

**Visualizing the Future:
Childhood, Race, and Imperialism in Children's Magazines 1873-1939**

by

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Visualizing the Future:
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University of Pittsburgh, 2020

Visualizing the Future: Childhood, Race, and Imperialism in Children's Magazines 1873-1939 argues that visualizations of children in juvenile periodicals from the turn of the twentieth century essentialize racial difference and naturalize white supremacy. I demonstrate that advances in illustration and print technologies during this era resulted not only in a vast increase in the number of images on the periodical page, but images that experimented with ways to visually present racialized bodies specifically for child consumption. My dissertation shows that the children's periodical press in the late nineteenth century not only used visuals to aggressively promote ideologies of white supremacy, but also spoke to an intimate public sphere of child readers who expressed great affection for these magazines which, for the first time in American culture, created a national media that catered directly to them.

Much of this project works to understand how racism intersects with printing practices, exploring how the act of visualizing race on the periodical* page reduced complicated ideologies of race and childhood to literal black and white. I explore how this practice was intensified by the visualization of children, arguing that these magazines took their cues on how to visualize children from eugenic and physiognomic practices of illustration and photography. This dissertation details how these white-authored magazines combined these visualizations of black and white racial difference with an understanding of the child as an embodiment of the future nation in order to idealize an American future in which white populations thrived and black populations struggled.

It further demonstrates how *The Brownies' Book*, edited by W. E. B. Du Bois, rejected these visual systems and creates a new visual system that asserted a vision of the future American nation based on the black child's positive potential. This dissertation closes with an exploration how these magazines participate in the project of American imperialism to further promote an ideology of white supremacy beyond the American landscape and into a global sphere.

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1.0 Introduction to Visual Culture and the Modern Child: Race and Imperialism in Children's Magazines 1873-1939

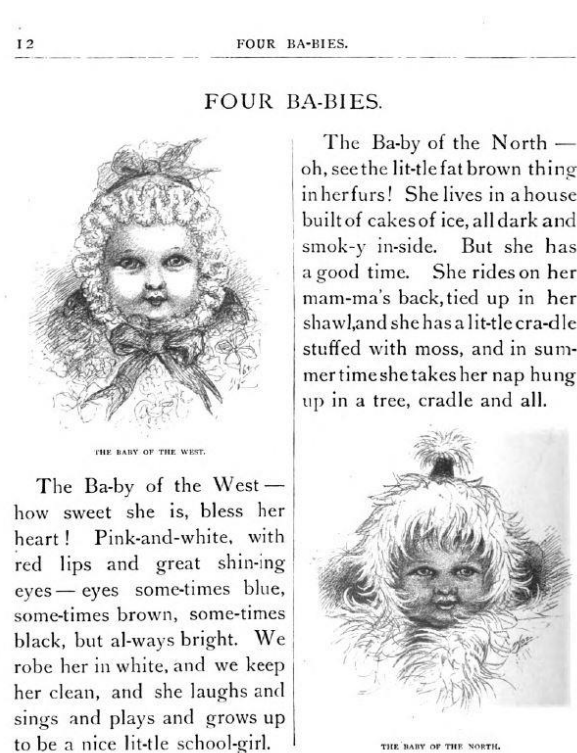


Figure 1. "Four Ba-Bies." *Babyland* (January 1882): 12. Courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Libraries.



THE BABY OF THE EAST.

The Ba-by of the East — the yel-low Chi-nese boy — see him smile! He's glad he is not a girl-ba-by. Then his feet would have to be band-aged tight to make them small. When he grows up he will eat rice with chop-sticks, and wear his hair in a great long pig-tail braid down his back; and at school he will have to learn sev-er-al thou-sand letters, in-stead of twen-ty-six like the Ba-by of the West.

The Ba-by of the South — oh, he's a lit-tle wild Af-ri-can! His moth-er sticks feath-ers in his tan-gly hair, and he wears a red blank-et. He likes to chew su-gar-cane, and he plays with big tusks of i-vo-ry. Per-haps white men will come some day and teach him to read; but I think he will be a great fight-ing chief when he grows up, and carry a sharp spear, and go to the wars.



THE BABY OF THE SOUTH.

Figure 2. “Four Ba-Bies.” *Babyland* (January 1882): 13. Courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Libraries.

“Four Ba-Bies,” printed in *Babyland* in January 1882, is a late nineteenth-century primer in white supremacy. This story, which balances the space of the text with that of the image, features four babies, “The Baby of the West,” “the North,” “the East,” and “the South,” effectively tying race to geographic location and suggesting to the readers of this American magazine that only the child who would live in the American nation, the “Baby of the West,” is white. The texts describing the non-white children are not explicitly derogatory, but instead they are keen to demonstrate differences in these racialized babies, especially in their lives and prospects. The story asks readers to understand the different races of the children in visual terms – notably, colored ones: the “Ba-by of the West” is “Pink-and-white,” the “Ba-by of the North” is a “lit-tle fat brown thing,” and the “Ba-by of the East” is a “yel-low Chi-nese boy.” Though the “Ba-by of the South,” identified as “a lit-tle wild Af-ri-can” is not given a color in the text of his story, he is identified as non-white

through his picture, in which his face is shaded darkly with black ink which stands out against the lighter shades of his clothing. His story also makes his racial non-whiteness clear when it says “Per-haps white men will come some day and teach him to read.” While the stories point out differences in these children’s baby lives, they also spell out differences in their future prospects, so that the “Ba-by of the West” will “[grow] up to be a nice lit-tle school-girl,” the “Ba-by of the East “will eat rice with chop-sticks, and wear his hair in a great long pig-tail braid down his back,” and the “Ba-by of the South” “will be a great fight-ing chief when he grows up, and carry a sharp spear, and go to the wars.” Again, while none of these are explicitly derogatory, they do work to tie future prospects to racial difference made explicitly visual for child readers of the magazine, to suggest that children of the West are white, and that racially non-white children live elsewhere on the globe.

This illustration encapsulates this dissertation’s argument that at the turn of the twentieth century visualizations of children in children’s magazines – both illustrated and photographed – functioned to promote an ideology of white supremacy within the American nation, abroad globally, and into the future. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were moments of great racial tension in American culture, a time when white populations in power, who understood themselves as threatened by the supposed risk of race suicide, used political disenfranchisement, social control, and physical violence against Black American populations in an attempt to re-entrench white power after the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution on July 9th, 1868.¹ While children’s magazines frequently portray themselves as

¹ This is a broad gloss on a complicated era of American racial politics. Here I highlight the perceived threat of race suicide as the impetus for this kind of social and political violence, but it did not stand alone. Further, this timeline does not seek to suggest that social, political, and physical violence against Black bodies didn’t exist before the late nineteenth century. Instead, this dissertation works to demonstrate that violence against Black populations, and in

outside of these complicated and violent histories of white supremacy, selling themselves as safe spaces for child play and learning separate from these adult concerns, closer inspection reveals them to be deeply interested in promoting – an, in one case, defying – the American ideology of white supremacy at the turn of the twentieth century.²

This dissertation studies five children's magazines published between 1873 and 1939: *St. Nicholas* (1873 - 1943), *Babyland* (1877 - 1899), *Wide Awake* (1875 - 1893), *John Martin's Book* (1912 - 1933), and *The Brownies' Book* (1920 - 1921). These magazines, taken together, represent a view of the children's periodical publishing industry from 1873 to 1939, the span of this dissertation's timeline. This timeline was chosen to represent a very specific moment in American publishing. 1873 is the year that De Vinne Press was awarded the contract to begin printing *St. Nicholas*, a joint venture that resulted in the development of and experimentation with lithographic printing technologies never before seen in children's periodicals. These experimentations resulted in stunning visual innovations in children's periodical literature, including the publication of child art and the mass printing of photographs of children. 1873 thus marks a year when the visual began to take priority in mass produced children's media of the late nineteenth century, a trend which persists through the early twentieth century. This dissertation's timeline ends in 1939, at the moment when television broadcast begins in the American nation. The timeline as a whole represents a moment in American cultural history when media for children was dominated by the

particular Black children, persisted through the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth in particularly pernicious forms.

² This policy of separation from the world of racial politics was not always the case with American children's periodicals. The *Slave's Friend*, published between 1836 and 1839 and produced by the American Anti-Slavery Society, was explicitly interested in presenting material about American race relations to its child readership. See Spencer D. C. Keralis, "Feeling Animal: Pet-Making and Mastery in the 'Slave's Friend,'" *American Periodicals* 22, no. 2 (2012): 121-38. and Christopher D. Geist, "The 'Slave's Friend': An Abolitionist Magazine for Children," *American Periodicals* 9 (1999): 27-35.

periodical, an incredibly popular genre of reading which for the first time engaged children as a national public unto themselves. While we in the twenty-first century are comfortable with a variety of national media that addresses children as an independent national audience, this kind of mass communication began with children's periodicals, which addressed populations as large as seventy thousand child readers simultaneously across America on a monthly basis.³ The popularity of children's periodicals waned in the 1930's and 40's, with many magazines ending their runs. When the popularity of children's periodicals waned, television was there to take its place, sometimes quite literally: Morgan van Roorbach Shepard, who used the pseudonym "John Martin" while he was the editor of *John Martin's Book*, became the juvenile director for the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in 1933.

This dissertation studies this unique moment in the history of children's media between 1873 and 1939, seeking to understand what function these powerful magazines played in reader's lives, and further how they intersect with the complicated American era that produced them. Ultimately, I argue that children's periodicals published between 1873 and 1939 produced

³ *St. Nicholas* boasted a readership of seventy thousand at the height of its readership. See Fred Erisman, "*St. Nicholas*," in *Children's Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 378. However, *The Youth's Companion* claimed a readership of five hundred thousand.

It is in many ways more apt to read children's magazines as having more in common with television than they do with books. As Sarah Banet-Weiser notes in her book *Kids Rule: Nickelodeon and Consumer Citizenship*, in the 1990's Nickelodeon garnered a fan base of intensely invested children by encouraging them to become citizens of a "Kid Nation" that they accessed through Nickelodeon television programming and Nickelodeon-based consumer goods. Nickelodeon encouraged this kind of investment by providing a feed of entertainment that was often serial (in the form of multi-season shows) and often novel (individual movies and special holiday programming) and arrived at a steady pace into the child home. While they worked on a slower timeline, children's magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided a similar access to national children's media. Through this kind of constant simultaneous address, both *St. Nicholas* and Nickelodeon were able to form passionately invested and steady fan bases, entire generations of children that they were able to then influence with their messages regarding the nature of childhood and their relationship to the nation. See Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Kids Rule: Nickelodeon and Consumer Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

thousands of racialized images of children that reinforced and naturalized ideologies of white supremacy and American imperialism, circulating them to a child readership primed to love their magazines and respond to the visuals within. Advances in illustration and print technologies abounded in this era, resulting not only in a vast increase in the number of images on the periodical page, but also in images that further experimented with ways to visually present racialized bodies for child consumption. This dissertation explores these printing practices, which I argue reduced complicated ideologies of race and childhood to literal black and white on the periodical page. Studying children's periodicals at the turn of the century allows for insight into how appeals for systemic racism and imperial ambition - likewise seen in Jim Crow sociopolitical agendas and Rooseveltian imperial rhetoric - were communicated to America's youngest readers through a vividly illustrated media created just for them.

This introductory chapter argues that technological innovations in visual production, photography, rail routes, and postal systems provided the first opportunity for American children across the continent to consume a medium created just for them on a nearly simultaneous basis. I argue that this simultaneous mass reading encouraged child readers to think of themselves as part of an intimate community of readers. This chapter explores the creation and propagation of this community through the "Letter Box" and "St. Nicholas League" (art submission) portions of *St. Nicholas* (1873-1943). This national community is significant in part because its child readers expressed great affection and attachment to a community engendered by a magazine that aggressively promoted ideologies of white supremacy.

My second chapter, "Black Ink and White Page: American Traditions of Illustrating Race and Childhood," explores the innovations in periodical visual production used to represent childhood in *Wide Awake* (1875-1893), and *St. Nicholas* (1873-1943). This chapter looks to

connections between phrenology, physiognomy, and illustration in this period to argue that these three practices informed each other as they grew in popularity across the nineteenth century, all three relying on a perceived transparent connection between the interior self and visual body to suggest that what is visually available on the body can be read for interiority. This chapter concludes that visual portrayals of black and white childhood in periodicals throughout my dissertation's timeline were not attempts to represent the actual lives of American children, but were instead a combination of visual signifiers that encode racial essentialism in visual representation. This chapter closes with an exploration of printed photography in *St. Nicholas*, the technology for which was developed in 1884. I read the fact that this magazine presents hundreds of photographs of white children from 1884 until the close of its run, but refrains from publishing photographs of black American children, as an erasure of Black American children from the American nation which the magazine represents.⁴

My third chapter, "The Future of Childhood at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," argues that visuals of the child at the turn of the century and worked as symbols of the future nation, and that children's periodicals used these visuals to idealize a future in which white populations ably navigated and controlled American culture while non-white populations struggled. My research

⁴ I take my note on signaling blackness and Blackness textually from Donnarae MacCann. As with MacCann, I differently capitalize the word black to indicate either imaginary persons or actual historical persons. I use the uncapitalized "black" to indicate fictional or imagined characters figured as racially black, indicating that these characters are asked to carry the ideology of the term as their creator (writer, illustrator, etc.) sees fit. This is differentiated from actual, lived persons who are biologically and culturally coded as Black. In short, racial blackness is a cultural construction that Black persons are asked to carry, but which they frequently defy, elaborate upon, change, or reflect. An important distinction is that while I argue that photographs of children do not index anything about their lived lives or realities, they do make visual the bodies of actual Black children who once lived in the American landscape. While the children in these photographs are asked to carry the ideologies of blackness that the magazines promote, they are still representations of actual Black children, and so in those cases I use the capitalized adjective. Donnarae MacCann, *White Supremacy in Children's Literature: Characterizations of African Americans, 1830-1900* (New York: Garland, 1998), xxviii.

reveals that though *Babyland* and *Wide Awake* pictured hundreds of idealized white children, they also featured many visualizations of non-white children in both drawing and photography. These representations of non-white children were sometimes openly racist and derogatory, but were often simply patronizing, visually encoding an ideology wherein non-white children are less able to negotiate the American landscape than white children. The visualizations of suffering black children, I argue, thus encode a future in which the black population suffers without white intervention. Continuing my second chapter's exploration of the nineteenth-century race science physiognomy, this chapter argues that children's periodicals later in the early twentieth century borrow visual logics from the then-popular sciences of eugenics and social Darwinism, using visualizations of child bodies to present an updated vision of the future American nation that is inhabited only by white populations. This bleak vision of the future nation is evidenced by the complete visual absence of black American children in *John Martin's Book* (1912-1933), which idealizes an American future in which black children do not exist at all.

My fourth chapter, "Illustrative Difference and Black Futurity in *The Brownies' Book*," focuses on W. E. B. Du Bois' unique employment of illustration and photography in *The Brownies' Book* (1920-1921), in which he combines photography and illustration to establish a black modern childhood that is radically disruptive of ideologies of modern childhood established in texts like *Babyland* and *John Martin's Book*. I argue that Du Bois' unique use of illustrations and photographs of black children in *The Brownies' Book* wages visual war on American culture and works to establish a vision of America's future that is based in the black child's positive potential. This chapter explores how *The Brownies' Book* likewise borrows visual logic from eugenics to insist that the Black American child's photographed body can be read for signs of this interiority; however, *The Brownies' Book* importantly indicates that the interiority can be read for an idealized

Black American childhood that the magazine itself promotes. In direct contrast to contemporary magazines' suggestions that black American children are suffering or absent, I read *The Brownies' Book* as a photographic archive of Black American childhood that effectively repudiates American mass culture in order to establish a new vision of America's future in which Black children ably navigate and inherit the American nation on equal terms with other child citizens of many races.⁵

My final chapter, "Children's Magazines and Imperialism: Nation, Body, Future," functions as a capstone to the dissertation, showing how the visual essentialization of race and naturalization of white supremacy seen in the magazines this dissertation studies promote an ideology of American imperialism. By featuring many visual enactments of the white child's easy travel to and joyful exploitation of foreign spaces, these magazines used the image of the child to visually enact the peaceful domination not only of the American landscape described in previous chapters, but also of foreign lands and subjects. This chapter includes my digital project, "A Global *St. Nicholas*," which uses the digital mapping system ArcGis to map the global locations from which readers of *St. Nicholas* sent letters to their beloved magazine.⁶ This project ultimately suggests that while these magazines present themselves as having readers all over the globe, this rhetoric of cosmopolitanism is actually a mask for colonial projects that portray American imperialism as international friendship. This dissertation concludes by suggesting that children visually presented in these magazines, both in the editorial use of their letters and functioning as a

⁵ I use the phrase "Black American childhood" because while children's magazines besides *The Brownies' Book* were comfortable printing images of non-white children from around the globe, they eventually stop printing images of black children visually portrayed as within the American nation. Since these magazines purport to represent a national readership of children, and function as an American national space, the erasure of black children from that space suggests that they do not exist in the nation at large.

⁶ Maps throughout the fifth chapter were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.esri.com.

visual representation of their race's future potential, become nothing more than the vacuous shells through which white supremacy, American imperialism, and more and more children's magazines are sold to generations of child readers particularly disposed to love them.

In order to make the arguments in the above chapters, this dissertation utilizes evidence from five children's magazines published across this dissertation's timeline. While there were hundreds of periodicals for children published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, these five were selected for study because of their particular emphasis on visuality for their child readerships. Taken together, these magazines collectively cover the span of this dissertation's timeline and each speaks to a combined audience of both boy and girl readers, representing a selection of texts that together demonstrate the developments and changes in children's periodicals across sixty-six years of magazine publication at the turn of the twentieth century.⁷

St. Nicholas, published between 1873 and 1943, was frequently considered the premier children's magazine of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *St. Nicholas*'s reputation is largely credited to long-time editor Mary Mapes Dodge, whose deft hand, long list of famous contacts, and ability to pay contributors generously enabled her to create a magazine responsible for the initial publications of some of the most enduring children's literature of the nineteenth century, including Louisa May Alcott's *Eight Cousins*, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and the stories that eventually became Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*.⁸

⁷ While many magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century spoke to individual audiences of either boys or girls, this dissertation focuses on those magazines that spoke to American children as one ungendered group of readers. However, gendered magazines for children – such as *Boys of America* (1911-Present) and *The Rally* (1917-1979), which later became *The American Girl* – are fascinating documents that deserve further study, especially in terms of the intersections of race and gender at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁸ This kind of media, however, was not inexpensive: at three dollars a year in 1887, it would be the twenty-first century equivalent of about seventy-five dollars annually. Regardless of the steep price, though, the magazine's popularity was phenomenal: it had subscriber lists that peaked at seventy thousand in the 1880's. Beyond this, though, Suzanne

Both *Wide Awake* and *Babyland* were published by D. Lothrop & Co., and were edited by Ella Farman Pratt and her husband, Charles Stuart Pratt. *Babyland* was an eight-page monthly magazine that hyphenated its spelling for an audience of very early readers. It featured a particularly domestic bent with many sentimental themes aimed at its baby audience, but which it also assumed would appeal to mothers reading with their children.⁹ *Wide Awake* was a magazine that Daniel D. Lothrop imagined as helping “the boys and girls of America [become] broad-minded, pure-hearted, and thoroughly wide awake.”¹⁰ It featured fiction written by Sarah Orne Jewett, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman and serially published Margaret Sidney’s *Five Little Peppers* in 1880. *Wide Awake* featured a readership of twenty-five thousand subscribers.¹¹ *St. Nicholas* was a competitor of both *Babyland* and *Wide Awake*. While *Wide Awake* was subsumed by *St. Nicholas* in 1893, *Babyland* persisted individually a little longer, publishing its last issue in 1899.

John Martin’s Book was published between 1912 and 1933. It was published by John Martin’s House, Inc., and edited by John Martin, which was the pen name of Morgan van Roorbach

Gannon and Ruth Anne Thompson estimate that with actions like donating used magazines to “less fortunate” children, library subscriptions, and teacher subscriptions for school classrooms, the readership of *St. Nicholas* was likely five times as much. The concept of three and a half million American children reading, reflecting on, and talking about the same magazine every month is an astounding concept, further suggesting that this text had a significant role in children’s lives in the nineteenth century. See Susan Gannon, “Introduction: What was *St. Nicholas* Magazine,” in *St. Nicholas and Mary Mapes Dodge: The Legacy of a Children’s Magazine Editor, 1873-1905*, ed. Susan R. Gannon, Suzanne Rahn, and Ruth Ann Thompson (Jefferson and London: McFarland and Co., 2004), as well as Susan R. Gannon and Ruth Ann Thompson, *Mary Mapes Dodge* (New York: Twayne, 1992), 130-2.

⁹ For more on *Babyland*, see Carol J. Veitch, “*Babyland*,” in *Children’s Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 23-26.

¹⁰ This motto was printed frequently in advertisements for *Wide Awake*, within the pages of the magazine, and on the back covers.

¹¹ For more on *Wide Awake*, see Diana Chlebek, “*Wide Awake*,” in *Children’s Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 454-60.

Shepard, who began this work as a series of letters to children that he wrote after he was injured in an earthquake in San Francisco in 1906. When the letters proved to be popular, Martin expanded to a small publication entitled “John Martin’s Letters,” which eventually had a readership of approximately two thousand children. In 1912 Martin expanded again to create *John Martin’s Book*, which eventually had a readership of forty thousand subscribers. While *John Martin’s Book* was able to print photographs and used the same print technologies that in other magazines produced cutting-edge visuals, the majority of the visuals in the magazine are presented in a woodcut style with an emphasis on bold coloring and simple lines. We see examples of *John Martin’s Book*’s ability to print photographs, as well as its preference for older styles, in figures 3 and 4.¹² In figure 3 we see that photographs of children are included in the magazine’s advertising pages, but the text of the magazine and its covers demonstrate a preference for older styles of visualization, as seen in figure 4.

¹² For more on John Martin’s Book, see Anne Menzies, “*John Martin’s Book: The Child’s Magazine*,” in *Children’s Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 234-9.



Figure 3. John Martin's Book (August 1926): advertising pages. Collection of the author.

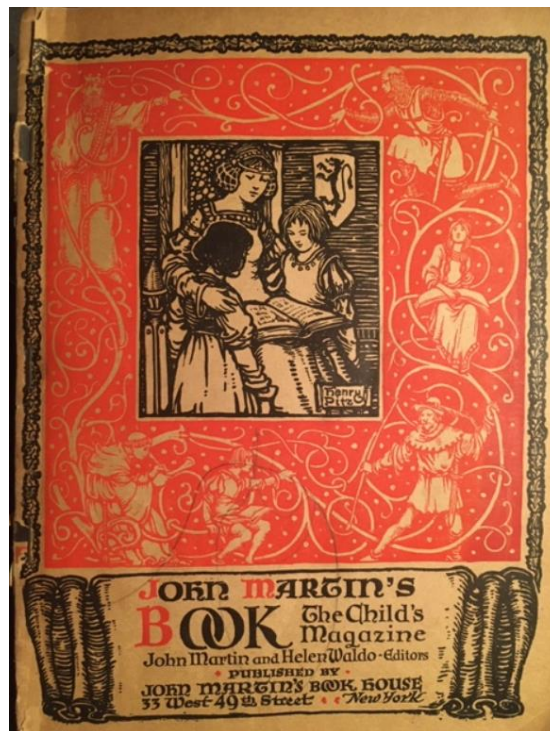


Figure 4. John Martin's Book (August 1926): cover. Collection of the author.

Martin's insistence on woodblock style visuals that reference styles of visuality that were popular before the civil war can be read as a nostalgia for an antebellum American past. This visual style pairs well with the text's refusal to print images of black American children throughout its run, which I will argue projects this privileging of antebellum style and racial politics into the American future.

The Brownies' Book, published between January 1920 and December 1921, was published by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and edited by W. E. B. Du Bois and Jesse Fauset.¹³ The magazine was the first children's periodical to explicitly address Black American children as its audience.¹⁴ *The Brownies' Book* continues the project of its parent magazine, the *Crisis*, to fight against race prejudice and it sought especially to demonstrate Black success and potential for its Black child readership. *The Brownies' Book* is especially notable for the hundreds of photographs of Black American children printed in its pages.

This introductory chapter will proceed with three sections. The first, "Visualizations of Race at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," explores the relationship between children's

¹³ While Du Bois was marked as the editor of the magazine, Katharine Capshaw Smith, citing Carolyn Wedin Sylvander and Elinor Sinette, argues that "*The Brownies' Book* was largely [Jesse] Fauset's accomplishment." See Katharine Capshaw Smith, *Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 25. Jesse Fauset was the literary editor of the *Crisis* magazine and she wrote four novels, *There is Confusion* (1924), *Plum Bun* (1928), *The Chinaberry Tree* (1931), and *Comedy, American Style* (1933). While Du Bois is listed as the editor of *The Brownies' Book* I will, when appropriate, refer to *The Brownies' Book*'s editorial team instead of just Du Bois as the editor.

¹⁴ While *The Brownies' Book* is frequently lauded as the first periodical for Black children, Nazera Sadiq Wright notes that the *Colored American* had a "Children's Department," which was first entitled the "Youth's Department" between April 5, 1836 and March 18, 1840. She details, "During that time, the forty-seven entries in the column included short stories, fairy tales, and maxims that promoted values consistent with middle-class life in the Northeast. The column reprinted widely from other publications, including the *Slave's Friend*, the *Juvenile Miscellany*, and the *Youth's Companion*. See Nazera Sadiq Wright, *Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 55.

periodicals and cultural concepts of race and racial politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The chapter then moves to a section titled “The Technology of the American Children’s Periodical, 1873-1939,” which details how these magazines were printed in the changing technological era at the turn of the twentieth century. This chapter then closes with a section entitled “The Child as Reader, Writer, and Contributor to the Magazine,” which argues that children’s magazines created the first public sphere of child readers and asked children to understand the space of the magazine as a nation in which they were citizens. This section reads letters from children to the Letter-Box section of *St. Nicholas* to consider how children understood themselves as readers of the magazine and members of the nation which the magazine represents.

1.1 Visualizations of Race at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Scholars of children’s literature have long maintained that black bodies have been missing from contemporary (i.e. late twentieth and twenty-first century children’s literature). We see this argument made by Ebony Elizabeth Thomas when she writes that:

Conversations about the lack of diversity in children’s stories are not new....Walter Dean Myers’s and Christopher Myers’s powerful essays, ‘Where are the People of Color in Children’s Books?’ and ‘The Apartheid of Children’s Literature,’ ...cited statistics collected by the University of Wisconsin’s Cooperative Children’s Book Center, which...found that every year, over 85 percent of all books published for children and young adults feature White characters – a statistic that has barely moved since the 1960s.¹⁵

¹⁵ Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, *The Dark Fantastic: Race and Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games* (New York: NYU Press, 2019), 4.

However, this dissertation argues that black children are not so much missing from children's literature as actively erased from it. Chapter 2 of this dissertation demonstrates that in the late nineteenth century the black child was frequently present in stories and visualized in children's magazines – indeed, in the 1880s these visualizations were even positive, portraying black childhood as innocent, vulnerable, sweet, and capable. This dissertation demonstrates that as the nineteenth century turned to the twentieth, though, these positive portrayals were replaced by negative portrayals and visualizations of black American childhood were erased from the pages of children's magazines entirely by 1916. This erasure, rather than an absence, represents an effort to wipe the black American child not only from the pages of children's media, but further from the American national future that these magazines visually present. This erasure is an ideological attack on Black communities that focus its violence not on the Black body, as in the mass scale of lynchings at the turn of the American twentieth century, but instead on the Black future that the visualized child represented and the psyche of the Black child readers who consumed these magazines.

Donnarae MacCann's *White Supremacy in Children's Literature: Characterizations of African Americans, 1830-1900* recognizes the existence of early portrayals of black childhood, beginning the conversation on superiority of whiteness in children's literature in this era. In this text MacCann argues persuasively that "Black identity was presented as of less value than European American identity [and] Blacks were expected to accept a restricted status and role in the American civic identity."¹⁶ Though MacCann privileges children's books over children's

¹⁶ MacCann, *White Supremacy in Children's Literature*, xviii-xiv.

periodicals in her study, I find that her arguments about representations of race carry: children's periodicals most frequently portray non-white characters, both child and adult, "as perennial children, as bumbling buffoons, as impassioned brutes, as docile Christians," all of which suggest that they are populations that need guidance and charity to survive. Though these magazines marked racial difference with largely visual methods, what is at stake in regards to race is really access to systems of political, economic, and social power. While all persons born or naturalized on American soil received the rights of citizenship in 1868 by the ratification of the 14th Amendment, it did not grant them access to American social equality, which is made obvious by the ruling of the Civil Rights Act as unconstitutional 1883 and the proliferation of Jim Crow in the years following. While some non-white persons became recognized citizens with a right to vote, they did not become included in a definition of what it meant to be American, which was still exclusively white.¹⁷ We see an example of this with the representation of American unity in *Babyland* in 1888, featured in figure 5.

