critiques includes words like “sexy,” “saucy,” and “sassy” as well as allusions to prostitution including “trampy” and “hooker chic.”⁵ These words vilify the Bratz for crossing a line of decorum deemed necessary in children’s toys.

Perhaps most of the criticism of the Bratz dolls has targeted the dolls’ clothing and makeup. Parents and other critics have expressed concerns that the dolls wear revealing clothing and too much make up and that they represent a hypersexualization of teenagers that sends a bad message to children. Similar concerns have been raised about Barbie’s appearance, but something is different in media descriptions of the Bratz dolls, which nearly always refer to their look as a “hip hop” or “urban” style.⁶ These are racially coded descriptors that allude to the major distinguishing factor between the reigning queen of fashion dolls and the upstart Bratz. Though since 1980 Barbie has variously appeared as blonde and blue-eyed, African American, Latina, Asian, and as a native of approximately three dozen different countries, Barbie is quintessentially white, whereas the Bratz dolls are a group of multiethnic and multiracial friends. So while both

Barbie and the Bratz are known to wear eye shadow, mini skirts, and bikinis, the particular style favored by the Bratz is brasher and trendier - less glamorous Oscar de la Renta gown or pastel Lilly Pulitzer shift (Barbie has worn dresses by both of these noted fashion designers) and more contemporary American shopping mall. Indeed, though they are described as urban, the Bratz are really the style fantasy of suburban tweens (a preadolescent or preteen roughly ranging from nine to twelve years old) and teens. The Bratz style might more accurately be described as a twenty-first century tween mallrat's dream Hot Topic wardrobe topped with a thick layer of lip gloss and mascara. However, as non-couture wearing multiracial teenagers, their fashion choices are identified as hip hop rather than just suburban mall as a way to not only hint at their racial otherness, but also judge them as tacky dressers without judging the white tweens who either dress or aspire to dress similarly.

The interpretation of the Bratz dolls as hypersexualized is also related to the dolls' unique bodies. Their anime-inspired features, including oversized eyes and lips on an equally large head that appears out of proportion with the smaller body, stand in stark contrast to Barbie's more proportionate facial features. Even MGA CEO Isaac Larian admits his initial reaction to their cartoonish appearance was that "they looked like aliens—big heads, with big eyes."⁷ And despite accusations that the dolls are "anatomically advanced" or depict "impossible to achieve female bodies," the Bratz actually have more modest curves than Barbie – even compared to Barbie's post-1997 makeover that reduced the size of her hips and bust and increased the size of her waist.⁸ Indeed, the Bratz are high schoolers, just a few years older than their target audience of six to fourteen year olds, an issue that some think is at the root of the controversy

surrounding Bratz.⁹ The Bratz dolls' fashion style is one that a mall-going tween might be able to successfully imitate, unlike the fantasy fashion of Barbie. Thus the Bratz may evoke in some parents in particular, anxiety about their own children's inevitable maturation, including everything from experimenting with makeup to experimenting with sex.

More subtly, descriptions of the Bratz dolls' style as "overly sexy" and "urban" or "hip hop-influenced" may be a reaction to the non-white status of three of the four core Bratz characters, and an attempt to distinguish between Barbie's fashion, however sexy it may sometimes be, and that worn by a generation of children who have grown up under the influence of a more racially and ethnically diverse popular culture. Of the four core Bratz characters, Yasmin, Cloe, Jade, and Sasha, only Cloe has the white identified phenotypic traits of pale skin, blue eyes, and blonde hair. MGA is careful to not identify the exact racial or ethnic background of the Bratz dolls "so that little girls of a range of ethnicities can identify with them," but Yasmin is most commonly described as Latina (though in fact she is named after Iranian American Larian's daughter Jasmin so she could equally be described as Middle Eastern), Jade as Asian, and Sasha as African American.¹⁰ Other dolls in the line come in a variety of combinations of skin tones and hair and eye colors so that the dolls appear both multiracial and multi-signifying, but blondes are notably in the minority challenging the blonde standard of Mattel's Barbie. The discomfort that critics express about the Bratz dolls' appearance may merely indicate a discomfort with deviating from some notion of "white style" and middle class norms of appearance. However, much more troubling, it may also indicate traces of subconscious and historically rooted ideas about hypersexualized non-white bodies - though one might

argue that these traces exist as much in Carter's designs for the dolls as in critics' interpretations of the designs. Thus, despite my own reservations about some of the language used by critics of Bratz, I in no way see them as multicultural heroines.

The fact that the Bratz are often described as having bad attitudes - they are after all "brats" - does not help their perception in the eyes of many parents. The visible indicator of this bad attitude is the dolls' half closed eyes and perennially pouty lips, resulting in what one writer described as an "expression of ennui," a state of being to which many tweens and teenagers can likely relate (much to the annoyance of the adults around them).¹¹ Aside from the previously mentioned exaggerated size of the doll's eyes and lips, the askance eyes and pout are reminiscent of the original 1959 Barbie, who wore heavy eyeliner on her half-closed side-glancing eyes and did not crack a smile on her red lacquered lips. In fact, the Barbie prototype was based on a racy German gentleman's toy named Bild Lilli, hardly stuff for kids and proof that Barbie was sexy decades before the Bratz were a twinkle in their creator's eye.¹² Furthermore, Barbie's age, initially in her late teens and by the 1970s a young career woman in her 20s, has allowed Mattel to sex-up Barbie's lifestyle beyond what is available to the younger Bratz characters. For example, Barbie has an on-again, off-again boyfriend Ken, a pink convertible, and her own mansion for private escapades. But Barbie and the Bratz are linked by more than just a perceived sexiness. There are also similarities between the two doll brands' early storylines. When Barbie was first introduced she was described as a teenage fashion model; Yasmin, Cloe, Jade, and Sasha are described as having "a passion for fashion." Perhaps, despite Mattel's protests, 1959 Barbie and the Bratz girls would have been great friends, and perhaps Mattel overestimated the Bratz threat. The Bratz phenomenon

peaked in 2005 with estimated global sales of \$750 million while Barbie sales made a slight rebound in 2006. The bigger threat to Barbie's empire seems to be children themselves as over the last fifty years the doll age, the age at which children play with dolls, has shrunk by nearly half - from approximately six to ten years old to three to five years old - contributing to an overall decline in doll sales.¹³

Concerned parents and critics of the multicultural fashion dolls known as Bratz were not simply victims of their own prejudices. Indeed, the dolls do not look like most parents' dream children and thus critics may in some ways be justified in their dislike of the dolls. Parents have long been concerned about their children's well being and worries about children growing up too quickly and threats to childhood innocence are not new. The negative reaction to the Bratz dolls then was the result of a cultural understanding of children as vulnerable and in need of protection. In this way, the Bratz controversy speaks to the social invention of childhood. Furthermore, the reason the Bratz look the way they do despite protests from adults is because they were designed to appeal to child consumers and not their parents – a result of the emergence of a children's consumer culture. Finally, the controversy surrounding the Bratz dolls speaks to the strong reaction that toys can evoke from parents, children's advocates, and children themselves, as well as toys' ability to represent and transmit ideas about racial and ethnic Others, which is the topic of this dissertation.

The Invention of Childhood and the Importance of Play

An understanding of the concept, nature, and function of childhood is necessary to understanding the importance of play and how toys, including ethnic toys - defined as toys representing racial or ethnic Others - contribute to the socialization of children. As

an area of academic inquiry, the history of childhood is only about fifty years old, but in that time numerous scholars have concluded that childhood, as a specific period of personal development, is a cultural construction that emerged sometime in the last five-hundred years.¹⁴ Steven Mintz and Howard P. Chudacoff have respectively written the most comprehensive histories of childhood and play in America to date.

In *Huck's Raft*, Mintz defines childhood as “a life stage whose contours are shaped by a particular time and place,” and describes American childhood as evolving in “three overlapping phases”: “premodern childhood,” “modern childhood,” and “postmodern childhood.”¹⁵ The first phase of childhood begins where so many US histories begin, with the Puritans. While other scholars have described children in this early period as “miniature adults,” meaning they were viewed as small, underdeveloped adults, Mintz claims a more accurate description would be “adults in training,” indicating that they were in fact not recognized as adults of any size, but were being prepared for the spiritual and physical demands of life from an early age.¹⁶ Puritan concerns about original sin and the salvation of the soul meant that they focused much time and energy on the proper training of their children, training critical to both their moral development and the survival of the faith. Mintz describes the Puritans as “unique in their preoccupation with childrearing,” and claims, “[t]heir legacy is a fixation on childhood corruption, child nurture, and schooling that remains undiminished in the United States today.”¹⁷ Indeed, this legacy can be seen in the controversy about Bratz dolls, which centers around a fear that Bratz will corrupt children’s innocence. Despite a reputation for a harsh approach to childrearing, with its emphasis on the dangers of sin, the Puritans were doting parents. They wrote and read childrearing manuals, made toys for their children to play with, and

allowed them to run and play outdoors despite complaints from some more conservative community members.¹⁸ However, all this attention to their children's well-being, centered around the idea that "children are highly malleable and need careful training," resulted in a great deal of parental anxiety.¹⁹

The Puritan recognition of the importance of early childhood as a stage of life critical to shaping the adult-to-be had the long-term effect of sensitizing American parents to the art and science of childrearing. Childrearing in the colonies was particularly influenced by two ideas promoted by John Locke and Jean-Jacque Rousseau, the first that children are "blank slates" - free from sinfulness and influenced or shaped by their surroundings, and the second that children are "naturally good" and their innocence must be protected from a corrupting world.²⁰ Both of these eighteenth century ideas have had a lasting effect on the way children and childhood are understood.

Like Mintz, Chudacoff emphasizes that children have long held a special place in American society, and that a strong societal belief in the benefits of play is a legacy of early America. He describes colonial America as a place where children's play, which he defines as "amusing activities that have behavioral, social, intellectual, and physical rewards," was used to keep children busy and out of trouble, with common activities "among families of means" including reading, paper-based games such as playing cards, puzzles, and board games, and playing with small "handcrafted toys and improvised playthings."²¹ By the late eighteenth century, colonial households increasingly included educational toys like alphabet blocks and books written specifically for children, reflecting an acknowledgement of the developmental benefits of playthings.²² Early manufactured toys were often imported from Europe, especially England and Germany,

but colonial children were adept at crafting their own playthings including “tops, hoops, kites, marbles, stilts, sleds, bows and arrows, puzzles, cards, blocks, and dolls.”²³

Chudacoff cites a change in children’s clothing styles in the years surrounding the American Revolution, when children’s clothing became looser to allow for greater physical freedom, as indicative of an increasing appreciation of the benefits of play.²⁴

Most important to the story of toys is the emergence of “modern childhood,” a product of the early nineteenth century urban middle class.²⁵ Mintz describes modern childhood as a “sheltered childhood,” one “free from labor and devoted to education.”²⁶ Echoing Mintz, Chudacoff notes that a lower birthrate at the dawn of the nineteenth century encouraged the idea that children were special beings to be protected from life’s cruelties, as well as “the notion of childhood as a time of play.”²⁷ With fewer children, more resources could be invested in them, allowing more prosperous parents to purchase toys and books for them, thus class privilege made modern childhood possible, as well as more time for toys and play.²⁸ Though middle class and wealthy children in the nineteenth century had the most access to formal toys, or objects made specifically for their play, informal toys, or objects repurposed by children for their own play needs, continued to be available to all children. Access to toys despite financial limitations is important because play does critical work in a child’s social development and toys are tools of play. However, in the story of ethnic toys, formal toys are key, as they typically reflect “adult culture” and adult ideas about children’s play, and it would not be until the second half of the nineteenth century that formal toys became more readily available in the form of domestic manufactured goods.²⁹

In the age of modern childhood, toys and play became tools in the work of maintaining children's innocence. Middle-class nineteenth century mothers, ever vigilante about their childrearing practices, could turn to experts like Lydia Maria Child for advice about the best toys and books for their children. In *The Mother's Book* (1831), which Child dedicated "To American Mothers, on whose intelligence and discretion the safety and prosperity of our republic so much depend," instructive toys were recommended along with balls, dolls, and outdoor play "for the health of both boys and girls."³⁰ She also recommended encouraging children to make some of their own toys, as she claimed children would likely find satisfaction in discovering what they are capable of making.³¹ As for children's books, Child included an eleven-page "List of Good Books" arranged by appropriate age, from four to sixteen years old.³² Her list indicates that middle class parents not only had a wide range of books to choose from, but also that they were navigating changing ideas about what kinds of writing was appropriate for children. Though she recommended books that "combine amusement with instruction," she was wary of fiction that had little moral value and was particularly worried about young girls being swept up by books that "contain romantic incidents."³³ Here we see a tension the middle class negotiated between supporting a child's innocence and playfulness, and maintaining strict morality.

Play was increasingly encouraged by means of commercially produced toys after the Civil War when, as Chudacoff describes it, "technology combined with higher expendable incomes to create a profusion of, and demand for, games, dolls, play paraphernalia, and books."³⁴ Scholars like Chudacoff see the middle class in post-Civil War America as increasingly "child-centered," with indulgence of children's playfulness

encouraged by not only the toy industry, but also “experts” on childhood development.³⁵ For those children fortunate enough to enjoy a sheltered modern childhood, the Industrial Revolution brought an explosion of manufactured toys beginning in the 1870s. For children of the laboring class, as well as enslaved children, an extended childhood was typically not possible, and manufactured toys were largely out of reach financially. These children still found time to play, but they were much more likely to play with homemade toys.³⁶ Concerned adults worried that these children did not have adequate access to play and, as a testament to the now widespread belief that children *needed* to play, organized the child saving and playground movements of the late nineteenth century to carve out space for poor children to play safely.³⁷

By the late nineteenth century, a number of scientists and social scientists weighed in on the value of play and the special nature of childhood. The founding of the American Pediatric Association in 1886 solidified a medical standard of understanding children as distinct from adults, while American psychologist G. Stanley Hall and physical education proponent Luther Halsey Gulick argued that like all animals, children must play.³⁸ But Sigmund Freud’s concept of the five stages of psychosexual development explicated in his 1905 publication, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* was the most important among the scientific theories about childhood. In Freud’s view, from about age five to puberty children experience a “latency period.” During this time, Freud theorized that a child’s developmental focus is on socialization, things like “same-sex friendships, hobbies, and athletics,” rather than sexual development.³⁹ This latency period is important to an understanding of play because if childhood is a significant period in life during which children learn how to operate in society, then play is a key

method by which this socialization occurs, and we can see how toys may in fact bear a strong socializing influence on children.⁴⁰ For example, Chudacoff explains the presence of racist imagery in some late nineteenth century toys as the result of toys reflecting “adult attitudes, negative as well as positive.” Once presented to children, he argues, this racist imagery “no doubt transferred demeaning stereotypes to children’s attitudes.” Though he makes no mention of non-racist ethnic imagery in toys – that is, ethnic imagery that is not derived from prejudicial stereotypes and which can be identified by the degree of realism, the presence or absence of caricatures or exaggeration, the costuming, and relationships to other characters - it undoubtedly also influenced children’s socialization.⁴¹ As I explore in this dissertation, non-racist ethnic toys did exist in the nineteenth century, and they reveal more complicated racial attitudes than simply racism.

Along with the expanded availability of American made commercial toys came changes in the way children and parents learned about toys, most notably advertising. In the late nineteenth century these advertisements targeted parents, often emphasizing a toy’s educational benefits.⁴² But after the turn of the century, increasingly affordable toys coupled with changes in advertising tactics meant that children were not only informed about the toy market, but also asked for specific toys and toy brands. From this point forward, formal toys have been a regular part of American childhood, aided by what Chudacoff describes as an “expanding consumer culture [that] enabled children of all socioeconomic groups to have access to at least some commercially produced toys.”⁴³

The twentieth century “sheltered-child” model of childhood, in which children needed protection from the ugliness of adulthood, required a safe place to play, resulting

in adult supervised neighborhood youth clubs and playgrounds, and for middle-class children, playrooms in the family home.⁴⁴ The toy industry took advantage of the sheltered-child model and proliferation of play spaces to sell more toys by encouraging the purchase of toys as rewards for good behavior rather than just Christmas or birthday presents, as had been the norm for middle-class children in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁵ By pushing toy sales year-round, advertising directly to children, and taking advantage of new media outlets provided by film and radio for toy tie-ins, by the late 1920s the toy industry joined the “modern consumer economy.”⁴⁶ This success was not stopped by the enormous economic hardships of the Great Depression, and in fact it was this era, with its comic books, movies, and child stars, that succeeded in “nationalizing and commercializing childhood.”⁴⁷ The fact that the toy industry was able to withstand the challenge of the Depression also reflected Americans’ commitment to preserving children’s right to childhood, an idea that was upheld at the 1930 White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, where delegates “declared that play was ‘every child’s right,’” and again by the passage of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act which effectively ended widespread child labor.⁴⁸

Media influence played a particularly important role in the expansion of American childhood, play, and the toy industry. The popularity of radio and film in the late 1920s and 1930s marked the first major move to a children’s consumer culture.⁴⁹ The media influence over children would only continue to grow with the invention of television, culminating in children’s television shows in the 1950s. Children’s television became a conduit for direct marketing to children as early as 1955, when the Mattel Toy Company sponsored *The Mickey Mouse Club*.⁵⁰ This moment, and the subsequent impact

on toy advertising, has led economists Sydney Landensohn Stern and Ted Schoenbaum to declare that the American toy industry has experienced two eras – “before and after television.”⁵¹ According to Chudacoff, the impact of television on the growth of the toy industry in the years after World War II was aided by economic growth that “created an attitude that everyone, especially a child, was entitled to a good life, and thus parents, eager to see their offspring happy and well-adjusted, found it difficult to resist the profusion of commercial playthings that their kids said they wanted.”⁵² This attitude made it easy for parents to spoil their children with increasingly large numbers of toys.

It is the early television age that Mintz identifies as the beginning of the “postmodern childhood,” a “semiautonomous” childhood with less supervision from working parents, but also less free time for unstructured play as scheduled activities have become increasingly common.⁵³ This shift in childhood has resulted in a shorter period of time dedicated to free play, and thus fewer toy playing years - one result of which is the shorter doll age that has Mattel so worried about its Barbie sales.⁵⁴ Chudacoff also locates a change in play in the mid-twentieth century. For him, the 1950s brought about an increasing dependence on commercial toys for play. He argues that in earlier periods, formal toys merely enhanced children’s play, and in more recent decades toys have become crutches for children’s play.⁵⁵

Critics of the commercialization of childhood, find fault in not only the reduction of free play, but also the media’s influence over children. Yet, while many parents and critics of the commodification of childhood bemoan the impact of television advertising that targets children, particularly toy commercials, Chudacoff and play expert Stephen Kline are careful to note that despite the slick maneuvers of advertising agencies, children

can “decipher TV content and ads more skillfully than critics have been willing to recognize,” and that in fact “youngsters have exerted both subtle and direct influence on marketers and manufacturers.”⁵⁶ A major sticking point in the controversy over the commercialization of childhood is whether or not children are simply being used for profits or if they have some control over their relationship with the market. In the last decade a number of books have been published on the intersection of childhood and consumer culture. Generally, these books fall into two categories: those who claim the toy industry has sold out childhood and robbed children of their innocence, turning them into unimaginative zombies who allow television commercials to dictate their play, and those who claim the toy industry has merely been keeping up with increasingly consumer savvy children who are indoctrinated into consumer society practically at birth, who have always reimagined and repurposed toys to fit their own needs, and who are just as responsible for keeping toy companies scrambling to develop this year’s must have toy.

Selling out childhood

As early as 1868, when the *New York Times* ran an editorial warning of the dangers of the proliferation of commercial toys to the child’s imagination, people have questioned the mingling of consumer culture with childhood.⁵⁷ Most of these critics have taken the position that children possess an innocence that should be protected from the evils of the market such as materialism, excess, and mind rot. Mark Irwin West and Gary Cross exemplify this position.

Like the editors of the 1868 *New York Times*, West is concerned about the impact of formal toys on “imaginative play,” or play scenarios that are invented by children.⁵⁸ He cites psychologist Jerome Singer’s claim that “toys can shape children’s play” and that

“minimally structured toys lend themselves to imaginative play, while complex and highly realistic toys hinder imaginative play.”⁵⁹ Similar to Chudacoff, West argues that there is an inverse relationship between the US toy industry’s growth and children’s active imaginative play. He celebrates simpler, less realistic toys like balls and blocks for allowing children to engage in imaginative play of their own design, and claims that as toys became more realistic, a late nineteenth century cast iron horse drawn wagon, for example, children’s play became more dictated by their specific toys.

Gary Cross is also concerned about the influence of the toy industry on children’s play, especially given that toys are ways that adults express their values and expectations to children. According to Cross, early toys encouraged children to play out “real life” situations, but as the twentieth century unfolded, children’s toys increasingly encouraged fantasy play, play that does nothing to prepare children for adult life.⁶⁰ Cross tells us that one hundred years of child development studies have given us the idea that play is the work of children, and toys are their tools. He argues that over the history of American toys, the messages toys transmit have changed reflecting changes in ideas about childhood and childrearing, but adds that “the commercial toy industry has facilitated, accelerated, and very often distorted this process.”⁶¹ He calls toymakers “pied pipers” who promote sexist and unattainable images of women and fantasy war play that teaches violence as a way to resolve conflict, but he claims the primary reason for the shift in toys has been changing ideas about parenting and childhood and not manipulation by toymakers.⁶² Whoever is to blame, Cross sees the transformation of the toy industry as the death of childhood innocence.

The rise of “fad” toys is a particular concern for Cross. He finds that marketing and branding were key to the growth of the toy industry in the twentieth century. These advertising tactics were part of a “retail revolution” that included expanded distribution networks, department stores, chain stores, mail order and print media, “alongside the emergence of the child-centered family.”⁶³ The technological improvements brought about by the Industrial Revolution that lowered the cost of toys and reduced production time so that new toys could be designed and put on retail shelves relatively quickly, made it easy to produce fad toys that reflected current events and the latest trends in popular culture. Fad toys were generally based on contemporary news and personalities, Teddy bears and Shirley Temple dolls for example, and they changed from year to year. Cross describes the emergence of fad toys as a shift from “timeless” toys to “right now” toys which he links to a larger change from reality-based toys to fantasy toys. This is a trend he sees as growing to alarming proportions in the late twentieth century, a time in which advertisers and toymakers, using direct marketing, fed children’s desire for fantasy with toys like He-Man, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and My Little Pony. According to Cross, these fantasy toys do nothing to prepare children for adult life, and instead “invite children into a fantasy world free of adults.”⁶⁴

Children’s Consumer Culture

While West and Cross bemoan the influence of the toy industry on children’s lives, Ellen Seiter and Daniel Thomas Cook have taken a more positive view of the relationship between children and consumer culture, arguing for children’s agency and the value of the child consumer.

Seiter's *Sold Separately: Parents and Children in Consumer Culture* seeks to understand the role of consumer culture in children's lives.⁶⁵ She argues "all members of modern developed societies depend heavily on commodity consumption, not just for survival but for participation – inclusion – in social networks."⁶⁶ This includes children who are just figuring out how they fit into larger society. By participating in commercial children's culture, children engage in a larger community of children.⁶⁷ Through consumer culture children access "a shared repository of images, characters, plots, and themes," and furthermore, how they interpret that repository cannot always be anticipated.⁶⁸ She calls it a mistake "to see marketers as evil brainwashers and children as naïve innocents, as they are so often depicted in journalists' accounts of the toy industry."⁶⁹ Like Kline and Chudacoff, Seiter recognizes that children interpret their toys, their television shows, and the advertising that is aimed at them in their own ways, which are often unanticipated by the advertisers and toymakers who spend a great deal of money trying to predict children's reactions. For Seiter, ultimately, "Children create their own meanings from the stories and symbols of consumer culture."⁷⁰

Seiter's interpretation of the market revolution's reshaping of the American home differs from that presented by Mintz and Chudacoff. Citing scholars like Ruth Schwartz Cowan, she states that after World War II the increase in mother's labor and the move to bigger homes in the suburbs were more responsible than the reduction of child labor and more sophisticated advertising directed at children for the surge in toy sales. More work for mother brought with it a need to keep the kids occupied, and growth in income and a rise in credit meant more means to buy toys.⁷¹

However, like Mintz and Chufacoff, Seiter sees the role of commercial media as integral to the growth of the toy industry. In a discussion of children's television commercials which market products directly to children, she makes two arguments that are particularly relevant to thinking about ethnic toys. The first is that commercials aimed at children "tap into utopian sentiments," and offer "something different, something better."⁷² She notes that despite the continued inequality of screen time for children of color in toy ads "there is far more integration and interracial friendship on children's commercials than there is on most prime-time television or, for that matter, in most of the classics of children's literature."⁷³ The second argument Seiter presents is that these utopian images of interracial friendship are particularly important for children of color. She explains that though "some critics have bemoaned target marketing as further exploitation of an already economically disadvantaged group" target marketing also gives children of color images they can identify with and "decenters the dominance of all those blue-eyed blondes they see so much of when they watch Saturday morning TV."⁷⁴ Furthermore, "commercials targeted at Black and Hispanic children, where Spanish is spoken as well as English, where recognizable parents and children in urban settings are celebrated, where children of color hold the spotlight, are gift horses many parents would be willing to accept."⁷⁵

Like Seiter, Daniel Thomas Cook rejects the idea of "corporate culture as the nemesis of childhood" in his book, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer*.⁷⁶ Though his book is on the children's clothing industry and not the toy industry, the two industries bear multiple similarities. Most notably, the children's clothing and toy industries both grew out of the

Industrial Revolution and became cemented in commercial culture in the 1930s aided by the sheltered childhood standard that emerged in the twentieth century. As far as selling goods for children, Cook claims there are two socially acceptable ways for children and commerce to commingle: by “defin[ing] or redefin[ing] commodities as beneficial and functional for children,” or by defining or redefining children as “full *persons* who are, in a relatively unproblematic way, desirous of goods.”⁷⁷ Cook locates a shift between these two ideas in the 1930s when, “Despite depressed economic conditions (or perhaps because of them), merchants, manufacturers, and advertisers began to target children directly as individual consumers as a matter of business strategy.”⁷⁸ He claims the change was more than just an attempt to increase sales, that rather there was a change in perspective on the part of the clothing industry, which went “from seeing the world as a mother would to the beginnings of seeing the world through children’s eyes.” He calls this “pediocularity” and he contends that pediocularity “took strong root early in the children’s clothing industry and [then] informed other consumer good and contexts.”⁷⁹ Though a child’s point of view had been considered before this moment, the 1930s are important to Cook as they see the end of child labor and the rise of “child-centered educational philosophy” (which also heavily influenced toys).⁸⁰ Born in the 1930s, the child consumer became firmly established within consumer culture by the 1950s, and Cook argues that today consumer culture could not exist without the child consumer. He concludes “one cannot understand children and childhood, at least since the beginning of the twentieth century, without examining the world of consumer goods and consumer social relations.”⁸¹

Six key concepts introduced by the childhood scholars presented here are woven throughout this study. They are: the idea that children are innocent blank slates; that toys are important tools of childhood; that toys have a socializing function; the competing ideas that toys are corrupting and toys are utopian; and the importance of children's perspective in the development and marketing of toys. What is largely missing from existing studies of childhood and playthings is an examination of ethnic imagery in toys and its impact on any of the above concepts. Chudacoff and Cross briefly mention late nineteenth century toys that contain racist imagery, but only a few scholarly articles have been devoted to issues of racial and ethnic representation in toys.

Race and toys

In 1990, the now shuttered Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies hosted an exhibition titled "Ethnic Images in Toys and Games." The slim exhibition catalog is still the primary source for a discussion of race and toys. Like Chudacoff and Cross, the essays in the catalog primarily focused on racist stereotypes found in toys. For example, Pamela Nelson's essay "Toys as History: Ethnic Images and Cultural Change," reveals numerous examples of toys from the past one hundred and fifty years that "depict blatantly derogatory images" of 'non-white' people."⁸² Nelson argues that these toys reflected dominant attitudes about ethnic and racial minorities and boosted a sense of superiority among those in power – in this case white Americans.⁸³ She sees the mean spirited and grossly caricatured toys found in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as particularly reflective of urban fears about immigrants and African Americans, however she notes that not all ethnic depictions of the period were derogatory stereotypes. She explains that the contradictions presented by representations of the Other, here used to identify those

who are not deemed white, in toys are typical to any process of cultural change.⁸⁴

Understanding and interpreting difference is a slow and uneven process. Nelson identifies the 1920s as a period in which ethnic toys softened their depictions of the Other, a shift she connects to decreases in immigration due to new immigration laws, the impact of World War I, and educational toys.⁸⁵ She claims that with the exception of Native American themed toys, ethnic toys mostly disappeared in the years between World War II to the 1960s.⁸⁶ Nelson concludes that non-derogatory ethnic toys became commonplace in the post Civil Rights era, a trend she associates with a backlash against “cultural homogeneity.”⁸⁷

A second essay in the catalog, this one by psychologist Carol Moog, explains the significance of dolls in a child’s development. She writes, “one of the first and most immediate ways that children get to know themselves and others is by playing with dolls.”⁸⁸ As a carrier of the child’s own feelings, children use dolls as an extension of the self.⁸⁹

More recently, Sabrina Lynette Thomas has published two short articles on black dolls as tools of racial uplift. Thomas traces a century-long “black dolls for black children” movement, beginning with an 1853 editorial by William Wilson in *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* and connecting it to the 1951 introduction of the Saralee doll.⁹⁰ Touted as the “first anthropologically correct Negro doll,” Saralee was the idea of a Southern white woman named Sara Lee Creech. It was designed by the white sculptor Sheila Burlingame, and endorsed by Eleanor Roosevelt, Zora Neale Hurston, and Ralph Bunch. Manufactured by the Ideal Toy Corp., the doll’s box advertised it as the “More Than Just a Doll, An Ambassador of Goodwill.”⁹¹ Thomas does not question Creech or

Burlingame's motives in this project, nor does she mention Creech's naming the doll after herself, or its supporters' frequent reference to the doll's supposed anthropological correctness - over 1,000 photos of Black children along with head measurements were sent to Burlingame to design the doll and a "color jury" of race relations experts was convened to decide on the doll's skin color.⁹² Instead, she focuses on the ways that dolls like the Saralee doll can operate "as commodities of racial uplift."⁹³ Thomas argues that, "Sara Lee was meant to do the work of agitating the racial status quo."⁹⁴ However, this political agenda was apparently too heavy a burden for Saralee. Though she was lauded by numerous publications such as *Life* and *Ebony*, she never sold well, was plagued with complaints about her medium brown skin color (viewed by some as too light and others as too dark), and she was discontinued after just two years.⁹⁵ From my perspective, the case of the Saralee doll exposes how contentious a mere plaything can be when it asks the buying public to think about the values it embodies. Furthermore, the critiques surrounding Saralee's skin color point to the complicated nature of depicting ethnic or racial identity in toys as ethnic and racial identities are fairly slippery concepts that transform over time and space.

