

various species are nowhere to be found, although they have been much discussed elsewhere. But these are minor problems in this fine book authored by an eminent ethologist and play researcher partnered with a philosopher concerned about animals and animal issues. For readers who want to put fairness and play into a larger ethological, evolutionary, and philosophical context, this book will be a fine and enjoyable read.

—Gordon M. Burghardt, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN*

Work and Play: The Production and Consumption of Toys in Germany, 1870–1914

David D. Hamlin

Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007. Illustrations, references, bibliography, index. x, 286 pp. \$75.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780472115884

Toys, Consumption, and Middle-Class Childhood in Imperial Germany, 1871–1918

Bryan Ganaway

Oxford, England: Peter Lang, 2009. Illustrations, references, bibliography, index. xi, 287 pp. \$55.95 paper. ISBN: 9783039115488

If you believe the German toy industry's own hype, around the turn of the twentieth century it had cornered 60 percent of the world market and dominated its own domestic market. Even if you are skeptical about these particular numbers, it is certainly true that German toy makers were the most successful toy exporters in the world and profited more from foreign

consumers (above all in America and Britain) than from their compatriots. Given these sorts of connections, developments in Germany take on particular relevance for anyone interested in the changing nature of childhood and play in Europe and North America before World War I. Fortunately, we have in David Hamlin's and Bryan Ganaway's recent studies—both revised versions of their dissertations—good surveys of the development of the German toy industry and the cultural associations surrounding its products. Both use toys to illustrate the nexus of mass consumption, rising middle-class ideals, and changing notions of childhood that have been the focus of much recent research. Their works also implicitly suggest the value of a more holistic, transnational approach to the history of play and childhood.

Hamlin's work starts from a basic but profound premise: one cannot understand the rapid rise of Germany's toy industry in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without understanding both the structural economic changes that accompanied the rise of mass production and the shifting cultural meanings of toys that accompanied the rise of mass consumption. He links the two developments (mass production and mass consumption) through a sophisticated framework centered on the arrival of "modernity" in Germany. In particular, he is interested in illustrating the establishment and consequences of the middle-class ideal of the autonomous individual, an "agent capable of rational action, self-definition, and moral reflection and . . . the object of continuous state and social pressure" (p. 8). This construction is crucially important for Hamlin's overall analysis, as he makes it the precondition for the changes he charts in both the economic and cultural spheres. Tensions in middle-

class ideals of the family demand resolution through gift-giving rituals and the use of toys as educational resources. This demand joined with various innovations to spur the rise of a mass market in toys.

Competing visions of the ideal of the autonomous individual came into conflict, though, as Germans dealt with the anxieties attending this process. In essence, mass production and consumption liberated the individual to define him- or herself in new ways but also threatened the individual with homogenization and degenerative spectacle. Toys became tools (literally and metaphorically) for resolving these tensions in debates that really centered on the essential nature of the individual and how best to nurture it. Hamlin's sophisticated discussion is sometimes dense but always rewarding, and his overarching analytical framework is convincing. Although the vast and diverse material he includes does not always clearly relate to this framework, readers will not be disappointed with the quality of his research and insights.

Ganaway's work revolves around many of the same points that lie at the center of Hamlin's analysis. First, both push back the beginnings of mass consumption in Germany to the late nineteenth century (not a new argument, but one that the general literature should emphasize more). Second, both focus on the associations of toys with new visions of the family and education. In this regard, they admirably outline the rise of parent-regulated play as a pedagogical good, one that required the purchase of toys to help mold respectable citizens. Third, both are interested in constructions of modernity. Although Ganaway does not define precisely what he means by the term, he certainly sees the emergence of mass consumption as an important component.

Ganaway's analytical framework is less sophisticated than Hamlin's—and it sometimes gets lost in the details—but the story he tells is more focused as a consequence. Where Hamlin's interest lies mainly in the varied impacts and apparent paradoxes of modernity, Ganaway's lies in constructing a model of consumption as a vast public conversation. In essence, the production and consumption of toys creates the kind of public sphere described by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, a public space in which ordinary people negotiate with producers, various commentators, and each other over the central social questions of the day. The important roles ascribed to toys as both objects of desire and pedagogical tools meant that they reflected and mediated contemporary debates over gender, class, technology, and the nation. For Ganaway, consumption becomes a form of participatory citizenship. It is neither fundamentally good nor bad but rather a context within which parents, pedagogues, and playing children tried to position themselves. In this regard, toys allowed a measure of self-fashioning that Ganaway depicts as ultimately empowering, although he also acknowledges the ways that restrictive discourses could skew the process. His analysis of children's self-fashioning is particularly valuable in this regard. Through memoir literature, for example, he shows how young Germans could appropriate toys for their own purposes while also internalizing the fundamental lessons of the consumer society rising around them.

The works under review suggest new fields of inquiry. Both briefly make reference to the networks tying German producers to worldwide consumers, and they frequently refer to studies of other countries for context. It is hard to escape the conclu-

sion that here lies considerable untapped potential for research. Particularly given past and current concerns about the homogenizing effects of mass production and consumption, it seems that understanding how the meanings of products shift (or fail to shift) as they cross borders and how they are appropriated in different contexts could drive a new research agenda. More than mere comparison, investigations of networks could shed light on the production of global childhoods or play rituals, while detailing the limits of those networks can better clarify what remained unique about various local contexts.

A footnote on layout: both books are generally attractive, but readers may be dismayed by the number of typographical errors the publishers allowed into the final texts, especially Ganaway's—as in “mellow-dramatic” (p. 247). However, this obvious but ultimately minor flaw does not detract from the valuable contributions they make to the growing study of play.

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Barbie and Ruth: The Story of the World's Most Famous Doll and the Woman Who Created Her

Robin Gerber

New York: Collins Business, 2009. Bibliography, index. ix, 278 pp. \$24.99 cloth. ISBN: 9780061341311

While the title may lend itself to the assumption that this is a book about Ruth Handler and the invention of the Barbie doll, author Robin Gerber provides a much more detailed historical account of

the founding of the Mattel Toy Company, Ruth Handler's role in the company, the development of the world's most iconic doll, and Handler's fall from grace amid a probing investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Gerber presents her work as a nicely interwoven biography and business history of both Ruth Handler and Mattel. The author looks at Handler's early life and childhood in Colorado, her move to California in the 1940s, and her courtship, marriage, and business partnership with her soul mate, Elliot Handler. The Handlers founded Mattel in the 1940s, first as a Lucite picture-frame company before venturing into the toy business with the Uke-A-Doodle ukulele. Gerber explores Mattel's move to toy manufacturing and the struggles both Handlers faced, particularly Ruth, balancing a career and a family. The author analyzes Mattel's early marketing and production strategies and the financial woes of this start-up company. Through all of this stood Ruth Handler, portrayed by the author as a strong-willed, motivated, and savvy marketer and businesswoman. She was not afraid of trying new ideas, nor did she dwell on the company's early failures. By the 1950s, Gerber argues, Mattel began to make strides in the industry by reusing popular technology, such as a voice box mechanism, in a variety of toys and by gambling on a major advertising promotion on *The Mickey Mouse Club* television series, a move that shifted the entire industry towards marketing toys year round instead of the traditional time in the weeks before Christmas. Handler viewed this move as one of the best decisions the company ever made, and it provided a national platform for the introduction of the Barbie doll.

Gerber sees the design, manufactur-