¹⁷ I use "some" here because, of course, women and children did not receive the right to vote, and children's access to American citizenship has long been contested.

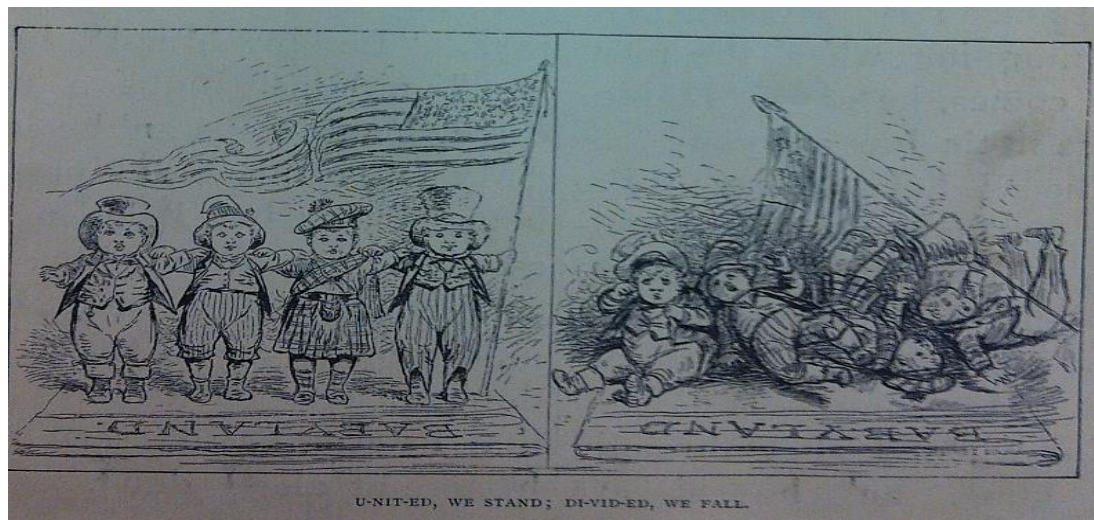


Figure 5. “U-nit-ed, We Stand: Di-vid-ed, We Fall.” *Babyland* (January 1883): 11.

Courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Libraries.

In this political cartoon in *Babyland*, included unremarked upon as an additional feature (i.e. not as part of a fictional story) in January of 1883, we see America embodied by four white children, each apparently of Anglo-English/Welsh/Scottish/American stock. The caption on the page remarks that united these representations of nationalism stand and hold up the American state; however, when divided, they tumble down in disarray. While the image participates in a rhetoric of cuteness in order to dismiss any overt claims to messages regarding race and nationalism, the political message here is stark: if the Anglo-white children of the nation do not stand together (despite much historical in-fighting amongst these groups within this era) the nation will crumble. What is absent here is again important: no African American or Native children are included here; instead, the white children of the nation alone find common ground quite literally on the pages of *Babyland* and there establish the basis for a future American state rooted in white friendship based on Anglo-Protestant national heritage.

Without the ability to define whiteness as access to political power and citizenship after the fourteenth amendment, white communities that wished to stay in power had to turn to more

social, ideological, and artistic methods of entrenching white access to systems of power. One of the ways that white populations accomplished this was by teaching it to their children within the pages of juvenile magazines that portrayed white childhood as a unique and exclusive class status.

Further, in the visuals of children's magazines at the turn of the twentieth century, there is no such thing as a mixed-race child.¹⁸ The illustrations at the beginning of this introduction are again emblematic. In these images these children are either black or white, Eskimo or Chinese: there is no conception of a child who can at once claim two of these categories. This illustration, and those like it throughout the magazines that this dissertation studies, stands against a threat of miscegenation which Dora Apel states "threatened to blur the color line and became a driving force in American race relations and racial representation."¹⁹ Rather than merely avoiding the blurring of the color line, this dissertation argues that children's magazines that this dissertation studies actively sought to reinforce it. Jonathan Senchyne's work demonstrates that this unwillingness to make racial mixture visible on the page was developed much earlier than the period which this dissertation studies. Senchyne notes that in the illustrations of *Clotel*, published in 1853, "The material lines of the engraver externalize the racial blackness forbidding Clotel from entering into legal marriage with Horatio Green and indexing the sexual history of her parentage that disallows her ever having been a properly 'unsullied sheet.'"²⁰ Though *Clotel* is a mixed-race character that

¹⁸ *The Brownies' Book* may again offer an exception to this statement, but with qualifications. Though in *The Brownies' Book* Du Bois prints photographs of many children, some of whom can claim two or more races as part of their genetic heritage, Du Bois does not, in his writing, identify them as such. Instead, the photographs must speak for themselves.

¹⁹ Dora Apel, *Imagery of Lynching: Black Men, White Women, and the Mob* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 2.

²⁰ Jonathan Senchyne, "Bottles of Ink and Reams of Paper: *Clotel*, Racialization, and the Material Culture of Print," in *Early African American Print Culture*, ed. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 140-58. 155.

the book describes as having “a complexion as white as most of those who were waiting with a wish to become her purchasers” and “features as finely defined as any of her sex of pure Anglo-Saxon,” Senchyne here notes that it is Clotel’s “racial blackness,” not her phenotypical whiteness, that the engraver indexes on the page by choosing to fill in her face with black ink while her captor’s faces are left blank.²¹

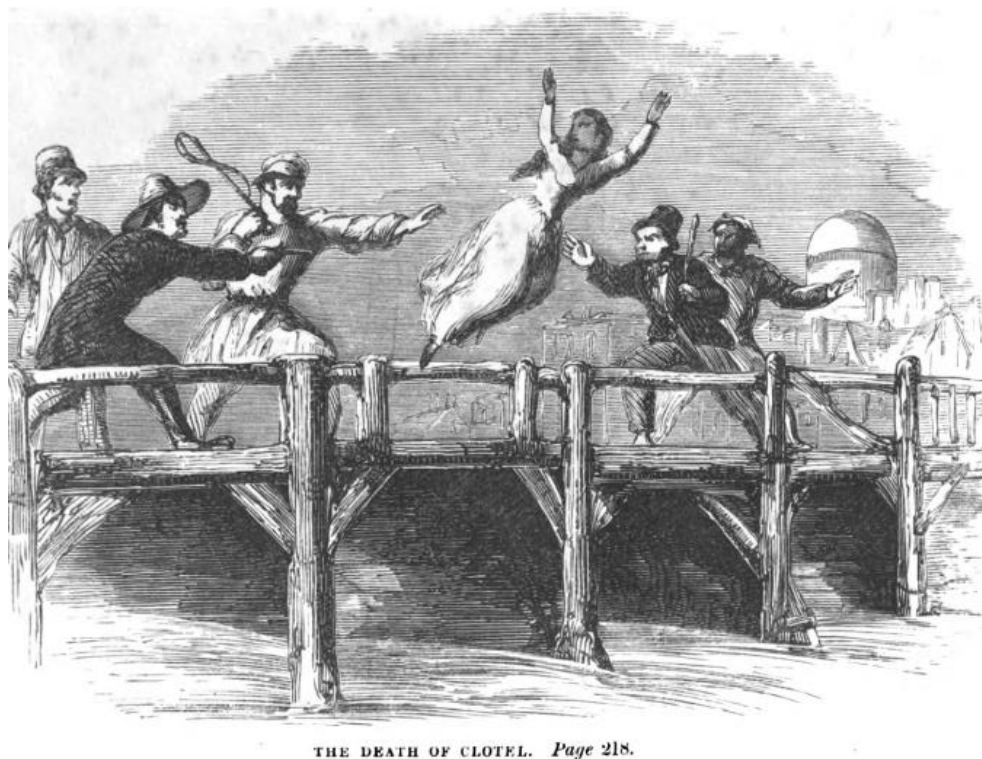


Figure 6. “The Death of Clotel.” *Clotel; Or, The President’s Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States*, by William Wells Brown. London: Patridge and Oakey, 1853. Fronticepiece.

Courtesy of Google Books.

We see an example of this in figure 6, which shows Clotel leaping from a bridge to her death. Though Clotel is explicitly of light complexion in the text, the image marks her racial

²¹ William Wells Brown, *Clotel; Or, The President’s Daughter* (London: Patridge and Oakey, 1853), Google Books.

blackness by filling in her hands and face with black ink, while her racially white captors all have faces empty of ink, except that used sparingly to mark eyes, noses, and beards. Children's literature has continued this trend: in the illustrations that this dissertation studies, including many of those featured in *The Brownies' Book*, illustrators mark racial blackness by filling in the space of skin with blank ink; racial whiteness continues to be indicated by the blank page.²²

In thinking of what race is, or at least how it functioned at the turn of the twentieth century in American socio-political history, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote that race is best conceived of as “a thin sheet of invisible but horribly tangible plate glass.”²³ W. J. T. Mitchell expands on this metaphor of race when he describes race as “a prosthesis that produces invisibility and hypervisibility simultaneously,” and “an intervening substance” (s. v. *Oxford English Dictionary*) that can both obstruct and facilitate communication,” so ephemeral and intangible that “every effort to grasp the concrete objecthood of race...seems to vanish and dematerialize the closer we come to it.”²⁴ In each of these definitions, race is not tied to genetics or skin color, but is instead invisible, as well as socially and personally important, an insubstantial medium used to separate people, or mark people as separate, but which is only made visible by those who choose to use visibility as the marker of difference.

²² As in *Clotel*, illustrators of children's magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century either refuse or struggle to portray the mixed-race child; instead, it is racial blackness and whiteness that is portrayed on the page. We see this in many of the illustrations within *The Brownies' Book* which hold up the traditional standards of illustration, though some offer visually radical portrayals of black childhood. This suggests that illustrations in this era do not seek to portray phenotypical appearance, but rather serve to visually communicate race.

²³ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dust of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of Race Concept* (Reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 66.

²⁴ W. J. T. Mitchell, *Seeing Through Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 14.

Mitchell, like Du Bois, argues that “Race...is something we *see through*, like a frame, a window, a screen, or a lens, rather than something we *look at*. It is a repertoire of cognitive and conceptual filters through which forms of human otherness are mediated. It is also a costume, a mask, or a masquerade that can be put on, played on, and disavowed.”²⁵ In the late nineteenth century, however, the American population became very invested in making race visible, and legible, on the body and on the periodical page.²⁶

1.2 Technology and the American Periodical, 1873-1939

The turn of the twentieth century was a time of massive cultural change when the American nation grappled with a new conception of itself after the Civil War and in light of changing conceptions of space, time, technology, and self that were caused by sweeping technological change. Tim Armstrong encapsulates the turn of the twentieth century as a time of “crisis,” noting that in American culture the embrace of technology and the new world it ushered in was frequently in conflict with a nostalgic and anxious desire to reinstate traditional values.²⁷ This description suggests that the fin-de-siècle can be understood as continually negotiating the push and pull

²⁵ Ibid., xii-xiii.

²⁶ These magazines portrayed many visualizations of black and white child bodies, but also engaged readily with both children of foreign nations, as well as non-black “others” on American soil, and what Thomas C. Leonard calls “hierarchies of gender, class, intellect, and moral character.” See Thomas C. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 120. This archive is ripe for investigation into these subjects as well, though it is too broad a concentration for one dissertation. While my focus is on a black/white divide in portrayals of American childhood, I delve into these other aspects of an American racial/eugenic hierarchy whenever possible.

²⁷ Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 1, 4.

between these opposed desires, which are never resolved, but instead “bound together” in a very anxious cultural form.²⁸ I understand the children’s magazines which this dissertation studies, and especially portrayals of childhood within them, as expressly negotiating these conflicting desires.

The earliest American children’s periodical, *The Children’s Magazine*, was published in 1789, though it only put out four issues. The genre got on a surer footing in the 1820s with periodicals like *The Youth’s Companion* (1827-1929) and reached the height of its popularity between the 1880s and 1920 with magazines like the richly illustrated *St. Nicholas*, *Wide Awake*, *Babyland*, *John Martin’s Book*, and *The Brownies’ Book*.²⁹

Around 1873 there was a boom in printing technology that allowed printers to experiment with newer, faster ways to print images. While illustrations produced by woodcut had long been the standard method for producing visuals in both newspapers and magazines, around 1870 printing companies developed technologies such as lithography, half-tone reproduction, and advances in etching that made it much easier to quickly produce more complicated visuals.³⁰ The speed here was on both ends: artists were able to draw directly on lithographic stone or transfer

²⁸ Ibid., 4.

²⁹ *The Youth’s Companion* ran from 1827 until 1929. In the 1890s it claimed a readership of five hundred thousand. It is not included in this study because for the majority of its publication it took the form of a weekly paper, while the rest of the magazines this dissertation studies are monthlies. It is remembered as one of the two most famous children’s magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (the other being *St. Nicholas*) and deserves further study as an American institution of childhood. For more on *The Youth’s Companion*, see David L. Greene, “The Youth’s Companion,” in *Children’s Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 507-14. For more on *The Children’s Magazine*, see Janice M. Alberghene, “The Youth’,” in *Children’s Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 105-9.

³⁰ While my “around 1870” sounds vague, I emphasize that there was no particular moment when things changed. The technologies at the turn of the twentieth century were not the result of one person, or one press, or one magazine – but rather the result of collective efforts of several competing with each other to produce the most advanced systems and visuals at this moment in time. Further, while I mark woodcuts here as the dominant method of visualization, etchings were extremely popular forms of visualization beyond 1830. For more detail on this complicated subject, see Bamber Gascoigne, *How to Identify Prints*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986.

paper instead of spending hours etching or engraving metal. Even when they did continue to invest in etchings and engravings (as *St. Nicholas* did during the 1880's), lithographic reproduction practices allowed for pages to pass through the printing process much faster and with less wear to (and thus less destruction of) the engraving plate. As these technologies progressed, media magazines moved from creating magazines that were mostly words, like that seen in figure 7, to magazines that were hugely visual, like that featured in figure 8.

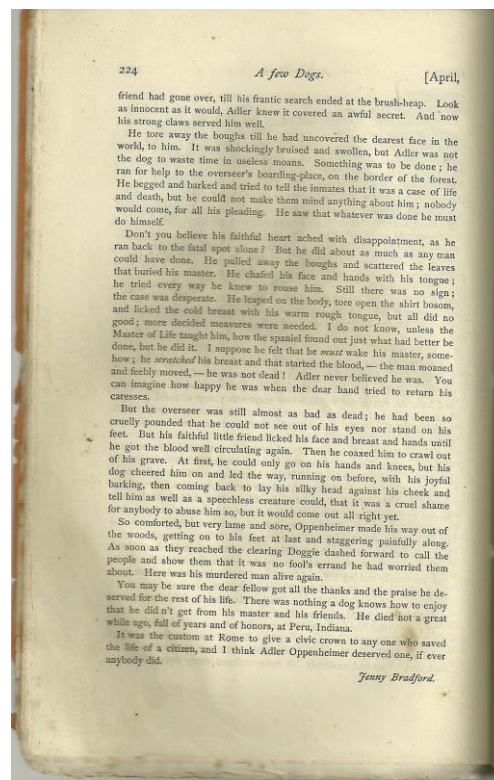


Figure 7. *Our Young Folks* (April 1872): 224. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

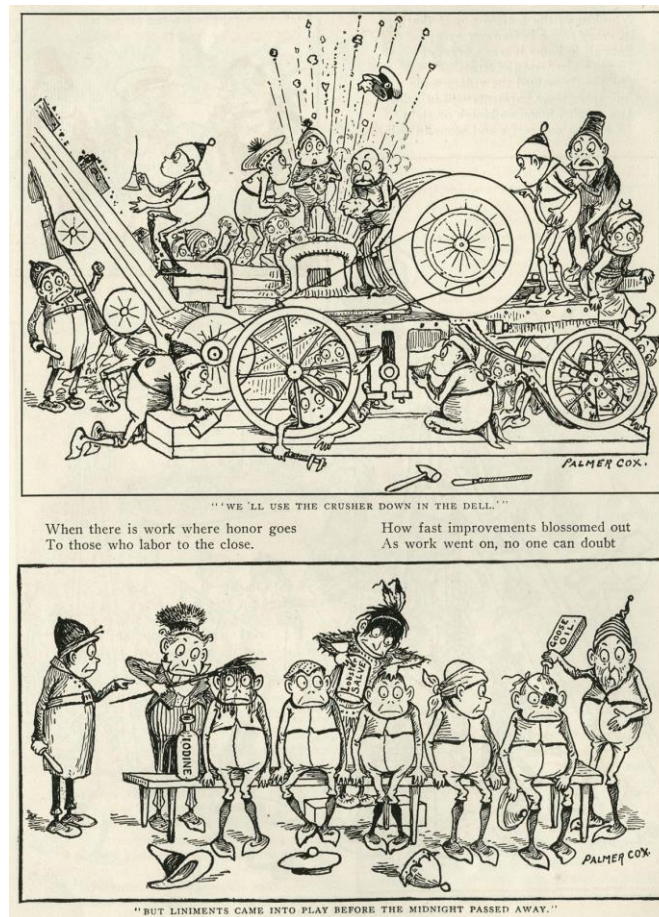


Figure 8. *St. Nicholas* (December 1910): 165. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Figure 8 and figure 9 demonstrate that in 1873 the pages of children's magazines were filled with text while in 1910 there was a new emphasis on visuality that required much technological invention to produce. While it may be tempting to think that children's magazines printed more visuals because the technology became available, it's much more useful to consider that this change in the visuality of the magazine did not result because technology miraculously changed, but rather because American culture at this moment required them. Michael Warner in *Letters of the Republic* suggests that the "fundamental premise – that technology has an ontological status prior to culture – must be rejected at the onset if we are to pose the question of printing's

relation to republican enlightenment.”³¹ By this Warner means, in part, that it is not the case that technology (such as the technology to print more and more varied visuals) is created and desirable for its own sake, but becomes marked as desirable because the culture that creates it wants or needs that technology. In other words, the ability to print more pictures in children’s magazines did not appear in American culture as a normal development in technology; instead, it is more likely that this technology was created in response to a demand for it. This demand came from editors and cultural creators who likely responded to what they perceived as a public demand for more images. In short, it’s not merely that children’s magazines started printing more illustrations because the technology existed; instead, the technology was developed because people wanted more illustrations. If we consider that the demand for visual technology came before the use of it in mass media, we shift the question from technology to culture, allowing us to ask: why, then, did people want it? How did the visual serve American populations at the turn of the twentieth century in ways that text alone did not?

On this subject of sudden visual transformation, David Green notes that “Photography entered the field of the social sciences at a moment” at the end of the nineteenth century “when the demand for modes of empirical observation and documentation, and techniques of quantitative measurement and analysis, were uppermost.”³² While Green here talks about how the photograph served sciences, I extend this need of “modes of empirical observation and documentation” to the abundance of visuality in children’s magazines as well, where it served the same cultural desire

³¹ Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 7.

³² David Green, “Veins of Resemblance: Photography and Eugenics,” *Oxford Art Journal* 11, no. 2 (1984): 6.

that it served in the social sciences: to present an object that proposed itself as objective – or more objective – than the text. In particular, at the turn of the twentieth century the visual served to tie exterior visualization to interior personality, suggesting to viewers that to see was to know. As Chapter 2 elaborates, this conviction of the visual served the purposes of white supremacy and race science by suggesting to readers and viewers that bodies were legible, an ideology that suggests that racial blackness and whiteness, and all the ideologies that these racial markings carried, were visually available on the body as well as on the magazine page.

In addition to changing print technologies in the modern era, the creation of time zones and the new national regulation of mail and train schedules caused abrupt changes in how time was calculated and understood in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, causing people living in this era to adapt to new ways of understanding time. Alexis McCrossen writes that after the Civil War the American government and American industry quickly moved people towards what she calls “clock time,” so that American life came to be regulated by public clocks in clock towers, trains stations, and town squares that served to unify people together in time.³³ In 1883 American railroads instituted the use of time zones across the continent which standardized time between them, an act which was soon adopted by states as standard time. No longer were American lives regulated by regional or diurnal time, but instead increasingly by national conceptions of time by which we still measure our lives today. The children’s periodical kept up with these changes by using these new technologies to deliver monthly issues of juvenile magazines to child readers across the nation with a regularity and swiftness previously impossible.

³³ Alexis McCrossen, *Marking Modern Times: A History of Clocks, Watches, and Other Timekeepers in American Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 4-7.

This new regularity of mail made faster by both trains and developments in postal technology required both adult and child readers to re-conceptualize national time and their own relationship to it. These changes required that American children measure their lives no longer by town church bells (if indeed children ever did regulate their lives by church bells) and instead increasingly by the regular national time of train and postal schedules. Reading the children's periodical thus allows us to question the relationship between time and childhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to consider how periodical genres of children's literature negotiate these changing conceptions of time with ideologies of childhood, which themselves have a complicated relationship to time.

This dissertation contends that the children's magazine was precisely the object used to negotiate these changing conceptions of nation, time, and child. Even though children's magazines kept up with the fast pace of time and delivered monthly editions of the same magazine on doorsteps of children from New York to California, unifying children across the nation by allowing them to read and respond together simultaneously, children's magazines posed themselves, paradoxically, as safe spaces outside of time and culture where children could learn and play safe from the adult world that was so full of change. What nationally-minded children's magazines of the late nineteenth century promised to protect was, in essence, the conceived safety of American children. In her manifesto justifying the creation of *St. Nicholas*, Dodge refers to her ideal children's magazine as "a pleasure-ground where butterflies flit gayly hither and thither; where flowers quietly spread their bloom; where wind and sunshine play freaks of light and shadow; but

where toads hop quickly out of sight and snakes dare not show themselves at all.”³⁴ Here Dodge imagines the magazine as a literary Eden, where toads and snakes – ugly creatures with connotations of sin – do not appear so that the child may play and learn free from the dangers of the adult world around them. Dodge is clear to note that the garden will not be a space that lies about the evils of the world, saying “Harsh, cruel facts—if they must come, and sometimes it is important that they should—must march forward boldly, say what they have to say, and go.”³⁵ In the face of these harsh truths, she marks the magazine as a safe landscape where children may face these realities with “a sharp, clean thrust at falsehood, a sunny recognition of truth, a gracious application of politeness, an unwilling glimpse of the odious doings of the uncharitable and base.”³⁶ In this language of a safe landscape in which children may confront the world - which is commonly repeated in other magazines of the era and is in no way unique to *St. Nicholas* - we see

³⁴ It was a common practice for successful “adult” magazines to create and sell companion “children’s” magazines to the children of their subscribers: *Scribner’s Monthly* was the “parent” text to *St. Nicholas*, just as *The Crisis* had *The Brownies’ Book*. When *Scribner’s Monthly* was sold to the Century Company in 1881 and became *The Century*, it bought *St. Nicholas* as well, though *St. Nicholas* maintained its entire staff and title. In the same month that *St. Nicholas* was first published, *Scribner’s Monthly* published a blurb that read “whether we shall lead the little child, or the little child shall lead us, remains to be seen; but it will be pleasant to have him at our side...Wherever ‘Scribner’ goes, ‘ST. NICHOLAS’ ought to go. They will be harmonious companions in the family, and the helpers of each other in the work of instruction, culture and entertainment.” This practice suggests that the late nineteenth century was a moment when adults and children were understood as requiring their very own particular, yet companionate, reading materials. See *Scribner’s Monthly*, November 1873, p. 115. Of course, publishers also saw potential profit in this configuration of adult and child reading.

Dodge first laid out her plan for *St. Nicholas* in a letter to the editors of *Scribner’s Monthly* when they were considering her as the potential editor for their new children’s magazine. The editors of *Scribner’s*, pleased with Dodge’s vision, published in the pages of their magazine. While Dodge’s letter was first published in the pages of *Scribner’s Monthly*, tucked away from children’s eyes, it was also available to child readers in the “Premium List” booklet from 1873-4, where it is printed in full in the final pages. Child readers would have received this packet either in the mail with the advertisement pages of the magazine or by requesting it from the editors. This booklet lays out the variety of prizes that readers could win by selling subscriptions to *St. Nicholas* to their peers. All quotes from Mary Mapes Dodge, “Children’s Magazines,” *Scribner’s Monthly* (July 1873): 352-4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 354.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

the children's magazine conceived of as an imagined space where the child can encounter the dangerous aspects of the adult world in "lite" form, well-cushioned with fun and play.

DuBois's credo of 1904 suggests that he, too, bought into this conception of children's education as best taking place in spaces that were conceptually natural and outside of the adult world. In "Credo," published in 1904, Du Bois wrote: "I Believe in the training of children, black even as white; the leading out of little souls into the green pastures and the cool waters, not for self or peace, but for life lit by some large vision of beauty and goodness and truth..."³⁷ In many ways his *Brownies' Book* can be read as providing this kind of space for Black American child readers, providing a safe space away from the twentieth century world. It's worth noting that Du Bois, in claiming a separate space for Black American children, can be understood as providing them with a space that is absent of the degrading portrayals of black American childhood seen elsewhere in American culture. While the safe space of the children's magazines that privilege whiteness operate rather redundantly, in that American culture widely celebrated white childhood and did not pose an active threat to their bodies in lives, *The Brownies' Book* presents a space for Black childhood that can be understood as actually necessary.

John Martin's Book likewise participated in this conception of the magazine as an idealized space that would be beneficial for children, evidenced by the "John Martin's Creed," which was published frequently in the pages of the text, and is featured in figure 9.

³⁷ W. E. B. Du Bois, "Credo," *Independent*, October 6, 1904, 787.

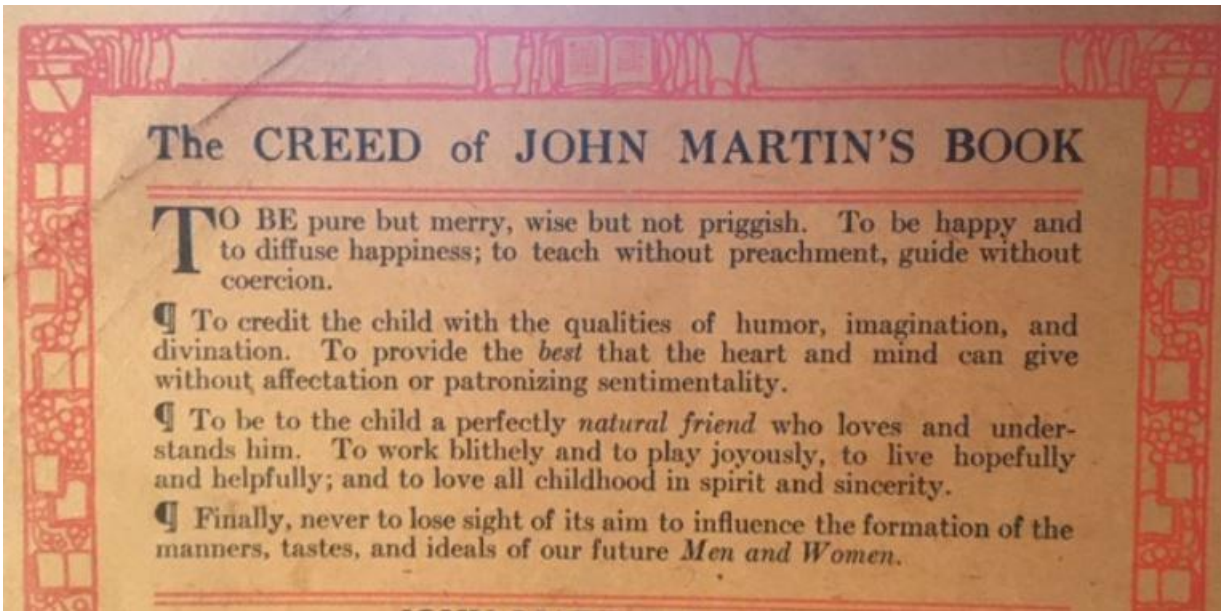


Figure 9. “The Creed of John Martin’s Book.” *John Martin's Book* (January 1917). Collection of the author.

The creed read in part that the goal of the magazine was “To work blithely and play joyously, to live hopefully and helpfully; and to love all childhood in spirit and sincerity. Finally, never to lose sight of its aim to influence the formation of the manners, tastes and ideals of our future *Men and Women*.”³⁸ This statement, perhaps more than other magazine manifestos studied in this dissertation, indicates the magazine’s interest in futurity and the fetishization not merely of children and childhood, but further of the adults they would become and the “manners, tastes and ideals” that they would embody.³⁹

This fantasy space, embodied by the magazine, is coded as entirely safe and culturally separate from the complications of the adult world. While mission statements like these asked children and adults to view children as vulnerable to the world outside the magazine, the actual

³⁸ Emphasis in the original.