Race and ethnicity are terms that are used to discuss identity categories. For the purposes of this project, race is best understood as a culturally constructed category of people primarily, though not always, based on phenotype. Ethnicity refers more specifically to a group of people linked by a shared cultural heritage. Neither of these concepts is static; rather they evolve to reflect current ideas about self and other. This is reflected in the fact that both concepts demonstrate a great deal of flexibility in their social use. I use the catchall term "ethnic toys" to denote any toy whose subject is

explicitly not “generic white.” Within popular culture, whiteness is held to be the default, or dominant race, while all others are deemed Other. The Other is different, either by virtue of skin color or cultural heritage. This perceived difference is emphasized in much of our cultural landscape. Richard Dyer’s work on visualizing race, or how race is visually represented, asserts that “racial imagery is central to the organisation of the modern world.”⁹⁶ When racial or ethnic Others are visually illustrated the focus is not about how people really are, rather it is about how people are culturally imagined.⁹⁷ Thus, he argues that studying racial representation is important because “how anything is represented is the means by which we think and feel about the thing, by which we apprehend it” adding “the study of representation is more limited than the study of reality and yet it is also the study of one of the prime means by which we have any knowledge of reality.”⁹⁸ Dyer’s study of racial representation applied to ethnic toys, offers a method to reveal the dominant perspectives on racial and ethnic Others that toys present to children. Dyer’s work attempts to dislodge whiteness from its dominant position by exposing the very constructed nature of whiteness. The racial category “white” is no more natural than the racial category of “black.” However, we cannot fully dismiss racial and ethnic categories because they have real lived consequences. Indeed, those who claim the socially dominant position of whiteness can only do so when populations deemed not white also exist.⁹⁹ Thus there is an incentive to protect whiteness and maintain categories of Others.

When it comes to incorporating racial imagery into commercial culture, illustrators and marketers exploit competing desires for realism and maintaining the status quo. Fath Davis Ruffins provides a timeline of ethnic imagery in advertising, much

of which she identifies as stereotypical before 1930. However, she adds, these images were also informational in that they “depicted how to live in a heterogeneous society.”¹⁰⁰ Particularly in the area of selling ethnic foods, immigrants in advertising illustrations could “seem more acceptable, more consumable, more assimilable, even as overt discrimination continued against immigrant groups.”¹⁰¹ By the 1930s ethnic imagery began to be used as “a metaphor for authenticity,” and during World War II, engaged in a propaganda war against the Nazis, American military posters began including multiethnic groups of soldiers.¹⁰² For Ruffins, it is the post World War II era that sees the greatest changes in commercial ethnic imagery.¹⁰³ Throughout, she argues “commercial imagery illustrating the complexities of race in America has a history virtually coextensive with the notion of “America” itself.”¹⁰⁴ Indeed, America’s struggles with ideas about race are related to America’s struggles with ideas about what is American. These points are equally valid when applied to toys.

Childhood is widely believed to be a special time in life, one that should be protected from the ugliness of the adult world. But Mintz also describes American childhood as having never truly been safe or separate from adult realities. His periodization of childhood into premodern, modern, and postmodern phases tells us much about shifts in the role of the family, increasingly moving towards a model in which the family has a less significant influence on the young than do their peers and outside forces such as the media and popular culture. This periodization also shows us how the function of childhood has varied over time. Since the Puritan era childhood has served as a training ground. The purpose of the training has changed, however, from spiritual

salvation to growing as an individual before the arrival of adulthood to preparation to become a competitive adult. Finally, these phases of childhood tell us something about how a commercial toy industry was able to emerge as middle class families increasingly saw play as necessary for a successful childhood. Mass production had the effect of lowering commodity prices, as well as making it easier to manufacture an array of similar products at multiple price points, thereby attracting a larger cross-section of buyers from the working class to the wealthy.¹⁰⁵

Toys are a topic of concern among many because of the prominence of their role in a child's life. Many parents and scholars worry that toys "reinforce sex stereotypes [...], promote sexual promiscuity [...], stifle imagination, suppress creativity, and serve as opiates for purposes of social control."¹⁰⁶ However, toys also play an important role in "promoting socialization, building confidence [...], and abetting autonomy."¹⁰⁷ Brian Sutton-Smith, a leading play theorist, has described the important role of toys in a child's life as "instrument[s] with which to express and manipulate the cultural forces that bear upon him or her."¹⁰⁸ Thus ethnic toys present opportunities for teaching a child about the diversity of people in the world, as well as opportunities to pass along adult ideas about those people. Yet, even with widespread use of direct marketing, children are not passive recipients of the adult ideas in their toys; as several scholars have pointed out, children frequently reinvent formal toys to meet their own purposes and there really is no way to predict how children will interpret and incorporate a formal toy in their play.¹⁰⁹

This project has two primary goals. The first is to ask what ideas about racial and ethnic Others have been inscribed in children's toys, and thus what more general ideas about race have been communicated to children, and finally how have those ideas have

evolved over time. The second is to ask what has been the range of ethnic imagery in toys. One easy assumption to make about ethnic imagery in toys is that it used to be racist or “bad,” and now it is culturally sensitive and even antiracist. But what if this is largely untrue? Ethnic toys may in fact offer a combination of “good,” “not so good,” and “bad” ethnic imagery across the years of this study.

Toys for the project were found at a number of museums and libraries, including: the Winterthur Museum, notable for its large collection of paper dolls and toy catalogs; the Philadelphia Doll Museum, the country’s only black doll museum; the American Antiquarian Society; the Henry Ford Museum; the Atwater Kent Museum; the Cotsen Children’s Library at Princeton University; and the Strong Museum and the Smithsonian Institution, the repositories of the nation’s two largest toy collections. In addition to scouring the artifact collections of these museums and libraries, wholesale and retail catalogs housed in their collections provided vital details such as prices, dates, and original descriptions. The toy industry trade journals *Playthings* and *Toys and Novelties* were equally useful, offering insider perspectives on the appeal of one season’s hit toy, advice on how to increase sales, and interviews with toy makers. Interviews with collectors helped me fill in gaps that the trade journals and catalogs could not. This is particularly true in regards to dating objects. Toys are often difficult to correctly date. Patent dates, which are frequently stamped onto toys, can be misleading, as can catalog listings. By putting together information from multiple sources I attempted to identify accurate date ranges for each toy I documented.

This project begins with a search for the origins of ethnic imagery in children’s toys. Beginning with “toy books,” small nineteenth century children’s books which

predate the commercial toy industry in America, I examine why an industry of manufactured children's goods emerged and how children began to be seen as a market in need of ethnic imagery. From a manufacturing perspective, paper was a medium through which relatively inexpensive products could be made for children - first in the form of books and later, as printing technologies improved, in the form of paper-based toys and games. Similarly, cast iron was an inexpensive and plentiful material for early manufactured toys. Paper and cast iron proved to be two of the most effective materials for the manufacture of early ethnic toys. In this chapter I ask why ethnic imagery became a theme in American toy books? What messages about race did that imagery contain? How did that early imagery influence ethnic imagery in other toy media such as paper games and cast iron toys?

Chapter Three moves to dolls, considering the appearance of international children in doll series. Here I explore the role of dolls in children's play and examine how dolls that are made for children to nurture treat race, as compared to toys not designed for a nurturing relationship. Focusing on the years between World War I and World War II, I ask how the growing global economy and worries about war influenced ethnic imagery. Much of this chapter focuses on influential doll maker Beatrice Alexander, and incorporates a biographical analysis into a bigger picture understanding of doll politics. By using biography I attempt to tap into the often elusive issue of maker intent in the design of ethnic toys.

The next chapter shifts focus to the study of boys' toys. Much academic scholarship on toys has centered on a concern about the promotion of violence in boys' toys. Little of this scholarship has considered who has historically been the target of

violence in these toys. I survey boys' toys from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s and find that people of color are overwhelmingly incorporated into boys' toys as targets of aggression. I ask why were minority subjects deemed appropriate targets for these toys and what messages about difference did they send to the children who played with them?

In Chapter Five, I examine toys that were intended to counterbalance the types of toys discussed in the previous chapter. I survey an array of minority-owned toy companies dating from the early nineteenth century to the 1990s and ask what was different about these toys, and what makes an "authentic" ethnic toy. Market segmentation practices that were expanded in the late 1960s led to a far more diverse selection of dolls on store shelves in order to tap into minority spending dollars, but control over the image of African Americans and other minorities in toys was an ongoing struggle - one that was ultimately won by those with the most money.

Over the course of these chapters a long history of ethnic toys is unveiled, one that is just as long as the American toy industry itself. The ethnic toys examined here do not expose a steady march towards anti-racist toys, nor do they offer a consistent message about difference. Rather, they present a variety of views on immigrants, racial minorities, and national identity. They both replicate and innovate ethnic imagery, and most importantly they show ethnic imagery to be part and parcel of American childhood.

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- ⁴ Ruth La Ferla, "Underdressed and Hot: Dolls Moms Don't Love," *New York Times* Oct. 26, 2003, ST1.
- ⁵ See, *Ibid*; Nicholas Casey, "Mattel Wins Ban on Mga over Rights to Bratz Line," *The Wall Street Journal* Dec. 4, 2008, B1; Jonathan Birchall, "Mga Hit by Order to Take Bratz Dolls Off Shelves," *Financial Times* Dec. 5, 2008, 16.
- ⁶ See, Birchall, "Mga Hit by Order to Take Bratz Dolls Off Shelves," 16; Sonia Poulton, "Move over, Barbie," *Daily Mail* (Dec. 8, 2005), www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-370946/Move-Barbie.html; Binkley, "Mattel Says It Really Owns the Bratz That've Given Barbie Such a Bad Time."
- ⁷ Ramin Setoodeh, "Get Ready to Rumble: The Saucy Braz Are Hot, and Barbie's Figures Are Sagging. What's a Middle-Aged Blonde to Do? Get a Makeover," *Newsweek* Dec. 11, 2006, 46.
- ⁸ La Ferla, "Underdressed and Hot: Dolls Moms Don't Love," ST1.
- ⁹ Tiffany Meyers, "Culture Mosaic," *Advertising Age* 77, no. 11 (Mar. 13, 2006): S1; Rachel Leibrock, "Glamour and Growing Up: From Barbie to the Bratz Dolls, Do Media Images Push Girls to Go Too Sexy, Too Soon?," *Sacramento Bee* Aug. 15, 2007.
- ¹⁰ Shakira Hussein, "How Multiculturalism Destroyed Barbie's Love Life," *KASAMA Solidarity Philippines Australia Network* 20, no. 1 (Jan/Feb/Mar 2006).
- ¹¹ Rebecca Winters Keegan, "Something to Pout About," *Time* Dec. 22, 2008, 65.
- ¹² M. G. Lord, *Forever Barbie : The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll*, 1st ed. (New York: Morrow and Co., 1994), 7-9.
- ¹³ For sales numbers see, Nicholas Casey, "Bratz Dolls Begin to Show Their Age," *The Wall Street Journal* Sep. 22, 2008, B1; Casey, "Barbie's Revenge: Brawl over Doll Is Heading to Trial, Mattel Alleges Skulduggery in Claim to Rival's Bratz Design," A1. On doll age see Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 348.
- ¹⁴ For an overview of the major scholars of childhood, see Benjamin B. Roberts, N. Ray Hiner, and Joseph M. Hawes, "History of Childhood," in *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 422-30.
- ¹⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 2-4.
- ¹⁶ Harry Edwin Eiss, ed. *Images of the Child* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994), 3; Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 10.
- ¹⁷ Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 10.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13, 18-19.

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- ¹⁹ Ibid., 17, 31.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 51; Eiss, ed. *Images of the Child*, 6-7.
- ²¹ Howard P. Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), xii, 27, 31-32.
- ²² Ibid., 33-34.
- ²³ Ibid., 32.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 37-38.
- ²⁵ Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 76.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 43, 46.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 69.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 69-70.
- ³⁰ Lydia Maria Child, *The Mother's Book*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1831), iii, 53-54, 57-58.
- ³¹ Ibid., 55-56.
- ³² Ibid., 98-109.
- ³³ Ibid., 86.
- ³⁴ Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 74.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 74-75.
- ³⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 135-36, 07. 107.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 179.
- ³⁸ Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 70, 72.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 103, 63. 163.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 103.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 121.
- ⁴² Ibid., 82-83.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 8-9.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 109-14.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 116.
- ⁴⁶ Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 216-17.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 236.
- ⁴⁸ Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 98.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 121-22.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 155.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 158.
- ⁵² Ibid., 169.
- ⁵³ Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 4, 348.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 348.
- ⁵⁵ Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 168.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 167.
- ⁵⁷ "Concerning Toys," editorial, *New York Times*, 2 Jan. 1868: 5. This editorial is also interesting for its identification of the emergence of a notable toy industry in the post-Civil War years, stating, "The amount of inventive ingenuity and parental cash expended upon amusing toys for children, is becoming one of the features of the age."

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- ⁶⁰ Gary S. Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 25.
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- ⁶² Cross 2-3, 7-8.
- ⁶³ Cross 26-28.
- ⁶⁴ Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood*, 4, 9.
- ⁶⁵ Ellen Seiter, *Sold Separately: Parents and Children in Consumer Culture* (1995).
- ⁶⁶ Seiter 3.
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- ⁶⁸ Seiter 7, 9.
- ⁶⁹ Seiter 9.
- ⁷⁰ Seiter 10-11.
- ⁷¹ Seiter 13.
- ⁷² Seiter 133.
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- ⁷⁷ Cook 11.
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- ⁸⁰ Cook 69.
- ⁸¹ Cook 151.
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- ⁸⁶ Nelson 18.
- ⁸⁷ Nelson 21.
- ⁸⁸ Carol Moog, "Psychological Aspects of Ethnic Doll Play," *Ethnic Images in Toys and Games*, ed. Pamela B. Nelson (Philadelphia: Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 1990) 24.
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⁹⁷ Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997) viii.

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Chapter Two

Paper and Iron: The Origins of Ethnic Imagery in American Toys

The 1890 edition of the Butler Brothers Christmas catalog declared it the “newest and funniest dollar toy.”¹ The “Bad Accident” mechanical toy bank, like many toy banks of the period, was made of painted cast iron and sprung to life with the insertion of a penny and the switch of a lever. This particular bank featured a dark black man riding on a mule-drawn cart while eating a large wedge of watermelon. The cart appears to be traveling down a rural dirt road and is just about to pass a small bush on the driver’s left. Hidden from the driver’s view, a small, similarly dark black child stands behind the bush with his arms outstretched. Unlike the driver who wears a blue jacket, red pants, white-banded hat, and spats on his shoes, the child is barefoot and wears a shabby red shirt and too short blue pants. As the Butler Brothers catalog described, “When a coin is placed under the driver’s feet the boy jumps from behind the bush and ‘frightens’ the donkey into rearing, when the coin disappears.”² What is unsaid, is that the action of bank results in the driver being violently thrown back by the rearing mule. By design the man does not fall off the cart, rather he hangs backwards, still clinging to his watermelon, waiting to be returned to his spot on the cart where he can reenact the scene over and over again.

The “Bad Accident” bank raises all sorts of questions. While no one appears to be seriously injured - the man is relatively unharmed and the donkey does not trample the child - what makes this “bad accident” so funny? Is it funny to see an African American hurt? Did the child intentionally cause the accident, and if so why? Why are the man and child’s clothing so different? Is this part of the humor? And more importantly how did

this kind of loaded imagery – the watermelon, the mule, the rural African Americans – end up in a children’s toy? To the twenty-first century reader, this would hardly be an appropriate toy for a child. The imagery employed by the bank contains prejudicial assumptions about blackness, as well as the social position of African Americans. Likely many would call this bank racist today. While I do not claim that the bank is not racist, I do suspect that there is something more going on here; this is an idea I return to throughout this chapter. I begin this chapter on the origins of ethnic imagery in children’s toys with this bank because it incorporates important visual markers of race that can be found in so many ethnic toys whether they date to the present day or a more distant past. These include the clothing of the man and child, the rural setting, and the physical position of the more nicely dressed man above the shabbily dressed boy. The ideas about race these markers transmitted to children in the nineteenth century tend to draw from one or more common threads: the racial other as man or animal, expressions of malice or goodwill towards racial others, political statements about the place of racial others, and the power dynamic or hierarchies with and within racial others. So where did the imagery in the “Bad Accident” bank come from? To find the origin of this ethnic toy we must go back to the “toy books” (small illustrated books for children) of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some of the first “toys” commercially made for American children.

Early American Children’s Books, 1680-1795

Even before toy manufacturing fully established itself in America in the second half of the nineteenth century, American children could access ethnic imagery specifically designed for them in the form of books. Like toys, children’s books reveal the values and ideas of a society’s dominant culture. Children’s literature scholars such as

Gail Schmunuck Murray and Anne Scott MacLeod are quick to point out that books for children are far from quaint little stories, and that in fact they have long been used “to shape morals, control information, model proper behavior, delineate gender roles, and reinforce class, race, and ethnic separation.”³ However, children’s books should not be perceived as perfect mirrors of the culture in which they were produced. Rather, as MacLeod has demonstrated, children’s book authors inevitably engage in self-censorship, so that while the books do reveal certain “central truths” about a society, they do so “with many ambiguities and evasions.”⁴ MacLeod explains, “since few adults, and perhaps fewer authors of books for young people, are entirely frank or wholly realistic in what they tell children about the world, any view of reality in children’s literature is refracted through adult attitudes toward children and society, with the result that juvenile stories are often as suggestive for what they leave out as for what they include.”⁵ While the total number of children’s books produced in America with ethnic imagery is unknown, surveys of major collections of nineteenth century children’s books indicates that while most books focused on white, wealthy or middle-class subjects, books with ethnic imagery were not uncommon. This is not surprising given what Murray describes as the period’s “preoccupation with a whiteness reinforced by racial and ethnic hierarchies.”⁶

Books as instructional tools have long held an important place in American culture. Early European settlers brought Bibles with them, and the “centrality of religion” in seventeenth century colonial America supported literacy - children had to learn to read the Bible if they were to be saved.⁷ Indeed, in 1642 Massachusetts established a law requiring that all children be taught to read just for this purpose.⁸ However, due to a general scarcity of books in the colonies through the eighteenth century, as well as

Puritan distrust of fiction, which they considered nothing more than lies, children's reading was limited to the Bible and a few children's instructional religious books that combined reading lessons with religious teachings.⁹ Though the Massachusetts Bay colony had a printing press only ten years after its founding, most of the books for children were imported from England, a notable exception being *The New England Primer*, which first appeared in the 1680s.¹⁰ Illustrations in primers and catechisms did not become common until the eighteenth century, and even then any illustrations were few in number and generally of a very poor quality. These "crude postage-stamp-sized woodcuts," often of an animal, ship, or human figure, did not contain ethnic imagery.¹¹

The limitations of printing technology were likely responsible for the over one-hundred year gap between the initial publication of *The New England Primer* and the first appearance of ethnic imagery in an American children's book. There were however, stories with non-white characters in circulation by the mid-eighteenth century. *Robinson Crusoe*, with its dark native character Friday, was published in England in 1719, and Fowle & Draper, a Boston printing firm, issued an abridged sixteen-page version between 1757 and 1762.¹² Fowle & Draper were perhaps the first American printer of chapbooks, small cheap paper-covered books, and their inventory was made up of both American reprints of English titles and English imports which were then sold across New England by itinerant "chapmen."¹³ Like many chapbooks, this book would have been intended for an adult reader, but with so little fiction available it would have been equally enjoyed by any young readers in a household lucky enough to have a copy of it. In this way, children could have been exposed to the descriptions of Friday and other island natives.

In approximately 1756, Daniel Fowle (of Fowle & Draper) printed what is believed to be the first wholly American children's storybook, *A New Gift for Children*.¹⁴ This small, paper covered, thirty page book was a departure from the usual religious, educational works made for children by American publishers, however, it shared a common trait of those books in that its small woodcut illustrations had no apparent relationship to the story. It was quite common for woodcuts to be reused by publishers so that often the illustrations did not match the story or primer lesson. As American parents became more accepting of recreational books for their children in the late eighteenth century, England (which had more liberal views on storybooks) was the source of many entertaining stories that were reprinted in America, especially books originally printed by John Newbery who specialized in children's titles.¹⁵ However, after the American Revolution, it was also apparent that America's story needed to be told to America's children. In telling this story, American children would learn about *their* culture and history, and this lesson required the introduction of America's nonwhite residents.

The first American children's books to present ethnic imagery appear to have been schoolbooks. In 1791, Noah Webster released the *Little Reader's Assistant*, a book for intermediate readers, which combined reading instruction with stories based on American history and morals.¹⁶ In this book, Webster harshly questions the treatment of Native Americans and the practice of slavery. He declares, "If there is justice in heaven, vengeance must fall upon the heads of men who commit this outrage upon their own kind."¹⁷ Though children's literature historian Gillian Avery describes Webster's book as, "full of compassion," his sympathies are fickle. In his account of John Smith he proclaims, "What a hero was Captain Smith! How many Turks and Indians did he slay!

How often was he upon the brink of death, and how bravely did he encounter every danger. Such a man affords a noble example for all to follow when they resolve to be *good and brave*.”¹⁸ Though Webster did not provide illustrations of the Native Americans, African slaves, or Turks, the book is significant because it expresses an early ambivalent view of racial Others. Webster presents conflicting positions on “compassion” towards non-whites – an attitude that would continue to present itself in children’s things for the next two hundred or more years.

The first illustration of a non-white person in an American book produced for children may be that of a Native American in *The History of America, Abridged for the Use of Children of All Denominations*, printed by Wrigley & Berriman of Philadelphia in 1795. Believed to be the first American history book for children, the frontispiece bears a woodcut of Columbus standing with a Native American.¹⁹ Describing the book’s illustrations, A. S. W. Rosenbach, the famed book collector, noted that, “The greatest economy was used in the portrait [wood]cuts,” with two basic portrait types used, those in tricorn hats, and those in periwigs.²⁰ However, in the woodcut of Columbus with the Native American, that privileged headwear is challenged. While Columbus appears in a tricorn hat, the Native American wears neither a tricorn hat, nor a periwig. Instead two feathers stick out from the top of his head. Gillian Avery describes the scene as “Christopher Columbus, wearing a tricorn, stares out left, and Americus Vesputius [Avery’s name for the Native American], almost identical, stares right.”²¹ Actually, the two are not so nearly identical, and their physical differences are seen in more than just their headwear. The caption beneath the woodcut reads, “Columbus’s first interview with the Natives of America,” and the image shows the Native American gesturing off to the

left with his right hand as he holds Columbus' right hand with his left. Columbus appears to be looking at the local's face as he shows him around. The details are difficult to make out, but in addition to their headwear, the Native American appears to wear a short grass or fur skirt and little else and his skin is shaded to appear dark, whereas Columbus wears a long coat, knee-length pants, dark shoes and possibly white stockings, and his skin is not shaded, making it the same color as the paper on which the woodcut is printed. A large tree and lush grasses surround the two men; the setting feels warm and comfortable. Their pose, hand-in-hand, is very friendly and, despite differences in costume and skin color, they appear as social equals with the Native American in the role of expert tour guide to a visiting friend. The linked hands in particular are in line with a trend in children's ethnic imagery that will be seen again. Handshaking across groups comes with the complexities of an uneven power dynamic (primarily represented in this illustration by the differences in clothing), however in this illustration the "interview" between Columbus and the Native American, as well as American children's introduction to ethnic imagery seems off to a good start.

Learning Manners and Customs, 1802-1864

By the nineteenth century, the printing of small books for children became inexpensive enough for children's books to become more widespread.²² Books for children remained primarily educational, but in the previous century the "spiritual intensity" of Puritan children's books had given way to "generalized moralism" making way for more amusing works in the nineteenth century.²³ One popular genre of toy books was manners and customs books.

“Manners and customs” children’s books and games demonstrate one of the earliest ways information about racial and ethnic others were systematically communicated to American children through their playthings.²⁴ Beginning in the early nineteenth century, these books provided illustrations of people from around the globe, and often included short descriptions of their habits, economy, or religion. The illustrations were nearly always of a single individual, usually male, whose physical depiction operated as a kind of visual synecdoche of a nation. The manners and customs genre seems to be related to geography schoolbooks, which were “among the ultimate bestsellers in the early republic.”²⁵

Anne Baker has argued that “the ideal of a racially homogeneous nation-state - a geopolitical unit in which a single racial identity is coincident with national identity - was a powerful presence in antebellum American culture,” and geography schoolbooks were a way ideas about race and nationhood were transmitted to school children.²⁶ Intended for slightly older school-aged children than the manners and customs books, antebellum geography schoolbooks introduced ideas about ethnic and racial difference and racial hierarchies along with numerous facts about rivers and mountains. The geography schoolbooks were tools of knowledge, whereas the manners and customs books and games were sold as tools for play. The latter provided far fewer “hard” facts and focused on brief descriptions and plenty of illustrations that could be enjoyed by beginning readers, as well as pre-reading children. In fact, some manners and customs books incorporated the alphabet into their format, introducing an ethnic or national group for each letter of the alphabet. In these books, people of various nations were presented as groups to be ordered and systematized as a method of play and more significantly early

learning. This relationship to alphabet books, arguably the most important instructional book genre for young children due to the direct tie to literacy, demonstrates that learning about race and difference was a valued, possibly even essential form of visual literacy for American children even at a pre-reading age.

People of All Nations: An Useful Toy, for Girl or Boy, a miniature book published by Jacob Johnson of Philadelphia in 1802, is a wonderful early example of the manners and customs genre. The first half of the book features illustrations of people representing a nation or ethnic group and a letter of the alphabet, the second half of the book features illustrations of additional people of various nations. The illustrations appear on facing pages, and the text appears on the facing pages in between the illustrations so that the illustrations are not encumbered by text. Reading and non-reading children could have easily enjoyed this book. For example, the letter A is represented by “an Arabian,” and the illustration shows a man in a turban with a long feather, a long robe worn over pants, pointy shoes, and a walking cane. He is positioned next to a large letter “A.” On the next page, he is described as follows: “An Arabian is very kind to his horse, and in return the horse suffers the children to play with him without hurting them. Arabia is a warm country, and in Asia.” Some illustrations represent specific groups rather than nations, for example the letter M is represented by “a Mahometan” whose description reads, “A Mahometan is of the religion of Mahomet, which has spread over great part of Asia and Africa. They are said to be moderate in eating, lovers of rest, and charitable.” Other illustrations reveal still evolving knowledge about remote parts of the globe, for example the letter O is represented by “an Oran-Outang.” The anonymous author explains, “An Oran-Outang is a wild man of the woods, in the East Indies. He sleeps under trees, and

builds himself a hut; he cannot speak, but when the natives make a fire in the woods, he will come to warm himself.” It is unclear if the author actually believed orangutans were a race of humans or merely a little known exotic primate that would no doubt fascinate children. Authors of nineteenth century children’s books were by no means universally well educated or well informed, but the period’s obsession with taxonomy is clear – the orangutan is something human-like, therefore he must not be omitted.

For the most part, the observations in manners and customs books are friendly, though occasionally they can be critical. For example, *Inhabitants of the World* published by Samuel Wood & Sons in 1818, describes the Spaniard (representing the letter S) as “superstitious and proud,” while also noting that Spain produces a number of agricultural products. Opposite this page, Turks (representing the letter T) are described as “mostly Mahometans” who “smoke and chew opium till they are intoxicated.” Nothing about any useful contributions Turks may make is included, and the illustration of the seated Turk smoking a long pipe, possibly containing opium, is a stark contrast to the standing Spaniard holding a walking stick, perhaps out to check on his citrus grove. It also should be noted that Wood’s image of the Turk is quite similar to the image of the Mahometan in Johnson’s earlier book.

The images used in manners and customs books were frequently recycled, copied, or redrawn with slight alterations over the years. While none of the illustrations seem threatening, they are not innocent. Even with little to no text, these books communicated ideas about racial hierarchies. This is especially seen in the illustrations which subscribed to a kind of racial code, including: the degree of nakedness of a subject; the positioning

of a subject as either standing, sitting, or crouching; and the presence of accessories such as weapons, natural objects, or even shoes.

American printers did not invent the manners and customs genre or the imagery or racial codes associated with it. Nineteenth century German toy globe makers also printed accompanying foldout booklets with people of different nations that were produced for export to Britain and America. The German illustrations were quite similar to those found in American manners and customs books; though, as these globes were very expensive, the quality was generally superior and the illustrations were often hand-colored. The German toy globes also demonstrate that early children's ethnic imagery in the United States had origins in European ideas about race.²⁷

European ethnic imagery would continue to influence American ethnic imagery for some time, as we will see later in the chapter, but the tone of the manners and customs books published in the United States reveals a blending of European ideas and the ideas of their American publishers. Samuel Wood, publisher of *Inhabitants of the World* and numerous other toy books, was a Quaker and a former schoolmaster based in New York City. His background is reflected in his books, which are remembered for being "soberly instructive" and "distinctly moral in tone."²⁸ Wood, along with Mahlon Day and Solomon King, all of New York, dominated American children's toy book production and selling in the early nineteenth century.²⁹ While Wood and Day printed more serious educational books for children, Solomon King's books often emphasized amusement.³⁰

Between 1829 and 1831, Solomon King published *A Peep at the Various Nations of the World*, an amusing manners and customs book that added a bit of whimsy to the manners and customs genre. Like Wood, King was not above critiquing the subjects of

his book, but whereas Wood provided only one sentence about each of his subjects, King created fanciful accounts of his subjects ranging from one to four paragraphs in length. Though the first seven subjects of *Peep* are presented alphabetically (Arabian, Bohemian, Chinese, Dane, English, Frenchman, Greenlander), he does not present his subjects with an alphabet and limits his coverage to just eighteen national profiles. The small, twenty-three page book has metal engravings approximately 1.75" wide by 2" tall. They are similar in appearance to earlier manners and customs illustrations, but appear to have been redrawn with a few notable added details.

