

the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries maintained as communication and performance in small groups? Once again, she looks at structure and content, this time the manipulation of modern media (television, compact disks, and video) to fit with the range of expression by children. We learn, through her fieldwork, that the children have latched on to media heroes including Michael Jackson and kung fu champion Jackie Chan, whose movements, texts, costume, and props are incorporated into the performance of the present using the structures of the past, including poetry and break dancing. We also learn how boys use computers to engage in informal interaction framed by access to games and the Internet. Although these chapters are vital in rounding out the range of child lore, they could be better connected to the previous chapters. They are not free floating, but it is plain Soileau has some trouble making cultural sense of these media movements.

In three appendices, Soileau presents teenagers' memories of their play and a further sampling of her collection. In the former, she has gathered a group of girls who are active in the Japanese club system, the *anime* where members of local clubs further themselves in the media presentation of rewriting literary works according to their perceptions of them. In this setting, the author asks the girls to reflect and remember their child lore. It is the only place where children are given voice to think about their lore, its manifestations, and its functions. Had Soileau given similar voice to the children she documented in her more than forty years of work, it would have enriched her study.

In the latter appendices we receive a treat: selections of Soileau's collection and a cluster of black-and-white photographs of children at play. Readers may not be entirely sure why the author has given us these gifts, but there is every reason to be grateful for them.

All told, *Yo'Mama, Mary Mack, and Boudreaux and Thibodeaux* has the potential to become a classic in the study of Louisiana's African American children's folklore. It is thoughtful, respectful, and honoring without being patronizing. And it is an encouraging work that brings to the literature an overlooked heritage in many of its manifestations.

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Doll Studies: The Many Meanings of Girls' Toys and Play

Miriam Forman-Brunell and Jennifer Dawn Whitney, eds.

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In a collection of essays called *Doll Studies: The Many Meanings of Girls' Toys and Play*, Miriam Forman-Brunell and Jennifer Dawn Whitney offer a critical review of how play with dolls and the construction of dolls have affected imaginations, ideologies, and identities. The editors divided the book into five sections: "Objects, Narratives, Historical Memories"; "Performance and Identity"; "Mediating Contexts of Play";

“Modernism and Modernization”; and “Commodifying Multiculturalism, Nationalism, Racism, and Girlhood.” From discussions of material culture and memories of girlhood in Germany to doll discourses in Ireland, from Bratz dolls and diasporic Iranian girls in Australia to Nicki Minaj and Harajuku Barbie, *Doll Studies* illustrates the growing importance of an international and interdisciplinary approach to the study of these universal toys.

The essays tend to contain post-structuralist theoretical perspectives with feminist epistemologies. The approach of these contributors, many of them among the newest wave of scholars, resembles the discourse in Miriam Forman-Brunell’s *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood* (1995), in which she traces the history of dolls in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and calls attention to the significant contributions women and girls made to establishing female identities through play with dolls.

Robin Bernstein’s essay provides readers with a thought-provoking study of nineteenth-century children’s literature and material culture. Many acknowledge John Newbery as the father of children’s literature. In 1744, Newbery published *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book: Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly*. The book contained several games and amusements, and Newbery paired its sale with a ball for boys and a pincushion for girls, making Newbery the first to link the commodities of books and toys for a single market. Bernstein cautions that many scholars of play fail to examine such an interdependence of children’s literature and material culture.

She devotes considerable attention to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 antislavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, noting that children—after reading the text—used dolls to act out its scenes of racial violence. She also refers to several horrific performances of ritualistic violence described in *Babyhood* (1897) by noted psychologists G. Stanley Hall and A. Caswell Ellis. As reported by a Minneapolis newspaper, children gashed the throats of black dolls, burned black dolls, and staged slave auctions. Bernstein argues that literature and material culture “co-scripted 19th century practices of play” and that “doll play was not private ... thus they further transmitted practices child-to-child” (p. 10).

In “The ‘Dollification’ of Riot Grrrls: Self-Fashioning Alternative Identities,” Meghan Chandler and Diana Anselmo-Sequeira examine the ways dolls can subvert gender expectations within the context in the Riot Grrrls movement from the early 1990s. A group of women initiated the movement after they held a meeting to discuss sexism in the punk music scene. The women decided that they needed to riot against a culture that failed to validate women’s experiences. In her research, Emily White noted that the term “grrrl” likely derived from the desire to focus on childhood, a time when girls enjoy the most self-esteem. Participants in the Riot Grrrl movement believed girls should actively engage in cultural production rather than be mere supporters of existing art. Chandler and Anselmo-Sequeira consider the ways Riot Grrrls used dolls in artistic performances and how such appropriations intersected with previous cultural meanings ascribed to the dolls. Establishing the importance

of Hall and Ellis's 1897 *A Study on Dolls*, in which the psychologists asserted that dolls fostered a girl's feminine identity, the contributors also look at the impact on such an identity of Riot Grrrls musicians—Courtney Love from the band Hole; Kat Bjelland from the band Babes in Toyland; and Katie Jane Garside from the band Daisy Chainsaw. Chandler and Anselmo-Sequeira argue that, although Hall and Ellis “seminally proposed that ideal ladylikeness was best embodied by the figure of the doll: a silent, and inactive object,” Riot Grrrls “reclaimed and reused dolls to dismantle longstanding notions about proper femininity” (p. 80). There is nearly a century of doll production that the contributors might use to enhance their thesis. They might also have focused more on the Grrrls themselves. Take for example, Courtney Love's relationship with dolls. While she “defied dominant expectations and investments in hygiene, self-containment, and beautification,” Love also collected hundreds of dolls with husband and musician, Kurt Cobain. When Cobain passed away, Love commissioned doll maker Dame Darcy to create a doll for their daughter. Dame Darcy used a lock of Cobain's hair to make the doll's hair. With this decision, the doll became an artifact of memory and mourning and embodied a long tradition of doll play.

The study of dolls provides a unique perspective for understanding how play constructs and disrupts girlhood. Many of these essays would be strengthened by illustrations since the analysis of dolls in cultural history often depends on the study of images. Still, *Doll Studies* is a thoughtful collection that demonstrates the impor-

tance of play and its material culture to social and cultural history.

—Michelle Parnett-Dwyer, *The Strong*, Rochester, NY

Jane Jensen: Gabriel Knight, Adventure Games, and Hidden Objects

Anastasia Salter

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Until recently, perusing just about any published history of video games might have given rise to the false impression that the industry is entirely driven by men. But such is not the case—it is only a matter of how games have largely been historicized. After all, historically speaking, video games are quite young. Most video game histories mark the beginning with William Higinbotham's analog computer game *Tennis for Two* in 1958—although some dispute even this, since video games did not become popular until the 1970s. Anastasia Salter, in her illuminating biography of an understudied industry figure, *Jane Jensen: Gabriel Knight, Adventure Games, and Hidden Objects*, offers the history of video games a much-needed intervention.

Jensen, Salter's subject, is an interactive storyteller for whom computer games—particularly adventure games—offered great potential. Best known for the Gabriel Knight series, Jensen brought thoughtful “hidden object” puzzle design and a novelist's attention to narrative and