³⁹ May 1919, last page before cover. The monthly magazine has no page numbers and neither do the editions of *John Martin's Big Book* which preserve much of the writing from the magazine. This makes it exceptionally hard to cite *John Martin's Book* in any detail.

text and imagery of the magazine provides space for children to engage in a community of like-minded peers, for children to think of themselves as empowered citizens with the ability to intervene in their societies, and for children to consider themselves as able to negotiate the threats of their world to which ideologies of childhood had long considered them vulnerable. Despite this rhetoric of capable childhood within the magazines, the manifestos published in them and advertising for these magazines suggest a need for this separate, empowering landscape of childhood by marking the child as vulnerable to the adult world beyond it. The creation of this safe space came as a reaction to the changing realities of American life in the newly technological and racially progressive era that followed the Civil War and extended into the early twentieth century.

Contrary to the appeals to vulnerability in manifestos and advertisements, within the imagined space of the magazine, child readers were encouraged to think of themselves as autonomous beings who were part of a community of readers that had the ability to influence their peers, their environment, and even the adults around them.⁴⁰ It's important to note that adult magazines did not participate in this rhetoric and instead frequently portrayed children as vulnerable and in need of parental care.⁴¹ As figures 10 and 11 show, children in *The Century* and *Crisis* are portrayed not as agential, but vulnerable and in need of parental care.

⁴⁰ This is a broad statement that applies largely to non-denominational magazines of the later nineteenth century. Magazines that had heavily religious audiences and themes tended to continue the appeal to child vulnerability even within the pages of the magazine. An example of a magazine that does not mark the child as autonomous and able is *Golden Hours: A Magazine for Boys and Girls*, published 1869-1880. These magazines are more common before, during, and directly after the Civil War; they tend to fall out of print after 1880, when they are replaced by more secular mass magazines. For more on *Golden Hours*, see Martha Rasmussen, "Golden Hours: A Magazine for Boys and Girls," in *Children's Periodicals of the United States*, ed. by R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 181-6.

⁴¹ Changing portrayals according to adult and child audience is not surprising. As Anna Mae Duane notes, "defining childhood is a means of defining and distributing power and obligation." It's thus not surprising that magazines for adults tell adults that they are powerful and children are vulnerable; to suggest otherwise would radically upset many of the base ideologies of what it means to be an adult. Anna Mae Duane, "The Children's Table: Childhood Studies



DRAWN BY C. S. REINHART.
"IN HIS ARMS HE CARRIED THE ALMOST LIFELESS BOY."

Figure 10. "In His Arms he Carried the Almost Lifeless Boy." *The Century Magazine* (February 1896): 627.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

and the Humanities," *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities*, ed. Anna Mae Duane (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 1.

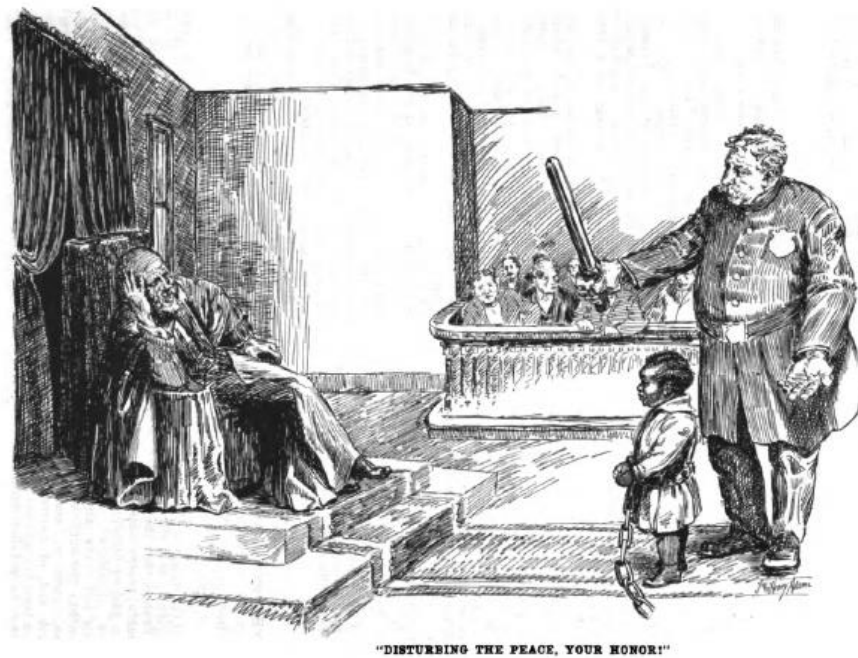


Figure 11. "Disturbing the Peace, Your Honor!" *Crisis* (January 1919): 134. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Figure 10, published in *The Century* in 1896 (the publishers for which also published *St. Nicholas*), shows a man carrying the figure of a nearly-dead white child. While this image empowers the man as savior, it marks the child as vulnerable and in need of care. To do so, as I argue in Chapter 3, would have marked the American future as deeply at risk. In figure 11 we see a figure printed in the *Crisis* magazine in January of 1919. While Du Bois published this picture of the child as vulnerable to the white powers of American government, he never published any images of such vulnerable black children in *The Brownies' Book*, instead preferring to publish images of black child success and action.

In considering the creation of *The Brownies' Book* separate from *The Crisis*, Capshaw continues, "Du Bois seems to have accommodated to some degree the protectionist impulse that surges through the *Crisis*. But he may have believed that the best way to politicize children is to

shield them from the most graphic descriptions of racial violence.”⁴² While the *Crisis* portrayed many visualizations of racialized violence on black bodies, even (and perhaps especially) in the “Children’s Number[s],” *The Brownies’ Book* removed this content. Capshaw notes that *The Brownies’ Book* “reports on progress of antilynching movements” and includes a “plain description” of the race riots during the “Red Summer” of 1919 in a “plain description [that] emphasizes black resistance to opposition rather than accentuating bloodshed.” Importantly, Capshaw notes that the description is included “tellingly, without images,” suggesting that it is not the knowledge of lynching that is the problem, but instead the visualization of lynching for child eyes – and the juxtaposition of lynching images with those of black childhood.⁴³ Thus we can assume that the call for a children’s magazine, separate but connected to that produced by the NAACP, had much more to do with what could or should be visualized for children, rather than the true difference in political content.

Children’s magazines are thus a study in ideological paradoxes that well represent the era in which they were produced. The magazines begin with justifications that emphasize the child as a figure threatened by the world around it, but the white child characters featured within the magazines themselves are portrayed as strikingly invulnerable, as able navigators of their world who continually survive and thrive, while black children in all magazines except *The Brownies’ Book*, when present, are marked as vulnerable and in need of help (usually from white peers). I

⁴² Capshaw, *Children’s Literature of the Harlem Renaissance*, 27.

⁴³ Ibid., 28. Capshaw later notes that “In ‘The True Brownies’ editorial, Du Bois pinpoints his discomfort with exposing children to explicit violence: ‘To the consternation of the Editors of THE CRISIS we have had to record some horror in nearly every Children’s Number -in 1915 it was Leo Frank; in 1916 the lynching at Gainesville, Fla.; in 1917 and 1918 the riot and court-martial at Houston, Tex., etc.’” Ibid. 27. Capshaw quotes the issue of *Crisis* published in August of 1919, pg. 285.

will explore this topic more completely in Chapter 3, but we see extreme examples of this from *St. Nicholas* in figures 12 and 13, which respectively portray a white child threatened by an eagle ably grappling with that beast by seizing it by its ankles, and a black child conversely terrified by a fluffy white puppy that has lowered his front half in a position of play.



Figure 12. "Abel Caught the Eagle Fairly About its Ankles." *St. Nicholas* (October 1920): 443.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 13. "Go 'Way! Go 'Way!' Screamed Holly." *St. Nicholas* (February 1874): 227.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

While the white child characters presented in the magazines ably engage with the world, child readers were told that they themselves must engage with the world through the safe medium of the magazine. It's nothing short of a paradox, untenable in its reality: here the child is asked to think of him- or herself as mutually threatened and invulnerable, as an able negotiator of their world but only when separate from it for his or her own safety. Thus the figure of the American child as presented by the American children's periodical is always split, always fraught. And this fraught figure sold magazines: magazines commoditized the fear inherent in the idea of the child

threatened by the “crisis” of the turn of the twentieth century world and presented the safe “pleasure ground” of the magazine as a panacea to the problem.⁴⁴

1.3 The Child as Reader, Writer, and Contributor to the Magazine

Courtney Weikle-Mills writes that Americans in the nineteenth century grappled with the split between adult and child by coding children as “‘imaginary citizens’: individuals who could not exercise civic rights but who figured heavily in literary depictions of citizenship and were often invited to view themselves as citizens despite their limited political franchise.”⁴⁵ While Weikle-Mills studies the first half of the nineteenth century, her configurations of “imaginary citizens” continue to apply in American culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In children’s periodicals we see this message communicated to children themselves, where the magazine asks them to understand themselves as needing a separate reading material that specifically asked them to understand themselves as citizens of a national reading public, one separate from actual civic power, but in which child readers were asked to understand themselves as influential participants. Children’s magazines participated in this ideology of imaginary citizenship with the creation of what I am terming the children’s public sphere of reading, a kind of participation in a national space of reading that is separate – and safe from – the adult nation that still asks them to understand themselves as citizens and preparing them for future adult

⁴⁴ Here “crisis” refers to Tim Armsrtrong’s use of the word in *Modernism: A Cultural History*, and the “pleasure ground” refers to Mary Mapes Dodge’s description of ideal children’s magazines.

⁴⁵ Courtney Weikle-Mills, *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence 1640-1868* (Baltimore: John’s Hopkins University Press, 2012), 4.

participation in the real nation. In this way American children's periodicals came to represent an American national space that is at once representative of the American nation as well as separate from it, for the safety of its readers.

Regarding public spheres, Benedict Anderson writes about the emergence of the imagined community as the creation of a nation, a sense of belonging to a community of persons tied not by geographic landscape but instead by common ideas and a common temporality undergirded by common experiences of reading. This kind of imagined community was made newly possible in the nineteenth century, Anderson argues, by the very technology that likewise brought such anxiety to adult readers on behalf of their children. Anderson describes the imagined community of readers coming together “under the impact of economic change, ‘discoveries’ (social and scientific), and the development of increasingly rapid communications,” all aspects of the turn-of-the-century world in which children's magazines came to flourish. The result of this, he argues, are communities based not around geographical limits, but “a new way of linking fraternity” across the space of the American nation “which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways.”⁴⁶

Anderson calls the daily reading of the newspaper an “extraordinary mass ceremony” in which members of a community almost simultaneously open their newspapers each morning and quietly commune with their community, all across a city, a state, or a nation. It is a linking of persons who likely know nothing about each other's actual identities linking together into “the solidity of a single community” by aligning their daily, weekly, or monthly routines and thoughts

⁴⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (Reprint, Brooklyn and London: Verso, 2006), 37.

with each other, though they may never meet.⁴⁷ We see this same “extraordinary mass ceremony” with the reading practices of children’s magazines where magazines arrived on a monthly or bi-monthly calendar and were read almost simultaneously by thousands of American children across the nation.

While these imagined communities of readership have been studied in terms of American mass culture, feminist imagined communities, and imagined fraternities of underrepresented persons, the community built within children’s magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide for the very first time an opportunity to consider the existence of a very real community of child readers across the American nation who read together, wrote to one another, and considered themselves part of a very real, if very imagined, community. The emotional validity of this kind of imagined national community of child readers, its significance in their lives, can be seen in their passionate letters to their beloved magazines. While children’s co-construction of magazines may initially seem to create an opportunity for child readers to counter or defy the ideologies of the magazines with their art and writing, I argue that the editorial processes suppressed any such defiance so that child voices within the magazine serve only to reinforce, rather than oppose, the white racial and cultural ideologies promoted by the literary and visual content of the magazines. A typical letter is seen in figure 14, printed in *St. Nicholas* in 1900, which reads:

Dear St. Nicholas: I am a little girl twelve years old, and I do just love your magazine better than anything. It is one of my Christmas presents, and I am beginning my fifth year. I like your continued stories best of any. / One summer I was at Cook’s Point, on Canandaigua Lake. Almost every child there took ST. NICHOLS and was devoted to it. You should have seen how anxious we were when the boat used to bring the mail on the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 35, 28.

25th, and how angry we were when you did not come. All the girls were especially interested in ‘Quicksilver Sue,’ and one of the ladies there used to read it aloud to us. / Last winter I had a dear kitten, which I was very fond of; but he ran away twice, and the second time he never came back, so I have had no pets since then. I am going to belong to the St. Nicholas League, which I think is a fine thing. / Wishing you a long life, I am, / Your devoted reader, / Julia Wright McCormick.

ITHACA, N. Y.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little girl twelve years old, and I do just love your magazine better than anything. It is one of my Christmas presents, and I am beginning my fifth year. I like your continued stories best of any.

One summer I was at Cook's Point, on Canandaigua Lake. Almost every child there took ST. NICHOLAS and was devoted to it. You should have seen how anxious we were when the boat used to bring the mail on the 25th, and how angry we were when you did not come. All the girls were especially interested in "Quicksilver Sue," and one of the ladies there used to read it aloud to us.

Last winter I had a dear kitten, which I was very fond of; but he ran away twice, and the second time he never came back, so I have had no pets since then. I am going to belong to the St. Nicholas League, which I think is a fine thing.

Wishing you a long life, I am,
Your devoted reader,
JULIA WRIGHT MCCORMICK.

Figure 14. A letter from Julia Wright McCormick to *St. Nicholas*. *St. Nicholas* (November 1900): 94.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Letters in *St. Nicholas* and other magazines take a form similar to this, with a vague description of self (“I am a little girl twelve years old”), an expression of love for the magazine and particular beloved segments, followed by a short anecdote about the place where the child lives, their pets, a small adventure, or a joke. In this letter, as with others like it, I’m struck by Julia’s constant expressions of love and devotion: she “love[s]” the magazine, likes the “continued stories best of any,” notes that all the children in Cooks Point are “devoted” to the magazine, are “anxious” and “angry” at its lack of arrival. Julia is further interested in a particular story (as are “all the girls”), she thinks the St. Nicholas League (a competition space where children send their writing and artwork to be judged and awarded with medals and publication) “a fine thing,” and expresses herself in closing to be “a devoted reader.” The intense role that *St. Nicholas* plays in Julia’s life is clear: this is a magazine she enjoys, anticipates, communicates with, and is

recognized by with the magazine's publication of her letter. Her fervent expressions of devotion and her expression of anticipated future action ("I am going to belong to the St. Nicholas League") indicate something beyond a love of a single text and instead a continued kind of commitment that spans months or years of Julia's life so that her connection to the magazine is presented as continuous, staying with her throughout time. Julia expresses great attachment to the magazine, a common sentiment in letters printed in Letter-Box sections, and also perhaps some anxiety that her beloved magazine will disappear when she wishes the magazine "a long life" in closing.

As demonstrated by Julia's letter and others like it, the constant presence of the magazine in her life is a source of great joy inspired largely by its predictable timeline, its ability to cause happiness when it arrives each month and anxiety or anger when, by some mistake, it fails to. Importantly, the predictable temporality of the periodical allows it to be a social medium. Consider, while a book may be enjoyed by many different friends at different points in their lives, the periodical was read and discussed by peers all in the same moment, as exemplified by Julia's note that "all the girls" like the story "Quicksilver Sue": Julia knows that all the girls like it because she has talked about it with her friends. Like Twitter or serialized television, children's periodicals become a basis around which child readers, such as Julia and her friends, begin to build a community identity. While Julia and her friends all knew each other in person, it's important that reading *St. Nicholas* becomes a talking point in their community: if one girl were not to read *St. Nicholas* and didn't know what happened to Quicksilver Sue, they would in some small way be left out.

The technology of the periodical is not one singularly tied to individual reading practices and pre-existing communities of readers such as Julia's group of friends; instead, it was tied to community reading practices and the construction and perpetuation of community that could be

national or world-wide. To read a periodical was to identify yourself as a reader of that magazine and join a community of readers who also identified as such despite geographic location. Magazines went to great lengths to build this community. *St. Nicholas*, for instance, encouraged children to imagine themselves among the readers addressed personally by Jack in the Pulpit, or as members of the “Bird Defenders,” or as active contributors “belong[ing]” to the St. Nicholas League. Reading a magazine was to join a community of readers, to be able to consider yourself among them, to be able to have connections with others who likewise have read the monthly edition of that periodical, no matter how close or far from you they may live. In this way periodicals are more than the text on the page; instead, they are the entire community experience of reading and conversation. The letters that child readers write to the magazine then are not mere correspondence with a beloved magazine editor; instead, they become tokens of membership, pledges of participation in a community confirmed by the rare instance when their letters or their names were printed in the magazine itself.

Beyond the creation of nationwide networks of child correspondents, what is appealing about these communities is the sense of autonomy, independence, and respect that they provide. In Letter-Box sections of the magazines, children’s voices were marked as interesting and important. Children were frequently solicited as experts and sources of knowledge for their peers, as is seen when Mary Mapes Dodge, instead of answering a simple question by herself or referring to one of the many resources she kept at her fingertips (both in terms of literary reference and professional contacts) would instead invite other readers to answer questions, as seen in Figure 15 below, which reads:

W. A. M. writes from Oregon asking what is the meaning of the three letters, ‘J. L. B.’ on the twenty-dollar gold pieces; and W. W. E. wishes to know why the stars on the United

States coins are six-pointed. Who can answer these questions?

W. A. M. writes from Oregon asking what is the meaning of the three letters, "J. L. B." on twenty-dollar gold pieces; and W. W. E. wishes to know why the stars on the United States coins are six-pointed. Who can answer these questions?

Figure 15. A letter from W. A. M. to the Letter Box of *St. Nicholas*. *St. Nicholas* (September 1879): 773.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Here Dodge challenges readers to answer their fellow readers' questions. Children would then write letters containing the answers to Dodge and Dodge would often print the correct answer, with attribution to the child providing the answer, in the Letter-Box of a later issue. In this way readers were asked to see their fellow members of the readership community as important keepers of knowledge and as able researchers and writers: a way of understanding themselves that is perhaps absent, or infrequent, in the adult-oriented world where their juvenile status would mark them as un-knowledgeable or where they would be referred to adults for the answers to such curious questions. By frequently referring readers to other readers in the *St. Nicholas* readership community, Dodge solidifies the readership as a community of able-minded peers, something that would have been intensely gratifying way for child readers.

With the opportunity to belong to the community there is likewise the threat of not belonging to the community, of being left out. The child who does not participate in the community of readers within the magazine is marked by the magazine as outside of the safe space of the magazine, as prey to all the threats the magazine protects against. That child, with no access to the community and autonomy that the community purports to provide, is only vulnerable, cut off from their peers and unlikely to be trained up for a successful future that reading the magazine proposes to provide. While the reality of these consequences is of course tenuous, this is indeed the logic of

the magazine: read, participate, and find autonomy as part of this imagined community or be left vulnerable to the dangers of the fin-de-siècle world. Thus the incentive to subscribe to the magazine becomes intensely appealing, as is the incentive to keep up a subscription throughout the childhood years.

While it is absolutely true that children of many races, ethnicities, and nationalities did indeed read all of these magazines, four out of the five magazines that this dissertation studies marked their readership through their illustrations as exclusively white.⁴⁸ We see this, for example, in *St. Nicholas*'s illustration for their regular Jack-in-the-Pulpit feature, included in figures 16 and 17. In this monthly feature Mary Mapes Dodge spoke directly to her readers through the figure of Jack, who was pictured as the spirit of a flower in elf form, leaning forward from his lily to address his audience of readers. This image persisted throughout *St. Nicholas*'s run until the 1880s when the picture changed to that featured in figure 17.

⁴⁸ As explored in Chapter 4, *The Brownies' Book* is an important exception to this claim. While I have evidence from the four other magazines that this dissertation studies that they understood, and visualized, their readerships as white, I expect that this argument extends to the vast majority of children's periodicals published at the turn of the twentieth century.



Figure 16. “Jack-In-The-Pulpit.” *St. Nicholas*, multiple issues. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 17. Jack in the Pulpit. *St. Nicholas*, multiple issues. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Jack was well understood to be the voice of the magazine itself and his address was to the readers of *St. Nicholas*. This kind of collective address served to solidify the readership of a magazine into a coherent group and develop a kind of group identity. Thus in these magazines it is understood that the children to whom Jack speaks in the picture are not the children of the world

at large, but the readers of the magazine. This image is a visual metaphor: as the child sits reading Jack's words on the page below the picture, they become one of the children in the throng surrounding Jack's flower pulpit.

As is obvious in these images, the children who are shown talking to Jack, the implied readers of the magazine, are pictured as exclusively white. Though the creator of this illustration imagines, at least originally, an audience promiscuous enough to include elves, giraffes, owls, and lions, they cannot imagine non-white members among *St. Nicholas's* readers. It is also unlikely that this is an effect of black and white illustration, as black figures appear with seeming ease elsewhere in the text and the lion features shading that we could imagine appearing in the picture to indicate the presence of non-white children.

The other magazines that this dissertation studies also have moments where they illustrate their readerships in repeated images and themes, often in banners and logos. The masthead for *Babyland*, for instance portrays a space filled with babies and surrounded by flowers, suggesting that the magazine creates an entire landscape (also suggested in the second half of *Babyland*) in which the babies can roam freely. The babies are, unsurprisingly, all white and apparently not in any danger though they crawl around "Babyland" without any represented parental supervision (figure 18).



Figure 18. *Babyland* header. *Babyland* (February 1888): 1.

Courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Libraries.

While these communities of readers were problematically defined as singularly white so that non-white readers were defined by the literature and illustrations of the magazines as outside of the community, the magazine had no control over who actually read the magazine, or over who composed letters, stories, and art that they submitted published in the magazines' Letter-Box and reader-produced features. This ability to submit letters and art offered an apparent opportunity for child readers and writers of any race or class to assert themselves as members of the magazine community and apparently add their own opinions and viewpoints to those promoted by magazine editors. In doing so, these magazines seem to open up the community of readers to subscribers and non-subscribers alike, to *all* children, including a variety of races and classes, even those who cannot read but may enjoy the pictures. Doing so seems to open up the door to a cross-racial community of peers that would be remarkably progressive for the era, as well as defying much of the literary and visual content of the magazine. By reading the magazine, the child – despite their race or class – is able to gain status as a member of the magazine community through their reading practices, a contributing member whose voice and opinions are heard. They gain even more if they become writers and see their words affirmed in writing, or if they become subscribers and have their membership validated by becoming collectors and owners of yearly volumes of the magazine, instead of borrowers from friends or libraries.

What made the proposed equality of the community of readership possible is the child's ability to remain anonymous within the pages of the magazine. If a Black child could read the magazine and write letters that s/he then sees published in a later issue, he or she becomes as much an equal member of the community as any white child who does the same. While the Black child may not receive such an opportunity in a real-world setting, the relative anonymity of the Letter-Box theoretically makes this equality possible. Michael Warner asserts that the structural

transformation of the public sphere in the nineteenth century created a literary environment in which power shifted from being “embodied in special persons” to a landscape in which “power is constituted by a discourse in which the people are represented.”⁴⁹ This emphasis on the power of discourse (as opposed to power in individuals) means that authority is placed not in the person writing and their personal access to systems of power authority, but instead in the discourse they present. Writing and what is said, Warner argues, began to take precedence over who said it. Thus anonymity could take on a kind of power by demanding that readers focus on the message instead of the authority of the person writing the message. In nineteenth-century children’s magazines, readers, in making themselves anonymous, draw attention to their contribution to the magazines, not to their authority as individual persons. In claiming relative anonymity by signing at most their name and location, child writers have the opportunity to mingle their voices with those of children and adults across the nation and take equal footing, equal contribution in magazine discourse.

By offering their letter to be made public, the child writer subjects their self to the “universal mediation” of the public sphere.⁵⁰ The children are identified in these Letter-Box sections by first and last name and location, or by initials, or by nicknames that they provide so that each child is not identified as they would be in, say, a census database (where I have tried, with only marginal success, to find them). Instead children are identified by the editors within the communities that the magazines create. Each magazine identifies its child readers and writing according to a unique and standardized system: *St. Nicholas* does full name and location while

⁴⁹ Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 39.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

some texts, such as *Boys' and Girls' Fireside Companion* (which this dissertation does not study), use initials. It's unlikely that the children self-identify in this standardized way in their letters and more likely that this is an editorializing process, a coded attempt at marginal anonymity and conformity so that each child is marked as a standard member of a group, though the reader him- or herself would be able to identify themselves or perhaps close friends as the author of the letter.

The magazine, in choosing this letter to be printed, confirms that its writer is the kind of person who belongs to this community. This opens doors for populations not in power to contribute their ideas and to join the public sphere; it denies the gatekeeper's ability to deny them access or to discredit their ideas based on anything about their personal identity: age, gender, race, economic status, ability, etc. By writing into the magazine the child reader leaves his or her personal self behind and becomes a citizen of this children's public sphere. This proto-citizenship could perhaps act as a preparatory space for later republican citizenship that the child reader/citizen will grow into and perhaps inherit. When considered in that light, the children's magazine can be understood as a preparatory space for a future republican America rooted in equality learned in the safe spaces of innocent American childhood. Unfortunately, the reality of this was not quite so simple.

While the magazine does allow individual readers to make a connection to the public sphere and nation that the magazine represents, it's important to note that the relationship is not always reciprocal. Children's engagement with the magazine, even successfully seeing their work published, does not disrupt the magazine's representation of itself as exclusively white and privileged by writing under a guise. Instead, all writers, readers, and amateur artists are instead co-opted into that group by dint of the anonymity. By writing into the magazine and seeing their words published the reader may individually defy the definition of the readership, but they are swept up into the group as "one of" the readers who is defined as white and middle class so that

their words and self-expressions become whitewashed by the definition of the readership, and those who write into the magazines, as white.

Karen Sà́nchez-Eppler writes that his kind of whitewashing and erasure happens elsewhere in children's literature and culture, notably in Sunday school stories that valorized mission work. These stories, she writes, respond to social anxieties about a racially and culturally heterogeneous American nation (and, as she expands it, American empire). Sà́nchez-Eppler argues that these stories reacted to the "chaos" of the American nation not by celebrating difference, nor by fully separating racial and cultural populations, but instead by "creat[ing] and preserv[ing] a national identity capable of containing (in both senses of the word) swarms of internal aliens."⁵¹ By this Sà́nchez-Eppler does not suggest that Sunday school stories participate in an inclusive American identity that makes space for a variety of racial and cultural practices; instead, she means a kind of inclusion that confirms rather than dissolves racial difference. Thus, in marking *St. Nicholas* as available to all readers no matter their race and ethnicity, but then carefully managing the Letter-Box and its representations of how readers are presented there, editors of these magazines do not actually mark non-white children as equal members of the community, but instead demands that they, in Sà́nchez-Eppler's phrasing, "turn white *and* disappear."⁵² In other words, the magazine demands that child readers subscribe to the white values of the magazine and erase any non-white aspects of their identities so as to fully participate in the community of readers. Importantly, to "turn white and disappear" does not mean that non-white readers were not featured in the letter

⁵¹ Karen Sà́nchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 198. 202.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 202.

box. They frequently were, but when their letters appear they were consistently identified by their race in a way that marked them as remarkably separate from the recognized, white *St. Nicholas* reader, the expected citizen of this imaginary community.

We see the demand to “turn white and disappear” in action in the Letter-Box sections of many magazines, and specifically in Dodge’s system of editing, which shows *St. Nicholas* to be an example of a magazine that, while ostensibly inclusive of all child readers, still privileges whiteness. To begin with, when Dodge prints a letter by a non-white child, she marks it as such by including either the child’s self-identification as non-white or a brief blurb that informs the reader of the author’s race. We see this in both Figures 19 and 20, where child writer Susette La Flesche is identified by Dodge as a “little Indian” and self identifies as a “’savage,’” as well as where child writers Lottie Hogan and Anna Turner are identified as “native negro girls.”

We see this identification of non-white child writers when Dodge, before the text of La Flesche’s letter (figure 19), writes:

A GOOD friend of *St. Nicholas* has forwarded for the “Letter-Box” several interesting letters written by children of the Omaha tribe of Indians. We cannot make room for the whole of every one of the letters, but the parts we print are just what the little Indians themselves wrote.”

Dodge then continues to print La Flesche’s letter, which begins: “Dear *St. Nicholas*: I do not know whether you allow ‘savages’ in your ‘Letter-Box,’ but my two younger sisters seeming to have no doubt whatever on the subject, Rosalie and I have concluded not to let them get ahead of us[.]”