Peep begins with an Arabian. Like his predecessor in *People of All Nations*, he is wearing a turban with a long feather and carries a walking stick, but now he faces forward and clearly has a small dagger tucked into his belt, a dangerous accessory that undoubtedly would have been exciting to children. The accompanying account offers a vivid description of a far away land: "Arabia is a dreary country; more than half of it is a trackless level of sand, without shade or shelter, and scorched by the direct and intense rays of the burning sun; the higher lands, however, are more pleasantly situated, abounding in every thing that can add to the comfort or even luxury of the human race." Surely this land of barren desert and opulence would have been a thrilling image to children.

Like other manners and customs books of the period, King was sympathetic to Africans (Wood called them "much oppressed") and used an engraving based on Josiah Wedgwood's anti-slavery medallion to represent the "Negro." King explained, "The western parts of Africa, are inhabited by a poor, unhappy race of men, called Negroes, who, to the eternal disgrace of Europeans, are bought and sold, like cattle. The other

parts, however, are more civilized, and comprise several powerful nations. Egypt and Morocco are both in Africa.” Here King, a native New Yorker, links Americans to Europeans in an interesting way. Slavery is still legal in the United States, a fact he clearly condemns, but he avoids directly criticizing America. Rather, he uses “Europeans” to refer to an umbrella of morally conscious whiteness which white Americans can choose to be a part of or not. Taken a step further, by choosing to side with King’s point of view the reader could stake a claim to the highest echelon of whiteness, Europeanness.

The popular nineteenth century children’s book author Samuel Goodrich (1793-1860) wrote a number of books that presented “facts,” some more truthful than others, to children about history, the natural world, mythology, and geography. Among these were at least four manners and customs themed books: *Tales of Peter Parley About Europe* (1828), *Peter Parley’s Method of Telling About Geography* (1830), *Tales of Peter Parley About Africa* (1830), and *Peter Parley’s Tales About Asia* (1830). Describing his work, Gillian Avery writes, “his information was always attractively presented, often compelling, though usually misleading and quite often wrong.”³¹ Avery goes on to explain that though Goodrich’s books were much loved by children, they contributed to lifelong misconceptions about their subjects, “The trouble was that his brief generalizations, right or wrong, were so memorable; the stereotypes they presented must have remained engraved on readers’ minds for a lifetime.”³² The same could easily be said about most of the manners and customs genre.

Manners and customs imagery was not confined to books. A. Phelps of Greenfield, Massachusetts produced a card game, “New Alphabet of Nations,” based on

popular manners and customs images around 1833. Using images nearly identical to those in *Inhabitants of the World*, the cards could be used to learn the alphabet or to practice reading; the text beneath the illustrations was reduced to just two to four words. The reduced text was simple for a young child, but is also indicative of the way that “facts” about a group of people can be collapsed into the most concentrated and baffling information. For example, the Persian, who had previously been described as “An industrious people, curious in weaving, &c. but fond of the sports of the field,” has been reduced to simply “Long pipe,” a reference to the long pipe shown in the Persian’s hand. Another card game, “The Young Traveller or Geographical Cards,” published by Josiah Adams of New York in 1846, did not contain illustrations, but provided various facts about different countries and categorized their inhabitants as enlightened, civilized, half-civilized, or barbarous, indicating that this was the only important information to know about the people themselves. As games for play, these again demonstrate how the manners and customs genre allowed children to not only see, but also participate in the process of ordering and systematizing the bodies of racial and ethnic others.

Alphabetical Costumes, published by Fall-River Lithographic Co. in 1864, was a late entrant to the world of manners and customs books. Beautifully lithographed in full color, it followed the alphabet book format, with each letter representing a nation, and illustrated with one man in traditional dress. Besides the illustration, the book offers no descriptive text. However, the United States, representing the letter U, is represented by *two* men. A white man, wearing a dark suit with a red vest, white shirt, black bow tie, black shoes and a hat stands in the foreground. He carries an American flag in his right hand, and with his left hand raises an olive wreath above his head. A giant letter U stands

to his right, upon which is perched a bald eagle. Behind the man, to his left is a Native American completely naked except for a short leather skirt and a small bunch of yellow feathers on his head. He is shown kneeling on one knee, a bow and arrow in his hands as he prepares to shoot something unseen. The two men are on a cliff overlooking a harbor, and behind the Native American is a large ship. While a single man represents the other nations, here, the United States must be represented by these two very different men shown together. The contrast between the two is striking and challenges the idea of a racially homogeneous nation-state as well as an easy understanding of American national identity. The Native American's kneeling position locates him as the lower of the two men in a power hierarchy, and the ship in the background represents the might of the Yankee's culture, but the Native American is a necessary presence for the Yankee's *American* identity.

There were dozens of these manners and customs books in circulation in the nineteenth century. They shared in common a relationship to America's fascination with geography and taxonomy, a desire to educate wealthy white children about their place in the world, and a role in introducing children to the visual tropes of race that would stay with them well beyond their childhoods. They also brought imagery to the child's world that would persist well past the popularity of the genre. However, these books had a limited market outside the wealthier families of the East Coast. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, growth of the children's book industry was limited by "underdeveloped transportation, inadequate supplies, and uncertain financial networks."³³ But by 1870, the transcontinental railroad was complete, major improvements in printing and reproduction technologies had been achieved, and the United States boasted a larger

literate public, all of which contributed to improved distribution networks, lower production costs, and a larger market for children's books.³⁴ Thus children's book publishing was primed for an expansion.

Chromolithography and the Golden Age of American Children's Books

Chromolithography was particularly important in the transformation of children's books and the birth of affordable American toys. This printing method differed from the relief woodcuts and copper engravings used by Samuel Wood and Solomon King, in that the images were no longer "stamped" onto the page and blocks no longer had to be painstakingly carved. Wood and copper block printing was relatively slow and limited to a single ink color. This meant that illustrations found in less expensive children's books tended to be rather simple with a minimum level of detail. Chromolithography, on the other hand, offered the potential to print affordable highly detailed, fully colored illustrations where differentiations between people's skin color and facial features would be visible.

Aloys Senefelder invented chromolithography in Bavaria in 1796. His printing process used a flat limestone plate onto which an image was chemically etched. This created a long-lasting plate from which richly colored oil-based inks could be applied and layered to create full color images.³⁵ Chromolithography arrived in America in the 1840s and slowly spread, largely thanks to the immigration of highly skilled German craftsmen throughout the mid-nineteenth century.³⁶ As a result of these technological advances, along with a loosening of social restrictions on children's fiction in the 1820s, children's books became more common, more colorful, and less expensive, all of which greatly expanding the possibilities for ethnic imagery. These changes also ushered in what is

considered the golden age of children's books in America, from 1870 to 1914.³⁷ Books from this era are recognizable for their brightly colored illustrations and whimsical storylines.

A great number of children's books and printed toys in the second half of the nineteenth century featured ethnic imagery. Stories like *Aladdin*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Pocahontas* were particularly popular with children's publishers. In 1863, the year of the Emancipation Proclamation, McLoughlin Brothers published the nation's first black paper doll, "Topsey," based on the character from the hugely popular novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.³⁸ Topsey was the first of many ethnic toys made by McLoughlin Brothers, the leading US publisher of paper-based playthings throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. John McLoughlin, Jr. invested heavily in experimenting with the new printing technologies and perfected a method of chromolithography with etched zinc plates before his competitors made the switch from hand colored illustrations; by 1870 McLoughlin Brothers operated "the largest color printing factory in the United States."³⁹ When the company was founded in 1828, their business was limited to printing books, but like other printers who got their start in books, they expanded to other printed items. McLoughlin Brothers was well known for their colorful and affordable children's picture books, board games, puzzles, paper dolls, and numerous other paper toys. As one historian of the firm put it, "No other American publisher of the day could boast the same productivity and exceptional quality of printing as could McLoughlin Brothers."⁴⁰ Indeed, their quality printing, vibrant illustrations, large product line, and competitive prices dominated the children's print based toy market.⁴¹ Two books introduced by McLoughlin Brothers in the early 1870s demonstrate the complicated nature of race relations in the

late nineteenth century, as well as a continuing ambivalence towards people of color that presented conflicting ideas about race to children through their playthings.

Meet Yankee Doodle, An American

McLoughlin Brothers' toy book *Yankee Doodle* was first published about 1871, and company order lists include the title until 1917.⁴² Thomas Nast, the political cartoonist, illustrated the book, but no author is given for the story, an inventive take on the famous song.⁴³ The story, accompanied by six full-page, color illustrations, gives a brief history of America from encountering Native Americans to the American Revolution and independence. As a story about American history, it is especially telling of ideas about who lives in and who belongs in America. The story begins with Yankee Doodle riding into a Native American village:

Yankee Doodle came to town,
 Upon a pretty pony,
 His coat-tails stuck straight out behind,
 His legs were long and bony.
 Yankee Doodle – Ha, Ha, Ha.
 Cakes and sugar candy,
 Come, listen to the story, now,
 Of Yankee Doodle Dandy.
 He wore a pair of striped pants,
 A feather in his hat, sir;
 His mouth was large, his nose stuck out,
 His feet were long and flat, sir.
 Yankee Doodle.
 The red men, when they saw him come,
 Cried, "What a funny fellow;"
 Some ran away, and some fell down,
 And loudly did they bellow.
 Yankee Doodle.
 And then the squaws came running out,
 To see what was the matter,
 For Yankee Doodle rode so fast,
 He made a dreadful clatter.
 Yankee Doodle.⁴⁴

The text implies that Native Americans went away with little trouble - they just “ran away” or “fell down,” and they “bellowed” quite like children - in fact, they look an awful lot like chubby little kids. Their child-like depiction not only marks the Native Americans as inferior to Yankee Doodle, but also racializes their bodies. Their short, plump bodies compared to the lanky Yankee Doodle, whose height is emphasized by his long legs clad in vertical-striped pants and the fact that he is riding a horse far above their small bodies, makes them seem animal-like. Their dark skin more closely resembles the color of Yankee Doodle’s horse than his own pale skin. Their hair, flying back as they run, appears stiff, like that of the horse’s mane and tail, again giving them the appearance of small frightened animals, as well as alluding to non-white African American hair⁴⁵. And finally, their clothing, which reveals far more skin than is seen on Yankee Doodle, makes visual their “primitive” status.

The action of the scene further predicts the future of Native Americans in this story. Three of the four men in the foreground are shown fleeing the scene, one with his hands in the air in a kind of panic stricken pose, the weapon in his right hand useless. The fourth man has stumbled to the ground, his “peace pipe” and tomahawk lay on the ground in front of him. In this illustration, both peace negotiations and fighting back are untenable. In the background, three women stand in front of the village teepees looking forlorn, and in the upper right, on a cliff above the village, two more villagers observe the attack. The man on the left stands with his arms stretched out over his head in protest; the man on the right sits on the ground, his mouth wide open. Both appear to be in a state of shock. Off in the distance on the left, a large ship can be seen entering the harbor, and figures, who are much taller and differently dressed than the villagers, are gathering on

the beach. The image does not offer the Native Americans any second chance. Their time is past, and this is the last mention of Native Americans in the story.

A nuanced explanation of the displacement of and violence against Native Americans would have been unexpected in a postbellum children's toy book (this was a period marked by Indian Wars, including the Comanche Campaign of 1867-1875), but Nast was generally friendly towards Native Americans in his political cartoons, and American children were already aware of the possibility of friendship between Native Americans and whites, especially as circulated through Pocahontas children's books.⁴⁶ So it is somewhat surprising that no reconciliation appears in the story and instead Native Americans are rejected from the image of America that unfolds in the book. On the very first page of the story, the beginning of America, barriers to inclusion are erected.

The four illustrations that follow take the reader through the American Revolution and expulsion of the British, and the final illustration depicts the post-Revolutionary United States of America. This last scene of the story presents Yankee Doodle, now known as Uncle Sam, lounging on the front porch of the White House, newspapers (actually a mix of newspapers, illustrated papers, magazines, and toy books) scattered around him as he looks out across the White House lawn and sees children playing together.⁴⁷ The group of children playing closest to the porch steps are holding hands in a large ring and appear to be dancing. In the background is a large red brick "Public School." Presumably all these children attend that school, but if you look closely at the ring of hand-holding children, you can see that one of them is Chinese! The final section of the story reads:

Now Yankee Doodle lives at ease-
The White House is his home, sir.

He would not swap with any king,
Nor with the Pope of Rome, sir.

Yankee Doodle.

All nations gather on his lawn,
And laugh, and sing, and dance, sir.
And Irish, Dutch, or Chinaman,-
He gives them all a chance, sir.

Yankee Doodle.

To send the children to his schools,
To learn to read and write, sir;
And when they all stand up to spell,
It is a pleasant sight, sir.

Yankee Doodle.

[... ..]

Now boys and girls, all gather 'round-
Come on, the whole "caboodle,"
And give three cheers for Uncle Sam,
For he is Yankee Doodle.

Yankee Doodle.

This is a scene of a victory celebration. Uncle Sam contentedly smokes a cigar, presumably after having finished reading all his papers, creating a great amount of smoke that has an almost magical quality to it. The smoke may just be exaggerated for comic effect, but it also transforms Uncle Sam into a magical figure, a figure able to bring together all nations on his lawn. Through his illustrations of Uncle Sam, Nast has been credited with contributing to the development of "a personality who could be capable of a fatherly kindness to the oppressed."⁴⁸ That personality seems present here. Indeed, the text celebrates America for giving *all* people a chance, and along with the illustration it also celebrates public education, the free press, and reading for both knowledge and entertainment as signifiers of Americanness. However, it must be pointed out that in the illustration, despite the handholding the Chinese child is visually separated from most of the circle of children by the placement of the large column on which Uncle Sam rests his

feet. The column, porch floor, and Uncle Sam's legs form a triangle around the child, simultaneously boxing him in, as if to exclude him, and framing him, as if to celebrate and draw attention to him. The column creates a tension in this circle of friends, ultimately limiting the Chinese child's complete inclusion in American society.

At least part of the more positive aspects of this message likely derives from Thomas Nast's own political leanings. Nast was "a strong Union patriot" who sought to appeal "to the public's pride and patriotism" through his illustrations.⁴⁹ The patriotism Nast subscribed to was not that of a stringent nativist; rather he "built his career on sympathetic renderings of African Americans."⁵⁰ As art historian Patricia Hills has demonstrated, for most of his career Nast "resisted the overt racism of his contemporaries and patrons." However, he did not treat all minority groups so fairly, and he has been accused of giving in "to views tinged with racism" later in his career.⁵¹

In 1870, a debate over common schools raged, and immigrant-heavy New York, Nast's home, was the epicenter of the debate.⁵² That year, in a cartoon that appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, Nast took the side of Republicans whose educational ideal was a "religiously neutral, ethnically and racially inclusive common school."⁵³ In the top panel of the cartoon, "Our Common Schools as They Are and as They Could Be," he depicts that educational ideal with a multicultural ring of children holding hands and dancing in front of a common school.⁵⁴ As historian Benjamin Justice has explained, "In Nast's view, bringing all children together into the public sphere, under democratic control, muted their religious and racial differences and molded a unified, multiethnic American society."⁵⁵ To be sure, this is *not* what public schools actually looked like in 1870. African Americans and Native Americans attended separate schools, most schools were

also ethnically segregated by neighborhood, and in California there were no public schools for Chinese children.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the circle of handholding international children carries a strong “symbolic function.”⁵⁷

“Our Common Schools” was not the first time Nast used the trope of a multicultural ring of people. One year earlier, in a cartoon celebrating the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, an event that challenged notions of American citizenship, Nast depicted adult couples of different cultures, most with a child seated between them, seated around the Thanksgiving dinner table with Uncle Sam and Columbia. Included are African Americans, Irish, Chinese, and a Native American (if his spouse is present she is obscured by the large table centerpiece proclaiming “Universal Suffrage”). Like the rings of children playing on the White House lawn in *Yankee Doodle* and in front of a school in “Our Common Schools,” “Uncle Sam’s Thanksgiving Dinner” is “a metaphor for the cultural diversity of the United States,” it is an idealized image of a “multiethnic community of citizens,” forming a circle of unity.⁵⁸

But is the final message of *Yankee Doodle* representative of just Nast’s politics, or does it also reflect McLoughlin Brothers’ beliefs? Again, there is no record of the author of the story, but ultimately, McLoughlin Brothers would have approved any of their products and the brothers may have been involved in the development of the story from the beginning, though it is difficult, if not impossible, to know. Very little is known about the personal beliefs of John McLoughlin, Jr. or his brother Edmund, only that like Nast, “John was an active member of the Episcopal Church.”⁵⁹ Without knowing about the personal politics of the McLoughlins, perhaps some clues can be gathered from their products. An anonymously illustrated image of children of different nations running with

large letters, which appeared in the center spread of many of McLoughlin's paper picture books between approximately 1885 and 1910, might be such a clue. This image of "international friends" seems to have two things in common with the final scene of *Yankee Doodle*: children of diverse backgrounds playing together, and a celebration of literacy. Certainly it was in McLoughlin Brothers' interest for children to read, so promoting literacy does not seem that political for them, but their choice of characters is interesting and may reflect Republican ideology similar to Nast's.

The strange thing about *Yankee Doodle* is the complete lack of African Americans, especially given that African Americans were a frequent subject of Nast's work. However, *Yankee Doodle* was often packaged with another Nast illustrated story, *Rip Van Winkle* in which he does introduce an African American. Written by Washington Irving in 1819, *Rip Van Winkle* is set in New York's Catskill Mountains and tells the story of a Dutch American who preferred drinking to working, and one day while hunting in the woods drank magical ale and fell asleep for twenty years. This is not a story most remember for its inclusion of African Americans, however, Nast's illustrations add a new dimension to the well-known tale. In this version, also released in 1871, Nast concludes the story in the town square where Rip reunites with his daughter. The townspeople have all gathered around to see their long lost neighbor, some appear shocked, others angry or bemused, but in a strange twist, among the crowd is an African American "Mammy." Mammies are generally associated with the American South, so she seems a bit out of place in the Catskills. But, as an icon in American culture, one that would be greatly commercialized in the following decade, this Mammy seems to operate as a visual marker of authenticity – this is an American story, set in America. She radiates a purely

American identity over a story which might otherwise be confused with an Old World folk tale. The waving American flag in the background further reinforces this claim to American-ness.⁶⁰ The Mammy's central position in the illustration and close proximity to the other townspeople further shows her as an integral part of the community, in fact, she is standing next to a man who resembles George Washington. In the final scene of this story, the African American Mammy is given a location of belonging and shown as undeniably American, though this works only within the confines of the "Mammy" stereotype. Like in *Yankee Doodle*, the reader is presented with limits to interracial inclusion in America.

Ten Little Niggers

African Americans make another, though less fortunate, appearance in McLoughlin Brothers books from this period. McLoughlin Brothers first released the toy book *Ten Little Niggers* about 1871, and continued to list the title in their catalogs until 1911, so it was in circulation at the same time as *Yankee Doodle* and *Rip Van Winkle*.⁶¹ The simultaneous expression of positive and negative feelings towards blacks is particularly acute in this toy book, which appeared over the years with a variety of different illustrations, two versions of the text, and one sequel. Unfortunately, as was common practice, McLoughlin Brothers did not identify the illustrators.

The book's story originates from a comic minstrel song titled "Ten Little Injuns," written by Septimus Winner, a prolific Philadelphia-based songwriter, in 1864. Winner was initially hesitant to publish the song as he considered it "childish."⁶² However, by early 1868 he had not only published the song, but also added an encore verse giving the last of the title characters a happy marriage and children. Perhaps this additional verse

was his attempt to remove some of the prejudice from the song. The song proved to be quite popular and inspired “at least two derivatives that both credited Winner with the music but not the lyrics.”⁶³ One of these was British songwriter Frank Green’s “Ten Little Niggers,” written for G. W. “Pony” Moore of the Moore & Crocker Christy Minstrels (later the Moore and Burgess Minstrels) also in 1868. It was this British version of the song that McLoughlin Brothers used as the text of their picture books.

The movement of the song across the Atlantic and back again is emblematic of the popularity of minstrelsy in the late nineteenth century, as well as the speed in which the publishing industry could respond to trends in popular culture. Winner’s “Ten Little Injuns” was likely first performed in public by E. F. Dixey of the Carncross and Dixey’s Minstrels in Philadelphia. Winner frequently wrote songs for Dixey, and even named his son Edward after him.⁶⁴ As early as March 1, 1868 the British newspaper *The Era* described the performance of the song as part of a show at Philadelphia’s Arch-Street Theater titled *Under the Gaslight*, where the song was “enthusiastically encored.”⁶⁵ According to one source, the sheet music to “Ten Little Injuns” was published in London as early as July 1868, but what is certain is that on September 6, 1868, G. W. Moore debuted the song “Ten Little Niggers” at the Standard Theater in London and *The Era* described it as “very amusing.”⁶⁶ Within a week, competing advertisements in *The Era* listed sheet music for both “Ten Little Niggers” and “Ten Little Injuns,” and by 1869 the publishing firm Lee & Walker of Philadelphia published the “Ten Little Niggers” sheet music in the United States, completing the trans-Atlantic circulation of the popular song.⁶⁷

McLoughlin's book is in fact a pirated version of a British toy book by Frederick Warne and Company. Read Brooks & Co., Dean and Son, and Frederick Warne & Co., all in London, began printing earlier examples of this title soon after Moore's version of the popular minstrel song appeared. This was not the first time that McLoughlin Brothers reprinted a British book under their own name. International copyright laws had yet to be established and even American copyright laws were regularly ignored. Indeed, as others have observed "printing houses blatantly pirated ideas from their competitors" and "transatlantic plagiarism was the norm throughout much of the 19th century."⁶⁸

The lyrics of *Ten Little Niggers* describe how one by one a member of a group of ten friends dies or is separated from the rest of the group. The lyrics are not kind, treating their characters as fairly disposable. However, over the forty years McLoughlin printed this title the illustrations treat the characters with varying degrees of kindness. The earliest version of the McLoughlin book, dating from 1871-1874, ends with a variation of the encore verse of "Ten Little Injuns" in which husband and wife live happily ever after and welcome nine children into their home.

At the time this British interpretation of African Americans derived from the American black face minstrelsy that became a sensation in Europe was printed for an American audience, the Civil War had been only ended six years earlier and Reconstruction was ongoing, and thus the emotions stirred by the outcome of the war had not yet been entirely sorted out. For the toy book's British audience the dark-skinned characters would have existed as just that - characters in a children's story and somewhat foreign ones at that - and not as contested citizens. Thus, the original British audience had little to fear from the story's characters and the illustrations reflect that difference.

Throughout the book the illustrations are highly detailed and though cartoonish, they are not grotesque. The characters bear many markers of the middle class in their dress and surroundings, the final scenes of the husband and wife relaxing in front of the hearth and a family beach outing especially so.⁶⁹ Indeed, a day at the beach was a popular activity for nineteenth century middle class families. But for McLoughlin Brothers' American audience the characters would have been quite different from most depictions of African Americans in popular culture. The relative affluence of this family, as well as the happy ending, may have worked with the idea that middle class blacks did not need to be feared, and since this family has a particularly British, i.e. foreign, look to them, they are no threat to white Americans. Interestingly, the final line alludes to a sequel, and seems to be an example of proto-direct marketing to children.

McLoughlin Brothers first published the sequel, *Nine Niggers More*, again pirated from Warne, in 1874 and listed it in their catalogs until 1886.⁷⁰ Similarities in the illustration style and design suggest that the artist is the same as that of the 1871 version of *Ten Little Niggers*; however, in the sequel, the family appears even wealthier than in the original book. The book tells the story of the family's nine children who enjoy an active social life, take "country rides and walks," attend boarding school, travel home for the holidays by train, attend an integrated dance, have a "faithful" white butler, enjoy a trip to the theater for a Fairy Pantomime, and receive numerous Valentines.

Again the characters, their fancy clothing, and even their activities appear more British (and old-fashioned) than American.⁷¹ Most noteworthy is that the word "nigger" only appears in the title and once at the beginning of the text - next to the word "friends" - as if the story wants to distance itself from such an offensive word and focus on the fun

lives of the characters.⁷² One scholar has argued that these images *might* seem preferable to the earlier book because the children do not die, but that it actually “makes a mockery of educating black children.” She contends the book draws from minstrel traditions in the “ridiculously overdressed” children and she finds the integration “so far-fetched for segregated 1870s America that these scenarios could only have evoked laughter in its audience.”⁷³ It may not be possible to know what the response to this book actually was, but comparing it to competitor Milton Bradley’s paper toy “The Contraband Gymnast” may present the possibility of a friendly reading of the book.⁷⁴

In 1872, two years prior to the release of *Nine Niggers More*, Milton Bradley introduced a moveable paper toy of an African American gymnast called “The Contraband Gymnast,” contraband being a nineteenth century term used for a runaway or fugitive slave. The toy gymnast, dressed like an American flag in red and white striped pants (quite similar to those worn by Nast’s Yankee Doodle) and a blue shirt with white stars, came in a decorative envelope illustrating the gymnast’s many stunts. To operate the toy a horizontal bar is inserted into the toy’s hands, and strings that connected his body parts at the shoulders, hips, and knees allowed him to flip around easily. The gymnast is an attractive looking young man or teenager; his face is nicely drawn with an air of calm concentration. All of the illustrative poses on the envelope show the gymnast dressed in his patriotic outfit, except for the pose just in front of the ticket office. Here he is instead dressed in a suit of all stripes, reminiscent of a nineteenth century prisoner’s uniform, while in a crouched pose. This was quite possibly a mistake, but it certainly makes him appear as a prisoner pleading before some unseen official behind the counter.

That person behind the counter may in fact be the recipient of the toy, with the gymnast pleading for a sympathetic audience.

Milton Bradley grew up in New England, the descendant of Puritans who arrived in Salem, Massachusetts in 1635.⁷⁵ His family struggled financially, and when he was eleven, his family moved from Maine to Lowell, Massachusetts where his father worked at a textile mill.⁷⁶ Despite hardships, Bradley's parents doted on their only child and encouraged him to pursue an education.⁷⁷ Bradley managed to graduate from high school and worked his way through one and a half years of drafting school.⁷⁸ Though he did not graduate, he was able to get a job as a draftsman in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1856, and later taught himself lithography.⁷⁹ In 1860, persuaded by the editor of the *Springfield Republican*, Bradley made and sold prints of a then beardless Abraham Lincoln. The prints were a short lived hit, with sales suffering after Lincoln grew his famous beard.⁸⁰ Bradley not only supported Lincoln's presidential candidacy, he opposed slavery as well.⁸¹ As one biographer has put it, "he had a strong sense of idealism as obvious to everyone as a Puritan's hat."⁸²

Another of Bradley's toys, "The Myriopticon: A Historical Panorama of the Rebellion" first produced in 1866, was a paper panorama of twenty-two scenes from the Civil War, one of which showed the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment. Bradley both drew the illustrations and wrote the seven-page lecture that accompanied the panorama and provided a script for the action.⁸³ The lecture described the regiment as "Among the first that rallied to the defense of their country," and the accompanying image shows the soldiers parading down a street in Baltimore on their way to Washington. Another scene depicts "contrabands coming into camp, and having just arrived are now supposed to be

sitting for their pictures.” This toy presented a strongly pro-Union view of the Civil War and showed African Americans caught in the Civil War as patriotic and proud.

In addition to the Bradley’s anti-slavery position, it is also worth noting that Bradley became an ardent proponent of the kindergarten movement in 1869, after attending a lecture by Elizabeth Peabody, the founder of the first kindergarten in Boston.⁸⁴ The same year that Bradley produced “The Contraband Gymnast,” he created a series of “Kinder-Garten Alphabet and Building Blocks.”⁸⁵ Many more educational toys, as well as guides and even a magazine for kindergarten teachers followed.⁸⁶ Much of his interest in kindergarten stemmed from a desire for poor or disadvantaged children (not unlike himself as a child) to have a strong start that would prepare them for a successful future.⁸⁷ Bradley is known to have supported kindergarten for white *and* black children. The Milton Bradley Company provided free kindergarten materials for the first black kindergarten established in Springfield in 1882. The patriotic and dignified appearance of “The Contraband Gymnast” suggests that this young man deserves a respectful audience, a chance to demonstrate what he is capable of, and ultimately an opportunity for a successful future. If toys of this nature could convince white children of the worthiness of a black playmate in 1872, and I do believe that most children who received manufactured toys in this period were white, then perhaps they would have been equally open to a positive reception of the characters in *Nine Niggers More*.

McLoughlin Brothers released another pirated version of *Ten Little Niggers* between 1880 and 1882. This post-Reconstruction edition of the book dropped the encore verse of the song and ended with the wedding of the last remaining title character, thus eliminating the happily ever after, married-with-children life presented in the previous

book. The new illustrations have a more cartoonish look than the original, the characters have rounder faces and bellies, but again they are not grotesque and overall the characters retain their middle class, British affectations most notable in their bowler hats and the wig worn by the judge.⁸⁸

However, with the introduction of an 1894 edition of *Ten Little Niggers*, some changes began to appear. This time McLoughlin appears to have commissioned original, non-pirated illustrations, and they also Americanized the story, for example replacing the word “chancery” with “prison,” and sending the characters to Devon on a cart pulled by a mule rather than on a train, seemingly relocating them from an urban to rural environment.⁸⁹ This African American driven mule cart would have been widely recognizable to American children; it was a frequent subject of cast iron toys in the same period. The characters’ clothing also underwent a transformation to become more typical of late nineteenth century American fashion. This process of updating the illustrations marks a re-racialization of the story’s characters. They were British interpretations of blackness as understood through American blackface minstrelsy; with the new illustrations they became American interpretations of blackness applied over a British story about blacks. The new illustrations not only look American, they also express American attitudes. Yet the anonymous artist struggles to maintain a consistent interpretation of the characters, perhaps reflecting a societal struggle to locate African Americans in those years between the failure of Reconstruction and the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. No universal brotherhood had been achieved and imagining social equality may have become increasingly difficult. Though the characters retain markers of the middle class, some of the images just border on grotesque and are even a bit mocking,

the first two scenes of a choking and drunken boy in particular succumb to exaggerated features and show little sympathy. But other illustrations are sympathetic and even sensitive in their portrayal of the boys. For example, the jail scene shows the boys appearing before a (wigless) judge in nice suits with hats respectfully removed, and at the lower left, the sorrowful victim dressed in prisoner's uniform, bows his head as he solemnly sits on a prison cot. The image recalls abolitionist imagery of slaves with echoes of the Wedgewood medallion, and evokes compassion for the young man. In the final image, the married couple sits on the porch of their home, the husband reading the paper, the wife sewing, looking every bit the happy middle class couple making them very relatable to a middle class audience. The contradictions in the sometimes cruel, sometimes sympathetic representations are unexplained, but they reflect increasing uncertainty about the place of African Americans in American society.

Three years later, a major shift takes place in the illustrations accompanying the 1897 version of the book, which McLoughlin catalogs listed until 1911.⁹⁰ Released a year after the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that legitimized segregation, the new illustrations are what can only be called extreme stereotypes. Any Reconstruction-era idealism is lost. The cover of the book features a man in brightly colored clothes, including a long red top coat, a checkered vest with a large, sparkling diamond lapel pin, a top hat, a cigar in his mouth, and a green umbrella in his gloved hand.⁹¹ He is a "dandy." The image was also used in McLoughlin Brothers' *Gem ABC and Picture Book* (1898) where it represented the letter "D" – "D is for Darkey, in gay garments dressed; And D is for Diamond, that shines on his breast."⁹² The interior images appear to have been drawn by a different illustrator; however, they are no kinder in their representation of the book's characters.

Truly garish in their exaggerated lips and expressions, as well as in the pleasure that the artist seems to take in illustrating the demise of the boys, these images lack humanity. The illustrations are gleefully mean. No longer having any traces of their British heritage, these boys are presented with disdainful mockery. No sympathy has survived.

The illustrations in McLoughlin Brothers' 1897 version of *Ten Little Niggers* are similar in tone and style to the Currier & Ives's "Darktown" series of lithographic prints. Currier & Ives, a New York based printing firm, created thousands of inexpensive colored lithographs from 1835 through the turn of the century. Their illustrations sought to represent American life for a popular audience. A Currier & Ives print might depict a Civil War battle, a winter sleigh ride, a cityscape, a pastoral scene, a natural disaster, or a child at prayer. The prints were hugely popular and sold well into the millions. Over the years the company produced numerous prints with African American subjects. These generally followed the popular feeling of the moment. Thus, they produced everything from scenes of happy plantation slaves to a scene from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁹³ The Darktown series was produced from the mid-1870s until the 1890s. The series depicted African Americans in the coon stereotype – inept imitators of white culture. Currier & Ives produced over one hundred of these "comical" prints whose message was that blacks could never be whites' equals. Frequent themes of the Darktown series included horse racing, "fancy" parties, and fire fighting. No matter the activity, the outcome was always the same – chaos.⁹⁴

Parker Brothers, a Salem, Massachusetts based company specializing in paper games, was just over ten years old when they introduced a Darktown puzzle series in 1894. The artwork for the puzzles does not appear to have been made by Currier & Ives,

but it is identical in theme. “The Darktown Fancy Ball” puzzle shows a costume ball in a shabby setting, plaster is missing from the ceiling and rafters are exposed. One couple dances wildly in the center of the room, while a clearly disappointed man wearing a Napoleon costume watches a squire flirt with a colonial lady. All of the partygoers have exaggerated features and a cartoonish appearance, similar to that of the characters in the 1897 *Ten Little Niggers*. It is quite possible that McLoughlin Brothers purposely adopted the Darktown look. George S. Parker, the founder of the company, was eager to take over McLoughlin Brothers’ position as the leading paper toy and game maker in the country, and he strived to keep his product line topical.⁹⁵ The popularity of the Darktown prints and Parker Brothers’ embrace of the genre would not have gone unnoticed by McLoughlin Brothers.

Tracing the evolution of McLoughlin Brothers illustrations for *Ten Little Niggers*, one finds that in the earlier versions of the story, there was some possibility for respect and maybe even equality, but this gradually faded away and was over taken by prejudicial stereotypes. That transformation seems to have been precipitated by the Americanization of the story’s characters. Like the Mammy in *Rip Van Winkle*, the boys’ inclusion in American life comes at the price of an existence limited by the confines of stereotype. As Gail Schmunuk Murray has described, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century “white southern attitudes [towards blacks] became nationalized views” and this spread into children’s literature.⁹⁶

In order to understand the trajectory that McLoughlin Brothers’ representations of multicultural alliances and African Americans took towards the end of the century, again it is helpful to compare the illustrations to those found in a competitor’s product. The

1881 version of “Sliced Nations,” a fifty-cent puzzle game produced by Selchow & Righter just a few years before the Americanization process began in McLoughlin Brother’s *Ten Little Nigger* books, presents people of different nations in their national costume and located in their native country.⁹⁷ The puzzle illustrations are reminiscent of the manners and customs genre. The subjects are shown as industrious, family oriented, and even well dressed. Meanwhile, the illustration on the cover of the puzzle box shows two children, presumably American, playing with the puzzle in a lovely park setting. The children sit with a board across their laps where they are piecing together a puzzle. The girl on the left holds a puzzle piece with the letter “C” and a squiggly line. The puzzle pieces the children have already put together on the board read H, I, N, E and the figure on the puzzle pieces has very slanted eyes, a bald head, and a colorful outfit. The squiggle on the girl’s puzzle piece apparently represents a queue and the puzzle is of a Chinese man. The image is not as offensive as it could be. No rodent appears in the picture.⁹⁸ However, it is a dreary stereotype compared to the actual “Chinese” puzzle found in the box – an image of a man operating a puppet show for a small child (with a queue) holding a doll. The man in the puzzle is shown working, while the man on the box cover has no context, no storyline, and no occupation.

Another puzzle piece shown on the box cover, just below the boy on the right, features the letter “N” and a crudely drawn face with bright red lips. It would have been no more difficult to imagine what puzzle this piece was for in 1881 than it is now. However the actual puzzle of a black man found in the set does not include this puzzle piece. Instead there is a “Zulu” puzzle featuring an African native crouched on his knees hunting in tall grass. The image resists gross exaggeration. The man appears to be

concentrating on his prey, an intricate shield in one hand, spears in the other. His outfit is difficult to make out, but his chest is bare, and his muscles are well developed. One can imagine that this man is responsible for feeding his family and he will not fail. Why is the Zulu given a respectful appearance, while Mr. N is not? Perhaps it is because the Zulu, like the Chinese puppet show operator, is clearly located in his own land, while Mr. N is located in some park in America.

Games & Puzzles

Robert G. Lee has described the kind of difference in representations of the Other seen in “Sliced Nations” as a difference between perceived categories of foreign, alien, and naturalized Others. Lee defines the foreign body as, “that which is outside or distant,” alien bodies as “outsiders who are inside,” and naturalized Others as those “cleansed of their foreignness and remade.”⁹⁹ He argues that within popular culture the alien Other, rather than the foreign Other or naturalized Other, is interpreted as the primary threat to white American society. He describes the presence of alien bodies as “disrupt[ing] the narrative structure of the community,” and as a constant “source of pollution.”¹⁰⁰ In “Sliced Nations” the caricatured Mr. N is the polluting alien, while the Zulu hunter and Chinese puppeteer are merely foreign. Competing representations of racial and ethnic Others as foreign, alien, and naturalized can be seen in a variety of games and puzzles from the late nineteenth century. These representations reflect not only racial ambivalence, but also the limited circumstances under which naturalization was possible.

Representations of foreign people – those who exist far away - in paper games and puzzles largely played up their exotic characteristics. The popular card game

“Nations” was a children’s variation on the game whist. McLoughlin Brothers published numerous versions of “Nations” in the late nineteenth century, followed by versions by Milton Bradley in the first decade of the twentieth century. A set of “Nations” cards consisted of fifty-two illustrated playing cards representing one of four nations: America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Each nation had thirteen cards, each of which with a different value - the highest being the map card, then the man, then the woman, then the child, and then the house cards numbered from ten down to two. The valuation of the cards may seem alarmingly sexist, but as the game is essentially whist, the card values correspond to that of basic playing cards with the map replacing the ace, the man the king, the woman the queen, the child the jack, and the houses the numbered cards.

The illustrations are what make “Nations” interesting. In McLoughlin Brother’s 1898 version of the game, “Game of Nations or Quaker Whist,” Europe unsurprisingly is represented by white people, the man in a suit with a top hat and cane, the woman in a Gibson Girl style shirt-waist dress, and the child in a sailor suit riding a bicycle. The house card shows a grouping of tall brick buildings, one with a steeple. Africa is represented by half-dressed black natives, a man with spears and a long shield walking to the right, likely off to hunt, a woman carrying a basket in her hands and a baby on her back, and a young boy shooting a small bow and arrow. The African house is a simple thatched roof hut. Asia is represented by imagery similar to that in the Chinese puzzle in “Sliced Nations,” a woman in long, decorative robes with a paper parasol and a child with a queue flying a kite; a pagoda-style structure represents their house. America, on the other hand is represented by Native Americans only: a woman carrying baskets, a man in feather headdress and embellished leather pants and shirt, carrying a tomahawk in

one hand and a long spear and round shield in the other as he runs to the left, and nine teepee cards. Like the previously mentioned manners and customs toy books, these illustrations incorporate exotic visual stereotypes about their subjects and reflect ideas about racial hierarchies, but are not imbued with malicious intent or fears of pollution. As foreigners, located in far away lands, they are not a threat to the racial order in the US. Except that the Native Americans are not in a far away land, indeed as illustrated by the cards they are America. This reflects a strange designation Native Americans are often given in toys. Despite their presence in the US, they are still foreigners in their own land, not aliens, not polluters, and not naturalized, but foreigners, forever outsiders - albeit not very threatening ones.¹⁰¹

Another popular representation of foreign Others includes the numerous representations of South Asian Indians in Parcheesi-type board games. Due to copyright restrictions, McLoughlin Brothers and other board game makers often renamed Parcheesi-based games, these names included: "India," "India Chess," "Hunting the Tiger," and "The Game of Tiger Hunt."¹⁰² McLoughlin Brothers produced some of their most beautiful cover artwork for these games. Reflecting the ethnic and geographic confusion commonly found in ethnic representations from the period, these games sometimes show an Arabian atop a camel, but more often they depict South Asian Indians. The 1897 cover of McLoughlin Brothers' "Hunting the Tiger" board game shows an elephant carrying a hunting party being attacked by a ferocious tiger. Atop the elephant a presumably British white hunter dressed in safari-style clothing shoots his rifle at the tiger as a turban-clad dark skinned man who is nearest the tiger barely escapes the reach of the tiger's extended claws. Another turban-clad local on the elephant, along with

three others riding an elephant in the background look on in concern. The lush setting, complete with tall green grasses, mountains in the background, and bright blue skies above, makes for an impressive composition. The white hunter is the hero, saving the elephant driver from certain death, but it also seems pretty clear that these natives would not have been there if not assisting the non-native man's hunt, and they are not judged badly by the illustration. In another McLoughlin made version of the game, "The Game of Tiger Hunt" printed about 1899, in a clearing in the jungle a tiger runs towards an elephant upon which ride two white men in all white hunting suits and one dark-skinned local in a yellow turban and red tunic. The two hunters have rifles, the one on the left points his rifle at the tiger, the other is looking down at the rifle in his hands and seems to be trying to figure out how to operate it or maybe reload it, and the elephant driver sits serenely on the elephant's shoulders. His eyes meet that of the viewer as he patiently waits for the hunt to be over. In the background, through some of the tall blades of grass that surround the scene, two natives can be seen. These two men wear only white turbans and loincloth-type coverings. They carry long sticks and presumably rustled the tiger out of the jungle and into the clearing for the hunt. Their station seems below that of the elephant driver, both as indicated by their dress and their job duties. Still, they are both physically much closer to the tiger than the two hunters and weaponless, and yet they along with the driver seem much braver and calmer than the armed men.

A curious inversion of the foreign Other is seen in E.G. Selchow's "Cruelty Picture Puzzle" from approximately 1879.¹⁰³ The box cover shows a desert scene. Dominating the illustration is a camel with a rug draped over its back upon which sit five identically dressed young dark-skinned men. They wear loose-fitting light blue jackets

over white collared shirts, knee-length red pants with yellow piping down the sides, white stockings, blue slipper-style shoes, and soft red tarbooshes or fezzes, evoking a kind of childlike, weaponless Zouaves. Though two pyramids in the background suggest an Egyptian setting, the costumes read as more generically North African. As previously mentioned, this kind of ethnic and geographic confusion was common in ethnic imagery of the period. A specific or authentic location is not required, just generalized visual markers of the Middle East are sufficient to locate the American viewer. To the left of the camel, a bucking spotted-horse appears to be throwing its rider, a light-skinned man in an Uncle Sam outfit complete with red and white striped pants, a long blue jacket, and top hat. The American has lost hold of the reins, his feet have come out of the stirrups, and his posterior sticks up in the air. The men on the camel smile and laugh at the panic-faced American. The puzzle illustration's intent is a bit of a mystery. The American seems to be the victim of the "cruelty," his displacement in this Middle Eastern desert is laughable. The juxtaposition of foreign and alien is key to making some sense of the scene. The foreign Others in this image, the men on the camel, are the ones in the dominant position high above the American on the horse, out of harm's way, and in their quasi-native environment. Meanwhile the American has the unenviable role of the alien Other, the foreigner who does not belong.

African Americans become alien Others in much post-Reconstruction puzzle and board game imagery. The McLoughlin Brothers toy book *The Funny Little Darkies* by British author Laura Valentine and thus likely a copy of a British toy book, and dating from approximately 1875, included buffoonish, cartoony illustrations of African Americans before, during, and after a "Grand Musical Party." Illustrations from the toy

book were used in a puzzle titled “Chopped Up Niggers” which was listed in McLoughlin catalogs from 1881 to 1886. In their cartoonish nature and general lack of malice, the illustrations are comparable to the also British in origin 1880 version of *Ten Little Niggers*, but the change in name from *Funny Little Darkies* to “Chopped Up Niggers” strangely changes the tone of the illustrations even with no actual change in the illustrations. Many puzzles in the period were named chopped up something, a reference to the image being cut into puzzle pieces, but here chopped up implies a violent act, and the use of the pejorative term nigger adds to the spite. In the American conversion of the illustrations into jigsaw puzzles, the wild, colorfully dressed partygoers are not a welcome part of regular society; they exist on US soil, but in a separate, alien social world. The African American as alien is perhaps the least ambivalent representation of blackness. It was this type of representation that dominated turn of the century games and puzzles by Parker Brothers, including the 1895 “Ten Little Niggers” board game, 1896 “Watermelon Puzzle,” and 1902 “Coon Hunt” board game.

Irish Americans are one of the few ethnic or racial groups that make the transition into the category of naturalized Other, but as demonstrated by a series of games and toys, that transition remained tentative for many years. In the mid-nineteenth century, following the mass immigration of Irish into the United States, the popular image of the Irish incorporated negative ideas about “racial Irishness” which included physical features such as a pot belly, bow legs, low brow, “upturned nose,” and tinted skin, with the overall effect of a “simian” appearance.¹⁰⁴ Ape-like representations of Irish immigrants were common in political cartoons in the second half of the nineteenth century and even appeared in Currier & Ives prints.

A popular stereotype about the Irish that made its way into children's toys was that they loved pigs. David J. O'Donoghue, the editor of William Carelton's autobiography, credited Carelton, a prolific nineteenth century Irish novelist, with the unintentional creation of this stereotype. In his *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, Carelton included the tale of Phil Purcel the pig-driver who had a very close bond with his pig, allowing him to wander at will through his home. O'Donoghue claims, "It is to be feared that the Saxon notion of the inseparableness of Paddy and the pig was originally derived from this sketch," leading English readers to believe this was a "national custom."¹⁰⁵ In a series of board games in which the objective is to round up wayward pigs, the specter of this stereotype and the enduring nature of ideas about racial Irishness can be seen.¹⁰⁶

Parker Brothers' "Game of Pat and His Pigs" was released around 1896, and featured a box cover with a young boy, perhaps six or seven years old, chasing after two pigs who have separated from the rest of the herd, which can be seen in the background. It is a pastoral scene with a quaint farmhouse, green fields, and hollyhocks filling the rest of the composition. The boy's mother stands in front of the farmhouse waving her arms above her head, as though she is calling out to him to hurry back with the naughty pigs. Interestingly, the boy's name, Pat, seemingly identifies the subject as Irish, but he has no physical signs of Irishness; he is in no way ape-like or otherwise caricatured in appearance. Rather, he has short blond hair, pale skin, and a cherubic-face. As a farm boy he does wear patched pants, no shoes, and a straw hat that has flown off his head in his pursuit of the pigs. Here, Pat has naturalized, he has been cleansed of his foreignness and remade into a white American. Similarly, McLoughlin Brothers' "Farmer Jones' Pigs"

and “Game of the Troublesome Pig,” dating from the 1890s and about 1900 respectively, use an illustration of a Yankee farmer chasing pigs that have escaped their pen. Tall, thin, and goateed, this farmer with a proper Anglo-Saxon surname looks more like Yankee Doodle than an Irish caricature.

However, another version of the game released by Milton Bradley after the turn of the century marked a return to the image of the racialized Irish. The box cover of “Game of the Stubborn Pig” (circa 1910) shows a slightly stooped portly man with a low brow, up turned nose, darkened cheeks, and large sideburns. With one hand he pulls on a leash attached to a large pig’s neck, while the other is raised, fingers outstretched, as he appears to be calling the pig. The pig digs his front hooves into the ground and is refusing to budge. Unlike the “Game of Pat and His Pigs,” the title of this game does not allude to the popular understanding of the relationship between Irish and pigs, but the illustration does. The illustration raises questions about the progress the Irish have made in the intervening years since the “Game of Pat and His Pigs,” and points to the precarious nature of naturalization. Despite advancements in the acceptance of certain ethnic groups, there is no permanent erasure of ethnic stereotypes. Perhaps the most well known toy to represent this tentative hold on Irish naturalized Other, is the 1882 “Paddy and the Pig” cast iron mechanical bank, which brings us back to the mechanical banks that began this chapter.

Cast Iron Toys

In the second half of the nineteenth century, cast iron, the physical antipode of paper, proved to be equally adept as a material for inexpensive, easily molded, racially specific toys. Cast iron began appearing in toys in the 1850s and greatly expanded in the

1870s when foundries that had focused on the production of war munitions during the Civil War turned their attention to domestic items. Casting techniques were initially somewhat crude and had a minimum of detail. Toy guns and wheels for all sorts of toys were typical early cast iron toy products. Improvements in casting transformed cast iron into one of the most adaptable materials available for toy making. Like paper, the fact that it was cheap helped spread the popularity of cast iron toys. Cap guns, fire engines, coal carts, horse drawn wagons, bell toys, and mechanical banks were all popular cast iron toys.

Wheeled toys, bell toys, and cap guns are some of the most ubiquitous nineteenth century toys. Primarily made of cast iron, these sturdy toys have survived in large numbers making them easy to find in antique shops across the United States. Connecticut foundries proved to be particularly adept at producing cast iron toys. By the 1880s, four major cast iron toy makers were located in the Connecticut River valley south of Hartford: Gong Bell Manufacturing Company, Watrous Manufacturing Company, and N. N. Hill Brass Company of East Hampton, CT and J. & E. Stevens of Cromwell, CT. By the turn of the century, Kenton Toys of Kenton, Ohio and Hubley Manufacturing Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania challenged Connecticut's dominance over the cast iron toy industry.

Bell toys, cast iron toys mounted on wheels that rang a bell when pushed or pulled across the floor, were a popular choice for young children. Gong Bell, Watrous, and N.N. Hill specialized in bell toys, giving East Hampton, CT the nickname "Bell Town."¹⁰⁷ Typical bell toys featured an animal, perhaps a horse or something more exotic like an elephant, or a clown or other human figure. Sometimes the human figures represented

African Americans. The earliest identified bell toy with an African American subject is Gong Bell's "Freedom Bell Ringer" from 1880. This toy featured a cast iron wheeled platform atop which sits a kneeling African American man dressed in a dark coat jacket over a white shirt with a starched collar and red pants. His painted tin body, with joints at the shoulders and hips, is shown in profile. The design and sober appearance of the man's face is evocative of Milton Bradley's "Contraband Gymnast." Before the man is a brass bell approximately half his size, atop which a flagstaff and American flag extend. The bell ringer's hands are attached to a thick wire that is attached to the base of the flagpole. The bell itself is connected by another thick wire to the front wheel of the toy so that when the toy is pulled the wheels turn, ringing the bell, and moving the man's body back and forth, giving the appearance of the man actively ringing the bell. The effect is one of a man patriotically calling attention to the American flag as he rolls down the (imaginary) road. Like the "Contraband Gymnast," this toy shows an African American as a patriot and a worthy recipient of America's promise of freedom.

No other known bell toy repeated this sentiment in the representation of African Americans. More typical were representations of African Americans as comical, rural subjects. For example, the Watrous Manufacturing Company's "Rocking Coons Chime" from about 1900, exploited the perceived musicality of African Americans to create an amusing scene. A seesaw atop a wheeled platform featured a black man in a green coat jacket holding up a red top hat in one hand on one side of the see saw and a black woman in full Mammy regalia including a bright yellow head kerchief with a tambourine in one raised hand on the other. Pulling the toy cause the two figures to rock up and down and bells to chime mimicking a musical dance between the two subjects.

Black Mammies and children were particularly popular subjects for bell toys. Playing on the racial epithet “coon” for African American, the 1902 “Two Coons” bell toy, also by Watrous, showed a hollow log with an African American boy at one end and a raccoon at the other. Pulling the toy resulted in the two sliding in and out of the log. Actually encountering a raccoon in an enclosed space would likely result in a bloody confrontation, but here the action is intended to be humorous, a cat and mouse game with “two coons.” In another bell toy, the “Watermelon Bell,” by N. N. Hill Mfg. Co., two African American boys stand on either side of a pile of watermelons evoking the common stereotype of watermelon-loving African Americans. In the boys’ hands is a long saw. Pulling the toy activates the boys’ bodies pushing and pulling the saw over the watermelons. One boy looks ahead, while the other looks to the side with a big, proud smile on his face. These boys have thought up a clever and easy way to open the watermelons. The boys are dressed in typical rural attire: a straw hat, shirt, and short pants, but their clothes are painted in bright primary colors to incorporate an additional stereotype about the garish tastes of African Americans. While both of these toys rely heavily on stereotypes to portray their subjects, they also represent a kind of middle ground in ethnic toy imagery – one that is neither celebratory, like the “Freedom Bell Ringer,” nor malicious, like McLoughlin Brothers’ 1897 version of *Ten Little Niggers*. This kind of stereotype-laden toy was primarily meant to benignly amuse, and like so many ethnic toys displayed an ambivalence about racial Others.

Besides bell toys, wagons and carts were also popular turn of the century wheeled cast iron toys. Horse, mule, and ox drawn carts, wagons, and carriages were specialties of Hubley Manufacturing Company and Kenton Hardware Company. Boys in particular

were drawn to these miniature wagons which recreated everything from early fire hook and ladder wagons to police patrol wagons to circus wagons. Some of these were very fancy – for example a tally-ho made by Hubley in the 1890s was drawn by a team of four galloping horses and held seven well-dressed passengers and one driver – and others were simple, consisting of a single horse and an empty cart. African American men often served as drivers for less fancy carts including log carts and coal carts. Frequently a mule or ox – representative of rural farm animals - rather than a horse, pulled these carts, and rarely did an African American driven cart have a team of animals. The differences in animals represented perceived differences between blacks and whites in geography, wealth, and status. A poor farmer might have an ox or mule, while a moneyed gentleman might have a horse or even a team of horses. Through these distinctions the toymakers communicated an assumption that a black man would be poor and rural while a white man would not.

Physical distinctions were also included in the design of African American subjects. Due to the nature of cast iron toy production, the paint job on human and animal figures was frequently uneven or sloppy. Cast iron toy makers primarily employed young women in their paint department, and they were held to daily quotas that rushed their work. Thus, the lack of detail on a human's face or the beady-eye nature of the dots of paint applied for eyes were not likely judgments on the toy subjects. However, black subjects were consistently depicted with larger noses and lips than their white counterparts. Another major distinguishing feature of African American cart and wagon drivers was their headwear. Even when the paint has worn away from a cast iron toy, the shape and style of the subject's hat can reveal its racial identity. African American drivers

were consistently limited to certain hat styles, mainly a straw farmer's hat and a jockey's cap. The farmer's hat came in two variations, one with a broad flat circular brim all the way around a taller round crown and sometimes with impressions to give the appearance of woven straw, and the other with a shorter brim that curved out from the crown. For example, Kenton's "Log Wagon" and "Plantation Ox Cart," from about 1900, feature black men doing rural work while wearing a typical straw farmer's hat. The other option, the jockey cap, featured a fitted crown and a rounded brim protruding from the front of the crown over the face only. The farmer's hats defined African Americans as rural, while the jockey's caps alluded to one occupation late nineteenth century blacks were deemed good at – horse racing.¹⁰⁸ In contrast, white wagon and cart drivers often wore more formal and more urban top hats, or straw hats with a narrower flat circular brim around a taller round crown, a hat designed more for fashion and less for protection from the sun, than its wider brimmed cousin. The importance of hats as visual markers of racial identity can also be seen in the evolution of the illustrations in McLoughlin Brothers' *Ten Little Niggers* and in cast iron mechanical banks.

Mechanical Banks

Mechanical banks were some of the showiest of the cast iron toys, combining clockwork mechanisms with penny banks. Yankee thrift has been credited with popularizing mechanical banks, but surely the exciting mechanical action of the banks, not the prospect of saving pennies, was what appealed to children. To operate a mechanical bank, a penny had to be placed in a slot and a lever pushed. The lever would activate the mechanism, usually hidden in the base of the bank, and momentarily bring the bank to life. The banks came in a variety of designs including animals, clowns,

historical figures, and racist stereotypes. Perhaps the most prevalent of the latter was a bank known as the “Jolly Nigger.”

Shepard Hardware Company of Buffalo, New York first manufactured by the “Jolly Nigger” bank in 1882. A relatively simple mechanical bank, a bust of a black man, his right arm bent at the elbow with his hand palm up in front of his chest tosses a penny from his hand into his smiling mouth while his eyes roll up in delight. The man’s appearance is pure caricature. His skin is painted a glossy black, his oversized lips a bright red. He wears a red buttoned jacket over a white shirt, its pointy collar folded over the neck of the jacket, a blue bow tie completes his outfit. The exaggerated physical features were likely drawn from blackface minstrelsy, as were his gestures, with the rolling of the eyes a favorite move on the minstrel stage. The man’s gigantic mouth and the action of merrily swallowing the penny would be taken a step further in the 1887 “Sambo Head” cap gun by Ives, Blakeslee & Co., a cast iron gun that exploded a paper cap inside the mouth of a similarly caricatured black man. Of course, biting down on a cap was more violent, but in these toys the act of either swallowing an exploding cap or a penny defined African Americans as comical, zany characters who the child could manipulate to do anything for a laugh. The one-dollar “Jolly Nigger” bank was a huge hit inspiring multiple companies to make knock-offs. The most widespread of these were made in England by the John Harper Company, but many others appeared. Common variations in the knock-offs added to the layering of black caricatures. Some had moving ears that wiggled up and down when the man swallowed the penny, and others wore a hat, either a straw hat similar to that seen in the farm laboring “Southern Negro” of the cast iron wagons and carts, or a top hat, an allusion to the Zip Coon character of

blackface minstrelsy.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the bank was so popular that even after Shepard Hardware's dissolution in 1892, J. & E. Stevens took over the official production of the bank, which they continued to manufacture until at least 1929.

J. & E. Stevens was the leading manufacturer of mechanical banks, and one of the first cast iron toy makers in the country. Brothers John and Elisha Stevens founded the company in 1843. In 1869, they introduced the first American cast iron mechanical bank, the "Hall's Excelsior Bank" also known as the "Cashier's Bank."¹¹⁰ When activated a cashier popped out of the roof of this simple toy bank in the shape of bank building. One of their most prolific bank designers was James H. Bowen of Philadelphia, who held at least twenty-one patents for mechanical banks. He licensed all of his designs to Stevens for production. Of the known Bowen banks, five contain ethnic imagery; these include the aforementioned "Paddy and the Pig" bank, plus three of African Americans, and one of a Chinese man.

Drawing from the same stereotype that influenced the previously discussed capture-the-pigs board games, the "Paddy and the Pig" bank depicts a seated Irishman with long, thick sideburns, a simian face, and shamrock adorned hat with a pig squeezed between his outstretched legs. The pig's front right foot has been tied with rope and the Irishman holds tightly to the rope to prevent the pig from running away. When a penny is placed on the pig's snout and the bank is activated, the pig's left front hoof kicks up and the Irishman's mouth opens and his eyes roll in delight as the penny is kicked into his mouth. This bank relied solely on stereotype for its portrayal of the Irish, and while those stereotypes were related to an initially English stereotype of the Irish, as seen in the *Ten Little Niggers* example, racial and ethnic stereotypes are not bound by international

borders. The paddy and the pig stereotype was readily adopted in the US and beyond.