A GOOD friend of ST. NICHOLAS has forwarded for the "Letter-Box" several interesting letters written by children of the Omaha tribe of Indians. We cannot make room for the whole of every one of the letters, but the parts we print are just what the little Indians themselves wrote.

The writer of the first letter, Susette La Flesche, is better known to many of our readers by her Indian name, "Bright Eyes."

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I do not know whether you allow "savages" in your "Letter-Box," but my two younger sisters seeming to have no doubt whatever on the subject, Rosalie and I have concluded not to let them get ahead of us; besides, nothing is ever complete unless "we four" are all "in it." As my little brother Mitchell (who, by the way, considers himself the most important member of the family) is unable to write for himself, I will attempt to do it for him. He is six years old,—so old that he constitutes himself our protector on all occasions.

He tries to re-assure mother by telling her that he will keep all the

Figure 19. A Letter from the "Children of the Omaha Tribe of Indians." *St. Nicholas* (September 1880): 918.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

We see this kind of editorial marking again in the letters from Lottie Hogan and Anna Turner in which they do not identify themselves racially at all (figure 20). Instead, both girls are marked as African by Mr. Fair, the missionary who enjoyed their writing and sent it in to *St. Nicholas*, and by Dodge, who writes: "In the school is a class of native negro girls, from thirteen to fifteen years old, and some of their 'compositions' have been sent to *St. Nicholas*. The girls themselves chose the subjects, and wrote the pieces without help." This kind of racial identification, which does not appear in letters by white child readers, suggests that these non-white readers are not a normative part of the readership.

At Cape Palmas on the west coast of Africa, at the northern entrance to the Gulf of Guinea, is a mission-school under the charge of Mr. Fair and his wife. In the school is a class of native negro girls, from thirteen to fifteen years old, and some of their "compositions" have been sent to St. NICHOLAS. The girls themselves chose the subjects, and wrote the pieces without help. Of course there is not room in the "Letter-Box" for all of the compositions, and so we can print only a few of the most interesting and amusing parts of them.

One of the girls, Lottie Hogan, writes what she knows and fancies about "Clouds." Among other odd things, she says: "The clouds act so queer, sometimes. I think they often look down on the earth, some running head over heel. They see a dog barking and so on, so they imitate as it is going on, on the earth. When the clouds are cut into small pieces in the sky it looks beautiful to my eyes, it looks like the skin of the Royal Tiger, with white and black stripes. It may be that they have seen the Royal Tiger below them in the forest and they have made themselves look like him. * * * You know everybody do not like to do one thing every time. So is the clouds. They do not like to fall into drops only. Sometimes they like to fall into one heavy drop called the waterspout. This drop is very dangerous."

Anna Turner writes about how a lion caught a deer: A lion once made the figure of a man, set it in the ground, and tarred it all over to make it look like a negro. Presently, up came a deer, who sniffed

Figure 20. A Letter from Lottie Hogan to the Letter Box of *St. Nicholas*. *St. Nicholas* (September 1879): 772.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

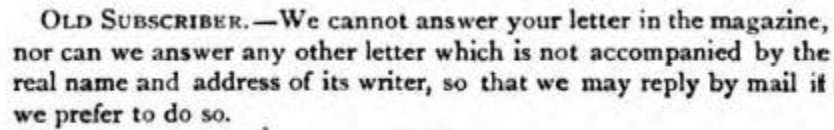
While the races of these three writers are identified openly and at the beginning of their letters, other letters published in the Letter Box do not include the race of the author (as seen in earlier figures in this paper). Instead of marking the mass of letters published in *St. Nicholas* as un-raced, though, I argue that it subsumes the writer into the general readership of the magazine which, as the visuals of readership demonstrate, was raced white. The need to identify the race of some writers and not others suggests that the races of some anonymous authors do not need to be remarked upon. Others, however, need a racial warning flag to color the interpretation of their letter. Those that are not flagged default to white.

Non-white children are free to write to *St. Nicholas* and participate in the community of readers, but they have only two options: the first is to identify their race to the readers, thus taking anonymity away from their discourse and placing it back on their racialized selves so the readers

may make what judgments they may about their writing according to their race. The second option is to erase their racial, ethnic, or national identity and disappear into the community of presumed-white readers. In privileging this editorializing process, these magazines place themselves on the same destructive ideological level as the policy to educate Native American children at the Carlisle School in order to “kill the Indian and save the man.”⁵³ While children’s magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries operated under the guise of creating a safe space for their readers, they also worked under the ideological demand that non-white participants must, to the best of their ability, adopt white values and ideologies while never really expecting to be placed on a level of true social equality. The alternative to this is the example of Susette La Flesche, Lottie Hogan, and Anna Turner, who are all marked as remarkable oddities who are notably different than the standard conception of community of readers, though they are themselves part of that community.

Dodge reinforces this policy with a careful policing of child anonymity. To begin with, she establishes a strict policy regarding the need for writers to identify themselves, clearly stating in a letter to a reader: “OLD SUBSCRIBER. – WE cannot answer your letter in the magazine, nor can we answer any other letter which is not accompanied by the real name and address of its writer, so that we may reply by mail if we prefer to do so” (figure 21).

⁵³ This was the catch phrase that Captain Richard H. Pratt used to explain the mission at the Carlisle school in Pennsylvania in 1879. The goal of the school was to “Americanize” the children of Native Americans in order to teach them white ideologies and cultural practices.

The image shows a scan of a printed notice from Mary Mapes Dodge. The text is centered and reads: "OLD SUBSCRIBER.—We cannot answer your letter in the magazine, nor can we answer any other letter which is not accompanied by the real name and address of its writer, so that we may reply by mail if we prefer to do so." Below the text is a horizontal line.

OLD SUBSCRIBER.—We cannot answer your letter in the magazine, nor can we answer any other letter which is not accompanied by the real name and address of its writer, so that we may reply by mail if we prefer to do so.

Figure 21. Response from Mary Mapes Dodge to an “Old Subscriber.” *St. Nicholas* (March 1879): 364.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

This rule served the very practical means of giving Dodge a return address to direct her replies if she responds to the letters outside of the Letter-Box, but her emphasis on the “real name” of the subscriber also suggests a desire for control: here Dodge restricts her writers’ ability to be anonymous by ensuring that she, at least, will know their true identity. This, of course, does not prevent writers from inventing believable pseudonyms, nor does it necessarily give Dodge access to the race, religion, or class of her reader based alone on name and location. Still, her demand for the information suggests a desire to control the contributions to her Letter Box on some level, to shape it as she chooses to have it appear. After receiving letters (and later submissions to the *St. Nicholas* League) from authors with their full (apparently real) names and addresses, though, Dodge carefully made anonymous the letters from children by publishing them in a standard manner of name and location. In earlier years, Dodge made young artists and writers even further anonymous in the Young Contributors Department by demanding their full name but publishing child art “with the writers initials only” (Figure 22). We see that this policy was enacted in January of 1876, when Dodge stated: “Henceforth we hope to be able to give space every month to a Young Contributors’ Department, the articles in which we are to be signed with their writers’ initials only, though we must require in each instance the real name, age, and address of the author.”

YOUNG CONTRIBUTORS' DEPARTMENT.

(Henceforth we hope to be able to give space every month to a Young Contributors' Department, the articles in which are to be signed with their writers' initials only, though we must require in each instance the real name, age, and address of the author. We shall be happy to hear from our young friends, and shall be guided in selecting manuscripts by their individual merit, the relative age of the author, and the interest of the matter for the greatest number of our readers.)




Figure 22. Instructions from Mary Mapes Dodge to readers regarding how to sign art submitted to the magazine. *St. Nicholas* (January 1876): 202. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Though Dodge refused to allow her writers to remain anonymous to her, she constructs their anonymity for her readers in the Letter Box. Though the Letter Box is marked as anonymous and as a community of all who have the ability to read English, Dodge kept a careful thumb on the Letter-Box and was careful to mark race explicitly, or erase it when convenient.⁵⁴ The anonymity and free writing-based discourse in *St. Nicholas* is one that is constructed as anonymous, rather than truly anonymous and a space of free dialogue.

By 1910, photographic technology progressed enough that child readers frequently sent photographs of themselves to the magazines and were able to see these photographs printed in the Letter Box alongside their letters.⁵⁵ In this way, readers had the opportunity to represent themselves both in their words and visually. This would be an opportunity for non-white readers of *St. Nicholas* to present themselves visually as non-white, defying the magazine's ability to white-wash their descriptions of self in their letters. However, this doesn't seem to happen: by dint of either editorial process or a lack of non-white correspondents (and I tend to suspect the former over the latter) non-white children are not pictured photographically as readers and writers for the

⁵⁴ Evidence of this may arise in the archives of Dodge's letters in the New York Public Library, the Princeton University Libraries, and The de Grummond collection at the University of Southern Mississippi, which I hope to explore while writing my dissertation.

⁵⁵ This technology was available long before 1910, but by this moment in the publication of children's periodicals photographs of readers within the text were common enough to become expected monthly features.

magazine. Thus the image of the white readership of these magazines is maintained, if not strengthened, by the ability to send and print photographs: instead of suggesting an all-white audience through illustrations of their readership, magazines were indexing an all-white readership through photographs of them.

While Dodge demonstrates herself to be invested in portrayals of race in the Letter Box portions of *St. Nicholas*, child writers prove themselves to be curious about race as well, and Dodge is careful to include them in the Letter-Box portion of her magazine, as well as other departments with contributors from readers. We see an example of this in January of 1880 (figure 23) when “H.P.” inquires:

DEAR *St. Nicholas*: Will you please ask some of your readers if they can tell me whether Adam and Eve belonged to the Causasian race, and, if not, the one they did belong to? I should like to know very much. I have tried in many ways to find out, but as yet I have not been able to. — Your constant reader, H. P.”

Amherst, Mass.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Will you please ask some of your readers if they can tell me whether Adam and Eve belonged to the Caucasian race, and, if not, the one they did belong to? I should like to know very much. I have tried in many ways to find out, but as yet I have not been able to. — Your constant reader, H. P.

Figure 23. A letter from H. P. to the Letter Box of *St. Nicholas*. *St. Nicholas* (January 1880): 276.

Here, the anonymous author addresses this concern to the peer readership of the magazine. Here H. P.’s anxiety about the question is clear: in asking for a clear, decisive answer to the question, H. P. reveals a homogeneous understanding of race: either Adam and Eve “belong to the Caucasian race” or they belong to “one” other: for H. P., there is no racial mixing. This reflects the literary and illustrative practice of the magazine which likewise feature no mixing of races (as discussed earlier in this introduction). Thus it makes sense that H.P. would turn to *St. Nicholas* for the answer to her/his question: the world so far has not been able to answer this question (though

H. P. “has tried in many ways to find out”) and so *St. Nicholas*, with its clearly demarcated racial characters in its stories and imagery, seems a logical place to find an answer. In querying her/his peers, H.P. reveals much faith in the collective mind of *St. Nicholas*’s readership to find the answer to a question about which H.P. is clearly anxious. The anxiety expressed the statement that H.P. “should like to know very much” and “[has] tried in many ways to find out” suggests that this child, at least, is deeply interested in understanding her/his world in terms of race – not even simply the present political world, but the historical and religious world as well. By placing this query in the Letter-Box, Dodge marks it as an appropriate, if not difficult, question for readers of *St. Nicholas* to be asking: she approves of her readers writing American concepts of race back into historical and religious eras long past. Though Dodge usually publishes reader answers to their peers’ questions, in the case of the Adam and Eve query she does not, implying that either no answer came forward, or none that satisfactorily answered the question.

We see the *St. Nicholas*’s subtle investment superiority of whiteness take precedence in the art contributed by children as well as in their letters, particularly in the St. Nicholas League, created in 1899. In this increasingly popular aspect of the magazine, children were encouraged to send poems, stories, art, and photographs to be published in this section of the magazine.



"A COLD DAY," BY PAULINE CROLL, AGE 15. (GOLD BADGE.)

Figure 24. "A Cold Day," by Pauline Croll. *St. Nicholas* (December 1900): 178. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The artwork "A Cold Day" (Figure 24) was sent in by Pauline Croll and was recognized by the League with a gold badge, the League's highest honor. Pauline has good technical skill for a fifteen-year-old artist, especially seen in her ability to connote the stark whiteness of the landscape through the use of shades of grey. What is likewise interesting is the piece's ordinariness: what Pauline has produced here is not very different than many of the drawings produced in *St. Nicholas* and in fact is very similar to the art reproduced in Figure 25, which is a professional adult-created artwork printed only a few pages earlier as the headpiece of the Nature and Science section of *St. Nicholas*.



Figure 25. “Nature and Science for Young Folks” *St. Nicholas* (December 1900): 170. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Both “A Cold Day” and “Nature and Science for Young Folks” are winter scenes that show white children moving forward in snow, the first pulling a small sled and the second attempting to avoid slipping on ice. The adult-created piece uses many of the same techniques as Pauline: the landscape is left white to suggest snow, watercolors techniques are used to suggest texture and the reflection of light, the child’s face is left uncolored, like the snow, to suggest racial whiteness, and primary features of nose, eyes, and mouth are only suggested by dark smudges of black. Both are winter scenes that highlight the child ably interacting with their environment (navigating ice, hauling wood for fire) and enjoying themselves in the process.

Anna M. Redcay notes that the League’s instructions “promoted the child’s immersion in and representation of the real world – prose which mimicked the adult contributions of the periodical,” suggesting that Pauline’s art was published and awarded because it represented a real vision of Pauline’s life.⁵⁶ However, another way of understanding the St. Nicholas League’s call for “realism” is to say that its instructions and choice of winners promoted the child’s immersion

⁵⁶ Anna M. Redcay, “‘Live to learn and learn to live’: The St. Nicholas League and the Vocation of Childhood,” *Children’s Literature* 68 (2011): 58-84. 68.

in and representation of the constructed landscape of the periodical – a construction that in no way represent the lived realities of actual child reader lives. It's important to note that the magazine did not publish just any representations of reader lives; instead, what are printed are those that reinforce and parrot back the ideologies promoted by the magazine itself. Pauline's work is an example of this: she is rewarded because she has submitted a charming picture that reflects the ideology and artistic techniques of the magazine, that reinforces the reality of child life that *St. Nicholas* presents. While we can imagine that all sorts of art was submitted to *St. Nicholas* from child readers, some of which presumably represented lives of non-white readers, these pieces were not printed. For many readers reproducing the "realism" that the magazine promoted may have been an easy task if their lives more completely matched the fictional child lives promoted by the periodical. For non-white or non-middle-class children, however, the call to create and submit realistic texts that would win a prize might have been a practice of fantasy rather than a practice of realism or naturalism. The call, however, remains the same: the child whose life matches more completely the childhood promoted by *St. Nicholas* is encouraged to represent their life; the child whose life does not match the childhood promoted by the magazine is encouraged to fantasize themselves in the life of the idealized *St. Nicholas* child, to take the pieces of their life that do match and represent those, or to invent stories and images which better line up – in other words, to erase their alternate experience, to turn white, and to disappear into the community of readers. Ironically, only by disappearing and subscribing to a white ideology of childhood could non-white children receive recognition for their artistic work. The call for realism doesn't represent an actual desire to represent the varied lives of American children; instead, it more accurately functions as a mechanism to oblige child readers to participate in and accept the ideal American childhood represented in the magazine as their own.

Children were encouraged not only to read the magazines, but to embody them, to reproduce and co-produce variations on the same themes they had already read in the magazine.⁵⁷ When children do not submit drawings that conform to the magazine's standard celebration of whiteness, they conform to other illustrative practices common in the magazine. For instance, Dodge publishes a drawing sent in by "an audacious young contributor" in 1879 that participates in *St. Nicholas's* practice of publishing illustrations that denigrate and mock non-white figures (Figure 26).



Figure 26. "An audacious young contributor." *St. Nicholas* (April 1879): 430. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

In this image, which uses a racial slur that Dodge herself assiduously avoids, the child contributor draws a black figure who is apparently "Made sick / By a brick." This image, like many printed in the magazine, asks the reader to laugh at the figure's pain instead of empathizing

⁵⁷ Children were even invited by the St. Nicholas League to become advertisers, to co-construct the advertising for the magazines by participating in advertisement competitions. The winning child saw their advertisement printed in the advertisement pages of *St. Nicholas* and were paid a five-dollar prize. Here children are asked to consider themselves as involved in the consumption process but also as workers paid for their labor (though the money is spoken of as a "prize" instead of payment). Unfortunately, those pages were not preserved through the years and so, as of now, I don't have access to these fascinating objects (though I continue to search).

with it. By sending the drawing to Dodge, the “audacious young contributor” communicates that s/he believes *St. Nicholas* to be a hospitable venue for such racial humor contributed by both children and adults. By printing the image, Dodge confirms this belief. By further calling the young artist “audacious” – a character trait often held up as laudable in the fiction of the magazine – Dodge holds this contributor up as a positive example for his or her peers. Thus we have at least one example of a child getting the message that *St. Nicholas* is a magazine with an agenda that supports the superiority of whiteness and the denigration of non-whiteness. Though readers may have sent in images or stories that protest such messages, we have no example of a contrary statement from child readers in print. However, there are many examples of children understanding that those images, letters, and stories that hold up the ideology of white superiority proposed by *St. Nicholas* are those that will be seen in print.

The creation of these magazines was immensely popular and profitable, suggesting that the American community of adult and children alike embraced these publications and the fraught ideology of safety from the world and imagined mass community that they suggest. In asking child readers to embody this identity and using children’s own artwork and writing as evidence of the appeal of joining the magazine community, American children’s periodicals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sold American child readers an image of themselves as autonomous that was, in fact, empty of any actual autonomy. Despite the apparent freedom granted by the community space of the children’s magazine, the children who participate in this community are denied agency: it is never up to the reader to define what they should do, read, or how they present themselves, as the editorial process makes these decisions for them. Those letters printed are those that exemplify the morality of the magazine; if the letter or artwork does not comply, it is either edited or elided. Children’s voices are present in the magazine, but though they propose to present

American childhood at large, taken as a whole they do not exemplify the variety of childhoods lived in the American landscape during the eras in which these magazines were published. Instead, their contributions are heavily curated to reinforce the white supremacist ideologies of the magazines so that the American child is portrayed both in literature and in their own words as espousing the inherently conservative and racially repressive regime of late-nineteenth-century culture – all under the guise of a community that emphasizes their voice, their autonomy, and their independence.

2.0 Chapter 2: Black Ink and White Page:

American Traditions of Illustrating Race and Childhood

In June of 1865, the monthly children's magazine *Our Young Folks* published a half-page promotion for the *Illustrated Phrenological Journal* in its advertisement pages.⁵⁸

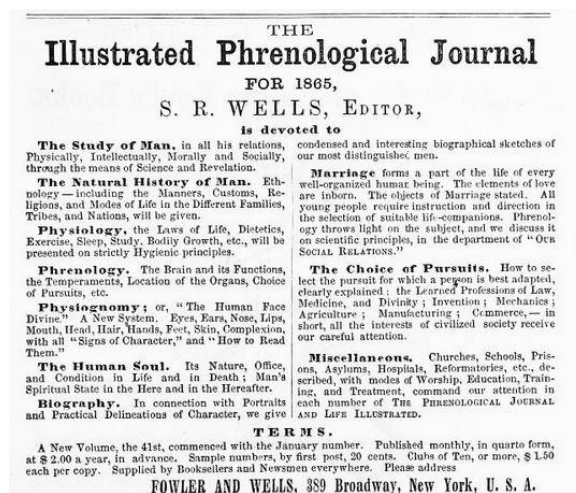


Figure 27. “The Illustrated Phrenological Journal for 1865.” *Our Young Folks* (June 1865): Advertising page

1. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

⁵⁸ Although Joan Brest Friedberg notes that *Our Young Folks* “carried no advertising,” it did publish advertising in its “wrapper,” entitled the “Our Young Folks Advertiser.” See Joan Brest Friedberg, “Our Young Folks: An Illustrated Magazine for Boys and Girls” in *Children’s Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 330. The wrapper pages of periodicals from the nineteenth century are infrequently preserved as a result of either reading or binding practices: readers, binders, and librarians often threw away advertising pages that were marked as disposable aspects of the magazine by both their inferior paper and a different system of pagination. Since professionally bound editions of periodicals are those most likely to survive into the twenty-first century, very few advertising wrappers survive. While it is likely that this ad was reproduced in several other issues of *Our Young Folks*, I was only able to view the wrapper for the June issue of 1865 at the American Antiquarian Society. As Sean Latham and Robert Scholes argue, advertising pages are intrinsic parts of the magazine reading experience which can and should be studied as closely as the textual aspects of the magazine. For more on advertisements, preservation, and digitization practices, see Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, “The Rise of Periodical Studies,” *PMLA* 121, no. 2 (March 2006): 517-31. This same advertisement for the *Illustrated Phrenological Journal* was published in other periodicals of the same year and was not exclusively promoted to a child readership; for instance, an advertisement for the *Illustrated Phrenological Journal* that is nearly identical to this one was published in *The Herald of Health and Journal of Physical Culture* in April of 1865.

The advertisement, featured in figure 27, makes many promises: that the *Journal* will reveal the mysteries of man's nature and history, the relationship between the body and the soul, what career is best suited for the reader, even what type of person they should marry. None of these insights are particularly unique for a phrenological journal in the 1860's: phrenology, a discipline that proposed to discern the proclivities of an individual's mind and character through close observation of the shape of their skull, had been promising these answers to the American public for decades.⁵⁹ What is striking and seems initially incongruous is this advertisement's placement in the pages of a children's magazine. This location begs the question: what can children's literature and illustrated phrenology possibly have in common?

⁵⁹ There is much cultural conflation between the terms phrenology and physiognomy. Physiognomy was a science popularized most famously by Johann Kaspar Lavater, who relied on bodily and facial features to discern a person's interior character. Phrenology focused this study of bodily signs to the minute observation and measurement of the skull for insight into human personality. Phrenology, while concentrating largely on skull shape, also "proposed that organic constitution harmonized with mental orientation. The color of the hair, eyes, and skin; the ratio of fat to muscle; and height to weight" all could be read as insights to personality and aptitude, coming down, unsurprisingly, in favor of white persons of Anglo-Saxon, German, and French types. Quoted in Ellis Shookman, ed., *Introduction to The Faces of Physiognomy: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater* (Columbia: Camden House, 1993), 6.

Phrenology owes much of its understandings of the relationship between outward appearance and interior reality to the discipline of physiognomy. As Christine Yao notes, "Johann Kaspar Lavater's physiognomic study of faces as the reflection of the soul gave way to Frank Josef Gall's more scientific phrenology, a critique of the head whose external bumps quantified the inherent faculties of the brain." See Christine Yao, "Visualizing Race Science in *Benito Cereno*," *J:19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 131. Physiognomy reached its height of popularity in the western world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though it has been traced back to Aristotle. As the nineteenth century moved towards the twentieth, these terms were increasingly used together and conflated so that texts like the *Illustrated Phrenological Journal* contained articles that were strictly physiognomic, but which were seen as part of the teachings of phrenology. This chapter participates in this late nineteenth-century trend and includes many descriptions that are technically physiognomic under the umbrella term "phrenology." For further reading on this kind of conflation, see Charles Colbert, *A Measure of Perfection: Phrenology and the Fine Arts in America* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), xi-xii and Barbara Benedict, "Reading Faces: Physiognomy and Epistemology in Late Eighteen-Century Sentimental Novels," *Studies in Philology* 92, no. 3 (1995): 312-15.

This chapter is interested in the methods by which childhood and race are visualized on the periodical page. From the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century there was much development in print technology and with it came much diversity in the way that children were made visual on the periodical page. In this dissertation I contend that images within children's periodicals did not merely accompany the texts they illustrated, but instead were complicated visual signifiers that communicated much information to their readers. This chapter investigates these images, the messages they communicate, and seeks in particular to understand how they function in children's periodicals. In particular, this chapter is interested in the changing ways of making race visual on the periodical page. From 1873 through 1939 (the timeline of this dissertation) visualization practices moved from producing images primarily through woodblock and etching to relying on lithographic and half-tone production that allowed photographs to be printed for the first time.⁶⁰ This chapter seeks to understand how the changes in these technical methods of production enabled people to experiment with the ways that race and childhood were visualized on the page, and how these visuals asked children to read them.⁶¹

⁶⁰ In halftone reproduction, which was used in children's periodicals as early as the 1880s, the photographic negative was projected through a screen onto a copper plate treated with photosensitive gels. This process allowed for variation in the tone and enabled printers to more easily simulate shades of gray. Where the light projected through the screen touched the photosensitive gel, the gel hardened. Once excess, un-hardened gel was washed off the plate, the plate was treated to an acid bath, where the acid ate away at the un-gelled areas of the steel, producing small gullies in the copper that could hold ink, an intaglio process similar to engraving. The photogravure process was similar to the halftone process, though it relied on dichromated gelatin instead of a screen for the variation in tone. Rotogravure, which was not used commercially in America until 1903, was similar to photogravure but utilized a rounded cylinder and allowed for reproductions to be completed at both high quality and great speed.

⁶¹ In his text *Picture Theory*, W. J. T. Mitchell writes that "One polemical claim of *Picture Theory* is that the interaction of pictures and texts is constitutive of representation as such: all media are mixed media, and all representations are heterogeneous; there are no 'purely' visual or verbal arts, though the impulse to purify media is one of the central utopian gestures of modernism." Mitchell, *Seeing Through Race*, 5. Suggesting that media like children's magazines, which consist of both print and pictures, should be read jointly. However, this chapter of my dissertation seeks to understand how images themselves communicate messages, how they work as semiotic communicators in the absence of the text. I do this in part to emphasize the increased visibility of the late nineteenth century, but also because academic readings of visual media tend to emphasize or privilege meaning garnered from the accompanying text,

This chapter begins with a reading of phrenological influence on wood block illustrations in *Our Young Folks* (1865-1873). The obvious influence of phrenology on the illustrations within this magazine clearly demonstrates the late nineteenth-century conviction that a person's visualized exterior could, and should, be read as evidence of interiority.⁶² This section, entitled "Illustrating Phrenology and Childhood: Early Traditions of Visualizing Race in *Our Young Folks*," demonstrates that phrenology and periodical illustrations of children both relied on a transparent connection between the interior self and visual body so that illustrations of children within *Our Young Folks* used phrenological signifiers to communicate complicated messages about the supremacy of the white race to the readers of the magazine. This section demonstrates that images of children communicated rich sets of information to readers and contained visual rhetorics of white supremacy.

As the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth, methods of illustrating children moved away from direct phrenological signification, but maintained the connections between visualized bodies and legible interiorities. The next section of this chapter, entitled "The Child's Legible Body: Technological Advancements and Illustration in *Wide Awake*," explores this moment in illustrative history. This section demonstrates how advances in illustrative technology changed the way that children and race were visualized, expanding and commenting upon the tradition set forth

reading that as the dominant message to be garnered from the heterogeneous combination of text and image and missing the opportunity to explore what the image itself communicates.

⁶² *Our Young Folks* was published in Boston by Ticknor and Fields, which also published *The Atlantic Monthly*. It was originally edited by John Townsend Trowbridge, Gail Hamilton, and Lucy Larcom. It had a circulation that reached 75,000 readers. See Friedberg, *Our Young Folks*, 329-41.

in *Our Young Folks*.⁶³ This chapter concludes by considering the further advancements introduced by *St. Nicholas Magazine* (1873-1939), which began to print photographs for mass child consumption in 1884.⁶⁴ In reading *St. Nicholas* (1873-1939), I further explore how the traditional representations and phrenological signification seen in *Our Young Folks* and *Wide Awake* were not fully abandoned, but rather maintained and subtly adapted in *St. Nicholas*, demonstrating that these traditions do not follow a neat technological timeline, but instead are complicated visual ideologies that play on, repeat, and sustain even as they produce new methods.

2.1 Illustrating Phrenology and Childhood: Early Traditions of Visualizing Race in *Our Young Folks*

Almost every page of children's magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century included images of children of a variety of races, and they explicitly visualized their racial difference with a variety of methods that this chapter will explore. Artists in this era were working with a palette of black ink on white page and creatively utilized this monotone color scheme to render images that communicated both childishness and race to their readers.⁶⁵ The question thus

⁶³ *Wide Awake* was published in Boston by D. Lothrop & Co., which also published *The Pansy*, *Babyland*, and the *Chautauqua Young Folks' Journal*. It was edited by Ella Farman Pratt, who was later joined by Charles Stuart Pratt. The magazine had a circulation of 25,000. See Chlebek, "Wide Awake," 454-60.

⁶⁴ *Wide Awake* began to print photographs in March of 1884, beating *St. Nicholas* to the print technology by about half a year. Interestingly, both printed photographs of the Carlisle School as their first photographs.