The German mechanical tin toy company Lehmann manufactured a “Paddy and the Pig” mechanical tin toy from 1903 until at least 1910, selling over 15,000 of the toys.¹¹¹

Lehmann exported their inexpensive tin toys around the world, and they were particularly popular in the US where they were much cheaper than similarly designed, locally made toys. Lehmann’s “Paddy and the Pig,” a wind-up toy that featured an Irishman riding atop a large pig that when activated, rolled back and forth in an unpredictable pattern causing the Irishman to also rock back and forth, was sold in a box printed in four languages: English, German, Spanish, and French, the better to spread the ridiculous, but perhaps harmless characterization of the Irish. Unlike representations of the Irish in American political cartoons of the late nineteenth century which took their caricatured depictions of the Irish to hateful extremes that promoted anti-immigrant, nativist politics, this children’s Paddy and the pig imagery seems primarily designed to be silly, a representation that does not block the path to eventual naturalization even while retaining “playful” stereotypes.

Racial ambivalence is particularly strong in James H. Bowen’s three African American banks designed between 1879 and 1897. “I Always Did ‘Spise a Mule,” patented in 1879 making it the earliest of the banks, depicts an African American man dressed as a jockey riding a mule. The young man’s brightly colored red and black billed hat is what identifies him as a jockey, but his feet are bare. He may be a jockey, but he is a poor jockey, riding a poor and likely rural man’s mule - the mule, distinguishable from a horse by its long ears, bears more rural associations than a horse. Perhaps this man earns extra income by racing, but it has not made him rich and he does not even own a

horse. His large head and facial features seem out of proportion with the rest of his body, but perhaps the large head was needed to fit the oversized ears, nose, and mouth, all similar to those of the “Jolly Nigger” bank. When the bank is activated, the mule kicks up its hind legs sending the rider over the horse’s head, where his head collides with a log. Not unlike a Currier & Ives Darktown racetrack illustration, this African American man attempts to rise above his station by playing the role of jockey and fails. Bowen’s second African American bank, the 1888 “Dark Town Battery,” uses a setting explored in the 1882 Currier & Ives Darktown print *A Base Hit*, in which a group of African American men playing baseball leap after a fly ball that has hit a portly spectator in the gut, but takes a very different approach to representing African American baseball players. In this bank three young African American boys are shown playing baseball. A penny inserted into the pitcher’s hand is thrown towards the batter, who swings and misses, as the penny falls between the catcher’s feet and into the bank. Unlike *A Base Hit*, in which the baseball players’ ineptitude is highlighted, here they appear to know exactly what they are doing, they smile rather than look panicked, and they their facial features are childlike, not supersized. This is a much gentler representation of African Americans than seen in either *A Base Hit* or “I Always Did ‘Spise a Mule.” Still, stereotypes do inform their appearance in the glossy black paint used for their skin and the names of the teams printed on their colorful baseball uniform jerseys - Possums and Coons.

In 1897, Bowen patented a new version of the “I Always Did ‘Spise a Mule” bank in which a young African American man sits on a log facing a mule, and when activated the mule spins around on his front legs kicking the man in the head with his hind legs. The revised version of the bank is much more aggressive in its treatment of the

African American man than the original. Here the man is just sitting on a log, not racing, a dangerous sport for anyone, and he is kicked in the head. The victim is indeed no jockey. Dressed in a loose fitting red shirt, blue pants, and a snug fitting cap, he has the appearance of a young farmer. In further contrast to the original subject of “I Always Did ‘Spise a Mule,” this man bears none of the exaggerated features of the jockey, instead like the baseball players his face, head, and body all appear in proper proportion. But stereotypes are still being engaged, especially that of the perceived laziness of blacks. The man is sitting on a log when he should be working, and for many recipients of this bank, the violence may have not only been seen as “funny,” it may have also been justified.

How did the maker of the two violent “I Always Did ‘Spise a Mule” banks, which Karal Ann Marling calls “the best known of a large class of mechanical joke banks in which the humor generally comes at the expense of a person of color,”¹¹² also come to design the relatively benign *Dark Town Battery* bank? One major difference seems to be that the subjects are different ages. The fact that the baseball players are children rather than adults may have played into their softened representation. Bowen may have engaged in a bit of self-censorship in designing the boys. The increasing level of aggression in the *I Always Did ‘Spise a Mule* banks reflects the increasing popularity of humor derived from the abuse of hapless blacks. Like cartoon characters that can be repeatedly blown-up, the actual ramifications of injury are ignored.

The Chinese were also fascinating subjects for children. With the late nineteenth century Chinese population primarily based in California, and smaller populations in large cities like New York, Chicago, and Detroit, many American children may have

never even seen an actual Chinese person. However, in the world of adults, anti-Chinese sentiment had been running high since the late 1870s, after a few years of increased Chinese immigration. Sensational political cartoons portrayed the Chinese as dirty, opium smoking heathens out to steal American jobs and women. Anti-Chinese riots broke out in California in 1877, and in 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act, federal legislation to ban Chinese immigration, was passed. These events did not go unnoticed by the toy industry.

Bowen's "Reclining Chinaman" from 1882 reflects the nativist political environment of the period and how it was communicated to children. J. & E. Stevens manufactured the bank, which depicted a Chinese man lounging on a log. He wears a long tunic, pants, and shoes with slightly curled up toes. A long queue is draped over his right shoulder onto his chest. In his right hand he holds four playing cards and his empty left hand is stretched out to his side. When activated, the man lowers his right hand, revealing four aces, while his left hand raises in salute, and a rat runs out of the log. Bank collector Carole Rogers claims the bank signifies that "the Chinaman holds the winning hand; the American laborer had lost the game."¹¹³ This message may have been clear to adults, but for a child this bank more likely relied on the exoticism of the man for its appeal.

Ives, Blakeslee & Co.'s "Shoot That Hat" was another mechanical bank capitalizing on the perceived threat to America posed by Chinese immigrants. This bank, designed by C. F. Ritchel, depicted a shoeshine boy sitting behind a fire hydrant. A man approaches the boy from behind carrying a large bowler hat in his hands. When the bank is activated the man lowers the hat over the unsuspecting shoeshine boy's head and a Chinese man's head pops up from the top of the hat. The base of the bank reads "Shoot

That Hat Bank,” proclaiming that the Chinese must be stopped before they take everyone’s jobs, at least to those who were aware of the reason for the anti-Chinese movement. For a child, a Chinese man’s head popping out of a hat may have simply been amusing, and the message to shoot it before the white shoeshine boy is replaced by a Chinese shoe shiner lost. This was not the first time Ives, Blakeslee & Co. incorporated the theme of “amusing” violence towards Chinese into their toys. Three years earlier they released a cast iron cap gun marked with its name “The Chinese Must Go.” This cap gun shows a man in a bowler hat holding on to the queue of a Chinese man who is running in front of him. An exploding paper cap could be placed inside the Chinese man’s mouth and when the gun’s trigger was pulled the man in the bowler hat, possibly depicting Dennis Kearney the leader of the anti-Chinese Workingman’s Party, kicks the Chinese man in the rear, which slams his mouth shut causing the cap to explode.¹¹⁴ Even without the anti-Chinese politics, this “kick in the rear” action would have been funny to many children. In fact, in another Ives cap gun a goat kicks a clown in the rear.

Exploding a cap inside the mouth of an alien Other was repeated in “Chinese Bombshells,” cast iron toys of the head of a menacing looking Chinese man in which caps could be placed in the mouth and then the “bomb” dropped to the floor to create a loud explosion, and later in the previously described “Sambo Head” cap toy. The major difference between these two cap toys was the manner in which the men’s faces were depicted - one fierce-looking and the other smiling. Whereas in the previous Chinese cast iron toys the subjects ranged from exotic to slightly comical, the “Chinese Bombshell” depicts the subject as more dangerous and not, like the “Sambo Head,” in on the fun.

The makers of these toys did not shy from using racist imagery, even if the children who played with them may have not understood the politics behind them. Of the approximately three hundred known mechanical bank models produced around the world from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, most of which were made in the US, at least thirty four American models represented a racial or ethnic Other.¹¹⁵ These toys captured popular American sentiment and turned it into something a child could interact with, likely passing on, at minimum, ideas about racial hierarchies and alien Others.

Conclusion

America's first commercially manufactured ethnic toys were primarily made of one of two materials, paper or cast iron. Despite the extreme physical differences of the two materials – one is lightweight, bendable, and tearable, while the other is heavy, rigid, and durable – both were cheap, abundant, and remarkably adaptable, allowing a wide array of toys to be made from them. Paper toys, particularly “toy books,” predate cast iron toys by over a half-century, but the ethnic imagery in both presents conflicting visual representations of the Other, alternately showing malice or goodwill, the complexities of the racial power dynamic, and ultimately subscribing to notions about foreign, alien, and naturalized Others. Thus, in the ethnic imagery that was first produced for children in their playthings an ambiguous message emerges in which racial and ethnic others are presented as acceptable and even friendly as long as they are depicted as wholly foreign, but as they become more embedded in American life, their welcome is diminished and their depiction grows increasingly unsympathetic.

Ethnic imagery of foreigners, or people who do not live in the United States and may only visit temporarily, typically plays up the exotic nature of the subjects. These people do not pose a threat to American identity and are therefore safe to represent in friendly or benign ways. An example of imagery of foreign Others can be seen in the Selchow & Righter puzzle “Sliced Nations.” Other ethnic imagery is of aliens, or outsiders who are perceived as having invaded and polluted America, threatening the possibility of a homogenous American identity. These polluting bodies are treated with much less kindness. The McLoughlin Brothers’ *Ten Little Niggers* books offer a glimpse of both foreign and alien Others within the context of the same story. The illustrations give more respect to their characters when they appear more British (or foreign) and less American. After their American makeover, that respect quickly vanishes and they become aliens contained by restrictive racial stereotypes, which limit their inclusion in American society.

Alien Others are particularly targeted for not knowing their place within the racial hierarchy. Returning to the “Bad Accident” bank from the beginning of the chapter, the cart driver, neatly dressed in jacket, pants, spats, and shoes, out for a ride in his mule drawn cart and enjoying a large slice of watermelon, gets his comeuppance when a much poorer looking shabbily dressed young black boy darts out in front of his cart, causing the mule to leap in the air and the driver to be thrown back. For the viewer the driver may have indeed crossed perceived notions of class boundaries for African Americans. He was simply enjoying life too much, and seeing him suffer a fright provides humorous payback, and puts him in his proper place within the racial hierarchy – the position of the butt of white jokes about Southern Negroes.

Sometimes naturalization is possible. The Paddy and the pig imagery employed in children's games and toys is emblematic of the precarious nature of naturalization. Certainly the Irish are being mocked in their representation with pigs, but it is a characterization that is capable of becoming an anecdote about a person and pig, rather than always about an Irishman and a pig. But more often, ethnic imagery in toys seems to land somewhere in between the foreigner and alien distinction. Toys like the "Dark Town Battery" bank combine bits of stereotypes, with an otherwise all-American theme. *Rip Van Winkle's* Mammy and *Yankee Doodle's* Chinese child appear as integrated members of society, but restrictions are placed on them. These ambiguities reflect conflicting adult attitudes about race, as well as self-censorship in the design of toys for impressionable young children.

Perhaps McLoughlin Brothers "international friends" centerfolds present the most hope for interracial harmony in a post-Reconstruction America. But this image, which appeared until 1910, occurs in an unspecified location. It could be America, or it could just be the fantasy world of play. The international friends fail to appear together outside the centerfold of any McLoughlin book, and similar compositions are not found in other toys from the period. Any adventures they may have had simply were not made available to the children of the late nineteenth century. The final lesson on race learned from these toys is that when playing American, international playmates are welcome, but if they seek to become American, there is a high price to pay for inclusion.

¹ Butler Brothers, *Santa Claus* (New York: Butler Brothers, 1890), 14. Butler Brothers was a major nineteenth century mail-order wholesaler that eventually opened a national chain of variety stores that lasted into the mid-twentieth century. They also offered pull toy version of the “Bad Accident” bank.

² Ibid.

³ Gail Schmunuk Murray, *American Children's Literature and the Construction of Childhood* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), xvi.

⁴ Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Ninetenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), vii-viii.

⁵ — — —, *A Moral Tale: Children's Fiction and American Culture, 1820-1860* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 10.

⁶ Murray, *American Children's Literature and the Construction of Childhood*, 117.

⁷ Gillian Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922* (London: Bodley Head, 1994), 13, 27.

⁸ Anne Scott MacLeod, "Children's Literature in America: From the Puritan Beginings to 1870," in *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, ed. Peter Hunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 102. The Massachusetts School Law of 1642 required all children be taught to read and be catechized at least once a week. For more on the Massachusetts colony's education laws, see Eric R. Eberling, "Massachusetts Education Laws of 1642, 1647, and 1648," in *Historical Dictionary of American Education*, ed. Richard J. Altenbaugh (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 225-26.

⁹ Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922*, 23, 26.

¹⁰ Ibid., 22, 29.

¹¹ Ibid., 42.

¹² Ibid., 38.

¹³ Victor E. Neuburg, *The Penny Histories: A Study of Chapbooks for Young Readers over the Centuries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 47, 53.

¹⁴ Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922*, 48.

Storybooks are works of fiction for children. They may or may not be illustrated. The term “toy book” was used throughout the nineteenth century for a small, illustrated book for children. The term “chapbook” has been used interchangeably with toy book, especially in referring to early nineteenth century books, though historically chapbooks were not always specifically for children. This is likely because in the first half of the nineteenth century they shared a similar format – small, paper covered books with small woodcut illustrations. Chapbook fell out of use by the second half of the nineteenth century and the term “picture book” largely replaced the term toy book in the twentieth century.

¹⁵ Ibid., 39, 41, 48-49. MacLeod, "Children's Literature in America: From the Puritan Beginings to 1870," 106.

¹⁶ Nila Banton Smith, *American Reading Instruction* (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2002), 40. Myra Jehlen, *The English Literatures of America, 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 798.

¹⁷ Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922*, 53.

¹⁸ Jehlen, *The English Literatures of America, 1500-1800*, 798.

¹⁹ A. S. W. Rosenbach, *Early American Children's Books* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1966), 81-82. See also Avery 52.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

²¹ Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922*, 52.

Americus Vesputius is the Latinized name of Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian explorer from whose name "America" is derived. Avery has also bestowed this name on the Native American in the woodcut.

²² *Ibid.*, 42.

²³ MacLeod, "Children's Literature in America: From the Puritan Beginings to 1870," 106.

²⁴ The manners and customs books may be seen as an offshoot of nineteenth century geography schoolbooks, and certainly they both did operate as disseminators of ideas about race, but with their focus on illustrations over text, the manners and customs books would have been appropriate for children too young for geography schoolbooks.

²⁵ Martin Brueckner, "Lessons in Geography: Maps, Spellers, and Other Grammars of Nationalism in the Early Republic," *American Quarterly* 51(June 1999): 320. Cited in Anne Baker, "Geography, Pedagogy, and Race: Schoolbooks and Ideology in the Antebellum United States," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 113, no. 1 (2005): 165.

²⁶ Baker, "Geography, Pedagogy, and Race: Schoolbooks and Ideology in the Antebellum United States," 163.

²⁷ For a beautiful example of a German toy globe with a fold-out booklet of men in national costumes see, Elly and Peter van der Krogt Dekker, *Globes from the Western World* (London: Zwemmer, 1993), 98.

²⁸ Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922*, 75.

Neuburg, *The Penny Histories: A Study of Chapbooks for Young Readers over the Centuries*, 55. Wood also published *Cries of New-York*, a book featuring street peddler and their "cries" from about 1808 to the 1820s. These books were based on the *Cries of London* and earlier *Cries of Paris*, but the New York version included African American sellers of buttermilk and pears, and African American buyers of sweet potatoes and muffins. The crude illustrations do not reveal much, but the books do indicate the presence of African Americans on the streets of New York in the early nineteenth century.

²⁹ Neuburg, *The Penny Histories: A Study of Chapbooks for Young Readers over the Centuries*, 53. Harry B. Weiss, "The Printers and Publishers of Children's Books in New York City, 1698-1830," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 52, no. 8 (August 1948): 389.

³⁰ Neuburg, *The Penny Histories: A Study of Chapbooks for Young Readers over the Centuries*, 57.

³¹ Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922*, 79.

³² *Ibid.*, 80.

³³ MacLeod, "Children's Literature in America: From the Puritan Beginings to 1870," 105.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

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- ³⁵ Peter C. Marzio, *The Democratic Art: Pictures for a 19th-Century America: Chromolithography, 1840-1900* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1979), 6-8.
- ³⁶ Philip B. Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983), 182-84.
- ³⁷ "Children's Literature in America, 1870-1914," in *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, ed. Peter Hunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 225.
- ³⁸ McLoughlin Brothers changed the spelling of Topsy's name to include an "e."
- ³⁹ Walter Sauer, "Struwwelpeter Naturalized: Mcloughlin Imprints of *Slovenly Peter* and Related Books," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 62, no. 1 (Autumn 2000): 25. Young factory girls painted the hand-colored illustrations using stencils. The results did not always show much in the way of quality control.
- ⁴⁰ Michael Partick Hearn, "Mcloughlin Brothers, Publishers 1828-1978," in *Catalogue 35: Original Wood Blocks from the Archives of Mcloughlin Brothers, Publishers, New York, Offered for Sale by Justin Schiller, Ltd.*, ed. Justin Schiller (New York: Justin Schiller, 1978), 3.
- ⁴¹ Lee Dennis, "Mcloughlin Brothers: Legends in Lithography," *Antiques & Collecting*, January 1991, 39.
- ⁴² It can be challenging to precisely date McLoughlin products, but clues can be found in the address and advertisements often printed on the back of books, copyright dates often published on the front of books, and publisher's catalogs which often include images of the items for sale. For a helpful dating reference see Sauer, "Struwwelpeter Naturalized: Mcloughlin Imprints of *Slovenly Peter* and Related Books." 19. *Yankee Doodle* is listed in an 1875 McLoughlin Brothers catalog, and the American Antiquarian Society dates the book between 1871 and 1874. I date the book closer to 1871 based on a description of Nast's Uncle Sam illustrations in Frank Weitenkampf, *Uncle Sam through the Years: A Cartoon Record, Annotated List and Introduction* (New York: Self Published, 1949), 7-8. He explains that Nast experimented with a bearded Uncle Sam in 1869, but then removed the beard again, until permanently adding the beard in 1872. *Yankee Doodle* features a clean-shaven Uncle Sam.
- ⁴³ McLoughlin Brothers products are rarely signed by the illustrator. Nast was one of a handful of artists who did sign their work for McLoughlin Brothers. For a history of the eighteenth century song "Yankee Doodle," see Henry Ablove, "Yankee Doodle Dandy," *The Massachusetts Review* 49 (Spring 2008): 13-21.
- ⁴⁴ *Yankee Doodle*, (New York: McLoughlin Brothers, 1871-1874), 1.
- ⁴⁵ Hair is fraught with racial connotations, largely stemming from white fascination with and repulsion of African hair. For more on hair and racialization, see Noliwe M. Rooks, *Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture, and African Americans* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996).
- ⁴⁶ For a history of Pocahontas illustrations in children's books, see Laura Wasowicz, "The Children's Pocahontas: From Gentle Child of the Wild to All-American Heroine," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 105, no. 2 (1995): 377-415.
- ⁴⁷ For a history of the evolution of the Uncle Sam figure, see Weitenkampf, *Uncle Sam through the Years: A Cartoon Record, Annotated List and Introduction* .
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁹ Russell Roberts, "Thomas Nast: Santa's Artist," *Germanic Life* 9, no. 4 (December 2002): 33.

⁵⁰ Patricia Hills, "Cultural Racism: Resistance and Accommodation in the Civil War Art of Eastman Johnson and Thomas Nast," in *Seeing High and Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture*, ed. Patricia Johnson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 105.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Benjamin Justice, "Thomas Nast and the Public School of the 1870s," *History of Education Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 171. Common schools were public schools, which, in theory, were open to all children.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Thomas Nast, "Our Common Schools as They Are and as They Could Be," *Harper's Weekly* February 26, 1870, 140.

⁵⁵ Justice, "Thomas Nast and the Public School of the 1870s," 174.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 190.

⁵⁷ Justice 190.

⁵⁸ Hills 115.

⁵⁹ Avery 126. The Episcopal Church had a complicated relationship with slavery and its aftermath. The church never condemned slavery, possibly because a great many Southern slaveholders were Episcopalian. After the Civil War Northern Episcopalians sought to aid recently freed slaves by founding the Protestant Episcopal Freedman's Commission. From 1865 to 1878, the Freedman's Commission provided clothing and education, and sought to increase African American membership and clergy in the Episcopal Church. Southern Episcopalians did not participate in Freedman's Commission activities nearly as often as Northern members of the church, many felt the project was a failure, and in 1883 Southern Episcopalians moved to formally segregate the Episcopal Church. See Gardiner H. Shattuck, "'One Fold and One Chief Shepherd' The Sewanee Conference of 1883 and the Beginnings of Racial Segregation in the Episcopal Church," in *Vale of Tears: New Essays on Religion and Reconstruction*, ed. Edward J. Blum and W. Scott Poole (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 54-57. J. Carleton Hayden, "After the War: The Mission and Growth of the Episcopal Church among Blacks in the South, 1865-1877," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 42, no. 4 (1973): 413-20.

⁶⁰ For more on the use of ethnic imagery to claim authenticity see Fath Davis Ruffins, "Ethnic Imagery in the landscape of Commerce, 1945-1975," in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judd (Washington, DC: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 381.

⁶¹ While it might seem shocking to have the n-word featured so prominently in a children's book, children were apparently well acquainted with the word. Randall Kennedy cites an 1837 book by Hosea Eaton in which he complains that white adults introduce their children to the "opprobrious term" at an early age in the form of reprimands such as accusations of behaving "worse than nigger" or "ignorant as niggers" and scaring misbehaving children with threats of being kidnapped by "the old nigger." Randall Kennedy, *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002) 5-6.

⁶² Michael Remson, *Septimus Winner: Two Lives in Music* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 154.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ "American Theatricals," *The Era*, March 1, 1868.

⁶⁶ Dennis and Len Lovallo Sanders, *The Agatha Christie Companion: The Complete Guide to Agatha Christie's Life and Work* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1984), 179. "The London Theaters," *The Era*, September 6, 1868.

⁶⁷ "Advertisements and Notices," *The Era*, September 13, 1868. Remson, *Septimus Winner: Two Lives in Music*, 155. Actually, the circulation of the song continued on further. As a children's rhyme, "Ten Little Niggers" was also quite popular in turn of the century Germany.

⁶⁸ Dennis 39 and Bonnie Keyser, "The McLoughlin Brothers and 19th Century 'Toy Books,'" *American Antiquarian Bookman*, November 17, 1986, 1993. For more on 19th century piracy and copyright law see, Paula Petrik, "The House That Parcheesi Built: Selchow & Righter Company," *Business History Review*, 60 (Autumn 1986): 418. See the 1886 "Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works," for an early attempt to establish international copyright protection, though the US did not sign onto the Berne Convention until 1989.

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that notions about race and particularly notions about whiteness are very much tied into notions about class. The middle class appearance of the black subjects should not be overlooked.

⁷⁰ The book may have been dropped due to poor sales, or it is possible that the 1886 Berne Convention establishing international copyright protections may have scared off future sales of the book - though the US did not sign the Berne Convention, or actually agree to international copyright laws until joining the Buenos Aires Convention in 1910.

⁷¹ Though Fairy Pantomime did appear in New York, most notably *Humpty Dumpty* starring George L. Fox, it is a British holiday tradition.

⁷² The first line of the story reads, "You know our little Nigger friends – you saw them once before." By 1874, the n-word was most definitely recognized as an offensive word. On the history of the word, Randall Kennedy writes, "No one knows precisely when or how *niger* turned derisively into *nigger* and attained a pejorative meaning. We do know, however, that by the end of the first third of the nineteenth century, *nigger* had already become a familiar and influential insult." Kennedy 5.

⁷³ Michelle Martin, *Brown Gold: Milestones of African American Children's Picture Books, 1845-2002* (New York: Routledge, 2004) 23-24.

⁷⁴ The Milton Bradley company purchased McLoughlin Brothers in 1920, after the deaths of both company's namesakes. It is also worth noting that there is a history of white authors using the n-word in anti-racist texts. Randall Kennedy lists Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells among others as "white writers [who] have unveiled *nigger*-as-insult in order to dramatize and condemn racism's baleful presence." Kennedy 52.

⁷⁵ Jill Lepore, "The Meaning of Life," *The New Yorker* 83.13 (May 21, 2007): 38. <http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE> (accessed September 30, 2008).

⁷⁶ Lepore.

⁷⁷ James J. Shea, *It's All in the Game* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960).

⁷⁸ Deborah S. Ing, "Bradley, Milton," *American National Biography Online* (February 2000). <http://www.anb.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/articles/10/10-00177.html> (accessed October 21, 2008).

⁷⁹ Ing.

⁸⁰ Ing.

⁸¹ Raymond H. Miller, *Milton Bradley* (Farmington Hills, MI: Kidhaven Press, 2005) 22. Shea 53-55.

⁸² Shea 54.

⁸³ Shea 80.

⁸⁴ Ing; Marshall and Inez McClintock, *Toys in America* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961) 263.

⁸⁵ McClintock 263.

⁸⁶ Ing; McClintock 263.

⁸⁷ Lepore.

⁸⁸ The Cotsen Library at Princeton University attributes these illustrations - as they were first printed by Frederick Warne & Co. - to British illustrator William J. Wiegand.

⁸⁹ A redlined copy of the earlier 1880s version of *Ten Little Niggers* showing changes in the text's language can be found at the American Antiquarian Society. Others have noticed this tendency by McLoughlin Brothers to Americanize foreign piracies, as well as a move to create more "American" titles in the 1880s. Regarding a German piracy, Walter Sauer notes, "Another interesting case involves two pictorial versions of the "Inky Boys" found in four different books. In both versions a marked national adaptation of the malefactors has taken place. In the first set of pictures we see them parade with an American flag behind the black-a-moor. The later version, from the 1890s, transforms Nicholas into a full-blooded wizard, but in the earlier one he appears as a typical pot-bellied American Santa Claus." Walter Sauer, "Struwwelpeter Naturalized: McLoughlin Imprints of *Slovenly Peter* and Related Books," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 62, no. 1 (2000): 29. Lee Dennis notes, "By 1880, heightened success and public acclaim had reduced the McLoughlin's need to mimic, and they did not have to depend so much on their printed pilferings. Their titles reflected the new Americanism in the books, *Sam Patch Jumps Over Niagara Falls* and *Johnny Headstrong's Trip to Coney Island*. Their games of *Base-Ball* and *Train for Boston* also mirrored American themes." Dennis, "McLoughlin Brothers: Legends in Lithography," 40.

⁹⁰ In 1898, the McLoughlin Brothers catalog began advertising a “Ten Little Niggers” board game, which was listed through 1900. I have yet to locate a copy of this game and do not know what it consisted of or how it was played.

⁹¹ The green umbrella may be a reference to the title character of Helen Bannerman’s 1899 children’s book *Little Black Sambo* who also carried a green umbrella.

⁹² *The Gem ABC and Picture Book* (McLoughlin Brothers: New York, 1898): 4.

⁹³ Bryan F. Le Beau, "African Americans in Currier and Ives's America: The Darktown Series," *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures*, no. 23 (Spring 2000).

⁹⁴ Le Beau 79.

⁹⁵ Philip E. Orbanes, *The Game Makers: The Story of Parker Brothers from Tiddledy Winks to Trivial Pursuit* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004).

⁹⁶ Murray 122.

⁹⁷ The puzzle was introduced in 1875 with a different box cover design which showed the national representatives standing in a group with Uncle Sam. Founded in 1867 by Elisha G. Selchow, this New York based company started as a box manufacturer and eventually evolved into a game company. Like McLoughlin Brothers, Selchow & Righter produced illustrated product catalogs and employed traveling salesmen armed with samples, making their products available to most, if not all, of the nation. For a complete history of Selchow & Righter, see Paula Petrik, “The House That Parcheesi Built: Selchow & Righter Company,” *Business History Review*, 60 (Autumn 1986): 410-437.

⁹⁸ According to racial stereotypes of the late nineteenth century, the Chinese ate rodents, and thus it was very common for prejudicial imagery of Chinese to include rodents in this era.

⁹⁹ Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Legally, most Native Americans were in fact not American citizens at this time, and would not be until the Snyder Act of 1924.

¹⁰² For more on the unusually stringent (by nineteenth century standards) enforcement of the Parcheesi copyright see Paula Petrik, "The House That Parcheesi Built: Selchow & Righter Company," *Business History Review* 60 (Autumn 1986): 410-37.

¹⁰³ This date is from Rick Tucker, ed. *The Game Catalog: Us Games through 1950*, 8th ed. (Dresher, PA: American Game Collectors Association, 1998).

¹⁰⁴ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 46, 48.

¹⁰⁵ David J. O'Donoghue, *The Life of William Carelton: Being His Autobiography and Letters, and an Account of His Life and Writings, from the Point at Which the Autobiography Breaks Off*, Two vols., vol. 2 (London: Downey & Co., 1896), 355.

¹⁰⁶ While these were board games, the basic objective of rounding up pigs is one that originated in Charles M. Crandall’s 1888 sensation “Pigs in Clover,” a dexterity puzzle in which marbles had to be moved through a maze of concentric circles into the center “pen.” Hundreds of thousands of “Pigs In Clover” were sold. See Inez Bertail and Marshall McClintock, *Toys in America* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 195-97.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 274.

¹⁰⁸ For more on African American jockey imagery see, David Pilgrim, "Question of the Month: Lawn Jockeys," Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, Ferris State University, <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/question/july08/>.

¹⁰⁹ John Daniel Meyer, *A Handbook of Old Mechanical Penny Banks*, 2nd ed. (Tyrone, PA: John Daniel Meyer, 1952), 136-50.

¹¹⁰ McClintock, *Toys in America*, 278.

¹¹¹ Jèurgen Cieslik, Marianne Cieslik, and Ernst Paul Lehmann (Firm), *Lehmann Toys : The History of E.P. Lehmann, 1881-1981*, 1st English ed. ([London]: New Cavendish Books, 1982), 139.

¹¹² Karal Ann Marling, "American "Argyrothecology," Or the Art and Commerce of the Penny Bank," in *Money in the Bank: The Katherine Kierland Herberger Collection*, ed. Corine Wegener & Karal Ann Marling (Minneapolis: Minnesota Institute of Arts, 2006).

¹¹³ Carole Rogers, *Penny Banks: A History and a Handbook* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977).

¹¹⁴ "Toys That Reflect History!!!," *Antique Toy World* 5, no. 11 (November 1975): 8.

¹¹⁵ Corine Wegener, "Money in the Bank: The Katherine Kierland Herberger Collection," in *Money in the Bank: The Katherine Kierland Herberger Collection*, ed. Corine Wegener & Karal Ann Marling (Minneapolis: Minnesota Institute of Arts, 2006), 11.

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Chapter Three

Doll Diplomacy: Learning How to Get Along with International Playmates

“Some people think that dolls are only for children. They are wrong if they think only a child can learn from a doll. Dolls can teach us all an important lesson: how to live in peace. On the shelf, the African woman stands next to the Chinese peasant, the Indian stands shoulder to shoulder with the French aristocrat. These little people never speak an unkind word. They bear silent witness to the power of love. In their tiny world there are no wars and no hatred. They reflect the beauty around them and quietly point the way for us to follow.”¹

Beatrice Alexander Behrman, better known as Madame Alexander, spoke these optimistic words upon the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of her successful doll business, the Alexander Doll Company. Madame Alexander knew something about the power of dolls, their “nearly universal” appeal, and their potential to broaden a young child’s knowledge of the world.² In 1935, just a year after Adolf Hitler declared himself the leader of Germany, Alexander introduced a line of international dolls representing children from nations around the world. This was not the first or last time a series of international dolls was introduced to the American toy market. Indeed, dolls representing children of different nations have been a mainstay in the American doll industry since the late nineteenth century. Dressed in traditional folk costumes, the dolls personify an idealized member of a distinct national group. International dolls are also often found in the form of souvenir dolls that can be purchased in many countries where a doll in native folk costume serves as an “authentic” memento of a trip to a foreign land. However

American international dolls differ significantly in their function. The American international doll reproduces popular understandings of foreign “Others” in the form of an instructive and highly consumable children’s plaything.

A major part of the appeal of dolls is that they are essentially miniature people. Doll play typically requires some miniaturization in order for a child to simply hold the doll. A side effect of this is that by virtue of their smallness dolls can be easily identified. French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss called this shrinkage the “virtue of reduction,” whereby “the object as a whole seems less formidable. By being quantitatively diminished, it seems to us qualitatively simplified,” and this “fosters an illusion of intellectual understanding that is at the same time pleasurable and empowering.”³ The miniature as toy “is a device for fantasy” that can be explored within any number of non-determinative contexts.⁴ For the child, the doll has a “playable” quality; it can be animated in whatever world the child imagines. Furthermore, dolls are “cute.” As Lori Merish has argued, cuteness is preoccupied with Otherness: it domesticates the Other by blurring social distinctions like us and them.⁵ Thus, miniaturizing foreign bodies in the international doll gives the child control over a world outside of her own and a secure window through which to see who else is out there and to imagine herself in relation to them. But without the child’s powers of animation, the doll is silent and frozen in time, a nostalgic representation of its subject.⁶ As a result, the international doll’s effectiveness as a tool for teaching children about foreign Others is largely dependent on the child’s play behavior. Nevertheless, for over one hundred and fifty years, American international dolls have provided children with an informal education about foreign Others. This chapter begins with an exploration of the origins of international doll series, and then

examines significant international doll series from the twentieth century to consider their potential for promoting international goodwill

Anson D. F. Randolph's "National Costumes" Paper Dolls

The earliest identified example of the international doll series in the US is a set of paper dolls titled "National Costumes: A New and Instructive Amusement for the Young," printed by Anson D. F. Randolph of New York in 1857.⁷ The handsome set was sold in a large wood box, and featured one doll and sixteen costumes representing fourteen countries, as well as a nun and a lady of the "French Court of Louis XIV."⁸ It is one of only two known paper doll sets made by Randolph, whose firm was primarily a publisher of religious books.⁹ Given the early date of this paper doll set, at a time when colored illustrations were hand painted and distribution networks had yet to be nationalized, these paper dolls would have been quite expensive and probably had limited distribution. The likely recipient of such a paper doll set would have been white, female, between the ages of five and fifteen, and the member of a wealthy east coast family.

The "National Costumes" doll was illustrated as a brunette woman with dark eyes, fair skin, and delicate facial features, offering a visual flexibility in her ethnic identity; none of her features were too ethnically specific. The costumes focused on European countries or regions, including: Bohemia, Circassia (now Southwestern Russia), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. Most represent basic folk fashion, though several specify the costume as that of a peasant, as in "German peasant," or in the case of France, a "fisher girl." In addition to the visual representation of national costumes, the "National Costumes" were contextualized by an accompanying booklet with descriptions of each of

the countries represented.¹⁰ The booklet describes the geography and climate, the people and government, and the religion of the country or region. As a set, the unillustrated booklet along with the illustrated costumes fits into the “manners and customs” genre of children’s books described in the previous chapter, including the communication of hierarchies based on simplistic understandings of cultural differences.

The most interesting aspect of the booklet’s commentary is the anonymous author’s advocacy of public education and criticism of the oppression of women and the poor. Though public education was not yet a national phenomenon in the United States of 1857, it was a goal held by many, particularly in New York, the center of the common school movement. The author praises Sweden where, “The common people are industrious and fond of reading. The government provides schools in all important places, and the people are intelligent and well educated.” Driving home the point, the Swedish costume shows the woman holding open a book that she appears to read. In contrast, he criticizes natives of Italy and Greece for their lack of education stating, “The Italians of the lower classes are generally idle, ignorant, and superstitious,” and, “The Greeks are a gay, thoughtless, uncultivated people. The women are handsome, but fond of dress, and uneducated.” Two important things are happening in these comments which indicate the presence and influence of both progressive and pseudo-scientific ideas in circulation in the mid-nineteenth century, and how those ideas were passed on to children. The first is that the author makes an argument for racially determined behavior. While Italian and Greek immigration to the United States would not peak until after the 1880s, bringing with it increased prejudices against “the Mediterranean races,” he does seem to reference ideas about the inferior racial stock of Southern Europeans.¹¹ However, he also alludes to

the possibility that they could become “cultivated” by way of education. Secondly, by criticizing the uneducated state of women in Greece, he presents his readers (who are likely young females) with a statement of support for women’s education, an idea promoted by Mary Abigail Dodge, one of the authors Randolph published.¹²

The author’s comments on Circassia and Turkey take this pro-woman sentiment further by declaring that women should be regarded with respect. On Turkey, the author explains, “The Turkish women are not respected by their husbands and sons.” While the author adds that, “The men have several wives,” he offers no other explanation of how the men disrespect women, though in describing Circassia (an area near the Caucasus Mountains located in present day Russia) the author writes, “The Circassians are celebrated for their fine physical form; and the women for their beauty. The women are subject to the men, and the life of a woman is considered by law, only half as valuable as that of a man.” Here he explicitly states his assessment of the value of women in Circassian culture and finds it inadequate. While the other countries described are named as either Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Greek Orthodox – all Christian religions – only Circassia and Turkey are named as countries with “Mohammedan” populations - Turkey almost exclusively so, and Circassia “a mixture of Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Paganism.”¹³ It may be that the strong criticism of the position of women in these two societies is a criticism of Islam as it was perceived in the West. The comment on the beauty of the Circassian women is notable because in the nineteenth century the Circassian was widely viewed as the epitome of “white beauty” especially as popularized in song and popular culture.¹⁴ However, in this paper doll collection, with only one doll

providing the body and face for all of the national costumes, it is the costume and not the face that represents Circassia.

In other sections, the author addresses economic disparity and the treatment of the poor. On Hungary, the author notes, “The Hungarian nobles are very rich, and oppress the poor who live upon their lands.” On Russia: “The Russian noblemen are very rich, and live magnificently; but the peasants, or serfs, who live upon the lands of the noblemen, are poor and ignorant, and have to work very hard; they are bought and sold with the land.” These comments on the treatment of serfs take a sympathetic view of the poor and powerless, and condemn the undemocratic nobility. Given the book’s source, the sketch of Russian inequality may be interpreted as a subtle critique of slavery. Anson D. F. Randolph was not simply a publisher of religious books. During the Civil War he published a number of letters, sermons, and books supporting the Union cause and decrying slavery, including *Christianity and Emancipation, or the Teachings and Influence of the Bible Against Slavery* written by United Church of Christ pastor Joseph Parrish Thompson.¹⁵ Randolph may have in fact written the booklet accompanying the paper dolls, as at the time it was not uncommon for publishers to create short works for their own press.¹⁶ Thus, Randolph’s personal abolitionist views may have been woven into the book. Whoever the author was, his anti-nobility position fits well into an anti-slave labor point of view. Though serfdom was not the same as slavery, the idea of ownership of people is quite similar whether the property comes with the people or the people are the property. Furthermore, the Russian Peasant costume is the only one in the set to include a child, here shown barefoot and holding the hand of his mother while she holds a rake in her other hand, perhaps off to the field to work. In the context of slavery,

the inclusion of the child further calls upon the viewer to save future generations from this injustice.

While Randolph's "National Costumes" paper doll set surely rose from the popularity of manners and customs books and games, it added an additional play aspect to the genre, the ability to dress and undress, thereby altering the identity of the subject at will. Rather than just reading about the habits of people of other countries, the child playing with these paper dolls could act out the prescribed manners and customs with the enclosed doll. Whereas most manners and customs books focused on male subjects, here the doll is an adult female which may have made it easier for the child to simultaneously bond with her in a mother-child manner, and to assert her will over the doll in a way that she may have not felt comfortable with a male doll.

The "National Costumes" paper dolls introduced the international doll series, but would not become a genre of their own until nearly forty years later when the toy industry was booming and imagery of "nations of the world" became pervasive in American visual culture. By the 1890s, international paper doll series were widespread but, by this time written descriptions of the subjects were almost entirely absent, as a visual language of nationality was firmly in place, largely aided by advertising trends set in motion by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

The 1893 Chicago World's Fair & "Others" as Cultural Commodities

Like other world's fairs before and after it, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago had a far reaching impact on American life. Robert Rydell and others have argued that the world's fairs were nation building affairs, "intended to win popular support for national imperial policies," and the Chicago World's Fair was

particularly designed “to send a signal to Americans and to the rest of the world that the American nation had been rebuilt and that American civilization now rivaled anything Europe had to offer.”¹⁷ In doing so the fair’s planners imagined an America whose advancement lay in “overseas economic expansion and, if necessary, on extending America’s political and military influence to secure economic ends.”¹⁸ Tied into this argument were ideas of racial hierarchies, which positioned all non-white races below the supposed superior white race, and thus promoted the idea that inferior races were in need of a guiding hand. Indeed, a strong sense of “us” and “them” is important to any nation building project, and the Chicago World’s Fair with its physically distinct Midway showcasing ethnic and racial others from around the globe did just this.

Advertising developed for and during the fair played up the idea of the world coming to see what America had to offer. Typically, it relied upon “nations of the world” imagery, with people of various nationalities gathered around an American product, invariably represented by Uncle Sam or Lady Liberty. In addition to supporting the economic expansion of the US economy, insistently pushing American products onto foreign markets, such imagery created a visual short-hand for the nations represented, providing the viewer with the ability to quickly recognize and organize bodies, while also describing an ethno-racial hierarchy supported by colonialism - much like the design of the fair’s White City and Midway.¹⁹ These visual markers of difference were important to establishing clear notions of “us” and “them.”

In general, ethnic imagery was pervasive in the nineteenth century. Stereotypical ethnic imagery could be found in “trade cards, advertising posters, print ads, sheet music, and even greeting cards.”²⁰ However, the “nations of the world” imagery was not entirely

about prejudicial stereotypes. Fath Davis Ruffins explains that this imagery, “also depicted how to live in a heterogeneous society,” where non-white peoples could be “united in their consumption of American products.” For life in immigrant America where people were not treated as equals, “equality as consumers” was the consolation prize.²¹ A typical example of “nations of the world” imagery dating from the time of the Chicago World’s Fair is a trade card for paint varnish with the tag line, “Uncle Sam Supplying the World with Berry Bros. Hard Oil Finish.” The illustration on this trade card shows Uncle Sam distributing large cans of varnish to men representing various nations. There is: John Bull of England, identifiable by his rotund belly and red tailcoat, a Scotchman in kilt and tam o’shanter, a stereotypical Chinese coolie with a queue and loose tunic over short pants, a Native American naked from the waist up save for a necklace made of animal claws and a feather atop his head, and a stereotypical Irish Paddy. Ultimately the late nineteenth century “nations of the world” imagery operated in multiple ways, making global diversity manageable, commodifying that diversity for easy consumption, while at the same time spreading often misinformed and highly judgmental preexisting ideas about foreign Others.

Imagery of “nations of the world,” inspired by the world fairs, quickly spread throughout American visual culture, especially in commercial art. In a study of turn of the century tobacco art, Dolores Mitchell found a prevalent arrangement of bodies in these images, the white body “invariably commands the highest position in a pyramidal or semicircular composition,” with the non-white bodies typically gazing up at the central figure who does not make eye contact with them.²² Furthermore, the white body is frequently seated on a throne, while the non-white bodies “recline on the ground, or lean

on a prop, signifying closeness to nature and lack of self-control[...] A harmonious mood and a stable composition conveys that each race is content with its place in the scheme.”²³

Though often beautifully executed, this imagery embodies ideologies about foreignness and white supremacy that bombarded the American public. The explosion of color printing after the introduction of chromolithography in the 1870s, along with the massive growth of the advertising industry and expanded distribution networks provided by the railroad meant that few Americans were spared this imagery, giving “advertising unprecedented power to stimulate desire and mold visual consciousness.”²⁴ The child’s world was not untouched by the trend, as costumes of foreign lands became a favorite theme of paper dolls.²⁵

Rise of the International Paper Doll

The history of paper dolls can be traced back much further than the Chicago World’s Fair, to the French *pantin*, or jumping jack, of the mid-seventeenth century. The earliest paper dolls appear to have been an amusement for the wealthy, but by the nineteenth century, the cost of paper and printing became less formidable, and paper dolls made their way to the middle class.²⁶ Early paper dolls were primarily made in Britain, France, and Germany. The earliest known paper doll printed in the United States was “Fanny Gray,” published by Crosby, Nichols & Company of Boston in 1854.²⁷ Randolph’s “National Costumes,” from 1857, was a very early American made paper doll. McLoughlin Brothers, the printer of so many children’s books and games in the second half of the nineteenth century, also produced a great many paper dolls.²⁸ McLoughlin offered their paper dolls in three sizes at corresponding price points: one-cent, five-cents, and fifteen-cents. The price range, as well as distribution networks put in

place after the Civil War, made paper dolls financially accessible to a large percentage of middle-class children. Before the 1870s the majority of paper dolls were hand colored using stencils and water-based paint, often by young factory girls, generally the children of immigrants in their early to late teens.²⁹ At this time, both boys and girls - though more frequently girls - aged anywhere from five to seventeen, played with paper dolls. The factory girls who painted the paper dolls, and were prized for their low wages and small, dexterous hands, might otherwise have been among the target audience for the dolls, but their class position had the effect of foreshortening their childhoods. As historian Steven Mintz has noted, the expansion of a work-free childhood for the middle-class meant more labor for working class youth.³⁰ The introduction of color chromolithography in the mid-1870s changed all of this. It not only improved the richness of the colors, but also lowered the cost of production, greatly improving the affordability of paper dolls, perhaps even making them accessible to working class factory girls.

In addition to being attractive and affordable, the advent of paper doll series, in which a complete set could be collected, enticed children to buy additional paper dolls.³¹ Storybook characters or families inspired many of these series, but it would not be long before people representing different countries became a regular paper doll series subject. These sometimes appeared in the form of soldiers of different countries – to appeal to boys – or folk dancers of different countries – to appeal to girls. As paper doll historian Anne Wallach explains:

“[I]n turn-of-the-century America, paper dolls taught children about a world wider than their own home towns. Many first learned about foreign lands from paper dolls that showed native costumes and flags of the nations.[...] Children of

foreign lands remained a paper-doll subject of interest for many years to come, widening the eyes of land-bound American children before travel was possible for any but the wealthy.”³²

Because paper dolls could be purchased for mere pennies, or even acquired for free in newspapers and magazines, they became popular with a wide swath of children. Their popularity led advertisers to take advantage of their appeal by incorporating them into advertising campaigns.

In fact, many of the international paper dolls that appeared in the 1890s were advertising paper dolls. In an era when collecting trade cards was a popular hobby with children and adults alike, paper dolls printed with a store or product’s name quickly became coveted by children. As Wallach observes, “Paper dolls were selling products almost as soon as they could be produced in volume. Small and flat, they could be tucked into products, sent through the mails, or included on packaging.”³³ Some product packaging was printed with a paper doll on it so that when the box was emptied, the doll could be cut out.³⁴ Other companies offered paper dolls as premiums in exchange for a designated number of product labels, a few one-cent postage stamps, or a combination of the two. Advertising paper dolls promoted everything from sewing thread, tobacco and pianos to coffee, sugar, and tonics. Many advertising paper dolls were “blanks,” stock paper dolls printed on one-side and sold to numerous companies who would then print their company information at the base or on the back of the doll, so that identical dolls could be found advertising different products or stores.³⁵

An example of late nineteenth century advertising international paper dolls is a set of sixteen paper dolls called “Native Costumes and National Emblems” offered by the J.

A. Pozzoni Pharmacal Company of St. Louis, Missouri in 1896. The dolls represented America, England, Holland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Turkey, China, Japan, Ireland, Scotland, and Russia. These were “head-and-shoulder” paper dolls, meaning each doll consisted of two die-cut pieces: one - the head-and-shoulder piece - depicted a person from the waist up, with torso, arms, and head and usually dressed in a shirt and headwear; the other – the clothing – consisted of an outfit on the lower half of the piece, an advertisement on the upper half, and a cut out in the center of the piece. The head of the head-and-shoulder piece was slid into the cut out on the larger piece, which was then folded down, with the advertisement becoming the backside of the doll. The arms of the head-and-shoulder piece could be placed in front of the doll’s thighs, securing the head in place over the body.

In contrast to the stereotypical representations in the Berry Bros. Hard Oil Finish trade card, the “Native Costumes” dolls represented young boys and girls with angelic faces. The child dolls were young, possibly around five years old (most with some remaining baby fat), and they were costumed in outfits that combined elements of native folk wear with national emblems, often imagery lifted from the representative country’s flag. The resulting combination was hardly an authentic folk costume of the country represented, but the inclusion of the emblems made the dolls’ nationality more visually distinctive, even when the nations represented bore physical similarities. The physical similarities could present a challenge in choosing a head for each body. Children are known to choose their own rules when playing, and particularly for the pre-reading child, figuring out which head-and-shoulder pieces and costumed bodies went together could have been a challenge with many physical similarities among the dolls.

Because all the doll bodies could accommodate any of the doll head-and-shoulders - allowing a child to put England's head in Japan's body to "mix" races for example – this kind of international paper doll created a play space for "racial mixing." In fact, boy heads could be put in girl bodies and vice versa, further allowing children to experiment with societal norms. For those children who wished to stick with the implied rules, the "correct" head could be identified by the headwear that was designed to match the correct outfit. For example, the torso piece for the Turkish boy wears a hat with little gold medallions sewn along the brim. The correct costumed body, marked "Turkey" just below the feet, has matching embellishment along the shirt placket, which is also decorated with a crescent moon and star, the design on the Turkish flag. Other international paper doll sets went a step further in avoiding any confusion by also labeling the torso piece, perhaps in deference to the perceived dangers of racial mixing. Clark's O.N.T. Thread offered a similar set of head-and-shoulder international paper dolls on the torsos of which they printed, for example, "Scotch Boy" and "Italian Girl." With this text printed on the dolls, there could be no confusion about their ethnic or gender identity.

Given that the majority of the dolls represented Western European countries, visual cues to ethnic difference were subtle to nonexistent. Instead their national identity – here based on folk costume and nation-state iconography - is emphasized over an ethnic identity. Even the two Asian dolls have a skin tone that is identical to the other dolls, their heavier eyebrows, just slightly slanted, and black hair serving as the only markers to differentiate them from the other dolls. It is their headwear that makes them match their more obviously foreign costumes – China's features a dragon and Japan's a red sun. The

faces representing America and England could easily be brother and sister, only the headwear and gender match them to the America outfit, a dress of stars and stripes, and the Britain outfit, a shirt with a Union Jack and short pants. The Mexican boy has hair and eyes only slightly darker than the Dutch boy's. Through their physical similarities the dolls promote a kind of human unity, but it is reliant on the choice of mostly white European nations. At the same time, they promote the notion of distinct political nations with distinct folk cultures.

As with most advertising paper dolls, the backside of each of the "Native Costumes" dolls was printed with an advertisement. These dolls were in fact advertising blanks, a stock set that could be purchased from a printer and then printed with an advertisement by any company. In the case of the set offered by Pozzoni, the dolls were used to advertise Pozzoni's Complexion Powder. This powder was touted as giving a smooth, pale complexion. That it was advertised on paper dolls in which all the dolls have remarkably similar complexions may have been an ironic coincidence, or perhaps Pozzoni selected this set precisely for the dolls' relatively light skin. The same "Native Costumes and National Emblems" dolls were used by a number of companies including Cordova Coffee, Merrick's Spool Cotton, and Sarica Coffee.³⁶ It is worth noting that cotton and coffee are two commodities associated with both colonial rule and darker skinned labor. When these connections are added to this nations of the world imagery, the paper dolls further succumb to colonial fantasy with children scrambling to expand their holdings by collecting them all, truly making the Other a collectible commodity.

The advertisements on advertising paper dolls suggest their audience included both children and adults. The advertisement on the back of Pozzoni's Austria doll reads:

“Where did you get those pretty paper dolls? Mamma ordered them for me from the man that makes Pozzoni’s Complexion Powder. Mamma thinks there is nothing like Pozzoni’s Powder; it makes her look so nice. Papa uses it too after shaving. And then they give you such a pretty puff box with each box of powder you buy.”

The inside of the dress (back of the unfolded outfit piece) was also printed with advertisements. These are targeted more specifically at the buyer of household goods, the lady of the house. One flap explains the benefits of the dolls, “They are very instructive and amuse children by the hour,” and instructions on how to order a complete set of paper dolls by sending in six cents in postage. The other advertises Allen’s Hygenic Fluid, “a cleansing and healing vaginal wash and injection.”³⁷ (What children would have made of this is unclear.) The paper dolls did double duty as instructive of products for the adults of the house and as instructive playthings for the children of the house, teaching something of international children and their national emblems, as well as promoting a feel-good internationalism of inclusion through its friendly representation of international children, but, they also displace the Other by making difference nearly invisible. Other companies such as Lion Coffee, McLaughlin XXXX Coffee, Barbour’s Irish Flax Thread, and None Such New England Mince Meat produced advertising international paper dolls throughout the 1890s and into the turn of the century, but all from this era operate in the same way – they focus mainly on Western European countries, and when they do include more exotic countries, physical differences are intentionally kept to a minimum. These paper dolls do not reproduce the grotesque racial caricatures found in late nineteenth century popular media because the dolls were meant to be endearing to

children, and a friendly internationalism is much easier to achieve when differences are so minor. While this is in a way a progressive message of common humanity, it is not truly open to real, perceptible difference, making it a quite limited internationalism.

Perhaps the best known example of these nineteenth century international paper dolls were the Brownies. The Brownies, characters created by the illustrator Palmer Cox, first appeared in 1883 in the children's publication *St. Nicholas Magazine*. The elf-like Brownies had a line of books in which they went on adventures, and were among the first children's book characters to be licensed to toy and advertising companies. An all male group, the Brownies had comically large heads, round bellies, and spindly legs. Their unusual bodies, large eyes, and wide mouths made them easily recognizable, and they were hugely popular, particularly with boys.³⁸ They appeared on rubber stamp sets, ten-pin games, dolls, and in advertising campaigns ranging from soap to the Kodak Brownie camera. Cox illustrated dozens of Brownie characters, but the most popular and recognizable were the Dutchman, Turk, Sailor, Dude, Policeman, Clown, Uncle Sam, Scotchman, Chinese, Indian, John Bull, and Canadian, each dressed in an outfit suggestive of their background. Another mainstay of the Brownie band was the "Plain Brownie," a Brownie dressed in a short jacket, leggings, and a stocking cap. He bears no stereotypical ethnic markers, and though he might be best described as "white," he operates as a "blank" Brownie. In this sense he establishes whiteness as the standard from which all other Brownies deviate. Because the Brownie facial features are all so similar, by changing the Plain Brownie's outfit and perhaps altering his skin color, he could easily become any one of the ethnic Brownies. However, by designing many of the

Brownies characters around an ethnicity or occupation, the Brownies essentially represented social types that a child could add to his or her visual dictionary.

In an advertising campaign for Lion Coffee, a major coffee brand in the late nineteenth century, the Brownies appeared in two series of paper dolls, the first in 1892 known as the “Standing Brownies,” and the second in 1895 known as the “Riding Brownies.”³⁹ The first featured Brownies with removable heads and the second, one-piece Brownies who could be attached to the back of an animal. In the second set, the ethnic Brownies were matched to an animal associated with their country of origin, for example the Englishman rode a fox, the “Esquimau” a polar bear, the Canadian a moose, Uncle Sam a buffalo, the Irishman a pig, the German a St. Bernard dog, the Russian a wolf, and the East Indian an elephant. Though stereotypes about costume are employed in the Brownies, the overall effect is silliness mixed with interracial cooperation. The Uncle Sam Brownie is just as funny looking as the Turkish Brownie. In their popular book series the Brownies were frequently seen working together to achieve something - harvest a field of apple trees or repair a family’s broken Christmas presents for example - and this kind of unity sent a positive message to children about the possibilities of cross-racial harmony. However, it is important to note that the Brownies were not humans. In fact, according to toy lore, whenever humans stirred, the Brownies quickly disappeared, only to return when the humans went away again. Though they perhaps inspired some children with a vision of an interracial community to which they could aspire, the brotherhood of “Plain” and ethnically specific Brownies only existed in the land of fairies and elves, and it seems likely that, unlike the all human “Native Costumes” paper dolls, the Brownies’

role was more that of fantasy characters designed to amuse with their exotic costumes and comical antics.

Early 20th Century Commercial International Paper Dolls

By the dawn of the twentieth century, the cost of paper dolls was such that nearly every family could afford them, and the dolls gained near universal popularity with girls in particular. The broad appeal and low cost of paper dolls in the early twentieth century led several major newspapers to include a sheet of paper dolls in the Sunday paper. Paper dolls of foreign children and costumes were included. The *Boston Herald* ran a “Boy Soldiers of All Nations” series in 1905, the *Boston Globe* ran a “Dolls of the Nations” series in 1909, and the *Boston Post* ran a “Folk Dance of the Nations” series in 1911.⁴⁰ The first of these featured a single boy of about seven or eight years old wearing a contemporary outfit of his country, with a military uniform that he could wear over his everyday clothes. The latter two depicted a girl in underwear with folk costumes that she could be dressed in.

Women’s magazines also took advantage of the paper doll craze. At the turn of the century, magazines like the *Ladies Home Journal* and *Women’s Home Companion* were important vehicles for promoting middle class ideology. Though their primary audience consisted of white middle-class women, it was understood that the children of the house were often secondary readers of the magazines.⁴¹ Thus they often included articles, comic strips, and cut-out activities for children.⁴² *Women’s Home Companion* even included a monthly section titled “For Younger Readers.”

A popular series of paper dolls published in *Ladies Home Journal* featured the character Lettie Lane. From 1908 to 1915, artist Sheila Young presented a page of paper

dolls featuring Lettie and her friends and family nearly every month. The occasion of Lettie's older sister's wedding provided an opportunity to send her sister on a honeymoon around the world in a series titled "Lettie Lane's Around-the-World-Party," which ran from 1910 to 1911. The paper dolls from this series represented people Lettie's sister met on her travels. These included a Chinese boy and girl, a Norwegian boy and girl, and their nurse, and a French girl with a Punch and Judy theater.⁴³ The focus on children was appealing to the child audience, and the numerous outfits provided for each character demonstrated both traditional folk costumes, and everyday play clothes. *Ladies Home Journal* had a large circulation, giving Lettie Lane and her exotic friends access to a large number of homes across the nation as well as the *Ladies Home Journal* stamp of approval. These were paper dolls of which a middle class (or aspiring middle class) mother could approve. Other women's magazines followed *Ladies Home Journal's* lead and added a monthly paper doll. *McCall's* magazine featured the "Around the World" paper doll series illustrated by Berta and Elmer Hader from 1916 to 1920; and *Women's Home Companion* magazine introduced their "Companion Paper Doll" in 1920, which included main character Margery May's Japanese friend Tamaki who was featured with both traditional Japanese kimono and Western style play clothes, perhaps because her traditional outfit was not suitable for play, in 1921.⁴⁴

A curious example of the international paper doll in the early twentieth century, is the "Polly Prim's Cousins of the World" paper doll set published by the Acmeograph Company of Chicago in 1911. This set featured a fold-out folder in the shape of a large red brick house which held five sheets of paper dolls, one with Polly Prim and her brother Billy, and the others with her "cousins" Nanki Poo and Patti Sing of Japan (creative, but

hardly authentic Japanese names), Hans and Gretchen of Holland, Alphonse and Isabella of Spain, Donald from the Scottish Highlands, and Noreen from County Kildare, Ireland. No explanation is given as to how all these people came to the big red brick house, but the format of the folder indicates that all of these “cousins” can be found inside. Each of the children is given two outfits, for the foreign children, both outfits are of native costumes, so unlike the Lettie Lane dolls, this set does not Americanize Polly’s cousins with an alternative “Western” outfit. However, it does, at least rhetorically, make the foreign children related to the brunette, blue-eyed, light-skinned American Polly, and not merely her friends as most similar paper doll sets implied. In this way, “Polly Prim’s Cousins of the World,” told children we are all family.