⁶⁵ Periodicals' strict reliance on black and white imagery changes with the introduction of color lithography, which allowed artists and publishers to render vivid multi-colored prints. Multi-colored prints were expensive and the majority of children's periodicals throughout this timeline did not invest in them, except occasionally on the cover of the magazine.

becomes: how does an artist armed with only black ink render the many colors of a child's face on the periodical page? Since race was judged in the late nineteenth century in many ways through skin coloration, we must ask: how were a myriad of skin tones to be communicated, and not conflated with the natural shadows of face and form? Which features were highlighted, and which elided?

Archival research suggests that phrenology provided a solution to those problems by providing artists with a ready repertoire of visual tropes that artists used in addition to the visual portrayal of darker or lighter skin. The illustrations in children's periodicals use a symbolic structure in the construction of images of children that finds its roots in phrenology, so that every choice made in how to draw a child's face, every decision about where to place black ink or let white page show through, can be read for that symbolic structure. Nineteenth-century texts on phrenology can thus be used as a key for understanding the illustrative signs used to visually depict childhood and race in this era.

Understanding the phrenological underpinnings of nineteenth-century visualizations of children allows us to understand the extent to which these illustrations sought to emphasize the visual as expressive of an individual's interiority. As Christine Yao writes, "Through the influence of science on nineteenth-century American visual culture, faces, heads, and skulls acted as the visible material signifiers not just of character and ability but also of differences within the hierarchy of the human that affirmed the supremacy of whiteness."⁶⁶ Phrenology suggested that a person's personality and potential were made visual by the shape and form of their head and body.

⁶⁶ Yao, "Visualizing Race Science," 131.

In including phrenological signifiers, illustrations within children's magazines suggest the same: that what is visually available to readers/viewers is suggestive of more than merely what a person looks like, but also of their interiority, or essential self. Both phrenology and representations of childhood in this era frequently communicated racial difference in visual terms, and both used visual depictions of racial difference not merely to suggest that black and white persons look different, but that they were inherently different in character, nature, and future prospects. These connections between visibility, science, and children's literature are central for understanding precisely how race and childhood were illustrated in the nineteenth century, and further how each was leveraged to encode white supremacy and communicate it to an audience of child readers.

Though phrenology has been largely dismissed today as pseudo-science, in the nineteenth century it was considered rigorously scientific and based in empirical evidence.⁶⁷ Phrenology proposed to enable individuals to visually read their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as that of friends or strangers, through the close observation of physical characteristics, especially the shape of the head and skull. Barbara Benedict writes that this was the appeal of phrenology, that it allowed believers to have "faith in the sign, the unity of the signifier and signified, God and man, appearance and reality."⁶⁸ Phrenology's influence on art in the nineteenth century is well documented, though magazine illustrators are not commonly included in the study. Charles Colbert notes that artists and authors were some of the most "avid readers" of Franz Joseph Gall, the so-

⁶⁷ Christine Yao notes that "these now maligned 'head sciences' allowed for the development of respectable fields of anatomy, psychology, and neuroscience but also influenced race science and the theory of polygenesis: the separate evolution of each 'race.'" Ibid. This emphasizes that though we no longer look to facial structure and head shape for evidence of an individual's personality, this branch of science did not go extinct but rather evolved to influence later branches of science that we today hold as credible. The commonplace view that phrenology has died and is separate from later scientific and cultural ideas should be dismissed, or at least troubled.

⁶⁸ Benedict, "Reading Faces," 312.

called father of phrenology, and that in the nineteenth century artists turned to phrenology to gain “access to regions of the personality that had hitherto escaped objectification.”⁶⁹ Phrenology apparently held many answers to this desire for objectification, as Colbert demonstrates that “The weight of evidence suggests that most artists in New York possessed some degree of familiarity with phrenology by the end of the third decade of the [nineteenth] century.”⁷⁰ It is unlikely that this knowledge died with these artists; instead, it is much more likely that phrenology as a basis for knowing and understanding how to draw faces was passed to artistic protégés, becoming further established in American art and illustration later in the nineteenth century. The note in figure 28, published in *The Illustrated Annals of Phrenology and Physiognomy* (1873), reads “As an artist, I have at all times found Phrenology advantageous in the practice of my art; and that *expression, in almost every case, coincided* exactly with what was indicated by the cerebral development.” This artist’s assertion that phrenology as useful in his practice suggests that phrenology as an important influence on art did indeed persist later in the nineteenth century, as at least one artist in the seventh decade of the century found phrenology “advantageous in the practice of [his] art.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Colbert, *A Measure of Perfection*, 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 13.

⁷¹ Yao furthers Benedict’s assertion, arguing that in the nineteenth century “Science drew on art and, in turn, art drew on science. The scientific dependence on the visual as a primary tool of analysis meant the proliferation of images of faces, heads, and skulls” in nineteenth-century art. Yao, “Visualizing Race Science,” 132.

As an artist, I have at all times found Phrenology advantageous in the practice of my art; and that *expression, in almost every case, coincided* exactly with what was indicated by the cerebral development.—GEORGE RENNIE, Esq., *Sculptor*.

Figure 28. *The Illustrated Annuals of Phrenology and Physiognomy* (Samuel R. Wells, 1873): 67.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

Images from children's magazines, such as those seen in figures 29 through 32, published in *Our Young Folks* between the years 1864 and 1866, are generally not read as evidence of phrenological influence on the visual aspects of children's literature. However, each of these images demonstrates a connection to the teachings of phrenology.



Figure 29. *Our Young Folks* (June 1864): 147. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.



Figure 30. *Our Young Folks* (June 1865): 5. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.



Figure 31. *Our Young Folks* (June 1865): 130. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.



Figure 32. *Our Young Folks* (June 1865): 272. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

What I notice when I look at these illustrations is that these characterizations don't fully read as children to my twenty-first century eye. Their faces don't communicate the kind of childishness that I'm used to seeing illustrated today, or even later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I know that these are meant to be children because there is something child-like about their rounded faces and limbs, because of their placement in a magazine for children, and because they are engaged in activities that are culturally coded as childish. Yet the more I stare at them, the more these drawn images look less and less like children: a trick of visual satiation, the visual sign becomes detached from the signified. These images, in my view, tend to caricature children, focusing on and elaborating a few key features in order to over-emphasize those characteristics and also what those characteristics signify. In figures 29-32, the features that I see emphasized are oversized foreheads that bulge more at the top, eyes that are at once deep set and protruding, full, round cheeks that omit any real jawline, and a whiteness of skin that is indicated by a lack of ink on the page, so that the blank whiteness of the paper is not merely a substance on which the image is printed, but instead shines through to become part of the face. In choosing a selection of features and repeating them in order to represent an idea of childhood, I argue that these drawings were produced less to capture or replicate what children actually look like (as is attempted in some realist modes of art and photography) but instead to communicate childishness in a selection of visual cues: namely, eyes, head shape, skin, and facial structure, and skin color.



Figure 33. *Our Young Folks* (June 1865): 372. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

Figure 7, printed in *Our Young Folks* in June of 1865, shares the features seen in figures 30-33. This picture accompanies an article entitled “A Business Letter,” a piece that provided child readers with instructions regarding how they should write to the editors or authors of *Our Young Folks*, especially if they wanted to become correspondents or receive a letter in return.⁷² The child represented in this accompanying image thus visually embodies the reader and correspondent to *Our Young Folks*. Because she is an imagined version of the reader, not a portrait of an actual named correspondent, the illustrator who created this image was able to make creative decisions regarding what that she looks like and how she should be represented on the page. The fact that the illustrator has such license with the image suggests that what has been made visual here is not really the image of a child, and instead an amalgam of phrenological features that each have different significations, and which together make up what interior qualities the editors and illustrators believe the ideal child reader of *Our Young Folks* might embody. She’s an illustrated

⁷² “A Business Letter,” *Our Young Folks*, June 1865, 368-72.

fantasy of ideal childhood that tells us much more about what the editors, authors, and illustrators of *Our Young Folks* wanted their readers to be like, not who those actual readers really were.

The two most obvious features that this illustrator used to build this girl are a large forehead and prominent upturned eyes. These features are not illustrative mistakes or coincidences; instead, they carry specific coded meanings that can be interpreted through the disciplines of phrenology and physiognomy. Both phrenology and physiognomy purported to be able to interpret an individual's interiority through an examination – visual or measured – of their external characteristics. Reading the ideal correspondent of *Our Young Folks* (as well as her counterparts in figures 29-32) through phrenological and physiognomic understandings of face and form allows us to understand less how *Our Young Folks* thought children looked, and more about how they figured child nature and interiority. For instance, the idealized girl's large forehead is indicated by a great deal of blank, un-inked page below the darkened implication of a hairline and above the shaded space that indicates a brow. This exaggeratedly large white forehead, when read phrenologically, suggests a strong intellect and a particularly sentimental and emotional spirit, a feature and interiority which the *Illustrated Phrenological Journal* visually demonstrates as features commonly seen in the clergy.⁷³

⁷³ The images and quotes here are drawn from an annual collection of *The Illustrated Phrenological Journal*, the magazine mentioned in the advertisement reproduced at the beginning of this chapter. The moniker “Annuals” means that the publishers of the journal a selection of articles from the first nine years of the journal and publish them in book form. Individual issues of *The Illustrated Phrenological Journal* are rare, though they may exist in special collections and private archives. Copies of the *Illustrated Annuals* are much more common. I have chosen to read the ideal correspondent of *Our Young Folks* against this source because it reveals the connections between this magazine and this phrenological text: not only does one advertise the other, but the illustrations included in both have many similarities. Since one was published in New York and the other in Boston, though, it is unlikely that they shared illustrators – though not impossible.



Figure 34. “Heads of the leading clergy.” *The Illustrated Annuals of Phrenology and Physiognomy* (Samuel R. Wells, June 1873): 26. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

The correspondent’s forehead is wide as well as long, extending around the side of her head so that the area around her temples, her “sidehead,” is likewise well developed, suggesting that she is suited to spending her time “developing the intellect as well as the sentiments and emotions.” The illustration also reveals that the correspondent, like the clergy featured in figure 34, has a “high [head], full in the coronal region, but comparatively narrow at the base,” suggesting that this girl, like the “Heads of the Leading Clergy,” “attends much to [her] devotions, lives constantly in its atmosphere, and ... thereby cultivates the organs in the top-head – Veneration, Spirituality, Hope, Benevolence, and Conscientiousness.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Samuel R. Wells, ed. *The Illustrated Annuals of Phrenology and Physiognomy* (New York: Samuel R. Wells, 1873), 26.

The correspondent's eyes are likewise revealing. According to the same journal, the prominence of her eye (indicated by a lack of line or shading beneath it) indicates that the language portion of her brain is well developed, pushing the eye forward beneath the brow, indicating a "great command of words" as well as the potential to be a "ready speak[er] and write[r]." While these complimentary features are indicated, this prominent eye could also indicate the downside of such an affinity for language: a potential for lack of scrutiny, at risk of being readily impressed, as demonstrated in figure 35, which reads:⁷⁵

A large development of the organ of *language* in the brain pushes the eye outward and downward, giving it prominence or anterior projection. Prominence or fullness, therefore, is an indication of large Language, and persons with prominent eyes are found to have great command of words, and to be ready speakers and writers; but it may be observed that as a projecting eye most readily receives impressions from all surrounding objects, so it indicates ready and universal observation, but a lack of close scrutiny and perception of individual things. Such eyes see everything in general but nothing in particular. Deep-seated eyes, on the contrary, receive more definite, accurate, and deeper impressions, but are less readily impressed and less discursive in their views."

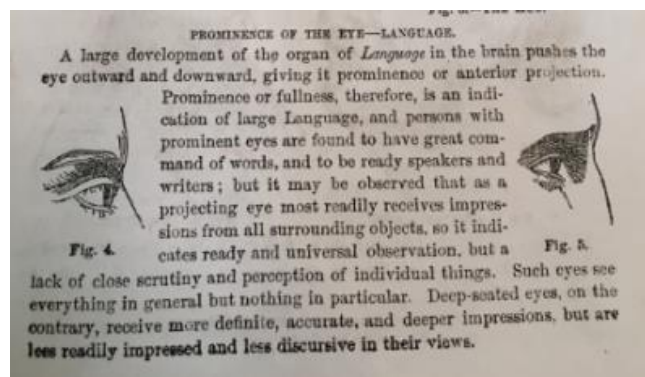


Figure 35. *The Illustrated Annals of Phrenology and Physiognomy* (Samuel R. Wells, June 1873): 84.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

That her eyes are upturned, indicated by the blackness of implied pupil and iris at the top left of her eye instead of at the bottom right (which would imply a downward glance at her page)

⁷⁵ Ibid., 84.

suggests that the girl has a natural predisposition to prayer and devotional feelings, as if a natural propensity to look upward suggests a spirit constantly and innately seeking the heavens. We see this too in the phrenological visualization of a prayerful person in figure 36, who is “wrapped in devotional feelings” and whose “eyes are raised by an action neither taught nor acquired,” because “Instinctively we bow the body and raise the eyes in prayer, as though the visible heavens were the seat of God.”



Figure 36. *The Illustrated Annals of Phrenology and Physiognomy*. Samuel R. Wells, June 1873, pg. 35.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

This phrenological reading of the illustrated correspondent demonstrates that there is nothing natural about this idealized reader and correspondent of *Our Young Folks*: every decision that is made about how she looks is a decision about where to place ink on a page, and each of those placements signifies a different kind of interiority that she is meant to embody. If this brief phrenological reading of the image of the ideal correspondent of *Our Young Folks* gives us any insight, it is this correspondent is an ideal reader indeed: a figure at once immature and yet with an affinity for language, sentiment, intellect, and faith. She is childish, and yet developing an

intellect that has much in common with some of the most venerated figures in nineteenth century society. Clearly, *Our Young Folks* flatters itself by positing this particular reader as the one whom they imagine writing to their magazine.

These phrenological readings of the ideal reader are possible because phrenological journals and texts give us the means to interpret them, just as they propose to give readers the means to interpret the outward signs of physical features in actual human beings. In providing instructions and illustrations about what a prominent upturned eye *looks* like on the illustrated page, phrenology has provided a sort of dictionary of visual signs in the nineteenth century that apply directly to illustrations such as this. Though much of the practice of phrenology was enacted in lectures and public readings of the heads and features of real subjects, much of its teachings were distributed to the American public through journals and books that relied on images such as those seen in figures 34 - 36. Illustrated examples make the practice of phrenology and physiognomy quite legible because these illustrations are able to exaggerate these features, often privileging the phrenological representation and signification over a strictly realistic visualization of a particular person.

While this level of close reading may seem to extract much information from minute, seemingly chance details, this is precisely the kind of reading that phrenologists encouraged. As an example, Gilbert Stuart Newton's woodcut of Washington Irving included in figure 37 was often accompanied by the following commentary: "Ideality throws the head slightly forward and to one side, as in Irving a man as gifted in taste and imagination as any other writer; and, in his portraits, his finger rests on this faculty." Colbert then comments:

Irving's familiarity with phrenology predates the portrait and makes at least possible its influence on the choice of pose. Had you inquired further into the matter, however, a phrenologist would have explained that the impulse to comply with the dictates of the

natural language was universal, rendering largely irrelevant the question of Irving or Newton's knowledge of the doctrine.⁷⁶



Figure 37. Washington Irving. *The Practical Phrenologist* (O. S. Fowler, 1869): 60.

What the children in images 29 - 32 likewise have in common is racial whiteness, an aspect visualized both by the whiteness of the page which is taken for their skin tone as well as by the features selected to compose their faces. As these images demonstrate, the science of phrenology was invested in suggesting that racial difference manifested itself on the body in ways beyond skin color, and in ways which, when read phrenologically, valorized racial whiteness.

Illustrations of black children from *Our Young Folks* can likewise be read along phrenological terms, though the messages they carry are, unsurprisingly, less flattering than those encoded into the image of the ideal reader. We see this demonstrated in the image of Kitty Jones (figure 38), included in the January 1866 story “Two Christmas Evenings,” by Lydia Maria Child.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Colbert, *A Measure of Perfection*, 29-30.



Figure 38. Kitty Jones. *Our Young Folks* (January 1866): 9. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

“Two Christmas Evenings” tells of a wealthy white family who performs an at-home Christmas “Tableau of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America” in order to charitably benefit orphans. Child describes Kitty as a “bright-looking little black girl” whose mother has been asked to “lend” Kitty to the family so that they may “dress her up for Africa.”⁷⁷ Although Child describes Kitty as “bright as a steel button” and notes that “She learns her letters a great deal faster than our Alice,” the illustration which visualizes Kitty imbues her with phrenological features that belie these positive descriptions.⁷⁸ Unlike the ideal reader and the many white children portrayed in *Our Young Folks*, Kitty’s forehead is small and lacks the domed “high head” that would indicate spirituality and benevolence. Instead, Kitty’s head is drawn “long and narrow,” indicated visually by the small highlighted space above her eyes and the slanting upwards line which traces the shape of her skull from her eye line to the back of her head. The *Annals of Phrenology* marks this shape

⁷⁷ See Lydia Maria Child, “Two Christmas Evenings” in *Our Young Folks* (January 1866), 8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

as typical of “the skull of an African” and as an indication of “weakness in the organs of the side-head” (figures 39 and 40). The explanation which accompanies the illustration of the “African” skull further suggests that his skull shape indicates “great social power” but “not great force.” In full, the explanation included in figure 40 reads:

Compare the form of this head with fig. 3, the skull of an African, which is long and narrow, showing weakness in the organs of the side-head, by the large development of which the power of the Indian character is distinguished. The brain of the negro runs far back, showing great social power, but the head being narrow there is not great force.

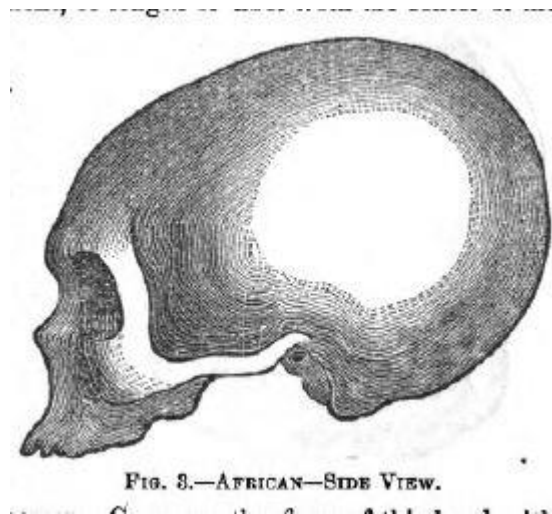


Figure 39. “African – Side View.” *The Illustrated Annuals of Phrenology* (Samuel R. Wells, 1873): 60.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

for social or intellectual power. Compare the form of this head with fig. 3, the skull of an African, which is long and narrow, showing weakness in the organs of the side-head, by the large development of which the power of the Indian character is distinguished. The brain of the negro runs far back, showing great social power, but the head being narrow there is not great force.

Figure 40. *The Illustrated Annuals of Phrenology* (Samuel R. Wells, 1873): 60.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

While the ideal reader's over-emphasized side-head indicates strong intellectual and emotional development, Kitty's un-domed, narrow forehead would be seen in part as a lack of "causality," a concept explained by the *Illustrated Annuals* in figure 41, which reads:

REASONING ORGANS. No. 36, Causality – the ability to comprehend principles and to think abstractly, to understand the why-and-wherefore of things, and to synthesize. It is represented by a picture of Newton observing a falling apple. His endeavor to explain the cause of that simple fact is said to have led to the discovery of the law of gravity. *Excess*: too much theorizing and impracticable philosophy. *Deficiency*: weak in judgment; inability to think, plan, or reason.

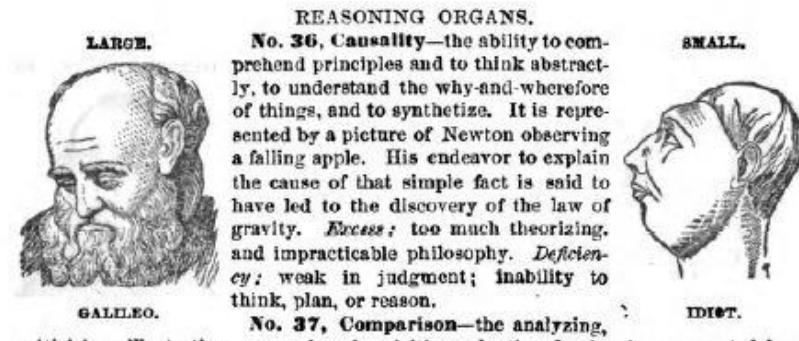


Figure 41. "Reasoning Organs." *The Illustrated Annuals of Phrenology and Physiognomy*.

Samuel R. Wells, 1873. Pg. 672. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

The *Illustrated Annuals* portrays Galileo as having a great deal of space between the center of his brow and his temples, as indicated by the blank whiteness of the page and his rounded, domed skull, suggesting that he has great "causality." The "Idiot" is alternately marked as having no space at all in his "Causality" region, as indicated by the shading of this area of the forehead and a concave skull, which, like the "African" skull, is "long and narrow." Indicated visually by the dark region that marks her forehead as particularly narrow, this lack of "causality" visually encodes in Kitty a lack of "ability to comprehend principles and to think abstractly, to understand the why-and-wherefore of things, and to synthesize."

While Child's text marks Kitty as bright, the illustrators employed by the magazine have drawn her with features which phrenologically mark her as uncomprehending, sociable (but without the "force" to be truly influential), and of low intellect. This visual representation thus contradicts Child's assertion that Kitty is bright, allowing readers to understand Kitty in racist terms that align her with common nineteenth-century white supremacist understandings of African American persons. Thus while the illustrations of white childhood in *Our Young Folks* work to reinforce the idea of white children as intelligent, faithful, and pious, the illustrations of black children work to undercut any positive descriptors that the text may include.

In the absence of real faces and real people on which to demonstrate phrenology, I argue that phrenology becomes not a science by which to read human faces, but instead a handbook for reading nineteenth-century illustrations. In understanding illustrations in children's magazines through the lens of phrenology and physiognomy, I do not suggest that phrenology and physiognomy exclusively influenced illustration, but rather that these fields constructed and rely upon each other in the nineteenth century.

It is impossible to know whether these messages would have been legible to readers and viewers of the magazine, but Colbert argues that phrenology was such a common part of culture in the nineteenth century that it's likely that many Americans would have had a passing, familiar knowledge of the science. Colbert states that "by the middle of the nineteenth century, phrenology held a place in the American mind not unlike that occupied by psychiatry in the 1930s. Its terminology and tenets entered the language of daily conversation," suggesting that many Americans – child and adult alike – would have had a cursory understanding of the science and

would have been familiar with the imagery associated with the practice.⁷⁹ The popularity of phrenological books and magazines likewise suggests that some readers would have had access to phrenological texts and some would not. Whether or not readers would have been fluent in phrenological meaning in the nineteenth century, it is clear that illustrations in nineteenth-century children's periodicals were influenced by understandings of phrenology and thus in many ways reflect or carry the ideologies of that discipline.

The popularity of both phrenology and physiognomy throughout the nineteenth century suggests that there was in this era a strong cultural desire to believe that what is visual tells a legible truth. In phrenology a person's very nature becomes tied to their body so that a viewer who sees at them – especially a viewer who is trained to look correctly – can discern the essence of their being writ incarnate. Once a person's interiority becomes something that is outwardly embodied, it becomes much easier to understand as a natural, unchangeable part of that person's personality. Yao argues that “The overlapping disciplines of physiognomy, phrenology, and craniology affirmed vision as a technology of scientific judgment.”⁸⁰ She continues, “These scientific discourses helped to train the average American gaze in the techniques of scientific visual evaluation, combining the expertise of the Foucauldian clinical gaze with a culture of everyday panoptic scrutiny, thereby providing widespread justification for racial prejudices naturalized to be as evident as sight itself.”⁸¹ The extreme influence of phrenology in the American nineteenth

⁷⁹ See Colbert, *A Measure of Perfection*, 23. Colbert further notes that George Combe, a leader field of phrenology, wrote a book entitled *Constitution of Man* (1828) that sold two hundred thousand copies before the civil war, a number that is beat only by the Bible and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

⁸⁰ Yao, “Visualizing Race Science,” 130.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 131-2.

century indicates that the visual in this era did more than interpret and entertain, but further worked to signify deep and complicated interiority that was often independent from the texts they illustrated.⁸² And, as Yao argues, these connections between the visible and the essential were frequently used in the service of teaching viewers first to see and understand visual justifications of racial difference and supremacy, and second to see them as factual, inarguable.

Writing of turn-of-the-century connections between science and visibility, Sarah E. Chinn marks the desire for a connection between bodily presentation and interiority as something that persists in American understandings of the visual. She writes “It is...internalized but everywhere occluded knowledge that modernity expects bodies to speak the visible identities they have been assigned.”⁸³ Citing the technologies of fiction, scientific writing, finger printing, and blood testing developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinn argues that the turn of the twentieth century was a time in which there was “an assumption that the body spoke for itself in a language that was clear and manifest,” demonstrating that this desire for connections between the visual and the essential does not die with the popularity of phrenology, but was instead picked up and adapted to new technologies created in the American “modern” era. While Chinn explores

⁸² My use of “interpret” here references Susan R. Gannon’s “The Illustrator as Interpreter: N. C. Wyet’s Illustrations for the Adventure Novels of Robert Louis Stephenson,” in which she argues that “all good illustrations, create for each novel a rich and rhetorically powerful narrative sequence well able to modify a reader’s experience in significant ways...it is clear that the reader’s own narrativity is susceptible to the powerful impact of an illustrator’s vision as he or she works on the clues provided in the discourse...” Gannon elaborates on this to conclude that “Each [illustrative] choice which ‘places’ the details for the reader both limits and – paradoxically – offers a potential enrichment of the reading experience as the illustrator puts his own complex experience of the text at the reader’s service”. Gannon here gives the illustrator credit for his or her ability to influence, even redirect, disrupt, or close down a reader’s ability to freely interpret the text of a story. She does not, however, consider whether the image itself may carry signs and significations that move beyond the illustrator’s intentions to communicate a meaning, story, or intention all their own. See Susan R. Gannon, “The Illustrator as Interpreter: N. C. Wyeth’s Illustrations for the Adventure Novels of Robert Louis Stephenson,” *Children’s Literature* 19 (1991): 90-91.

⁸³ Sarah E. Chinn, *Technology and the Logic of American Racism* (New York: Continuum, 2000), xii.

these factors in the work of “eugenicists, jurors, hematologists, military commanders, [and] newspaper reporters,” late nineteenth-century children’s periodicals’ likewise rely on a connection between body and interiority even as methods of visualizing race and childhood change.⁸⁴

2.2 The Child’s Legible Body: Technological Advancement and Illustration in *Wide Awake*



Figure 42. “‘I want to wing the bell mys’f,’ said Kittyleen.” *Wide Awake* (January 1882): 68.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The image included in figure 42 was included in *Wide Awake* in the short piece “Kittyleen (A Christmas Story)” by Sophie May, published in January of 1882. The image pictures Kittyleen

⁸⁴ Ibid.

arriving to her friend Edith's house while her mother paints china, and her attempts to ring the doorbell, which is out of her reach. The story begins by noting that Kittyleen is "a snip of a girl" who "looked like [a] dove, for she was brown and white all over: brown eyes and hair, brown cloak, white fur cap and white tippet."⁸⁵ No mention is made of Kittyleen's race, though the accompanying image makes it clear that she is racially white.

Magazines use illustrations as a kind of visual metaphor, an imagined scene, a representation of ideology more than of reality. When considering how an illustration interacts with a periodical text, it is helpful to know that "illustration" is defined as a "lighting up, illumination, enlightenment."⁸⁶ The illustration narrows in on a salient point in the text and literally "sheds light" or "allows us to see" what's important, what the illustrator or publisher wishes the reader to see, rather than just imagine. In this way the illustration gives more information to the child, illuminating a scene so that they can see more clearly, but it also shuts down alternate interpretations of that scene so that the child reader is not free to imagine the characters or their adventures in any way that they wish.

What the illustration illuminates here is Kittyleen's racial whiteness, though it does so in a way that is in some ways different than that seen in *Our Young Folks*. Closer observation of the illustration of Kitty reveals the ink used to mark her face is quite sparse: it is merely a circle marked with dark smudges for eyes and short black and grey lines to indicate mouth, nose, and brows. Here we see that Kittyleen is drawn entirely without phrenological signification – the viewer is not provided with access to her skull shape, the direction of her gaze, or the dimensions of her

⁸⁵ Sophie May, "Kittyleen (A Christmas Story)," *Wide Awake*, January 1882, 68.