These examples demonstrate the prevalence of the international genre in manufactured paper dolls, their widespread distribution, and the variety of concepts for and approaches to introducing foreign Others as paper dolls. They also represent the ways that a “doll cosmopolitanism” was being established in the world of dolls. No longer tied to the selling of commodities, or the more didactic manners and customs genre, these dolls began to more strongly suggest an interconnectedness (dancing, parties, cousins) and a beauty in difference.

Home Made Paper Dolls

Paper dolls were so popular in turn-of the century America that it was common for children, especially little girls, to design their own paper dolls as well as additional costumes for their commercially made paper dolls. As Ann Wallach explains, “Handmade dolls were always an alternative for creative, as well as for poor, children.”⁴⁵ Children’s reception of the ethnic imagery found in their playthings is next to impossible

to tease out, however we can sometimes see the influence of that ethnic imagery in home made toys. Paper dolls made by Emily Redington Heath, the daughter of a bank president in Waterville, Maine are a fine example of the impact international paper dolls had on one child – and probably more children - in the early twentieth century. Among a collection of twenty-eight handmade paper dolls a young Heath made between approximately 1915 and 1920, are: Atoo, an Eskimo girl; San-San, an Asian girl; Peg, an Irish girl; Galli Cupi, an Italian girl and Chloe, a black girl with shabby patched clothes.

Heath's dolls incorporate basic understandings of her subjects' backgrounds. For example, Atoo has short, shaggy black hair, and wears a one-shouldered tunic and lace-up boots with curled up toes, which appear to be made of leather or suede. She has two additional outfits - a hooded jumpsuit made of white fur, perhaps polar bear, and a fairy-like outfit consisting of a full knee-length purple skirt with yellow bell accents, a green and yellow top, and green lace up boots with curled toes. Here it seems Heath knew about Eskimos and clothing made from arctic animal hides, but she has also added a whimsical twist. Perhaps Heath imagined that even Eskimo girls like to play dress up and the fairy outfit was Atoo's play costume. Heath's San-San has slanted eyes and short black hair, and has a tonsure, or shaved spot, at the top of her head. Heath may have gotten the idea for the tonsure from advertisements for Jap Rose Soap that appeared in the same period she made her dolls, and which frequently showed a pair of Japanese children, the Jap Rose Kids, including one with a tonsure. However, San-San's clothes appear to be for a girl. She wears a pink slip with green polka dots, and also has a very well drawn pink kimono with white obi and a black round brimless cap with a small topknot. Yet tonsures were typically worn by boys, so it calls into question Heath's understanding of this

practice and exposes the limits of what she was able to glean about Asian culture from ethnic imagery. Perhaps closer to Heath's own life, Margaret, nicknamed Peg, has red bobbed hair with bangs and wears a slip and black Mary Jane shoes. Heath seems to have particularly enjoyed drawing outfits for Peg. She has seven different outfits, including a shamrock costume, a folk dancing dress with shamrock accents, and a white ruffled party dress, also with shamrock accents. Similar shamrock adorned outfits were common for Irish international paper dolls. Finally, Galli Cuppi has long black pigtails each adorned with a small red rose. She has large black eyes, and wears a yellow and red dress, while her skirt has a visible repaired rip. Galli Cuppi has no additional (surviving) outfits.

Heath wrote the names of her dolls on their backsides, names that reflect her vivid imagination as well as her working knowledge of ethnic and racial archetypes. The backs of the dolls also show that the paper she used to make the dolls were originally bank slips. As the daughter of a bank president, she surely could afford to buy paper dolls. Indeed her designs indicate that she had a strong knowledge of commercially produced paper dolls, and thus she likely did own a number of purchased paper dolls. Heath's home made dolls all share characteristics of the popular commercially made international paper dolls of the period and indicate that Heath was not only familiar with this type of ethnic imagery, but also that she was able to reproduce it in her own hand.

Particularly interesting among her creations is the African American Chloe doll. Following the character Aunt Chloe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the name Chloe was often given to black maids in late nineteenth and turn of the century popular culture. Heath was apparently aware of this tradition. Her Chloe doll has dark black skin and bright red "pickaninny" style hair, a series of little braids sticking straight out from her head. It is

possible that Heath chose to use red for the hair to distinguish it from the black of Chloe's skin, but the red juxtaposed with the black makes for a striking and somewhat garish contrast. Chloe's red mouth is reminiscent of both blackface minstrelsy and Topsy paper dolls, which were based on another character from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The Chloe doll wears a blue slip with a red and white-checked patch on one side. She has four dresses, including one red everyday dress with a red and white-checked yoke, and a repaired tear on the front of the skirt, and a frilly white party dress with a bright red sash. Her other two dresses are similarly pristine. Despite Chloe's stereotypical physical appearance, her clothing indicates that Heath was also willing to see her as a girly-girl who liked to wear pretty dresses.

Due to the fact that international doll series focused on people from other countries, and typically excluded African countries, blacks were rarely a part of international paper doll series. The exclusion of African countries in the international doll series may have been an economic choice, a way to reduce the cost of paper and ink, or it may have reflected a general lack of knowledge about or interest in African cultures. Whereas the native costumes of specific countries of Europe and Asia were well known, African countries and their customs remained a mystery for many. One rudimentary understanding of African native dress consisted of merely a loincloth, a rather limited option for paper doll play, which is so tied to the act of dressing and undressing. For example, around the turn of the century, the British firm Raphael Tuck & Sons released a German printed collection of die-cut, embossed paper figures titled "Races of Mankind" that included a Zulu Warrior.⁴⁶ This set of all male paper dolls had no extra outfits to dress in, and were instead printed wearing their costumes. The Zulu Warrior had no

visible clothing, the shield carried in his left hand covered his genitals and his only other adornments were his headband and necklaces. It is not clear how available this set would have been in the United States, but it likely would have primarily appealed to boys with its lack of females and additional costumes.

The costume problem was just one impediment to African paper dolls; another was recognizable national lines. The Scramble, or Race, for Africa that began in the late nineteenth century resulted in areas of Africa changing hands several times over, borders being drawn and redrawn, and ultimately the divvying up of most of Africa among the European powers. This period of political instability in Africa may have caused some confusion about how to represent (and in the case of European colonies, *who* to represent) the ever changing nations of Africa, as well as posed a challenge in educating American children about the continent. Furthermore, African Americans never appeared as representatives of America in the nineteenth and early twentieth century international doll paper doll series. Whereas toymakers sometimes allowed Native Americans to represent America in earlier manners and customs books and card games like McLoughlin Brothers' "Game of Nations," they did not extend this role to African Americans. This seems to be an issue of African Americans bearing a too uncomfortable presence in America, one that was not as easily assimilable as the subjects included in the international paper doll series. Blacks did occasionally appear in storybook paper doll sets, for example the above mentioned Topsey from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and as rural inhabitants or domestic servants, including the ever popular Mammy. These types of paper dolls were likely the inspiration for Heath's Chloe. But as far as the international

paper dolls' role as teachers of geography and diplomacy, Africans and African Americans were essentially nationless.

International Conflict & World War I

World War I presented an opportunity to introduce children to the countries involved in the conflict. The paper doll page of the women's magazine *The Delineator* featured Allied soldiers of different nations on furlough in their native land, including an Italian and French soldier in 1918. Illustrated by Corwin Knapp Linson, the pages showed both the Allied soldier and his family, as well as a scene from his town that could be cut out and set up as a prop.⁴⁷ These paper dolls were likely popular with boys and girls as they celebrated both soldiers and their families, and were somewhat instructive in their illustration of towns in Europe.

While the war may have brought children's attention to Europe for new reasons, it did not end children's interest in the costumes of foreign countries. The popular paper doll character Dolly Dingle, created by Grace Drayton, was featured in the magazine *Pictorial Review* from 1916 to 1933. In 1923, the "Dolly Dingle's Travels" series depicted Dolly's visit to children of post-war Europe, including Belgium, Spain, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy. Drayton's illustrations of children are best described as cute. Much like her still popular Campbell Soup Kids, they bear her trademark chubby rosy cheeks, innocent saucer eyes, and dimpled knees and elbows. The charming nature of Drayton's cherubic characters makes for very appealing and thus sympathetic subjects. This is perhaps most evident in the character of Dolly's friend, "Little Pierre the War Orphan." The Belgian Pierre has two outfits. The first, a patched pair of short pants worn with sagging stockings and clogs represents, "The suit Little Pierre wore when the Red

Cross found him.” The second outfit, a neat striped collared shirt, bright green short pants, and a French flag in one hand shows, “Pierre’s lovely new suit Dolly’s mother bought.” Here the war orphan’s problems have seemingly been solved with a new outfit, but Pierre’s rescue represents something more than a makeover. On the one hand, Dolly’s mother represents the United States as patron of post-war Europe, financially investing in our allies’ recovery. On the other hand, it is kind-hearted *children* of the world that present the prospect of a children’s cosmopolitan alliance that can prevent future war orphans. Also included with the Pierre doll is his dog Fidel, described as, “Pierre’s faithful friend who never left him.” The adult world has largely failed Pierre, but his loyal dog serves as a model of how we should treat each other. Undoubtedly, Pierre’s depiction promoted sympathy for victims of the war, particularly orphaned children, and above all loyal friendship among children of different nationalities. All the characters in the travel series were introduced as “Dolly’s friend,” promoting a kind of simple cosmopolitanism, an imagined alliance. “Dolly Dingle’s Travels” was so popular that the New York publishing firm of John H. Eggers Co., Inc. reprinted them on cardstock in a two series book set, and Drayton illustrated a new travel series in 1929, which included trips to Mexico and China – extending the alliance further across the globe.⁴⁸

New Trends in Education

In 1922, *Ladies’ Home Journal* introduced a paper doll page based on Lucy Fitch Perkins’ *Twins* children’s book series. Beginning with *The Dutch Twins* published in 1911, these books told the story of a set of twins from different times and places, and were commonly used in primary schools at the time.⁴⁹ Perkins later described her impetus

for writing the books as a recognition of “the necessity for mutual respect and understanding between people of different nationalities if we are ever to live in peace on this planet.”⁵⁰ The paper dolls brought a great number of foreign children to the *Ladies Home Journal*, including Japanese, Irish, Eskimo, Mexican, Belgian, French, Scotch, and Italian twins, with illustrations of a boy and girl and their folk costumes, as well as a pet common to their region. The paper dolls, illustrated by Jessie Louise Taylor, were accompanied by a short story about the twins’ lives written by Perkins. The *Twins* books and paper dolls, as well as Perkins’ thinking about the need for the characters, foreshadowed a movement in public education to expose children to different cultures of the world and find ways to celebrate them.

Three-Dimensional International Dolls

A survey of American toys reveals that children have been long fascinated with depictions of racial and ethnic difference in their dolls. The Topsy-Turvy doll was a popular cloth American folk doll found throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and continues to be made today. It featured a white doll wearing a long dress on one end and a black doll on the other. Flipping the doll’s skirt up or down exposed one or the other dolls. This doll is thought to have been inspired by *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, with the white doll representing Eva, and the black doll representing Topsy. However, the doll far outlived the popularity of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, most likely due to the intriguing two-in-one nature of the doll, the spectacle of two races sharing one body, and the visual contrast in the two dolls.

In 1923, the Change-O-Doll Company of New York introduced a modern take on the Topsy-Turvy doll, this time a doll sold with multiple heads that could be attached to a

single doll body, one at a time. *Playthings*, the leading toy industry trade journal, described the Change-O-Doll as follows: “Various character heads, such as clown, negro, and Chinese, together with appropriate dresses, are supplied in attractively boxed outfits at popular prices, making the Change-O-Doll, as Mr. Kramer [the company owner] says, a ‘whole family of dolls in one.’”⁵¹ The Berwick Doll Company sold a similar doll called the Famlee doll from the 1920s into the 1930s. The Famlee doll had eighteen different heads available, typically sold in sets of three heads plus one doll, including a Chinese boy, American Indian girl and boy, “Colored” girl and boy, and two types of clowns. As the name implied, the heads of these dolls could make up a “family,” united by their shared body, despite their obvious physical differences. Like the head-and-shoulder “Native Costumes” international paper dolls, the child playing with a Change-O-Doll or Famlee doll could change its identity by simply swapping its head and costume, and like the Plain Brownie, the doll’s body served as a blank. However, by including clowns in the selection of heads, all of the heads take on the quality of being characters rather than identities. Plus, the doll body’s light skinned arms and legs do not match several of the doll head options, implying that the doll’s natural state, again like the Brownie, is white.

Some educators also believed that dolls wearing the folk costumes of various nations could instruct children in world geography and culture. *Playthings* reported on doll exhibits at the Wisconsin State Historical Museum in 1926 and at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum in 1928, that featured dolls collected from different countries, wearing traditional garb.⁵² The journal reported positively on the exhibits, claiming, “The dolls not only help to teach geography but the physical characteristics and dress of foreign people.”⁵³ A few years later Madame Alexander echoed this sentiment, and added

to it the importance of friendship, in her often repeated line, “Dolls should contribute to a child’s understanding of people, other times, and other places [...] A doll can undoubtedly become a child’s best friend.”⁵⁴

Beatrice Alexander and the Alexander Doll Company

The Alexander Doll Company introduced its first set of international dolls in 1935, marking a significant development in the history of American international dolls. The company began quite modestly in 1923 when Beatrice Alexander Behrman gathered her sisters and a few neighbors to sew dolls at her kitchen table.⁵⁵ Dolls had long been a part of Alexander’s life. She grew up above her stepfather’s small doll shop in Manhattan’s largely Jewish Lower East Side. There she learned about what made a quality doll, as well as what set the wealthy apart from the poor.

Alexander was born on March 9, 1895 in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the daughter of Jewish immigrants. Her Austrian mother, Hannah Pepper, arrived in New York from Russia where she had escaped the anti-Jewish pogroms. Her biological father died before or shortly after her birth, and she was raised by her mother and stepfather Maurice Alexander, a native of Odessa, who had apprenticed with a German toy, watch, and china repairman before he came to New York.⁵⁶ Her parents’ arrival in the United States coincided with a mass emigration of Jews from Russia, many of whom settled in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Beatrice’s stepfather’s training prepared him to open the first known doll hospital in the United States. Beatrice grew up just upstairs from the business, surrounded by the beautiful and expensive imported European china and bisque dolls her father sold and repaired, dolls few people in her poor neighborhood could have afforded to buy. She was well aware of her own poverty and she regarded with envy the

carriages and elaborate hats of the women who dropped off and picked up the dolls. Years later, Beatrice recalled, "When I was 11 or 12 I realized that there were poor people and there were rich people, and I leaned towards the rich. I wanted to have a carriage and a hat with ostrich feathers," a desire for finery that appears to have influenced her doll aesthetic and her resolve to succeed years later.⁵⁷

The Alexanders encouraged their four daughters to aspire to a life beyond the confines of the Lower East Side. Beatrice in particular excelled in school and in the creative arts. She graduated high school valedictorian in 1912 and was offered a sculpture scholarship in Paris.⁵⁸ Sadly, family financial problems prevented her from taking the opportunity, but her artistic skills did not go to waste. The start of World War I in 1914 resulted in an embargo against German imports and disrupted doll production in other parts of Europe. As most dolls in the early part of the twentieth century were imported from Europe, particularly Germany and France, the Alexander family's business was threatened with a lack of inventory due to the embargo.⁵⁹ Though Beatrice was by then married with a baby, she designed a cloth Red Cross Nurse doll and rallied her sisters Rose, Florence, and Jean to aid her in sewing dozens of the dolls to fill her father's store's windows. The doll sold well and saved the family business. The experience also inspired Beatrice to create her own doll business.

In 1923, Beatrice established the Alexander Doll Company with funds borrowed from family. She juggled designing, sewing, and selling while managing a small staff comprised of her sisters and neighbors. Though the high-end cloth baby and toddler dolls sold well, keeping the company profitable was a constant challenge. By 1926, Alexander persuaded her husband Philip Behrman to take over the management aspects of the

company.⁶⁰ Though the company had not yet achieved financial stability, Alexander strongly believed in her products and trusted her husband to gain control of the company's finances while she focused on her areas of expertise - design and production.⁶¹ Behrman was initially hesitant to leave his steady paycheck as a personnel manager at a large millinery firm, a job that provided a reliable source of income for their family. But Alexander swayed him with an ultimatum, telling him if he was unwilling to join the company she could always find another husband.⁶²

As the driving force behind the company, Alexander had few female American peers to look to for inspiration. One female doll maker whom Alexander greatly admired was Elena Scavini, known as "Madame Lenci," an Italian doll maker. After World War I, Alexander's father carried the elegant Lenci dolls in his shop, and the inspired Beatrice adopted the moniker "Madame" for herself around 1928.⁶³ This was not the first time Alexander reinvented herself with a name change. Her birth name was Bertha, a name she despised. As a girl with big aspirations she changed her name to Beatrice, a name she thought to be more elegant and more fitting for her reinvention from a poor girl from the Lower East Side to a refined lady.⁶⁴

By the late 1920s, Alexander dolls were carried by the finer department stores, including Macy's, Gimbel's, Marshall Field's, and FAO Schwarz, where they were marketed to the wealthy and upper middle class. Though the company offered dolls in different sizes at different price points so more parents could find a doll for their budget, Alexander dolls were never inexpensive, making them aspirational dolls for much of the middle class. Somewhat ironically, Alexander's aristocratic aspirations began to come true just as the Great Depression set in. As Americans turned to amusement and escapism

to endure the economic hardships of the 1930s, Alexander and other doll and toymakers discovered that many Americans were unwilling to deny their children small gifts even as money became ever tighter.

Searching for doll ideas that would sell despite the difficult market, Madame Alexander drew from her love of classic literature to design storybook character dolls. Inspired by Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, she introduced Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy, and Alice dolls in 1930. The dolls sold well, and when movie adaptations of the books appeared in 1933, re-issues of the dolls were bona-fide hits.⁶⁵ With this success, storybook character dolls became a mainstay of the Alexander doll line.

The Depression spurred an era of movie going, and undoubtedly part of the success of the *Little Women* and *Alice in Wonderland* dolls was due to movie tie-ins, a practice pioneered by Alexander.⁶⁶ For example, many stores held in-store promotions that displayed the dolls along with studio stills from the films. However, Madame Alexander initially saw this success as related to the appeal of classic children's literature and not Hollywood's influence on America's youth.⁶⁷ While she signed on to make composition dolls of the *Three Little Pigs* for the Walt Disney cartoon short that same year, she passed up the opportunity to sign a deal to make dolls in the likeness of child actor Shirley Temple the following year (1934), a decision she would long regret.⁶⁸ Ideal Novelty and Toy Company, the originator of the Teddy Bear and a fierce competitor for doll dollars, snapped up the offer and as a result sold millions of Shirley Temple dolls between 1934 and 1939. These dolls were sold in four sizes that ranged in price from \$3 to \$7, an impressive price in the 1930s.⁶⁹

Reeling from the Shirley Temple incident, Madame Alexander began to embrace popular culture as a source for doll inspiration. When the birth of the identical Dionne quintuplets Annette, Cecile, Emilie, Marie, and Yvonne on May 28, 1934 created a media sensation with newspaper articles, newsreels, and even feature films dedicated to detailing their lives, Madame Alexander recognized an opportunity.⁷⁰ Alexander secured an exclusive license to make dolls in the girls' likeness. As the girls grew, the company released new dolls to keep up with their growth. The dolls were such a huge hit that they have been credited with keeping the company in the black during the Depression.

Even before the company became a successful moneymaker, Alexander committed herself and her company to philanthropic causes, particularly Jewish causes. For a civically engaged Jewish toymaker, the rising threats to Jews in Europe would not have gone unnoticed. In 1928, Alexander joined the Women's League for Palestine, an organization that helped women in Palestine (later Israel) secure housing and employment.⁷¹ Her experience as the child of Jewish immigrants no doubt influenced her political worldview. The spread of fascism and the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe was alarming to many, but it would have been particularly alarming to a person like Alexander whose own parents escaped anti-Semitic persecution in Eastern Europe decades earlier. Her decision in 1935 to add international dolls to her line was likely as influenced by world events as by her own humble background as the child of immigrants.

The Intercultural Education Movement

Children growing up in the Depression were not only inundated with Hollywood imagery, at school and in neighborhood festivals, children were also indoctrinated into an intercultural education movement. This movement began in the 1920s, but hit a high

point in the 1930s as it became clear “that America was still a fragmented society, [and] that the alchemy of the Melting Pot had not worked.”⁷² The intercultural movement was particularly catalyzed as the spread of fascism in Europe and Adolf Hitler’s appointment as Germany’s Chancellor in 1933 prompted concerns about racial and ethnic intolerance in the US. Cultural integrationists organized local “Festivals of Nations,” folk dancing troupes, and school curriculum to promote intercultural understanding. Often these activities resulted more in romanticizing immigrant cultural heritages than in promoting any real dialogue between different ethnic groups, but for children these performance-based events were arguably “fun.” In 1934 Louis Adamic, “the pied piper of cultural integration during the Depression,” wrote an article in *Harper’s Magazine* proclaiming the need for intercultural respect and harmony.⁷³ That same year, the American Jewish Committee, based in New York, provided funding for school programming designed by the newly founded Service Bureau for Intercultural Education.⁷⁴

Ultimately, the intercultural education movement offered a child-friendly version of cosmopolitanism that challenged divisive nationalism and celebrated ethnic heritage within the limited, but relatively uncontroversial and thus safe parameters of folk festivals and related activities. Furthermore, within the realm of 1930s advertising and popular culture “ethnic imagery began to be constructed as the ‘authentic’ imagery of America.”⁷⁵ The dual impact of this cultural environment could be seen in international paper doll series. Around this time a notable change occurred in the naming of international paper dolls’ series. Samuel Gabriel Sons & Co. printed two identical paper doll sets under two different names: “Little Americans From Many Lands” (1929) and “Foreign Friends Paper Dolls” (circa 1930s), and Friendship Press, a Christian publishing

house, printed a series of paper dolls called the “Friendship Paper Dolls” in 1932 and 1933 that presented friends of various races and nationalities, including: “Charles, Our Negro Friend,” “Wenonah, Our Indian Friend,” “Pedro, Our Mexican Friend,” and “Angelina, Our Italian Friend.”⁷⁶ This change in language, the use of the designation “friends,” and in the case of “Little Americans From Many Lands” even describing the subjects as Americans, marked a shift in tone towards the foreigner from one of permanent outsider to one of potentially welcomed neighbor.

Madame Alexander, a well-read New Yorker, active in Jewish philanthropic organizations, and raising a high school-aged daughter, would have been well aware of this intercultural movement and the changing trends in paper doll names. Again, due to her family’s background as Jewish immigrants, she would have also been quite sensitive to the rising threats in Europe and racial and ethnic intolerance in the US. Furthermore, as a businesswoman, she would have seen a marketing opportunity, a chance to make a doll that could both tie in to the intercultural education movement and support her humanitarian concerns.

Madame Alexander’s International Dolls – The First Generation

The introduction of a line of international dolls in 1935 represented Alexander’s desire to promote peace and understanding across national lines, her own version of doll cosmopolitanism in which dolls of all nations could be members of a shared community. Madame Alexander introduced a total of twenty-one international dolls between 1935 and 1939. These were 7 or 9-inch tall composition dolls with painted eyes and mohair wigs. Some of these dolls remained on the market for only two or three years, while others were available for as long as eight or nine years. Unfortunately, none of

Alexander's notes or sales figures on these dolls have survived, and so one can only speculate why some dolls were sold for longer than others. Likely, some dolls were simply more popular. What is known is that Alexander wanted her international dolls, like all of her dolls, to be of the highest quality, with care paid to the accuracy of the dolls' costumes. As such, she traveled to the New York Public Library to research the native dress of her subjects in order to design the folk garb worn by her international dolls.⁷⁷ Attention to detail is what set Alexander's dolls apart from many of her competitors. The original seven international dolls introduced in 1935 represented nationalities Alexander would have likely encountered in New York - Polish, Czech, and Russian - as well as nationalities less common, but equally distinctive in folk costume - Finnish, Belgian, Chinese, and Spanish. These dolls, ranging in price from one to two dollars depending on size and complexity of costume, must have been successful enough to merit the expansion of the series over the next several years, despite the fact that company advertisements tended to focus on the storybook and movie tie-in dolls during this period.⁷⁸

There are several reasons why the Alexander international dolls may have been popular. Undoubtedly, some parents bought their children an international doll that represented their own ethnic background. Cultural pride has never been fully removed by outward assimilation. However, many of the dolls represented countries with very little representation within the United States. Likely an Egyptian (1936-1940), Eskimo (1936-1939), or Persian (1936-1938) doll served as an exciting image of a far away land rather than a reminder of the motherland. Because they were relatively expensive, it is unlikely

that many if any children owned a complete set. Nevertheless, the dolls were also naturally collectible, as they complemented each other in theme and even in appearance.

There was something very identifiable about each one of the twenty-one dolls. Each was made with the same face mold – a mold known as the “Tiny Betty” or “Little Betty,” depending on the size. Thus, the little Dutch girl had the same innocent gaze as the little Chinese girl. A decade later there would be much talk of the need for “anthropologically correct” ethnic dolls, but in Alexander’s vision of children from around the globe, the only real difference between them was their costume, hair and eye color, and occasionally skin color. In this way, the Betty face is a kind of blank slate, reminiscent of the Plain Brownie, from which a child from any nation can be conjured with the right accessories. Betty performs as universal child, emphasizing culture over race as the thing that differentiates us. And with no descriptive text provided with the dolls, as compared to the booklet provided with Randolph’s “National Costumes” paper dolls, the resulting dolls are similarly blank slates upon which a human child could apply her own ideas about personality, likes and dislikes.

Like Randolph’s “National Costumes” paper dolls, the critical article for each of the Alexander international dolls is its clothing. Since each doll had the same Betty face the costume is what most made it a Chinese, Egyptian, Italian or Spanish child. In fact, the costume could even make the child male or female, though the majority of Alexander’s international dolls were female. In addition to the costume, paint was used to make the eyes blue or brown, and in some cases to make the skin brown. In the case of the Chinese doll, for unknown reasons she was given blue eyes along with pale skin, blushed cheeks, black hair, a long Asian-style floral print dress, and an elaborate

headdress. The Egyptian doll on the other hand had brown eyes, long black hair, and skin painted a medium brown with blushed cheeks. Her costume, a long white cotton dress with a gold sequin belt, coordinating headdress, and white sandals, is evocative of Cleopatra. She is one of the few brown skinned internationals; the others included the Hawaiian girl and the Rumbero and Rumbera dolls, a Cuban boy and girl dressed in white ruffled dance outfits. Some countries, like Italy and Spain, were available as both girl and boy dolls. Boys were rare in the series and seem to have only been included when an interesting folk costume was available. For example, the Spanish boy with short black hair, blue eyes, and pale skin wears a toreador inspired costume including a red shirt, red rickrack accented black pants, and a black hat with red fringe detailing. All of the doll costumes are highly detailed and make for very attractive dolls.

A major difference between the Alexander international dolls and the earlier international paper dolls was price. A complete set of international paper dolls would have been possible for a large number of children in the early twentieth century, especially given the prevalence of free advertising paper dolls. Alexander dolls on the other hand, at one to two dollars for an international doll, were quite expensive for the time. An Alexander international doll would have been a treasured toy, and likely a good friend, for any child no matter its subject.

The intentional flattening of physical difference created a sense of commonality across a collection of dolls in highly distinctive, culturally specific clothing, which might otherwise mark them as fundamentally disconnected. The shared face communicated a shared humanity. A critical viewer might interpret the Betty face as forcing European features on all of the dolls and potentially creating an unintended consequence of

supporting assimilation and denying heterogeneity within a national group. However, the Betty face, with its large side glancing eyes, chubby cheeks, and small nose and mouth, represents a child no older than five or six years old, an age when most children still have babyish features that are fairly similar across racial and ethnic lines. Captured at this age, the Betty face corresponds to Alexander's version of simplified, non-threatening, and commercially viable cosmopolitanism in which all children are more similar than different. This is not Randolph Bourne's definition of cosmopolitanism, nor Horace Kallen's more political cultural pluralism. Alexander was not an intellectual or politician, and neither were her target customers. Furthermore, the Betty face was used for a wide variety of Alexander dolls from 1935 to 1944, including Alice in Wonderland, *Little Women's* March sisters, and Scarlett O'Hara, three of her biggest sellers. In fact, the Betty face was one of only three faces used during this period, making it easily identifiable as an Alexander Doll Company face (it also undoubtedly kept production costs lower than individual molds for each doll). This kind of ease of recognition offered Alexander some protection from knock-offs, and was an important branding tool. It also had the impact of sending the message that the Brazil doll was every bit an Alexander girl as was the Jo March doll; they are members of the same doll family.

Fittingly, Alexander displayed her international doll line along with her other popular dolls at the New York World's Fair in 1939, an event at which several ethnic festivals were staged.⁷⁹ The dolls were part of a toy exhibit sponsored by Macy's in the "Children's World" building.⁸⁰ Though the original theme of the fair had been "Democracy," when war broke out in Europe the theme was changed to "For Peace and Freedom."⁸¹ These dolls represented the desire for peace and freedom, but their

collectability also promoted another theme of world's fairs – the buy, buy, buy message of capitalism.

As much as Alexander seemed to espouse a vision of global friendship in the dolls, there was one notable absence from her international doll series. Germany, the apparent center of Europe's spreading fascism, was excluded from the series.⁸² While Alexander hoped to provide children with international playmates through this doll series, she drew the line at including the country ruled by Nazis. Furthermore, because these dolls were "international," the series did not include the group perhaps most affected by intolerance in the US at the time, African Americans, and thus, like the intercultural festivals, Alexander's international dolls might be accused of avoiding real dialogue about prejudice and racism in 1930s America.