⁸⁶ "Illustration, n.," OED Online, March 2020, Oxford University Press.

sidehead. As this section will demonstrate, phrenological signification in illustration waned in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and illustrators and printers invested in different methods of making race visible on the periodical page.

Belief in phrenology as a scientific practice slowly waned towards the end of the nineteenth century, but the connections between bodily legibility persisted into later decades of American culture. The last decades of the nineteenth century consequently saw changes in artistic practices as well: visual portrayals of exaggerated skull shapes in both adults and children waned, but ties between bodily legibility and interiority remained. In children's magazines as elsewhere in American print culture, seeing became believing and the visual maintained its reputation as matching what was visual with what was interior, or essential, about the object.⁸⁷

Anne Anlin Cheng traces the American desire for and fascination with exteriors that transparently reflect interiority to the 1910's and 20's. Writing of both modernist architecture and Josephine Baker's performative dance in 1920's Paris, Cheng writes that "for a brief period in the early twentieth century, before cultural values collapsed back once again into a (shallow) surface and (authentic) interior divide, there was this tensile and delicate moment when these flirtations with the surface led to profound engagements with and re-imaginings of the relationship between interiority and exteriority, between essence and covering."⁸⁸ While Cheng rightly suggests that this cultural desire between exterior and interior reached its height in the early twentieth century, the popularity of phrenology and its influence on art and media suggests that this cultural desire to

⁸⁷ As I will later demonstrate, phrenological markings do not totally disappear from illustrations in children's periodicals, but instead come to stand side-by-side with illustrations that do not use phrenological signifiers but still suggest to readers that what is visually available can be read for signs of interiority.

⁸⁸ Anne Anlin Cheng, *Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 11.

connect the visual with the essential persisted throughout the nineteenth century. Cheng further connects the union of interiority with exteriority in what she calls the “modern surface” to the history of racialization in the West, writing that the “aesthetic history of ‘surface’ (that which covers and houses bodies) and the philosophic discourse about ‘interiority’ (that which has been privileged as recessed and essential) provide the very terms on which modern racial legibility in the West, what Fanon calls the ‘epidermalization of interiority,’ is limned.”⁸⁹ Here Cheng makes clear that in the era in which these magazines were produced, the visualized “surface” of bodies – that which is made visual through printed illustration or photography – are still asked to carry and speak the racialized interiorities that they propose to cover.

It is not that the textual was unimportant in this era, but rather that in many ways the textual and verbal, with their reliance on abstract signs, was understood as more divorced from the signified. The illustration argues, like phrenology and the child’s body, that what is seen cannot be contested: it merely is. Thus it is not merely that illustrations of children in the nineteenth century relied on the principles of science of phrenology and physiognomy, but that illustrative practices, scientific theory, and conceptions of childhood all worked on the same cultural conception: that what is visibly available is legible and has access to truths that words cannot reveal. As the popularity of phrenology waned towards the end of the nineteenth century, illustrators found new ways to illustrate race that dropped the over-emphasis on phrenology (representations of bulbous heads were less frequent, though, as I will demonstrate, some signifiers

⁸⁹ Ibid., 12.

were maintained). What was conserved, however, were the connections between the visual and the interior.

While the first part of this chapter read the influence of phrenology on illustrations in children's magazines to demonstrate their ties to race science and white supremacy, this part of the chapter reads illustrations from *Wide Awake* to demonstrate that they likewise participated in a conception of the body of the child as racially and essentially legible even as the direct physiognomic signifiers fell out of fashion. In the 1880s and 1890s, illustrators began experimenting with new methods of visualizing children on the pages of children's magazines. While illustrations of children frequently maintained features that directly referenced phrenology, they also began to take techniques from realist art and photography to create images that look more akin to what we recognize as illustrations of children in the twenty-first century. Technological advances also meant that magazines were able to experiment more with shade and tone, especially on portrayals of children's faces.



Figure 43. "She Reads Him a 'Once Upon a Time' Story." *Wide Awake* (August 1882): 365.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 44. "Sweets to the Sweet." *Wide Awake*, July 1882. Pg. 149.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 45. *Wide Awake*, May 1882. Pg. 42.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

It is important to note that the influence of phrenological markings in illustrative practices merely waned in the last decades of the nineteenth century, it did not disappear completely. As the illustrations in 43 through 45 demonstrate, phrenological markings can still be found in *Wide Awake*, as in the other magazines that this dissertation studies.⁹⁰ Like the ideal correspondent, the

⁹⁰ Illustrations chosen from one year of *Wide Awake* demonstrate that these kinds of illustrations are not anomalous, but rather common illustrative tropes. Perusal of the many years of the magazine shows that this method of visualizing children does persist across the magazine's run. The images featured here are representative of illustrative trends in this time period even beyond the years of *Wide Awake*'s publication.

white children in figures 43 and 44 maintain the largely domed head, while the black children in figure 45 maintain the “long, narrow” head shape seen in the portrait of Kitty Jones in figure 38. What images 43 through 45 likewise carry from *Our Young Folks*, and what here becomes the main method of indicating child race, is a lack or abundance of ink on the page, a technique that persists into the twentieth century even as phrenological visual indicators of race wane.

There is a connection between the lack of ink on the page and the cultural understanding of childhood, and racial whiteness. James R. Kincaid in *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* demonstrates that Western culture has long defined children as “have nots,” writing that “Childhood, to the large extent, came to be in our culture a coordinate set of *have nots*, of negations: the child was the one who *did not have*. Its liberty was a negative attribute, however much prized, as was its innocence and purity.”⁹¹ Kincaid’s definition of children as lacking adult qualities, as “have-nots,” codes children as vacant spaces waiting to be filled. Kincaid continues that “constructions of modern ‘woman’ and modern ‘child’ are very largely evacuations, the ruthless distribution of eviction notices. Correspondingly, the instructions we receive on what to regard as sexually arousing tell us to look for (and often create) this emptiness, to discover the *erotic in that which is most susceptible to inscription, the blank page*.”⁹²

Here Kincaid’s reference to the blank page is metaphorical, but mine is quite literal: in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century lithographs and engravings, to mark the child as racially white the space of the body was merely left blank, with dark lines added sparingly to mark major features, such as nose and eyes. To mark a child as racially non-white, more lines of ink were cross

⁹¹ James R. Kincaid, *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 15. Emphasis in the original.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 16. My emphasis.

hatched or shaded onto their bodies to connote darker skin.⁹³ These lines were achieved through extra labor from the lithographer or engraver: *more* wax drawn onto the stone to attract an abundance of ink that would be transferred to a page laid on top; *more* gullies carved into the steel to hold ink which would be transferred to the page under extreme pressure from the press. Thus to mark a person as non-white with these illustrative technologies is to touch them more, to add more ink, to disrupt the erotic whiteness of the page with the darkness of ink.

When children are illustrated with this technique, then, the white child comes to the forefront as emptier in illustrations: it is only a vague and vacant shell that is, coloring-book style, outlined for its viewers to fill, its face literally blank, its eyes and major features marked sparingly in black so that they are discernable, but not distinct. White children thus come to viewers' attention as the ideal version of this form of childhood: as the most vacant, the most erotically empty. Black children are visually portrayed as having a more complicated connection to the supposedly ideal state of evacuation because their child bodies are corrupted by layers of black ink in a tradition that fetishes erotic emptiness.

While Robin Bernstein in *Racial Innocence* argues that black children in the nineteenth century were "written out" of childhood due to a portrayed lack of innocence, another way of understanding the conception of childhood as the nineteenth century passed into the twentieth is that black children were not written out of childhood, but rather were in many ways marked as a less desirable category of child.⁹⁴ Further consideration of children's periodicals demonstrate that

⁹³ W. E. B. Du Bois begins to disrupt these standard methods of portraying black childhood in children's magazines in *The Brownies Book*, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁹⁴ Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: NYU Press, 2011), 16.

black children were importantly still portrayed as part of the category of the child, and that cultural makers of the magazine were invested in portraying black children – among other categories of persons – as put into what Karen Sánchez Eppler ironically calls “good (Christian) order.”⁹⁵

In describing the imperial project of American missionaries working to convert persons both inside and outside the United States to Christian belief, Karen Sánchez Eppler writes that missionary texts imagined the endgame of their project to be “A finished creation, a perfected nation,” which would not create equal spaces to respect all races, ethnicities, religion and classes, “...but rather a diverse population put in good (Christian) order,” suggesting “a national identity capable of containing (in both senses of the word) swarms of internal aliens.”⁹⁶ This vision of the American nation deals largely with the question of how to best incorporate ex-slave, immigrant, and colonized populations into the American nation as Black populations were emancipated, new citizens arrived in America, and new territories were colonized and made United States territory. This plan for an “order” of races by which to organize the nation, with white populations on top and other races falling neatly in line, can be contrasted with abolitionist plans to send freed slaves “back” to Africa: the idea was not to remove non-white populations from American soil, but instead to incorporate them within a system organized by white supremacy and justified not only by “Christian” rhetoric of the white man’s burden, but also by forms of scientific racism that suggested that persons racially coded as white were genetically superior, more evolved, and best suited for roles of power. Children’s magazines of the late nineteenth century were less invested

⁹⁵ Robin Bernstein argues that in the nineteenth century “sentimental culture had woven childhood and innocence together wholly” and that “This innocence was raced white.” Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 4.

⁹⁶ Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States*, 198.

in the Christianizing aspect of this kind of order (though they do follow rules of personal ethics that align with common American Protestant values, including good work ethic, kindness to neighbors, discipline, frugality, etc), but they were certainly invested in a specific racial ordering of childhood. *Wide Awake*, alongside the other magazines that this dissertation studies (besides *The Brownies' Book*, a notable exception) promoted an organization of races in which white children were marked visually and textually as ideal, and non-white children (especially black children) marked as less ideal.

Children visually portrayed within the magazines that this dissertation studies were marked visually as closer and further from the ideal childhood that modern culture celebrated through various methods of illustrative and photographic techniques. The phrenological signifiers discussed earlier in this chapter were part of this ordering of children, marking some children – like the ideal reader of *Our Young Folks* pictured in figure 33 – as more phrenologically desirable than others, such as like Kitty Jones. The technique of marking children with more or less ink likewise participated in this system, portraying some children (those marked as racially white) as more erotically empty, less touched with ink than other children (those marked as racially black).

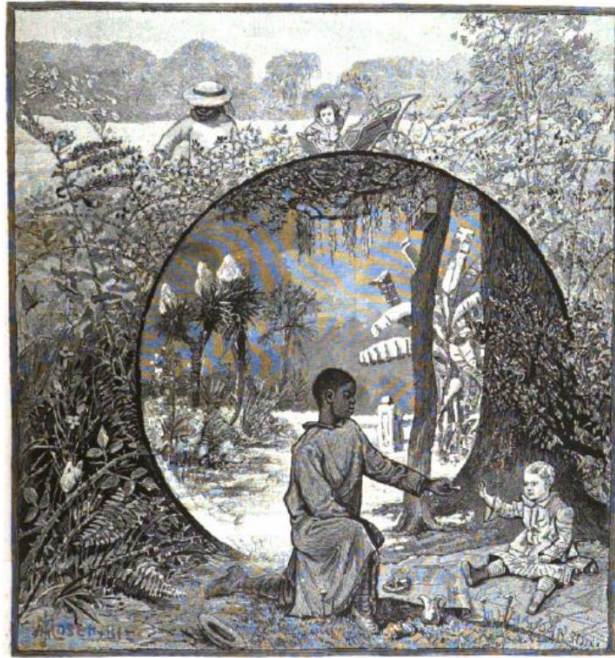


Figure 46. “A Little Texas Nurse Girl.” *Wide Awake* (September 1882): 151. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

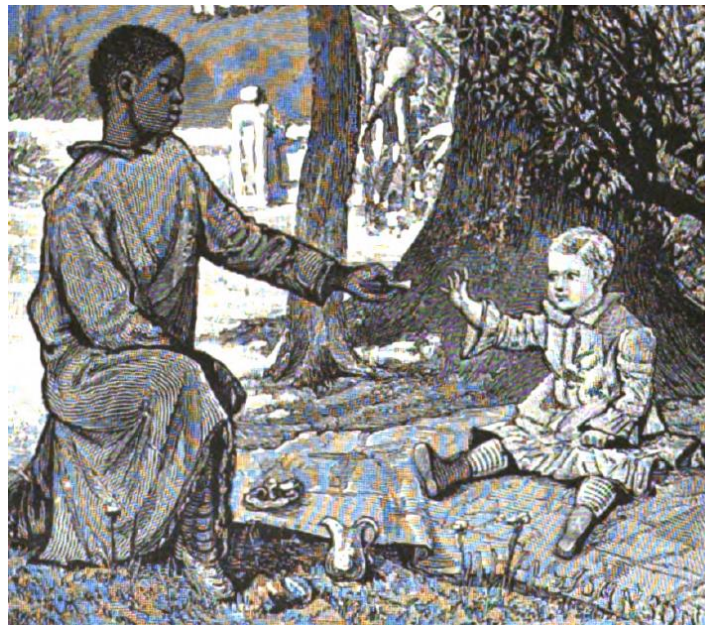


Figure 47. A close-up of Figure 35. *Wide Awake* (September 1882): 151.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ The addition of color in these images is due to the digitization process. This kind of discoloration is common and makes close investigation of the printing process difficult, emphasizing the need to maintain archives of physical texts for study.

The image included in figure 46 (with an enlargement of the two primary characters in figure 47) illustrates the methods of inking blackness and whiteness on the periodical page and using this method in a process of marking white children as more ideal than black children. This image accompanies a short story by M. J. Cushing entitled “A Little Texas Nurse Girl” that tells of a day in the life of a young enslaved nursemaid, Charity (often called “Chatty”) from her own perspective. The author quickly marks this young narrator as black in the first lines of the piece when she says “I ain’t done nuthin’ dis blessed day! No, *dat* I aint; nuthin’ ‘tall but trod my legs off waitin’ on de white folks, an’ I’m goin’ to stop it!”⁹⁸ The story continues to tell of Charity’s day taking care of white children, a task which both pleases and exhausts her, until she goes to bed and declares that she won’t work again until the morning, when the baby again needs her.

The image that accompanies the text has as much story to tell as the words. In this image, Charity kneels before the white child for whom she cares and offers him food, a tableau that recalls the popular nineteenth century image of the kneeling slave, as seen in figure 48.

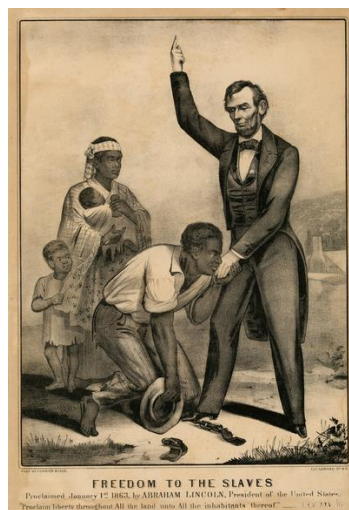


Figure 48. “Freedom to the Slaves.” Currier & Ives, undated. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

⁹⁸ M. J. Cushing, “A Little Texas Nurse-Girl,” *Wide Awake*, September 1882, 149.

In the case of “A Little Texas Nurse Girl,” the roles are reversed: Charity in figure 46 is the one with something to generously provide, and the master’s child is the one who receives with gratitude. However, the master’s child has authority in the piece: echoing Lincoln, the white child raises his hand skyward in a position of power while Charity kneels before him. Though the image reflects the familiar kneeling slave, it offers an ironic commentary on the image by suggesting that the slave kneels in thanks not for emancipation, but for the chance to labor for the white child. This figuration naturalizes and reimagines the violent system of slavery as a peaceful system of mutual care, a reconstruction-era nostalgic plantation narrative common in the late nineteenth century in children’s magazines, as elsewhere.⁹⁹ Although Charity says “I’m goin’ to stop it!” in regards to working for her white masters, the narrative reveals this to be a fruitless protest meant to be humorous because Charity knows, despite her protest, that the baby needs her and that she enjoys caring for the baby. This story in no way disrupts the plantation narrative and instead reinforces it in the pages of children’s literature. While Charity’s story situates her in an antebellum space, her joy in caring for the child beyond any humorous protest suggests that her position as servant to a white family is natural and comfortable for her. This, combined with her kneeling, suggests to viewers a clear hierarchy: the black child is very happy to be in service to the white child, a signal to readers that perhaps this hierarchy persists beyond legal slavery and into racialized forms of labor present later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Beyond the story encapsulated in this image, though, the techniques of illustrating Charity and the baby reveal how imagery worked separately from narrative to further mark the black child

⁹⁹ For more on plantation narratives and rhetorics of disruption, see William Tynes Cowan, *The Slave in the Swamp: Disrupting the Plantation Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

as having a more complicated relationship to ideal childhood than the white baby. As Brigitte Fielder notes in regards to methods of illustrating racial blackness in nineteenth century musical notation, “the presence and absence of black ink represents racial difference that in reality is nuanced by gradations in complexion, historical contexts, and cultural resonances of racialization.”¹⁰⁰ In the image of Charity and the white baby, phenotypical skin coloration is reduced to a starkness of black and white, representing racial blackness and whiteness as opposites, as well as placed in a hierarchy of race akin to Sánchez Eppler’s “good Christian order.” The most heavily inked (and thus blackest) places on the page are reserved for the black child’s body and shaded natural spaces, while the blankest (and thus visually whitest) are reserved for the white child’s face and reflections of light. In encoding blackness as having more in common with shadows and natural elements like trees, the image marks the black child as secondary in this piece, as part of the natural environment of the plantation. The white child, alternately, is marked as distinctly apart from the plantation, visually separated from the natural environment of the tree by the sheer whiteness of his skin and the relationship between his coloration and the reflection of light off the grass and fence. Chen describes this kind of emptiness in the coloration of skin and light as the “dream of an undistracted surface,” which she writes continues to be fetishized in the early twentieth century as “a nexus of metonymic meanings – purity, cleanliness, simplicity, anonymity, masculinity, civilization, technology, intellectual abstractism – that are set off against notions of excessive adornment, inarticulate sensuality, femininity, backwardness.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Brigitte Fielder, “Music and Military Movement: Racial Representation,” in *Race and Vision in the Nineteenth-Century United States*, ed. Shirley Samuels (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 54.

¹⁰¹ Chen, *Second Skin*, 25.

The image of Charity and the baby is constructed in order to demonstrate this contrast: the black child is placed against the light, and the white child against the dark in order to make vivid their stark coloration. This image brooks no questions: the children's races are made explicit through juxtaposition with lightness and darkness, are made black and white in ways that reflect societal constructions of race and racial hierarchy much more than they reflect actual visual characteristics of children's phenotypical skin tone.

If children in the nineteenth century were understood as as-yet innocent of everything, as evacuations of culture, then their bodies represent pure potential: representations of the human race in its purest form, expressing the inherent inward character of that race as well as their outward appearance. These images are less attempts to portray actual children than they are attempts to visualize the earliest, and most essential, untainted incarnation of both black and white race. Visualizations of children carry all the ideological weight of their culture and use the bodies of both black and white children to make ideologies of racial difference and white supremacy likewise innocent and unremarkable. While nineteenth-century American culture was eager to deny black children access to the privileges that innocence provided to white children, it still depended on some associations between childhood and racial blackness in order to render visualizations of black child bodies as the truest expressions of the race, a visualization that essentialized black childhood and blackness itself as inherently less valuable than white childhood and whiteness. In the image of Charity and her child charge, we see this racial hierarchy naturalized even with a girl and the baby she watches. The baby, culturally understood as yet-untainted by society, still raises his hand in beneficent acceptance of Charity's labor. Though he cannot speak or feed himself, the infant knows how to enact his white privilege, naturalizing it as an essential part of his person.

Images in children's periodicals leaned on the transparency of the visual, the ability of the body to express interiority, and the evacuated state of both black and white childhood in order to establish all children as fully legible examples of racial difference. If white children were consistently encoded by illustrative practices as more ideal and by phrenological signs as intellectual, emotional, and spiritual, then, as the newest, yet-untainted exemplars of their race they suggested that white people, at their purest center, are untainted, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. Illustrations of black children, likewise considered the purest yet-untainted incarnation of their race, used both technique and phrenological signification to signify that the black race was the inherently inferior race. The signs that these nineteenth-century visualizations of childhood encode clearly mark the white child as superior to the black child, in shading as well as the author's choice of which phrenologically coded features to include.

2.3 Indexing American Childhood: Realistic Illustration and Photography in *St. Nicholas*

While visuals in children's magazines maintained both the systems of phrenological markings and techniques of shading demonstrated by the visuals in the first half of this chapter, technological advancements in the printing process and investment in new visual technologies allowed children's magazines at the turn of the twentieth century to begin to experiment with how to use visuality on the periodical page, as well as with ways of visualizing race for their readership. *St. Nicholas*, long considered the foremost children's magazine of the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries, was at the vanguard of this kind of visual experimentation.¹⁰² While *St. Nicholas* is frequently lauded for “high-quality entertainment” and its promotion of the “style, attitudes, and values of an established, secure, upper-middle-class culture,” a less academically recognized reason for *St. Nicholas*’s reputation as the foremost children’s magazine of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is its dynamic and cutting edge use of visuals.¹⁰³

St. Nicholas was from its conception a magazine that promised stunning visuality, emphasizing the critical importance of pictures for children. In the letter that Mary Mapes Dodge wrote to *Scribner’s Monthly* in which she laid out her plan for *St. Nicholas* as a safe space, Dodge elaborates on her vision for what illustrations should do. In this letter, Dodge lays out her vision of the ideal children’s magazine as a media that is “strong, warm, beautiful, and true.”¹⁰⁴ She goes on to say:

A child’s periodical must be pictorially illustrated, of course, and the pictures must have the greatest variety consistent with simplicity, beauty and unity. They should be heartily conceived and well executed; and they must be suggestive, attractive and epigrammatic. If it only be the picture of a cat, it must be so like a cat that it will do its own purring, and not sit, a dead, stuffed thing, requiring the editor to purr for it.”¹⁰⁵

Dodge’s remark that the magazine will be “pictorially illustrated, of course” offhandedly emphasizes the importance of illustration to children’s magazines: pictures were to function as more than just pleasant additions to the text and instead were expected to work as an intrinsic part of the magazine, as essential as the stories. Dodge’s description of the anticipated visuals is almost

¹⁰² Erisman, “St. Nicholas,” 386.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 377.

¹⁰⁴ Dodge, “Children’s Magazines,” 353.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

oxymoronic in its dual emphasis on abundance and simplicity, an elaborate visual fecundity that is somehow unified and wholesome. The emphasis here on simplicity, beauty, and unity reflects Dodge's desire, expressed elsewhere in the letter, to create a magazine that is "true": that the illustrations are a part of this design suggests that visuals were understood at least partially as vehicles of truth, as portals to understanding the world on at least equal footing with stories and articles. Dodge takes this further, saying that the illustrations will be "epigrammatic," able to contain both wisdom and mirth in something pithy, a word usually reserved for textual description.

This emphasis on simplicity of communication echoes late nineteenth and early twentieth century understandings of what the image, or the visual aspect, is able to do: contain much information in something easily viewed and utterly legible, to make the complicated essence of a subject easily legible on its visualized surface. The visuals that Dodge proposes in her vision for in *St. Nicholas* are thus meant to be metonymic: the clear visual able to stand, and speak for, the thing as a whole. Dodge goes a step beyond this in her example of the illustrated cat. Here Dodge clearly expresses that a "picture of a cat" will give child readers not only an idea of what a cat looks like, but further access beyond sight: the image of the cat will allow them to experience the cat as vividly as if the cat were in the room with them, living and breathing. This suggests that Dodge imagines that the images within *St. Nicholas* become prosthetic, providing to readers an access to vivid, tactile, truthful knowledge of the world while they read within their homes. While Dodge makes no reference to science or human features here, her understanding of what the illustration will do reflects the role of images in phrenological texts of the nineteenth century as well as in *Our Young Folks* and *Wide Awake*: the image, in its simplicity, allows the viewer to understand the essential, vivid truth of what is illustrated for them. Not only do they have access to what a cat looks like, but to its breath, its heart, its pleasure. This is a tall task for an illustration,

for what is essentially choices about where to put ink on a page, but none the less it was an expectation for how illustrations functioned into at least the early twentieth century, and almost certainly beyond.

The visuals in *St. Nicholas* have much in common with periodicals earlier than and contemporary to its 1873-1931 publication. For example, a comparison of figures 49, 50, and 51 to figures 30, 31, 32, and 33 from *Wide Awake* reveals that some of the illustrations in *St. Nicholas* maintain the traditions of illustrating whiteness that were present in *Wide Awake*, even if they sometimes lack the direct reference to phrenological features as seen in *Our Young Folks*.



Figure 49. *St. Nicholas* (December 1882): 94. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



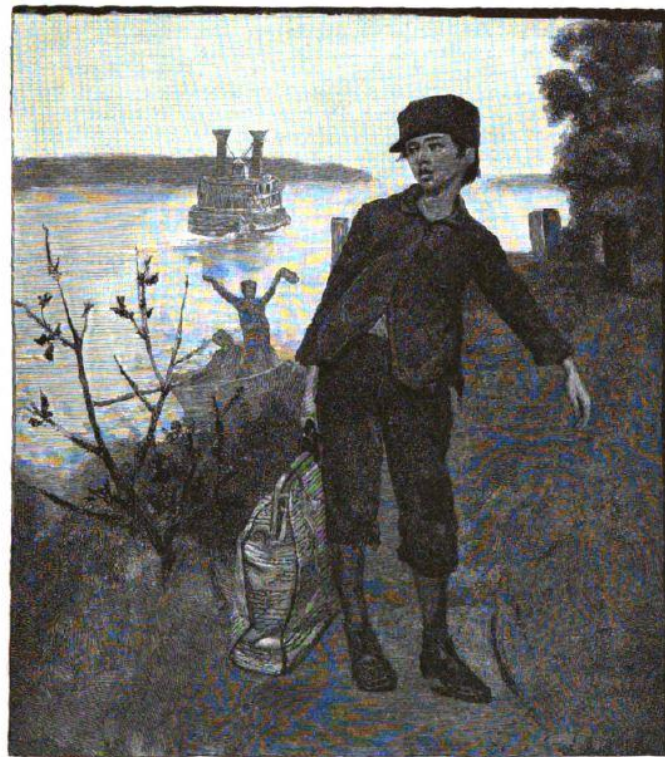
Figure 50. *St. Nicholas* (February 1885): 308. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 51. *St. Nicholas* (December 1880): 126. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

As printing technology changed, illustrations become more creative and inventive, often playing with realistic modes of drawing children's faces in combination with phrenological and shaded methods of portraying racial whiteness explored earlier in this chapter. Illustrators begin to play with shadow and light and white children – bolstered by phrenological underpinnings of their facial features – began to be able to “play in the dark” of tonal variation.¹⁰⁶ While in the examples from *Our Young Folks* and *Wide Awake* shading the face with layers of black ink had been reserved for visual portrayals of blackness, in later years illustrators begin to experiment with ways to use shading to artistically portray a figure while maintaining signifiers of that figure's racial whiteness, as seen in figures 52 and 53.

¹⁰⁶ See Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Reprint, New York: Vintage Press, 1993). This quote is engaged more fully on page 177 of this dissertation.



"THE LANDING OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS." [SEE PAGE 358.]

Figure 52. *St. Nicholas* (March 1882): 361. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Don't Scold the Children If They Tear Their Stockings

Get Holeproofs—Set Your Mind at Rest

We speak to the mothers who never have tried these famous, long-wearing stockings. The parents who *have* bought Holeproofs rarely go back to others.

They know too well how Holeproofs stand rough wear *for months*. Wouldn't you also like to *escape* the work of darning?

Children's Ribbed Holeproofs are the friend of thousands of mothers. You should certainly try them.

Holeproof Hosiery

For Men, Women and Children

Varns of extra strength and special ways of knitting make these stockings doubly strong. No other method, it seems, can equal the Holeproof way.

Even the thinnest closely woven styles for men and women and rich hand-knit styles for women.

Children's, 35c Per Pair and Up; Men's, 50c and Up; Women's, 40c and Up

Any clothing store will supply you. Should you fail to find genuine Holeproof Hosiery close by, we'll ship direct, charges paid. Write for interesting descriptive booklet free.

(1917)

HOLEPROOF HOSIERY CO., MILWAUKEE, WIS.

Holeproof Hosiery Co., Ltd., London, Eng. Holeproof Hosiery Co., 10 Church Lane, London, Eng.

Figure 53. *St. Nicholas* (March 1917): Advertisement 33. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

In both of these images the figures' faces are shaded (in shadow and silhouette, respectively) but lean heavily on other visual cues to communicate the figures' whiteness. For instance, in figure 52, the boy's face is shaded in ways that in other images would connote racial blackness. However, his face is not as dark as his stockinged legs, nor is his hand as dark as the road against which it is drawn. The boy is marked as white because, unlike Charity of *A Little Texas Nurse Girl*, his skin is not the darkest thing on the page. Thus while his skin is darker than the white page, the reader is able to understand his racial whiteness because the illustrator is at pains to contrast his skin with the shadows and natural spaces around him. In the same way, the children in Figure 53 actually are the darkest objects on the page. However, the illustrator includes the profiles of the children, which phrenologically signify whiteness through the forehead, nose, and mouth, which run in a straight vertical line from forehead to chin, an important phrenological signifier of both racial whiteness and racial evolution.¹⁰⁷

Many methods of illustration, however, abandoned phrenological markings and blank spaces as methods of indicating racial whiteness and blackness and instead took more notes from the increasingly popular art of photography. The kinds of visuals of children printed in children's periodicals at the turn of the twentieth century and beyond can be sorted into two categories: traditional methods, which rely on phrenological features and either the blank page or an excess of black ink to mark child race, and photorealistic methods, which mimic the lights, shades, and lines of photographic reproduction, or which reproduce photographs themselves. While I mark these illustrative methods as different and as a product of changing technology, traditional and

¹⁰⁷ More on silhouettes will be included in Chapter 3. See pages 194-7 of this dissertation.

photorealistic methods of portraying children persist side-by-side on the periodical page long into the twentieth-century. We see this, for example, in figures 54 and 55, images printed on pages 160 and 161 of the Dec. 1908 issue of *St. Nicholas*, which would have faced each other.



Figure 54. *St. Nicholas* (December 1908): 160. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

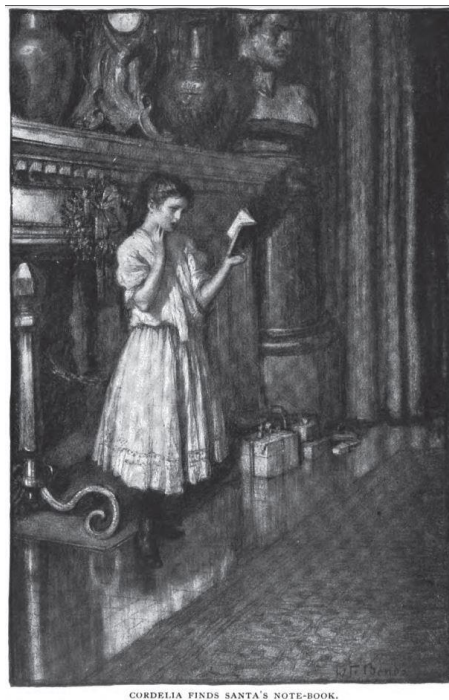


Figure 55. *St. Nicholas* (December 1908): 161. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Thus it is not that photorealistic modes come to replace traditional ones, but rather come to stand beside them, multiplying and complicating the methods by which racialized childhood came to be visualized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This new emphasis on photographic or photograph-like representation in children's magazines reflects an apparent change in the desire regarding what a visual was supposed to perform. Regarding the popularity of phrenological imagery, Yao notes that in portraying the faces of famous persons in sculpture "Artists such as Hiram Powers and Augustus Saint-Gaudens were influenced by phrenology's popularity, altering their busts and paintings in order to give their sitters flattering phrenological portrayals."¹⁰⁸ The same was true of the picture of children early in this chapter – the ideal reader looks less like any "real" child and more like a collection of complimentary phrenological signifiers. As the nineteenth century turned toward the twentieth, though, as illustrations came to reflect photorealistic imagery, implying a further investment in the body's ability to testify to interiority on its own. Certain features no longer needed to be exaggerated (though this sometimes happened too); instead, visualized bodies were expected to speak for themselves.

Despite these innovations in illustrative portrayals of white childhood, much about portrayals of white childhood remain consistent through the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Black childhood went through a more interesting visual progress, beginning with conflicting portrayals, moving to stereotyped and insulting ones, and then eventually disappearing from the magazine page entirely in the 1910's and 20's. After the Civil War, if children's magazines (*St. Nicholas* included, but not exclusively) portrayed black childhood at all, they did

¹⁰⁸ Yao, *Visualizing Race*, 132.

so in a stereotypical and mannered form, as seen in figures 56, 57, and 58. Beyond participating in the illustrative methods of visually marking racial blackness through an abundance of black ink against a light background as seen in *Wide Awake*, these images were consistent with a stereotypical and racist understanding of black children (and black persons more broadly considered) as lazy, stupid, and humorous.¹⁰⁹

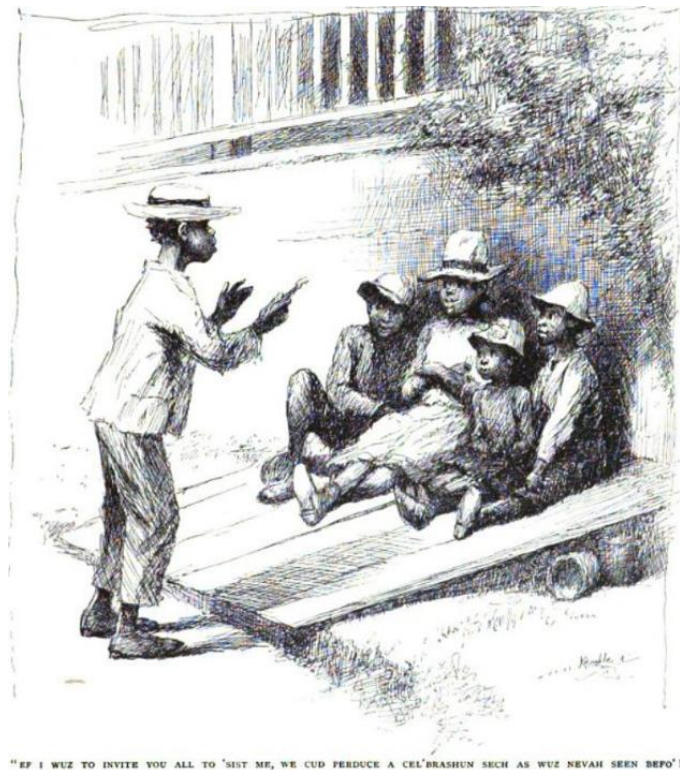
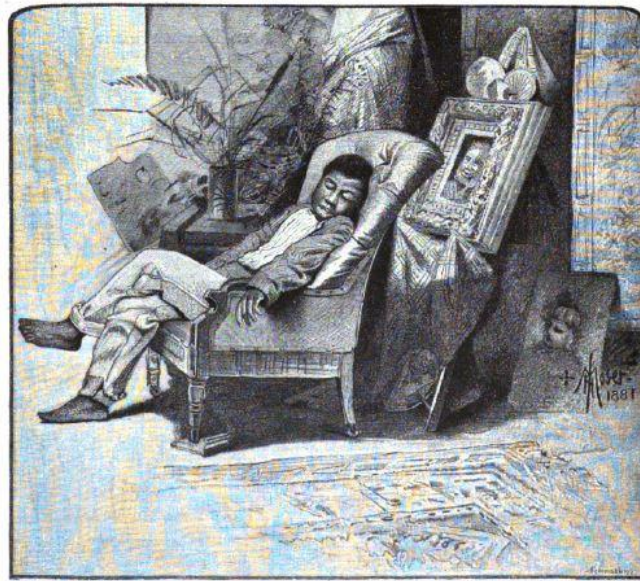


Figure 56. “‘Ef I wuz to invite you all to ‘sist me, we cud perduce a cel’brashun sech as wuz nevah seen befo’!’ E. W. Kemble. *St. Nicholas* (July 1887): 665. Courtesy of HathiTrust.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ This is consistent with Robin Bernstein’s definition of the “pickaninny” as an imagined, subhuman black juvenile who was typically depicted outdoors.” While Bernstein elaborates that the pickaninny is usually portrayed as “merrily accepting (or even inviting) violence,” children’s magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century generally do not uphold this aspect of the common portrayal of black children. See Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 34. These figurations of black childhood, unsurprisingly for the later half of the nineteenth century, almost without fail ask child readers of the text to laugh at black children, to see them as unserious and unsentimental figures.

¹¹⁰ This image was drawn by E. W. Kemble, who was famous in the late nineteenth century for his first-edition illustrations of Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*.



OUR artist, who goes out sketching every Saturday, has succeeded in hiring "a bright, active boy" to come for an hour, on that day, to clean the Studio.

Figure 57. "Our artist, who goes out sketching every Saturday, has succeeded in hiring 'a bright, active boy' to come for an hour, on that day, to clean the Studio. *St. Nicholas* (May 1885): 560. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



"MISS MAMIE SEZ DESE ARE 'HIGHLY CULLID.'—I 'D LIKE TO KNOW EF DEY 'RE ANY MO' HIGHLY CULLID DAN I AM!"

Figure 58. "Miss mamie sez dese are 'highly cullid.' – I'd like to know ef dey're any mo' highly cullid dan I am!" *St. Nicholas* (September 1886): 869. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Figure 56 carries many phrenological exaggerations of the children's faces and jaws, marking the featured children as racially inferior through a reference to phrenology, which was losing credibility in scientific and popular communities but which still had signification in American illustrative culture. This image also introduces a variation on racialized shading which became popular throughout the twentieth century. Like the image of Charity (figure 46), the darkest spaces on the page in figure 56 are reserved for the children's skin and the shadows behind the bars on the top of the wall against which they lean, associating racial blackness again with shadowed spaces and darkness. Through the techniques of shading black and white children seem to blur together in these methods, it is important to note that the base color for portraying racial blackness and whiteness remains the same: white children are not the darkest objects presented in the image, whereas black children feature mostly ink and are usually the darkest presence on the page, along with shadows and natural spaces. In figures 56 through 58, the illustrators find new ways to disparage the black child character, either through phrenological signifiers or through the story they choose to tell. For instance, while the artist who produced Figure 56 could have chosen to portray the black children as perky and attentive in a school room or a woodland setting (markers of American cultural associations with childhood, learning, and natural spaces) the children instead slump on a cellar door, taught by a peer whose pants are too short.¹¹¹

Figures 57 and 58 participates in the same methods of marking blackness as does Figure 56, though this time marking the children they portray as respectively lazy and tastelessly foppish. The boy in figure 57 does not sleep peacefully curled, but instead sprawls. He is barefoot and

¹¹¹ This image is interestingly contrasted with the "ideal readers" of *St. Nicholas* portrayed in the Jack in the Pulpit figures of the introduction (figures 16 and 17) who likewise learn, but whose postures and teacher are very different.

asleep in a formal living area that he has been hired to clean, suggesting that he does not belong in his lush environment. The boy included in Figure 58 is fancy, but in all the wrong ways – with a variety of turkey and chicken feathers tucked into his cap, he seems to have no ability to differentiate them from the beautiful peacock plume that he clutches in his fist, and which is in direct contrast with his rags. This boy, who defies phrenological markings with his prominent and beautiful eyes, is regardless made silly and stupid by the story his image tells: he is not part of the joke, but instead is asked to be laughed at. Importantly, in each of these images the black children are all marked by poverty – shown in contrast to beautiful, rich interiors and objects to which they are not a part, and dressed in rags. While *St. Nicholas* is frequently at pains to emphasize that poor children are part of their readership, they also ask their subscribing readers to consider the poor children to whom they can donate their used issues of the magazine. Thus readers, whether they themselves are poor or rich, are trained by the magazine itself to pity those in poverty, including the black children pictured in figures 56, 57 and 58, marking them in another way as a part of a lower class of American child society. These stereotypical visual degradations of black childhood via phrenological markings, shading, and narrative deprecation became the stereotypical way that black childhood was portrayed in *St. Nicholas* until about 1914, when images of black childhood began to disappear from the magazine as a whole, replaced with only images of white childhood.

An interesting anomaly in portrayals of black childhood in *St. Nicholas*, however, came in the 1880s. In these early years of the decade *St. Nicholas* published a number of images that visually portrayed black childhood in sentimental ways that children's magazines usually reserved for white children. While disparaging images of black children were common in the nineteenth century, Robin Bernstein notes that in the nineteenth century, "many images of black children in popular culture were mildly denigrating, and some were not at all so." Citing an 1886 statuette by

John Rogers and the work of abolitionist book illustrations and photographs, Bernstein argues that several artists working in the mid- to late-nineteenth century “created non-denigrating images of black children, but none of these images circulated widely in the mid-nineteenth century.”¹¹² Bernstein continues, “By the end of the century, however, popular culture abounded with grossly dehumanizing images of black children.”¹¹³ Bernstein analyzes this timeline by noting that “An arc of cultural history had opportunity to form: from the late eighteenth through the late nineteenth centuries, a broad band of artists could have represented African American children in ways that respected their intellectual and emotional complexities, their interiority, and their communities. But that did not happen.”¹¹⁴ In contrast to Bernstein’s assertion that these sort of images did not circulate widely, *St. Nicholas* in the early 1880s printed a few illustrations in which black children were portrayed as playful and sentimental. We see two examples of this in figures 59 and 60.

¹¹² Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 99-100.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 111.



Figure 59. "My big brudder can make it go!" *St. Nicholas* (July 1884): fronticepiece. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 60. "Shall it be peace, or war?" *St. Nicholas* (March 1881): 351. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The image of the baby with the banjo in figure 59 is particularly striking for its unique placement of the black child's face against a darker wall, a portrayal that required that the etcher tone down the darkness of the child's skin so that he becomes visible against the blackness behind him - a technique usually reserved for visual portrayals of white children.¹¹⁵ This is in contrast to the other portrayals of black childhood in this chapter and indeed in comparison to the other portrayals of visualized racial blackness explored by this dissertation, which, typically, use more ink against a lighter background to signify racial blackness. Instead, this image relies on the child's white night gown and highlights upon darker facial areas to imply that the child's racial blackness. This caption for this image likewise doesn't use dialect, but instead invests the child with babytalk as he says "my big brudder can make it go!," rare for an image of a black child in the nineteenth century.

While the image in Figure 60 maintains the tradition of marking the black child as the visually darkest part of the picture, the child is not phrenologically degraded – instead, she is provided with the oversized forehead that connotes high "causality," as studied earlier in this chapter. Further, she is not made silly by her storyline. While many images of black childhood in the late nineteenth century revelled in black children's apparent fear of perfectly friendly dogs as seen in figure 13 (and their abuse by not-so-friendly ones), this black girl has the upper hand, commanding her furry friend to sit peacefully while she controls the sandwich he so desires. While these fascinating examples of black childhood innocence exist, they are anomalies in this magazine, and fascinatingly restricted to the early 1880s.

¹¹⁵ The caption to this painting reads "From a painting by Alfreed Kappes" and "By permission of Mr. R. M. Donaldson." However, I have not been able to locate the painting from which this etching is produced.

From the start, at least some aspects of American culture understood that black children *are* children: they're not fully written out of childhood, as Bernstein suggests in *Racial Innocence*. Instead, they persist within the magazine specifically as children in order to emphasize the social "order" that privileged white supremacy in which *St. Nicholas* was invested. Although *St. Nicholas* did include images of sentimental black childhood in the 1880's that complicate this narrative, they disappear as early as 1885, superceded by degrading images. However, even these degrading images eventually disappear, as visualizations of black children disappear from American children's magazines altogether between 1910 and 1920.

One of the final illustrations of black childhood in the pages of *St. Nicholas* that is worth noting is that included in figure 61.



Figure 61. *St. Nicholas* (December 1908): 178. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

This image was sent in by a reader of the magazine, fourteen-year-old Dorothy Stare. We know that the child portrayed in this image is racially black because this reader/artist has reproduced the magazine's systems for representing child race: the girl's skin is darker than the background against which she stands, and also contrasts with her clothing – especially her snow-white socks. The artist has further emphasized the illustrated child's racial blackness by showing that the child drawn holds a doll whose face is black – implying that the doll is racially white. This fascinating image was awarded a gold badge and is the only representation of black American childhood reproduced in *St. Nicholas* in all of 1908, and further the only positive representation of black American childhood printed since the 1880s. This image's presence in the magazine is completely anomalous for its timing, its positive representation, and the fact that a reader of the magazine – not a professional artist – produced it.

The final illustration of black childhood was published in 1916, and is included in figure 62.

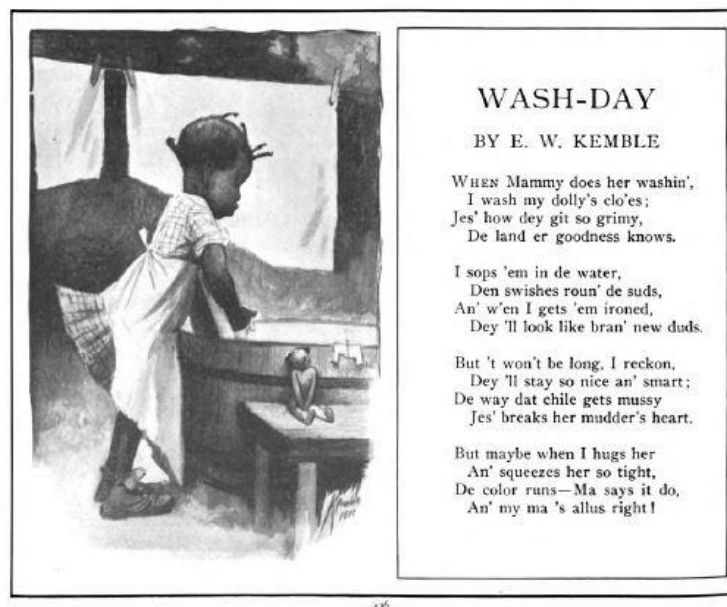


Figure 62. *St. Nicholas* (March 1916): 436. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

2.4 Photography and Race: Technological Advancements and the Erasure of Black Childhood

The advent of photography and mass photomechanical process that began to make it possible the print photographs in the periodical mark a shift in visual portrayals of both black and white childhood. While more traditional methods of illustration signified race through reference to phrenology and with a reliance on black ink and white page to signify racial blackness and whiteness, illustrations at the turn of the century frequently relied on photographs as their referent. Thus children's faces came less to resemble those seen in *Wide Awake* and more popularly to resemble children's faces as seen in photographs, mimicking the varying shades and lines of light and dark that delineate childish forms. We see this, for example, in figure 63.



Figure 63. "Tad Lincoln in his uniform of a lieutenant." *St. Nicholas* (November 1882): 64.



Figure 64. Tad Lincoln. Mathew B. Brady, photographer. Circa 1860s. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

This etching of Tad Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln's youngest son, included in figure 63, was produced in 1882 and here stands alongside the actual photograph from which it was produced. While the illustrated image in figure 63 looks almost photorealistic in its qualities, comparison to the source photograph in figure 64 reveals that it is instead an artistic rendering of the photograph itself, likely created because the photomechanical process to place an accurate photograph of a child on the periodical page did not yet exist.¹¹⁶ The striking similarities between the two, however, clearly demonstrates both the quality of the etched reproduction as well as its desire to reproduce what the photograph purports to reveal to its readers: reality on the periodical page.

The fact that *St. Nicholas* desires at all to reproduce a photograph suggests that the form held some kind of cachet at this moment, reflecting a cultural desire to see what the photograph

¹¹⁶ Changes to the background were likely made for the sake of simplicity so that the figure could command the viewer's eye, or because this background already existed in the engraver's collection – a kind of "stock" background over which the engraved image could be printed.

offered that other forms of illustration could not. What the photograph proposed to offer in the nineteenth century was a glimpse of reality, a visible object that indisputably existed, reproduced for mass visual consumption. While the illustration invented by the artist uses ink to visualize and communicate the essence of the thing it represents, the photograph purported to present to the viewer what Roland Barthes calls the “this-has-been”: evidence that the object pictured “has been real,” and suggesting that “it is alive,” indisputable evidence of the reality of the object is visualized.¹¹⁷ The new technologies that made it suddenly possible to begin printing photographs marked an opportunity for Dodge to present for her readers not just an illustration that does its best to encapsulate a cat, but now, further, a medium that proposes to capture the cat and present it whole before the readers’ eyes: this, the photograph implies, really *is* a cat, not just an image that captures its essence.

This move to include more photo-realistic etchings is as much one of technological possibility as it is a cultural demand. As the photograph picked up cultural capital as the thing that reproduced reality, more people came to rely on it as a standard of vision. In response to this demand, technologies were produced that could print the photograph on magazine paper in mass scale. *St. Nicholas* was at the forefront of photographic printing technology as well because it was printed by the De Vinne press, one of the most technologically advanced and progressive printing firms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While *St. Nicholas* was published by Scribner’s, the text was printed by Francis Hart & Company, which was owned by Francis Hart

¹¹⁷ Ironically, Barthes suggests that this reality is an illusion and instead of suggesting that the object pictured is alive, it shifts “this reality to the past” and “suggests that it is already dead.” This would suggest that children’s magazines become tombs for relics, a concept that will be further pursued in Chapter 4, though it is unlikely that the creators and editors of *St. Nicholas* would have considered this the function of the photograph in the magazine. See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 178.

but managed by Theodore Low De Vinne (1828-1914) during the years when *St. Nicholas* was published there.¹¹⁸ The De Vinne Press pioneered some of the earliest technologies for printing etchings and photographs on a mass cultural level.¹¹⁹ While De Vinne made his name in wood cut engravings, he was one of the first printers in New York to incorporate the half-tone printing process in the early 1880s, technology that made it possible to begin printing photographs in magazines, an advancement which I argue eventually resulted in the erasure of visuals of black American children from the pages of *St. Nicholas*.¹²⁰

In February of 1884, *St. Nicholas* reproduced its first photograph (figure 65).

¹¹⁸ In 1883, only two years after *St. Nicholas* transitioned from Scribner's to The Century Company, Francis Heart died and De Vinne purchased the company, renaming it the De Vinne Press. See Michael Koenig, "De Vinne and the De Vinne Press," *The Library Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (January 1970): 1.

¹¹⁹ Koenig suggests that Francis Hart & Company "secure[d] the printing of...*St. Nicholas*, in 1872" because of the firm's reputation for "the immaculate printing of scores of wood engravings." He further suggests that De Vinne needed *St. Nicholas* as much as the magazine needed a publisher that could fulfill Dodge's promises for extraordinary images, saying "Publishing *St. Nicholas* was a major event in the growth of Francis Hart & Company, for it gave the firm a new financial stability, a new stature, and placed it in a manufacturing process." See *Ibid.*, 1-2. This suggests that the children's literature market was a major influence in requiring technological change during this era of major increases in mass market printing. Thus, in ways that perhaps have been underestimated but may ultimately be unsurprising, technological advances in visuality depend on increasing demands for children's literature was increasingly more elaborately visualized.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.



Figure 65. "The misses Longstreth, the Indian chief, 'Spotted Tail,' and Captain Pratt. (From a photograph.)

St. Nicholas (October 1884): 951. Collection of the author.

1884 is early for mass photographic reproduction, and indeed it is four years before *St. Nicholas* printed its first photograph of a child (or in this case, children). We see this in *St. Nicholas* in June of 1887.



Figure 66. *St. Nicholas* (June 1887): 631. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

In terms of this dissertation, what is notable about this family of children all snuggled up together in bed is that the white children – as in illustrations of white childhood before this photograph – are starkly pale figures, their skin tones matching the snowy sheets in which they are wrapped so that their whiteness, even in the photographic half-tone process, is still made evident by a lack of ink in comparison to the rest of their surroundings.

Beyond this, what is important about the photograph's inclusion in these magazines is the claim that what the viewer is seeing are *real* American children. While the majority of illustrations produced in these magazines feature an imagined ideal of American childishness to which readers are asked to relate, the photograph presents singular children, suggesting to the readership of *St. Nicholas* that these children are truly living and breathing in America. Sarah Blackwood calls these methods of marking the reality of American childishness, especially racially white American children, through visualizations such as illustrations and photography “the indexical power of white visual practices,” suggesting that the visual practices of white gatekeepers, such as illustrators and editors who commission, approve, and place illustrations, use photographs’ visuality to index race.¹²¹ Indexicality, as used by Charles Pierce and Paul Levinson, suggests a relationship between the photograph and reality, suggesting that what appears in the photograph must be real since rays of light bounced off of that object in the real world in order to transfer the image to the light-sensitive paper.

The photographs included within *St. Nicholas* purport to index individual American childhood, perhaps explaining why the majority of the photographs of American children in *St.*

¹²¹ Sarah Blackwood, “Fugitive Obscura: Runaway Slave Portraiture and Early Photographic Technology,” *American Literature* 81, no. 1 (2009): 94.

Nicholas are printed in the Letter-Box and *St. Nicholas League* portions of the magazine, contained at the tail end of the magazine's monthly printed pages, where children are invited to send in their photographs and artwork to be printed. This inclusion suggests that *St. Nicholas* was invested in using photographs to represent their readership as actual, not ideal, though they were happy to include imagined children in the body of the magazine to illustrate fiction.

While illustrations and photographs both make claims to truth and depend on the viewer's ability and willingness to look at the image and recognize what they see as a child, to tie the signifier with the signified, what is dangerous about the photograph is all of the extra information invested there. While the illustration conveys childishness and whiteness with a minimum number of lines, the photograph provides an abundance of extra information. This is what Shawn Michelle Smith refers to as the photograph's ability to allow a viewer to see beyond human ability, further explained when Smith writes: "photography revolutionized seeing, making new worlds visible beyond the limits of natural human sight."¹²² By freezing a moment on the page, Smith contends, the photograph offers that moment for minute investigation, allowing a viewer to study an object for hours, if they choose, instead of the mere moments that real-life viewing provides. Photographs, Smith contends, offer the opportunity to notice, see, and re-see things that a viewer might not have noticed had they merely glimpsed the scene during their everyday life. Photographs, she says, "make visible what usually evades perception."¹²³

So while illustrations make race visible, photographs make everything (perhaps even race) hyper-visible, and further record the existence of the object. Smith continues this line of thought,

¹²² Shawn Michelle Smith, *At the Edge of Sight* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

¹²³ Ibid.

writing that “As photography shows us more, it also shows us how much we don’t see, how much of ordinary seeing is blind. The optical unconscious introduced by photography is a deeply uncanny sensibility, then – it is the revelation and recognition that we inhabit a world unseen.”¹²⁴ What is dangerous about the hyper-visibility that the photograph provides, Smith suggests, is that the photograph has the potential to reveal, or index, to viewers precisely that which gatekeepers, such as magazine editors, might not want them to see.

What is ultimately unsurprising, then, is that although *St. Nicholas* prints at least one photograph of a white American child in every issue after the photograph of children snuggled in bed, it only ever prints two photographs of Black American children, one in 1916, included in figure 67 (ironically very soon after the last illustration it ever prints of a black American child) and then not again until 1924, when it prints the photograph included in figure 68.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

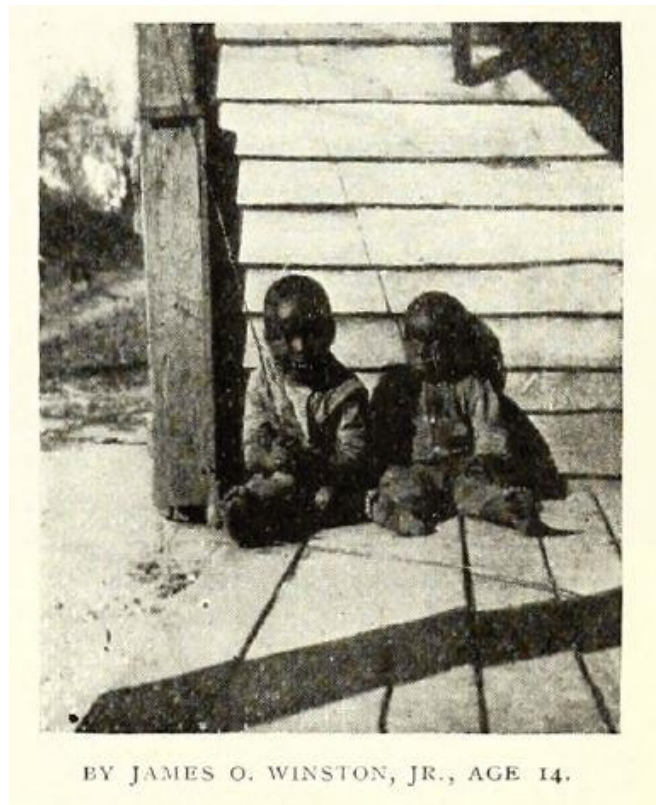


Figure 67. "By James O. Winston, Jr., Age 14." *St. Nicholas* (October 1916): 1141. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 68. "A Happy Moment.' By Margaret Hatcher, Age 14. (Silver Badge.)