However, separate from the international line, the 1936 line of Tiny Betty dolls included a black Topsy doll which was carried by the company for about three years. First introduced in Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the character Topsy had by the 1930s developed into a generic representation of an African American child, a kind of archetype of the black child. Alexander's Topsy doll is remarkable for how strongly it contrasts with Stowe's description of the character and earlier depictions of her, particularly the 1863 McLoughlin Brother Topsey paper doll. Whereas Stowe describes her as "one of the blackest of her race," "goblin-like," and with "woolly hair [...] braided in sundry little tails, which stuck out in every direction," this doll bears the large eyes, small nose and mouth, and perfectly formed round cheeks of the Betty face.⁸³ Her skin is painted a medium brown, her hair is neatly parted down the middle, and two pigtailed tied with red bows hang at her shoulders in sharp contrast to the pickaninny style

hair shown in the Topsey paper doll or even Emily Redington Heath's Chloe paper doll. This Topsy wears a clean white short-sleeved shirt with a red and white-checked full skirt. The skirt fabric suggests her rural background, but nothing about her is messy or ragged. Rather, she appears to evoke the charm and purity of heart that Stowe's character ultimately displayed. Though not a member of the international collection, she easily shares in those dolls' message of friendship across lines of difference.

Despite any shortcomings of Alexander's international dolls, compared to other toy makers - most notably the paper doll makers who often included internationals among their lines - the Alexander international dolls were by far the most diverse, branching out beyond Western Europe in their representations to include China, Mexico, Persia, Egypt, Brazil, and Burma.⁸⁴ The most common dolls in other international doll series were Dutch, Scottish, Spanish, Irish, French, and Swiss. By offering children the option of so many different ethnic dolls, Alexander essentially offered them the most diverse set of friends available in doll form. Doll makers like Alexander were well aware that children viewed their dolls as friends and not just as objects. Furthermore, as she put it, "we must always look for what is fine and beautiful in every person."⁸⁵ Though her international dolls did not break free from the exoticization of earlier international dolls, they did aim to show children the beauty of ethnic Others.⁸⁶ As with her other dolls, the internationals were a market success. In 1936, the Alexander Doll Company was named one of the top three doll companies in America, and Madame Alexander was proclaimed "the Queen of Dolls."⁸⁷

Following the missed opportunity of the Shirley Temple doll and success of the Dionne Quint dolls, the Queen quickly learned the profitability of celebrity tie-ins, but

the introduction of her international doll line also revealed her commitment to producing dolls that sent a positive message to children. The dolls reflected the growing presence of ethnic imagery in American life, especially as celebrated by the intercultural education movement. But while ethnic folk festivals became a part of Depression-era life, particularly for school children, ethnic and racial prejudices were still deeply ingrained in American society. By miniaturizing foreign bodies, Madame Alexander's international dolls made these racial and ethnic Others less threatening, and showed them as just children, like any other children. This message would have likely been easy for children to absorb given their exposure to these ideas in school and through playthings, but perhaps more importantly the message was one that the adults who purchased the dolls reinforced through their purchase. In this way the act of buying an Alexander international doll may have helped alleviate adults' anxieties about foreigners, ethnic Americans, and global conflict – simplifying “those” people into cute dolls.

Madame Alexander's international dolls were the best known and highest quality of the genre, but her dolls were not alone in bringing attention to children from around the world. In the late 1930s, Georgine Novelties offered eighteen “Dolls of All Nations,” and Dream World Dolls sold thousands of inexpensive composition international dolls; Madame Louise Doll Company carried a line of international dolls including a “Refugee Doll” introduced in 1941, and the International Doll Company in Philadelphia offered ten allied country dolls in 1942. By the early 1940s, perhaps the most popular of the international dolls was one based on the Brazilian movie star Carmen Miranda. Alexander doll collectors date the earliest “Carmen” dolls to 1936, though this seems unlikely given that Carmen Miranda did not make her American debut until 1939.

Whenever the Carmen Miranda doll's debut, it was extremely popular. Alexander offered the doll in four sizes until at least 1943, each decked out in layers of ruffles and lace, gold hoop earrings, and a hat piled high with fruit. Though Carmen Miranda never officially licensed a doll, the costume is clearly inspired by Miranda's famous style, particularly the Tutti-Fruity hat she wore in the 1943 film *The Gang's All Here*. Other doll companies like Dream World Dolls made Carmen Miranda look alike dolls, but Alexander's were the most well known.

Good Neighbor Dolls

Carmen Miranda's Hollywood career was largely a result of the United States' Good Neighbor Policy with Latin America. The Good Neighbor Policy may have initially been an attempt to improve political relationships with Latin America, but by the first declaration of war in Europe in 1939 it had become increasingly about trade and war propaganda, and Hollywood took a lead role in the job.⁸⁸ Miranda's charm was well received in the US, and she eventually became the highest paid actress in Hollywood. That she wound up a children's doll is not surprising given the popularity of both international and celebrity dolls. Nor was she the only Good Neighbor toy. Besides Carmen Miranda, perhaps the most famous character to emerge from the Good Neighbor Policy was Jose Carioca, a Brazilian parrot who befriended Donald Duck in the 1942 Disney animated film *Saludos Amigos*. Rubber Jose Carioca toys soon followed. Less famous Latin Americans were featured in a number of paper dolls during the war years. *Women's Home Companion* featured a paper doll named "Itosita, Our Good Neighbor" that same year, with costumes for Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, and Bolivia making Itosita an ethnically flexible Latina. Saalfield Publishing Company's 1944 "Good

Neighbor Paper Dolls” set included four young women and two young men with twenty-four costumes representing eighteen Latin American countries. This set is notable for representing some phenotypic variation in the dolls, particularly the female dolls whose hair ranges from light brown, to auburn, to black, and whose eyes range from blue to brown. Their skin color is relatively light tan and does not reflect true the range of skin colors in Latin America, however overall the dolls are more representative of Latin Americans than seen elsewhere in international dolls. Furthermore, the costumes represent both traditional, often indigenous, folk costumes as well as more modern folk costumes, a gaucho outfit for example. These Good Neighbor dolls are remarkable for their frank acknowledgement of a government policy supporting American children’s friendship with foreign Others. Here we can see how international dolls could have played a role in indoctrinating children into understandings of Otherness. In this case, the objective is to extend positive feelings towards Latin Americans, so while the costumes include more traditional, exotic folk costumes - the kind that might most reinforce Otherness and are most associated with international dolls – the set also includes costumes that might seem more relatable to the child. Plus, it includes the more common raven-haired Latina, along with the perhaps lesser known auburn and brunette Latinas, allowing the child to choose the doll that most appeals to her while still reading the dolls as Latin American.

Post World War II Return of the International Doll Series

Madame Alexander seems to have been ahead of the curve in her representation of children from around the world as more similar than different. By 1945, Alexander’s international doll series was discontinued due to materials shortages brought on by World

War II. Just a few years later in 1949, Robert H. McCready, editor of the toy industry journal *Playthings*, wrote two editorials in which he praised children's ability to see past skin color and proclaimed the need for all people to open their eyes to their similarities. He concluded, "It may be that the best way to prevent war in the future is to educate our children along the lines of brotherhood and amity."⁸⁹ Alexander did not abandon the international dolls or the potential for doll cosmopolitanism. The line was modernized (a new plastic mold named Wendy was used) and re-introduced in the early 1960s, due in part to the return of the World's Fair to New York in 1964. In the intervening years children did not suffer from a lack of international friends. The children's magazine *Children's Playmate* featured a monthly paper doll page throughout the 1950s that frequently focused on children from different nations.⁹⁰ *Wee Wisdom*, a Christian children's magazine, also included international paper dolls as part of its international outreach program, which incorporated a pen pal program as well. These children's magazines emphasized education, so the foreign costumes promoted learning about the larger world as well as the making of friends.

Perhaps the biggest of the international dolls in this period was the Vogue Ginny doll. Ginny's Costumes From Far-Away Lands series was introduced in 1959 with seven dolls: Scandinavia, Hawaii, Holland, Israel, the Orient, Alaska, and the British Isles. These dolls were more affordable than Alexander dolls, ranging in price from one dollar to \$2.50, with an average price of two dollars.⁹¹ Unlike the Alexander dolls in which each doll was supposed to be a child from a foreign country, in this series the Ginny doll, a young girl with light skin and hair that ranged from blonde to black, wore a costume from another country, region, or US state with a large nonwhite population, and every doll

came with an educational sheet in which Ginny described her costume and the land it represented. In the case of the British Isles doll, Ginny explains that she got her outfit from a Scottish friend and then gives the names for some of her accessories. Through her costumes, Ginny experiences a kind of tourism and shares that experience with the child. The most interesting of this series is the Israel doll, representing a country that was barely eleven years old. Dressed in a striped dress with metallic accents, a white head veil, and a gold necklace with a Star of David charm, the doll capitalized on the novelty of the newly formed nation and exposed children to a small slice of contemporary geopolitics. The original Far-Away Lands series was only produced for a year, so perhaps Vogue's unconventional take on the international doll was not a hit with toy buying parents and was unable to drum up sufficient demand from children. If in fact the problem was poor sales, it would indicate the control the toy buyers – at this point still mostly parents, though children have had an influence on toy purchases since at least the 1930s – have in choosing the messages that get communicated to children through the toys they are given. The series was redesigned and reintroduced in 1965, but this time the dolls were no longer American Ginny in foreign costumes, and instead were little girls from foreign lands in native folk costumes. This version of the Ginny Far-Away Lands series lasted through the early 1980s, perhaps indicative of a preferred international doll model among children and their parents, one perfected by Madame Alexander.

Madame Alexander – The Golden Age

Madame Alexander's return to international dolls in the early 1960s also marked the golden age of the Alexander Doll Company. Alexander dolls were more popular than ever, and Mattel's Barbie had yet to take over the doll industry. Like her earlier

international dolls, the new Alexander international dolls became friends to American girls, teaching them that any differences between them and their international counterparts were minor. In the intervening years, other international dolls lines had come to prominence, including the noted Vogue Ginny dolls, and led to two short lived series by Mattel and Hasbro. The occasion of the 1964 New York World's Fair seems to have inspired a great deal of international doll making. As at the 1939 New York World's Fair, the 1964 fair found room for a message of cross-cultural understanding. This was primarily felt at the Pepsi-Cola sponsored UNICEF promotion, the Disney designed It's a Small World boat ride. The theme of the ride was "every child is all children," an idea that was represented by "several hundred identical child-dolls in varied national costumes."⁹² As Karal Ann Marling explains it, "the smiling figures all look just alike because, in the words of the song that play incessantly throughout the voyage, 'It's a small world after all!'"⁹³ This of course was not a strategy invented by Disney, or Madame Alexander for that matter, but it is one that she used with success for a number of years. As Alexander displayed her international dolls at the 1939 New York World's Fair, she also brought back her international line in time for the 1964 fair, and continued to innovate the genre with a wider geographic reach, and attention to sensitive world affairs. She made a doll for every UN member nation and was honored at UN Day in 1965.⁹⁴

Mattel's Barbie was perhaps also inspired by the 1964 New York World's Fair when, that year, Mattel added a Travel Costume Series beginning with a Japanese costume for Barbie, and followed by costumes for Barbie and Ken as they traveled to Hawaii, Mexico, Japan, and Holland. Like the original 1959 Ginny Costumes From Far-

Away Lands series, these costumes were souvenirs from trips abroad. Karen Goldman describes the costumes as, “a miniature reenactment of the U.S. middle-class’s increasing tendency to dedicate capital and leisure time to long-distance travel,” and accuses Barbie and Ken of “cultural cross-dressing.”⁹⁵ In fact, these costumes were not even sold with a doll; the child dressed a Barbie or Ken doll in the separately purchased costume which sold for as little as \$1.50 for a Hawaiian outfit or as much as \$3.50 for Ken’s *charro* costume from Mexico. So, unlike the Alexander international dolls, and even unlike the 1959 Ginny Costumes From Far-Away Lands dolls, for a Barbie dressed in a Travel Costume, that outfit was just one of many and not in any way part of her cultural identity. Instead, the costumes were more a part of her identity as a consumer, an identity the child could partake in through the purchase of additional Barbie outfits.

Alexander’s international dolls were more capable of asking a child to identify with the culture represented by her doll, and in the wake of her UN honor she seemed even more willing to push the boundaries of doll diplomacy. Whereas Madame had shied away from including a German doll during the build up to World War II, she boldly introduced a Vietnamese doll (who was not designated as either northern or southern so there was no implication of good or bad, enemy or ally) in 1968 at the height of the Vietnam War. This medium brown skinned doll, dressed in a pink silk tunic over black pants and topped with a wide brimmed straw hat, demonstrated that despite the on-going bloody conflict and one popular understanding of the Vietnamese as communist enemies, Vietnamese children were just as friendship-worthy as any others.

Two years earlier in 1966, Hasbro introduced a GI Joe “Action Soldiers of the World” line with WWII-era soldiers including a French Resistance Fighter, Australian

Jungle Fighter, British Commando, German Storm Trooper, Japanese Imperial Soldier, and Russian Soldier. Like Alexander's international dolls, these soldiers wore carefully researched costumes, in this case replicas of actual World War II uniforms.⁹⁶ Though Hasbro was careful not to call any of the soldiers enemies of GI Joe on the product packaging or in advertisements, as soldiers representing Allied and Axis countries, it was fairly obvious that some of the soldiers were "bad guys."⁹⁷ The bad guy status of the two Axis soldiers was compounded by their appearance. Hasbro commissioned artist Virginia Perry Gardiner to sculpt two new heads for the Soldiers of the World, one for the white soldiers and one for the Japanese soldier. As Gardiner described it, "They wanted faces that looked more ethnic."⁹⁸ Hasbro's official GI Joe history acknowledges that the Japanese soldier's face "featured stereotypically slanted eyes and a menacing visage," while the head used for the other soldiers had, "a more 'Nordic' face."⁹⁹ A close examination of the two heads reveals that both in fact have rather stern faces. These are soldiers ready for battle, and a GI Joe action figure is never supposed to look cute. However, the factor that seems to contribute most to the Japanese soldier's "menacing visage" is his slight frown which communicates a kind of disgust or contempt that is not present in the "Nordic" face. While the German soldier has the same face as the Allied soldiers, his swastika adorned uniform proclaims his enemy status.

Hasbro was founded and run by a religiously active Jewish family, making the German soldier all the more shocking. Indeed, Harold Hassenfeld, brother of company president Merrill Hassenfeld was reportedly horrified when he found out about the company's plans to release the German soldier. Merrill persisted, arguing that it was a necessary member of the World War II-era set.¹⁰⁰ In this understanding, the Action

Soldiers of the World were defined not as just international soldiers, but as soldiers of a particular historical moment who happened to represent different countries. Perhaps Harold was ultimately correct though, as none of the Soldiers of the World were strong sellers and the series was phased out after two years.¹⁰¹ Even twenty years after the end of World War II, it was impossible for Hasbro to convincingly produce German and Japanese soldiers who did not read as enemies. On the other hand, Alexander's Vietnamese doll, made at the very moment of the Vietnam war, resisted simple categories of good guys and bad guys. For Alexander, a doll - a miniature child - could not be good or bad based on its nationality.

Conclusion

Years after the introduction of Madame Alexander's first international doll series, Alexander recorded an album to commemorate the fifty-fifth anniversary of her company. On this album she spoke of the power of dolls, describing them as "little people [who] never speak an unkind word," as united in peace by love and beauty, as models for children and adults alike.¹⁰² Just three years later, Alexander's international line would face its greatest threat – the 1980 introduction of a Barbie international doll series. The Barbie internationals challenged Alexander's model of a single mold by using five different face designs, as well as by reintroducing didactic information about the dolls' countries, generally in the form of a first person description of the dolls' homeland printed on the back of the box. Perhaps due to the period in which they were introduced, a period in which no world war loomed, the first generation of Barbie international dolls lack the underlying tensions of global and domestic unrest as well as the message of international peace found in the early Alexander international dolls. The Barbie

international doll model succeeded in dominating the market, but the Alexander international dolls carried on, even occasionally making a political statement with the dolls. The 1985-1986 Philippine doll, with light brown skin and brown hair and eyes, wore a turquoise dress with a white lace collar and sleeves and red and blue flowers in her hair, representing Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos' political party colors. But after Corazon Aquino's successful presidential campaign, resulting in the election of the Philippines' first female president, the doll was redesigned in 1987 to reflect Aquino's signature color yellow. The new doll, dressed in a yellow dress with a yellow flower in her hair, seemingly not only replaced the corrupt Marcos administration, but also celebrated the achievement of a Philippine woman, a woman children could look up to.¹⁰³

Doll cosmopolitanism is just one way dolls can bear social and political messages.

From their origins in nineteenth century paper dolls, American international doll series have dolls introduced children to people from around the world, showing them what these other people might look like, and helping them imagine how they fit into that world. While their makers have incorporated racial Otherness into the dolls, they have increasingly done so in a way that emphasized a human commonality, and downplayed racial difference. This has at times occurred under the guise of "equality as consumers," and at other times under the guise of fantasy characters such as Palmer Cox's Brownies. In designing her doll utopia, Madame Alexander drew from the intercultural education movement that offered a child-friendly version of cosmopolitanism that challenged divisive nationalism and celebrated ethnic heritage within the limited, but relatively uncontroversial and safe parameters of folk festivals. Alexander intended her international dolls to serve as foreign friends and playmates for the children that owned

them. Their smallness and cuteness encouraged children to literally hold a foreign Other in a way that promoted an intimate friendship, blurring cultural differences between the child and the doll so that the doll was both a play object and a play partner. The dolls' identical faces showed them as alike beneath their layers of paint and clothing. This is was a model of thinking about race that would be rejected by some critics in later years, but Alexander's child and parent friendly cosmopolitanism represents one toymaker's attempt to create a shared community of respect for cultural differences that still rings true.

While none of these dolls engaged children in profound discussions of racial politics or exposed them to the power structures that construct racial hierarchies in society, the dolls were simply not intended to carry such a heavy burden. The intent was simply for the child to play with her international doll. Ultimately, by animating the doll into a friend and playmate, the child can create a space in which shared experiences and values can be explored, and in doing so the child can learn doll diplomacy. Dolls play an important role in a child's life. They offer children "security in an insecure world."¹⁰⁴ Through doll play children can travel to an imaginary world of fun, fantasy and hope. The international dolls Madame Alexander introduced in 1935 could take a child on a play date with a friend from halfway around the globe.¹⁰⁵ The opportunity to take one of these imaginary voyages offered a child temporary respite from the world of adults and international conflict. These dolls matter because they offer us insight into the role toys have played in children's informal education about foreign people and places, and how these friends can also present children with an alternative vision for the future, one free from racial and ethnic intolerance.

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- ¹ John Braden, music and lyrics, ed. *Madame Alexander: The Commemorative Album* (ASCAP, 1978).
- ² G. Stanley and A. Caswell Ellis Hall, *A Study of Dolls* (New York: E. L. Kellogg & Co., 1897), 3.
- ³ Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 74.
- ⁴ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 56.
- ⁵ Lori Merish, "Cuteness and Commodity Aesthetics: Tom Thumb and Shirley Temple," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosmarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University, 1996), 188.
- ⁶ Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 66.
- ⁷ Marion B. Howard, *Those Fascinating Paper Dolls: An Illustrated Handbook for Collectors* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1981), 28.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid., 30.
- ¹⁰ Howard's *Those Fascinating Paper Dolls* contains a complete transcription of the booklet's text.
- ¹¹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 43, 56, 61.
- ¹² Mary Abigail Dodge was a popular author who often wrote under the name Gail Hamilton. She supported women's suffrage and the end of slavery. See Mary Abigail Dodge, *A Call to My Countrywomen* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1863).
- ¹³ The reference to Paganism is somewhat unclear, but may refer to Zoroastrianism, a religion that had thrived in the Caucasus in ancient times. See Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 160, 263.
- ¹⁴ Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 222-23.
- ¹⁵ "Death of Anson D. F. Randolph," *New York Times* July 8, 1896. Joseph Parrish Thompson, *Christianity and Emancipation, or the Teachings and Influence of the Bible against Slavery* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1863), 9.
- ¹⁶ For example, Samuel Wood, Mahlon Day and Solomon King – New York based publishers of children's toy books who wrote some of their titles themselves. See, Gillian Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922* (London: Bodley Head, 1994), 75-76.
- ¹⁷ Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Press, 2000), 5, 8.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 9.
- ¹⁹ Fath Davis Ruffins, "Reflecting on Ethnic Imagery in the Landscape of Commerce, 1945-1975," in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in*

the Twentieth Century, ed. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Mattias Judd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 384-86.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 384.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 386.

²² Dolores Mitchell, "Images of Exotic Women in Turn-of-the-Century Tobacco Art," *Feminist Studies*, no. 18 (Summer 1992): 330.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 327.

²⁵ Anne Tolstoi Wallach, *Paper Dolls: How to Find, Recognize, Buy, Collect, and Sell the Cutouts of Two Centuries* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1982), 106.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷ Howard, *Those Fascinating Paper Dolls: An Illustrated Handbook for Collectors*, 13.

²⁸ See chapter 1 for a discussion of McLoughlin Brothers and their products.

²⁹ Child labor was inexpensive, keeping production costs low, and the child's small hands were prized for intricate details like painting illustrations. See Wallach, *Paper Dolls: How to Find, Recognize, Buy, Collect, and Sell the Cutouts of Two Centuries*, 15.

³⁰ Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 152.

³¹ Wallach, *Paper Dolls: How to Find, Recognize, Buy, Collect, and Sell the Cutouts of Two Centuries*, 16.

³² *Ibid.*, 26.

³³ *Ibid.*, 118.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁵ Maxine Maxson Waldron, "Bonnet Paper Dolls," in *Maxine Waldron Collection of Children's Books and Paper Toys* (Winterthur, DE: Winterthur Museum Library Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, n.d.). Collection 121.

³⁶ Lagretta Metzger Bajorek, *America's Early Advertising Paper Dolls* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1999), 16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Hall, *A Study of Dolls*, 16.

³⁹ Bajorek, *America's Early Advertising Paper Dolls*, 36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴¹ Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴³ Wallach, *Paper Dolls: How to Find, Recognize, Buy, Collect, and Sell the Cutouts of Two Centuries*, 35.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁶ The Raphael Tuck & Sons "Giant Relief No. 523 Races of Mankind" is undated, but attributed to 1880-1899. See Maxine Waldron Collection, accession number 79x357.553, location V. Books, scrapbooks, scraps, etc., Box 3. Winterthur Museum.

⁴⁷ Wallach, *Paper Dolls: How to Find, Recognize, Buy, Collect, and Sell the Cutouts of Two Centuries*, 45.

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- ⁴⁸ Mary Young, *20th Century Paper Dolls: Identification and Values* (Dayton: Collector Books, 2006), 102.
- ⁴⁹ Wallach, *Paper Dolls: How to Find, Recognize, Buy, Collect, and Sell the Cutouts of Two Centuries*, 54. For an analysis of the *Twins* book series, see Claudia Mills, "Toward Global Community: The *Twins* Series of Lucy Fitch Perkins," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 4-9.
- ⁵⁰ Stanley J. and Howard Haycraft Kunitz, ed. *The Junior Book of Authors* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1935), 295-96.
- ⁵¹ "News...Notes," *Playthings* (October 1923): 89.
- ⁵² "Dolls in Costume Teach Customs of Many Lands," *Playthings* (July 1926): 116. "Dolls Teach Geography," *Playthings* (August 1928): 129.
- ⁵³ "Dolls Teach Geography," 129.
- ⁵⁴ Stephanie Finnegan, *Madame Alexander Dolls: An American Legend* (New York: Portfolio Press, 1999), 49.
- ⁵⁵ Finnegan, *Madame Alexander Dolls* 18.
- ⁵⁶ Finnegan *Madame Alexander Dolls*, 12.
- ⁵⁷ Krystyna Poray Goddu, "A Personal Profile: Madame Alexander," *Dolls: The Collector's Magazine* (November 1988): 59.
- ⁵⁸ Finnegan, *Madame Alexander Dolls: An American Legend*, 13.
- ⁵⁹ Jewish Women's Archive, "JWA – Beatrice Alexander – The Alexander Doll Company," <http://jwa.org/exhibits/wov/alexander/adc.html> (October 6, 2008) and *Ibid.*, 15.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ⁶¹ Jewish Women's Archive, "JWA – Beatrice Alexander – A Shrewd Businesswoman," <http://jwa.org/exhibits/wov/alexander/shrewd.html> (October 6, 2008) and *Ibid.*
- ⁶² *Ibid.*
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 19. Jere Van Dyk, "The Magic of Madame Alexander," *Smithsonian* 31, no. 12 (March 2001).
- ⁶⁴ Finnegan, *Madame Alexander Dolls: An American Legend*, 10.
- ⁶⁵ The *Little Women* dolls were so popular that they have been issued nearly every year since. See Finnegan, *Madame Alexander Dolls*, 23-4.
- ⁶⁶ Jewish Women's Archive, "JWA – Beatrice Alexander – A Shrewd Businesswoman," <http://jwa.org/exhibits/wov/alexander/shrewd.html> (October 6, 2008).
- ⁶⁷ Adam George, "Creative Merchandising," *Playthings*, January 1934, 52. This article also features an advertisement used by Gimbel's for the 15-inch Alice dolls listing them for \$1.50, plus an additional dress for \$1.
- ⁶⁸ Finnegan, *Madame Alexander Dolls*, 25.
- ⁶⁹ *Playthings*, "Merchandise, Markets, and Men: Shirley Temple Doll," October 1934, 71. In adjusted dollars the 2009 equivalent would be \$3 doll at \$48.35, \$5 doll at \$80.59, \$6 at \$96.70, and the \$7 doll at \$112.82.
- ⁷⁰ The Dionne Quintuplets were the first identical quintuplets to survive birth. In an age before in-vitro fertilization they were indeed "miracle babies," however their story was also tragic. Born to poor farmers who were already raising five children, the babies were taken into government custody and made wards of the state as it was claimed the family did not have the means to care for them. The girls were raised at "Quintland" near their

family's home in Ontario where tourists could visit them and buy souvenirs. When the children were nine their parents successfully sued for their return, but the girls were never close with their family and all felt exploited by both the government and their family.

⁷¹ Jewish Women's Archive, "JWA – Beatrice Alexander – Generous Philanthropist," <http://jwa.org/exhibits/wov/alexander/generous.html> (October 6, 2008).

⁷² Nicholas V. Montalto, *A History of the Intercultural Education Movement, 1924-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1982) viii.

⁷³ Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 68-69.

⁷⁴ Montalto, *History of the Intercultural Education Movement*, 111-114.

⁷⁵ Ruffins, "Reflecting on Ethnic Imagery in the Landscape of Commerce, 1945-1975," 390.

⁷⁶ Young, *20th Century Paper Dolls: Identification and Values*, 108.

⁷⁷ Jewish Women's Archive, "JWA – Beatrice Alexander – An Innovative Designer," <http://jwa.org/exhibits/wov/alexander/design.html> (October 6, 2008) and Finnegan, *Madame Alexander Dolls: An American Legend* 23.

⁷⁸ Adjusted for inflation, one dollar in 1936 is equivalent to \$15.32 in 2009, so a two dollar doll would have cost \$30.64 in 2009.

⁷⁹ Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000) 95.

⁸⁰ *Playthings*, "Capitalize on the Most Highly Publicized Toys of 1939," May 1939, 36-38.

⁸¹ Rydell et al., *Fair America*, 95.

⁸² Many years passed before Germany was welcomed to the circle of doll friends. Alexander eventually added a German doll in 1962. Note that there was also no "African," or black skinned doll, other than the Egypt doll, which was painted a medium brown.

⁸³ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 258.

⁸⁴ The series included China (1935-1940), Mexico (1936), Persia (1936-1938), Egypt (1936-1940), Brazil 1937-1943), South America (1938-1943), and Burma (1939-1943).

⁸⁵ Braden, ed. *Madame Alexander: The Commemorative Album*.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ "Dolls—Made in America," *Fortune* 14(December 1936): 199.

⁸⁸ Dale Adams, "Saludos Amigos: Hollywood and FDR's Good Neighbor Policy," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 24 (2007): 289.

⁸⁹ Robert H. McCready, "The Spotlight," *Playthings* (May 1949): 80. — — —, "The Spotlight," *Playthings* (July 1949): 88.

⁹⁰ Wallach, *Paper Dolls: How to Find, Recognize, Buy, Collect, and Sell the Cutouts of Two Centuries*, 83-84.

⁹¹ Adjusted for inflation, two dollars in 1959 equates to \$14.56 in 2009.

⁹² John Canemaker, *The Art and Flair of Mary Blair: An Appreciation* (New York: Disney Editions, 2003), vii. Karal Ann Marling, "Imagineering the Disney Theme Parks," in *Designing Disney's Theme Parks: The Architecture of Reassurance*, ed. Karal Ann Marling (1997), 132.

⁹³ Marling, "Imagineering the Disney Theme Parks," 132.

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- ⁹⁴ Patricia R. Smith, *Madame Alexander Dolls, 1965-1990* (Collector Books, 1991), 2.
- ⁹⁵ Karen Goldman, "La Princesa Plastica: Hegemonic and Oppositional Representation of Latinidad in Hispanic Barbie," in *From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*, ed. Myra Mendible (Austin: University of Texas, 2007), 266.
- ⁹⁶ Vincent Santelmo, *The Complete Encyclopedia to GI Joe*, 3rd ed. (Iola, WI: Karuase Publications, 2001), 131.
- ⁹⁷ Hasbro's official GI Joe history rather unsuccessfully attempts to deny that any of the Soldiers of the World were enemies, see Derryl DePriest, *The Collectible GI Joe: An Official Guide to His Action-Packed World* (Philadelphia: Courage Books, 1999), 36.
- ⁹⁸ Santelmo, *The Complete Encyclopedia to GI Joe*, 129.
- ⁹⁹ DePriest, *The Collectible GI Joe: An Official Guide to His Action-Packed World*, 36.
- ¹⁰⁰ John Michlig, *GI Joe: The Complete Story of America's Favorite Man of Action* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998), 132-33.
- ¹⁰¹ DePriest, *The Collectible GI Joe: An Official Guide to His Action-Packed World*, 36.
- ¹⁰² *Madame Alexander: The Commemorative Album*, music and lyrics by John Braden (ASCAP, 1978).
- ¹⁰³ Fran Clark, "International Doll Series," *The Review [Madame Alexander Doll Club Newsletter]*, no. 1 (1996): 5.
- ¹⁰⁴ Smith, *Madame Alexander Collector's Dolls*, 1, 17.
- ¹⁰⁵ Though Alexander international dolls are still made, it was during the years 1935-1974 that Madame Alexander was most involved in the design of the doll series.

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