St. Nicholas (December 1924): 220. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Besides these two photographs, I am unable to find any other photographs of Black American children in *St. Nicholas*.¹²⁵ While these examples seem to undercut the extreme erasure of photographs of Black children from *St. Nicholas*, let me emphasize the extreme anomalousness of these pieces: in forty-four years of printing photographs of children, over the course of approximately 77,400 pages of print, *St. Nicholas* prints two photographs that index the existence of Black American children, and one of those photos is of the children happily eating watermelon.¹²⁶ The other portrait of Black American children has much in common with the illustrative portrayals of black children in figures 56 through 58, portraying these children not as happily engaging any activity, but instead as passively sitting on a porch while their picture is taken. Both photographs were interestingly included in the *St. Nicholas League* portion of the magazine, suggesting that they were sent in by readers.

There are some photographs printed in *St. Nicholas* in which I am unable to guess at the race of the children, which could be photographs of Black American childhood, though their very ambiguity makes it a moot point. In figure 69, we have an image of a boy working on a boat –

¹²⁵ I use the language “I am unable to find” because after 1926 issues of *St. Nicholas* are rarely digitized and are infrequently preserved in library collections. I have looked where and when I could and have found no other photographs of Black American children, but this research was largely restricted to monthly issues of the magazine that I myself purchased from Ebay. There is thus room for flexibility in the nuances of this argument, though I believe that the overall sweeping erasure of photographs of Black American children is still evidenced.

¹²⁶ Regarding watermelon as a racist trope, William Black writes that “The trope came into full force when slaves won their emancipation during the Civil War. Free black people grew, ate, and sold watermelons, and in doing so made the fruit a symbol of their freedom. Southern whites, threatened by blacks’ newfound freedom, responded by making the fruit a symbol of black people’s perceived uncleanness, laziness, childishness, and unwanted public presence.” See William Black, “How Watermelons Became a Racist Trope,” *The Atlantic*, Dec. 8, 2014.

either fishing or sailing.¹²⁷ In contrast to his white shirt and cap, his skin is certainly darker, though whether this is due to an excess of shadow or to racial blackness I am unable to guess.



"BUSY." BY CLARENDON E. SEIBERT, AGE 12.
(SILVER BADGE.)

Figure 69. *St. Nicholas* (December 1916): 184. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

In figures 70 and 71 we likewise have dark figures against lighter backgrounds, though due to the extremes of contrast it is impossible to discern with any clarity or assurance whether these are portrayals of black childhood.



BY FRANCES C. DUGGAR, AGE 14.

Figure 70. "By Frances C. Duggar, Age 14." *St. Nicholas*. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

¹²⁷ The photograph's label of "by Clarendon B. Seibert" suggests that the photograph was taken and submitted by Seibert, not that he is visualized in the image.



688" BY WILLIAM J. O'HEARN, AGE 14.

Figure 71. *St. Nicholas* (May 1917): 473. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

If these are portrayals of black childhood, I emphasize that these are three ambiguous possibilities compared to the literally hundreds of photographs which clearly communicate white childhood, as seen in figure 72.



A LARGE FAMILY OF SMALL CHILDREN. (COPY OF A PHOTOGRAPH BY MR. ALEXANDER BLACK.)

Figure 72. *St. Nicholas* (July 1887): 688. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

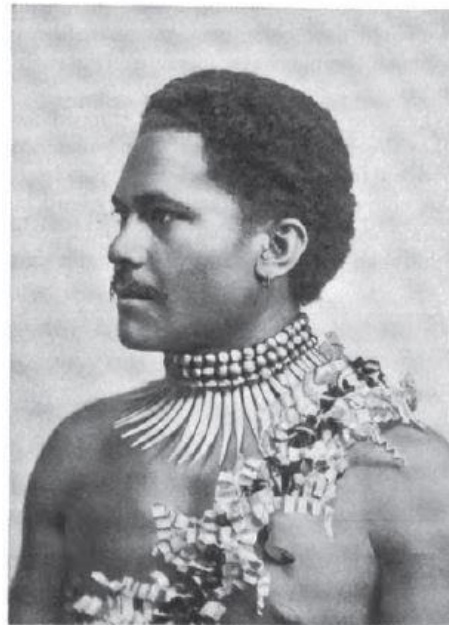
In Figure 72, the reader is presented with an unambiguous example of white American childhood, able to gaze upon the child's face, body, and possessions for as long or as short as they

please. The girl is further photographed with her white dolls, allowing the reader to make a clear distinction between the real, living child, and what are perhaps puppet versions of white childishness: the girl, then, is thus doubly real. Here the individual white child is indexed, made clear for the viewer: she, this photograph suggests, really exists.

In regards to the relationship between race and photography in the late nineteenth century, Smith further explains that “photographic technologies were developed to secure idealized representations of whiteness” and thus “film and lighting were gauged and adapted to register the white face,” meaning that the technologies of photography, and photographic reproduction, were developed to reproduce white faces, an argument which could be used to suggest that *St. Nicholas* didn’t print images of black children because they didn’t yet have the technologies to do it in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁸ However, *St. Nicholas* reveals itself to be willing to reproduce photographs of other black figures, especially adults and those people it codes as non-American, as seen in Figures 73 through 75.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Smith, *At the Edge of Sight*, 15.

¹²⁹ While the half-tone process was clearly able to reproduce photographs of black bodies on a mass periodical scale, other photographic reproductive processes did not. Lyneise Williams notes that photogravure (a printing process that used rounded cylinders and did not need a separate printing for images and text, as is required in half-tone photographic reproduction) reproduced a photograph of a black face until 1927. Lyneise Williams, “The Glamorous One-Two Punch,” *Migrating the Black Body: The African Diaspora and Visual Culture*, Eds. Leigh Raiford and Heike Raphael-Hernandez (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 130.



TALOLO VAILIMA.

Figure 73. “Talolo Vailima.” *St. Nicholas* (January 1896): 191. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The portrait of “Talolo Vailima,” included in Figure 73 and printed in *St. Nicholas* in 1896, demonstrates that *St. Nicholas* and the halftone process could indeed print a photograph of a black figure with accuracy and clarity in the 1890’s. This photograph was included as part of a series of letters, perhaps fictional but commented upon as if they are real, by Robert Louis Stevenson to his nephew Austin while he lived in Samoa. Commentary on the article by Lloyd Osbourne explains that “Talolo was the Vailima cook, a fine young chief.”¹³⁰

What is further interesting is that though *St. Nicholas* was unwilling to reproduce images of black American children, they were not hesitant to publish photographs of non-white child bodies under terms of anthropology and world knowledge. The only photographs we have of non-white children are those explicitly marked as foreign, as in figures 74 and 75, which, when taken

¹³⁰ Robert Louis Stevenson, “Letters to a Boy,” *St. Nicholas* January 1896, 194. The photograph came from Stevenson’s personal collection.

together with the lack of photographic portrayals of American black children, effectively suggest to readers that nonwhite children live outside of America.¹³¹



POLA VAILIMA. A SAMOAN BOY.

Figure 74. “Pola Vailima. A Samoan boy.” *St. Nicholas* (February 1896): 309. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



THE ONLY ESKIMO LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES.

Figure 75. “The only eskimo living in the United States.” *St. Nicholas* (April 1901): 526.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

¹³¹ Chapter 5 of this dissertation will more completely address how the magazines that this dissertation studies situates non-white children outside of the American landscape.

These photographs of Pola Vaillma and an Eskimo child are accompanied by articles written in a scientific, geographic tone, connoting the children as interesting foreign specimen, not as peers of the *St. Nicholas* readership. The text from which Figure 75 is taken is called “The Only Eskimo in the United States.” In discussing the boy in the photograph, Mene, the article begins “He is very young, and very small, to be the only representative of his people in our country.”¹³² Though many people of Eskimo heritage are today American citizens, the article is clear to mark this boy as foreign, even though he is adopted by an American family after the death of his father. Visually, these children’s dress likewise marks them as foreign to Americans, as bizarre specimen to study and upon which to gaze. This kind of presentation allows readers to codify ethnic and racial “types” visually while solidifying their apparent difference from American-ness as exemplified by the hundreds of photos of white American children on the other pages of the magazine. Taken together as an archive, these photographs across the decades of *St. Nicholas* work to display both American-ness and foreignness, careful to provide an abundance photographs of both so that child viewers have ample evidence of the kinds of children who exist in the American nation as well as outside of it. That Black children are visually excluded from this archive suggests an intent on *St. Nicholas*’s part to suggest to their readers that Black children are not a proper part of the American nation.

St. Nicholas’s refusal to publish photographs of Black American children was a very specific choice to refuse to visually present indexable Black American childhood for its readers. Miriam Hansen notes that “photographic representation has the perplexing ability not only to

¹³² Mary B. Sheldon, “The Only Eskimo in the United States,” *St. Nicholas*, January 1901, 525.

resemble the world it depicts but also to render it strange, to destroy habitual fictions of self-identity and familiarity.”¹³³ Here she is saying that photography, simply considered, purports to reproduce the world for the viewer of a photograph, to represent for them only the “truth” of what is out there. What sometimes happens when a photograph is viewed, Hansen continues, is that the photograph does not “resemble” the world that the viewer expects. In this way viewing the photograph could be considered an uncanny experience in which the viewer expects to see one version of the world and the photograph reveals another version of it in which the “truths” that the viewer expected to see do not appear, or where they appear slightly askew. This is what Hansen means when she says that the world that the photograph reveals can be rendered “strange,” that it can “destroy habitual fictions of self-identity and familiarity”: the photograph has the potential to reveal to the viewer that the world they think they know and understand, and that the ideologies they expect to see reflected back to them in the photograph, can sometimes be revealed as lies.

What *St. Nicholas* had long peddled as the truth of black child essence were racist stereotypes which photographs of Black childhood may have had the power to belie. This is not to suggest that photographs really do provide access to essence through a viewing of the surface; instead, they do have the power to index different ideologies of Black childhood that *St. Nicholas* could not control, and of which they may not have approved. The photograph runs the risk of revealing a Black child’s face that does not comply with the long-invested stories about interiority that illustrations have peddled for generations. The editors of *St. Nicholas* can control the kinds of interiority provided to black children in illustrations; the photograph, however, is unwieldy: it

¹³³ Miriam Bratu Hansen, “Introduction,” *Theory of Film* by Siegfried Kraucauer, (Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), vii-xlv, xxv. Quoted in Smith, *American Archives*, 7.

allows too much control to the reader, who may study the face and read something there which the editor did not intend. In this sense the illustration is a much more controllable image. If editors and illustrators had for generations invested in a traditional illustrated version of childhood in which white children are visually coded as ideal and black children have a complicated relationship to childhood, then reproducing a photograph of a Black child runs the risk of doing away with that long-invested ideological work. If they were to present a photograph of a Black child, the editors of *St. Nicholas* would provide an ability for readers to see beyond what the illustration provides: the viewer would have the opportunity to look at the Black child's face and disrupt the ideologies that the visuals of *St. Nicholas* were at such pains to establish, especially those that were invested in the supremacy of racial whiteness.

The risk of putting a photograph of the Black child into the pages of *St. Nicholas* is that it had the potential to deconstruct long-invested fictions regarding black childhood. If, as I have argued previously in the chapter, these magazines (*St. Nicholas* included) are invested in ideologies of the supremacy of whiteness, and the ability of the visual to truthfully communicate this supremacy to the viewer, the photograph of a Black American child that does not comply with the negative portrayals of black childhood in which *St. Nicholas* had long invested would run the risk of destroying this supremacy. The risk here is that the photograph of a Black American child could revealing something *more* than what the visuals have for decades suggest is the truth about black childhood. This, then, becomes the power of the photograph.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Whether the photograph actually does this work, or would do it, is more completely up for debate. I find this power significant only in terms of *St. Nicholas's* refusal to print photographs of Black American children.

Indeed, as Smith notes, “whiteness emerges as a racial category most forcefully when one sees what is ordinarily obscured.”¹³⁵ Once we note the absence of photographs of Black American child bodies from the pages of *St. Nicholas*, the overwhelming presence and predominance of white child bodies comes to the forefront: this magazine presents photographs of white children’s bodies in order to suggest, overwhelmingly, that these are the real readers of the magazine, the members of the imagined national community. It is unlikely that white children were the only ones reading *St. Nicholas*, and further unlikely that only white children sent in photographs of themselves to be displayed in the pages of the magazine.¹³⁶ White American children, however, dominate the representation of children in photographic form, suggesting to the readers that the American readership of the magazine was exclusively white.

As Jasmine Nicole Cobb notes, “Blacks pictured in...early photographs used portraiture to seize control over representation of the free Black body. With the artist, these patrons created a palpable record of freedom and Black visibility that bolstered the contemporaneous display of autonomy staged within Black communities.”¹³⁷ In refusing to print photographs of black children, *St. Nicholas* refused to give Black photographers and patrons a platform for controlling the

¹³⁵ Smith, *American Archives*, 14.

¹³⁶ *St. Nicholas* was taken by a variety of libraries across the United States and subscribers were encouraged to donate their already-read copies to children in their neighborhood who did not subscribe. Thus one didn’t have to be a subscriber to be one of *St. Nicholas*’s readership, and black children almost certainly had access to this text across the generations through both subscriptions and community access. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, we have evidence that Yolande Du Bois was a subscriber to *St. Nicholas*, a fact that in itself disrupts *St. Nicholas*’s self-presentation of its American readership as a white readership. A perusal of the archives of *The Century Company* at the New York public library may have more insight into this, though their archives as of this writing are unavailable for scholarship, as they are being digitized.

¹³⁷ Jasmine Nicole Cobb, *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York UP, 2015), 3.

representation of the Black child body.¹³⁸ Cobb further notes that “Picturing freedom enabled different, but interrelated, modes of situating Black people within the empire as a home space.”¹³⁹ I’d argue that *St. Nicholas*, and the use of visuals within that magazine, participates in this practice of situating black people within the American national space: the children’s magazine had the potential to be one of many spaces for experimenting with notions of Black freedom in the nineteenth century, finding a space for blackness in the white nation – an opportunity that W. E. B. Du Bois accepts when he begins to publish *The Brownies’ Book* in 1921. The eventual disappearance of black children from the pages of *St. Nicholas* as time passes, as well as the refusal to print photographs of Black American children likely sent in by readers, suggests that how Black children were represented within Black artistic communities, or indeed how they were representing themselves in amateur photography, did not match up with how the editors of SN wished black children to be represented.

The eventual exclusion of even illustrations of black childhood from the magazine suggests a whitewashing not only of the magazine, but also the national readership that the magazine purports to represent. If photographic evidence purports to index actual children in the American nation – real readers who come into existence when they are seen by their peers – then the exclusion of Black children suggests, in a way, that they do not exist, that they’re not real. It invites readers to forget, or ignore, Black children as actual American subjects. The third chapter of this dissertation explores this erasure, seeking to place the kinds of images explored and erased

¹³⁸ I argue that this kind of control is the impetus for the creation of *The Brownies’ Book*, edited by W. E. B. DuBois, which finally gives black child patrons and photographic artists this platform, as discussed in my fourth chapter.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

in this chapter into their historical moment and understand how they reflect, or oppose, the complicated ideologies of turn-of-the-century America.

3.0 Chapter 3: The Future of Childhood at the Turn of the Twentieth Century



Figure 76. *The Youth's Companion*. Calendar, 1882. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

The calendar piece featured in Figure 1 is the sixth part of a folding calendar published by *The Youth's Companion* in 1882. The child featured here moves blissfully away from 1882, backlit by a dying sun, and forward into 1883, a gold-limned secret discovered in the reeds. This object is in itself not surprising - a calendar was a common enough promotional item - but what is surprising is that the child is so starkly within time, clearly aging, and that this is portrayed as a positive, even glorious occasion. Academic study is more familiar with nineteenth-century portrayals of childhood which do not usually so boldly associate children and time, more commonly marking children as outside of time, disconnected from connotations of aging and the

fast pace of the adult world. Stories which conflate time and childhood themselves tend to present troubled figures, such as Little Father Time of *Jude the Obscure* (1895), a child whose association with time is irrevocably tied to infant murder and suicide. Other characters, like Wordsworth's Boy of Winander and Barrie's Peter Pan are idyllic figures because they exist in imaginative timelessness.¹⁴⁰

Each of these three more famous child characters can be understood through Marah Gubar's explication of Romantic childhood as a set of ideas about children and childhood that revolved around the idea that "children are innocent creatures who should be shielded from the adult world and allowed to enjoy their childhood, ...a protected period of education and enjoyment" outside of the pace of adult time.¹⁴¹ In the Romantic conception of childhood as a temporally separate space, this idealized childhood was understood as purer, simpler, and more pleasurable than adulthood, so much so that adult culture created art and literature that glorified the idea of delaying children's exposure to a world that would cause them to grow up too soon. Children's magazines that this dissertation studies frequently participate in this rhetoric when they mark the magazine as safe spaces, as discussed in the introductory chapter. Other aspects of children's magazines at the turn of the twentieth century, however, suggest that these magazines' relationship to time is more complicated than a strictly Romantic separation of the child from the fast-paced adult world. The calendar piece in figure 76, for example, participate in a cult of timeless childhood; instead of being separate from it, the child gleefully moves forward in time,

¹⁴⁰ Or, perhaps because they too are dead. An argument could be made that what is fetishized at this moment is not the child's connection to timelessness, but child death.

¹⁴¹ Marah Gubar, "The Victorian Child, c. 1837-1901," University of Pittsburgh, accessed 25 March 2020, <https://www.representingchildhood.pitt.edu/victorian.htm>.

discovering the new year and effectively aging in a moment of joy. This periodical piece suggests that conceptions of children's relationships to time in periodicals were not so clearly cut, and instead that tensions existed between understandings of childhood and time in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation, "The Future of Childhood at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," seeks to put children's magazines thoroughly within time, to see how they intersect with American conceptions of science that held cultural attention in the era in which they were produced. Continuing the second chapter's exploration of the connections between magazine illustration and phrenology, this chapter explores connections between visuals in *Babyland* (1877-1898), *Wide Awake* (1875-1893), *John Martin's Book* (1912-1932) and American forms of scientific racism, such as the eugenics movement and social Darwinism. This chapter demonstrates that illustrations within these magazines engage with eugenic and social Darwinist thought to present and entrench a vision of the American future which was entirely populated by white Americans. This chapter not only seeks to understand the relationship between turn of the century children's periodicals and the American history of science, but further to discern how, precisely, the ideology of childhood as idyllically static engaged with a culture in which time was understood as speeding up, made faster by quicker production times of books and media, the development of train services and postal speed, and the creation of time zones. While these subjects at first may seem disparate – childhood, time, visuality, and turn-of-the-century race science - this chapter argues that childhood and visuality were precisely the things that fin-de-siècle Americans used to engage with and mitigate anxieties about a changing nation.

This chapter begins with a section entitled "Childhood and Time in *Babyland*," which explores that magazine's use of images of children embodying their future roles as adults. In this

section I demonstrate that in the late nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth, images of children engaged with a new emphasis on futurity, and thus can be read as negotiating anxieties about the connections between childhood, adulthood, and time. The next section of this chapter, “Agency and Suffering in *Wide Awake*,” then moves to a consideration of the role of child suffering in *Wide Awake* in which I explore the connections between magazines’ new emphasis on futurity and their investments in portraying black children as suffering and in need of aid, and white children as agential. I argue that in combination this emphasis on futurity and racialized access to ability paints an idealized future for the American nation in which white populations thrive while black populations lag behind. This chapter ends with a section entitled “The All-White National Future in *John Martin’s Book*,” which connects this vision of the national future with early twentieth century science, demonstrating that the images that *John Martin’s Book* align with eugenic fantasies of an all-white future nation. This section closes with a consideration of the erasure of black American child bodies from children’s magazines that began in Chapter 2, demonstrating that it was not just *St. Nicholas* that erased images of the black American child from its pages, but *Wide Awake* and *John Martin’s Book* as well. This sweeping erasure, I argue, represents an eugenic fantasy of the American future where white populations thrived while black populations quietly disappeared, demonstrating that these magazines were invested not only in an ideology of white supremacy, but they were also actively invested in an ideology of black social death.

3.1 Childhood and Time in *Babyland*

The children's magazine was genre in which the clock was constantly ticking. As the introduction to this dissertation argues, juvenile magazines of the mid- to late-nineteenth century provided the first opportunity for children across the American continent to consume a media created just for them on a nearly simultaneous basis, an opportunity that encouraged child readers to think of themselves as a public, as part of a national community of readers. As my introduction argues, in asking children to affiliate themselves with a national community of readers and to anticipate the monthly arrival of communication from that community, these magazines effectively takes children outside of the family and regional time that presumably structured many child lives in the nineteenth century and places them into a new pace of time, one punctuated by the steady monthly arrival of the magazine. In asking children to understand themselves as a public, these periodicals allowed the opportunity for children to understand themselves as part of a national timeline as well as a regional and personal one. It is not that conceptions of Romantic childhood as ideologically separate and shielded were abandoned – indeed, the magazines themselves frequently engaged in these constructions of childhood and child reading – but now children were for the first time given the opportunity to also understand themselves as part of a national public timeline that read together, anticipated the next issue together, and indeed grew together.

Mark W. Turner notes that this effect of the periodical pacing is inevitable, saying that “The natural state of being for periodicals is change and movement, and newspapers and periodicals rely, to a greater or lesser degree, on the ‘new’ and on the very modern concept of

advancement, of moving forward, of futurity.”¹⁴² Much of Turner’s thinking here is based on John Sommerville’s assertion in *The News Revolution in England* that “Periodicity is about movement, while conservatism is oriented toward order and solidarity. Those who publish daily or weekly papers will have accepted the idea that *change* is the really important feature of life and must live with their minds in the future.”¹⁴³

This emphasis on change and futurity are intrinsic to the children’s periodical and part of the first media for children that functions to put them within a set pace of time that is at once national and linked to the delivery of adult periodicals (children’s magazines would have been printed and delivered at the same rate as their parent magazines), but also in a time that is entirely their own, unto themselves, and which is invested in forward movement towards the future. The emphasis on change in both Turner and Sommerville is complicated when we consider that while children’s magazines did print fresh, new material every month, they likewise build in repeating features that in some ways can be considered potentially conservative.¹⁴⁴

Within these complications we see that the children’s periodical is at once speaking to a child audience it has promised to protect by providing rich, wholesome material, thus conserving their idyllic state as separate from the adult world, and yet in the same issue is responsible for

¹⁴² Mark W. Turner, “Periodical Time in the Nineteenth Century,” *Media History* 8, no. 2 (2002): 184.

¹⁴³ Charles John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10, emphasis in the original.

¹⁴⁴ Of course, not all material or images were new. Many periodicals, especially early nineteenth-century periodicals, reprinted stories and images that were printed elsewhere first, frequently in English papers. Many magazines, most heavily in the era of woodblocks but also frequently as transfer lithography became the main means of mass printing, borrowed images from other sources and rewrote the text around them. Repeat features entitled things like the Letter-Box, Science for Young Folks, or Contributors Department allowed child readers to have some expectation of what was coming, serving in some ways to mitigate the propulsive emphasis on change and futurity that Turner and Sommerville emphasize. In this way, children’s periodicals again reveal their paradoxical nature, working at once with systems of future-oriented change as well as conservation that catch child readers somehow in between.

producing new material for an audience that was a month older than they were when they read the last issue. While adult magazines don't seem to address the fact that their readers are likewise aging as the issues pass, children's magazines reveal themselves to be very aware that they are in the business of futurity, of growing up children and propelling them into the adult world. We see this in *Babyland*'s advertised reference to itself in figure 77 as having "sweet, cunning stories of tiny men and women," which emphasizes that it understands its readers at once as babies but also, simultaneously, as the future men and women of America.¹⁴⁵



Figure 77. *Babyland* (January 1889): back cover. Courtesy University of Pittsburgh Libraries.

Babyland, published by D. Lothrop and Company between 1877 and 1898, published many images that specifically engage with this tension. *Babyland* was advertised as "For the Very Little Ones" and described as a "large handsome eight-page quarto that is especially for the babies," whom the editors assume are interested in "gay pictures and drawings and beautiful little stories and jingles."¹⁴⁶ *Wide Awake*, also published by D. Lothrop and Co. and likely intended as a

¹⁴⁵ This is again in contrast to magazines aimed at an adult audience, which rarely if ever reveal that they understand their audiences as at once as adults but also, simultaneously, as the future dead people of America.

¹⁴⁶ This unattributed quote comes from a review published on the back of the 1880 collection of *Babyland*.

magazine that *Babyland* readers will graduate to as they grew to require more complicated texts, is marked as a “magazine...for the young folks of the household,” whom the editors assume are interested in “sparkling stories, beautiful poems, interesting narratives of travel and exploration, articles about interesting industries, and lively papers of outdoor life, all finely illustrated.” The visuals in *Babyland* and *Wide Awake* follow similar styles because both magazines were designed, illustrated, and edited by the same team, lead by Eliza Ann Fairman and Charles S. Pratt.¹⁴⁷ *Babyland* and *Wide Awake* sometimes even shared illustrations, as evidenced by the *Babyland* cover page for the bound collection of 1882 and page 149 of *Wide Awake*, published in July of 1882, which both feature the same baby eating molasses as seen in figures 78 and 79 (and as featured in Chapter 2 in figure 44).¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ The one exception to this timeline is between 1892 and 1895, when E. Addie Heath became the editor of *Babyland*.

¹⁴⁸ For more on *Babyland*’s publication history, see Veitch, “Babyland,” 23-6. *Babyland* ceased to be an independent magazine in 1898 when it merged with the publication *Little Men and Women*. The resulting publication was called *Little Men and Women – Babyland*. I have been unsuccessful in locating any physical or digital copies of *Little Men and Women – Babyland*.



Figure 78. *Babyland* (1882): cover page. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 79. *Wide Awake* (July 1882): 149. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

A story entitled “The Little Chief” that was published in the January 1879 issue of *Babyland* was accompanied by an image of a small white boy in Scottish highlander regalia (figure 80).



Figure 80. *Babyland* (January 1879): 9. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Illustrations in both *Babyland* and *Wide Awake* in this era participated in the same methods of marking racial whiteness that were used by *St. Nicholas*, as discussed in Chapter 2. The image of the boy in figure 80 thus signifies his racial whiteness by leaving this face blank so that the whiteness of the page comes to signify his racial whiteness. Eyes, nose, and mouth are noted with black lines. This image reveals itself to play in the realm of photorealistic image by playing with shadow and light, shading areas of the boy's skin with black ink to indicate shadow. However, the extreme contrast between the whiteness of his left cheek and the darkness of his regalia makes his racial whiteness visually clear. He is also marked as part of a British Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-Celtic) tradition by the regalia itself, which evokes the Scottish highland traditions of kilts and clan

chiefs. The poem that accompanies the image begins “I’m my moth-er’s Little Man, / I’m the Chief of all the clan,” and then continues to tell the story of a boy who loves to help his mother with household chores, all the while considering himself very manly in the process, saying “I’m much a man as any man / If I do ev-e-ry-thing I can!”¹⁴⁹ The poem is itself tongue in cheek, clearly playing on an adult reader’s knowledge that this little boy is not a man or manly, but he images himself so. The boy in both the image and the story perfectly encapsulates the magazine’s vision of the child as at once a child and the future man that he will become. Instead of engaging with any of the paradoxes inherent in this concept or any anxieties about a child not remaining in an idyllic childish space separate from adulthood, the piece presents this paradox as funny, cute, and simple. In doing so, it naturalizes the piece’s emphasis on futurity, suggesting that this was a normal and pleasant concept at the time of this magazine’s publication. This emphasis on and comfort with the child’s connection to futurity was historically not always present.

In Anna Mae Duane’s *Suffering Childhood*, she “reveals how the complex network of exchange between Indians, the English, and the American environment itself subtly shaped colonial representations of childhood.” In Duane’s theory, the figure of the child worked in the era of the American revolution “as an emblem for the success of the colony,” so that children who suffered or died in a text about colonial times could be read as emblematic of the suffering of the colony as a whole.¹⁵⁰ Beyond merely working as an index of what plagued a colony or nation, Duane argues that the suffering child functioned in the colonial era as a call to arms against the English oppressor as well as the native barbarian, each constructed as threats to the young nation

¹⁴⁹ “The Lit-tle Chief,” *Babyland*, January 1879, 9.

¹⁵⁰ Anna Mae Duane, *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Violence, Race, and the Making of the Child Victim*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011, 13.

embodied by the vulnerable child. In suffering, the child worked to justify both independence from England and suppression of the Native other, so that the white, protestant, American male power could establish its authority in the new world.

For Duane, children were connected to the concept of futurity in this system of signification because the suffering of the child signifies the potential death of the colony or nation. This early conflation between childhood and futurity suggests that there is a long tradition of this association in American culture, though it is by no means an uninterrupted one. Duane suggests that in the mid-nineteenth century the ties between children and futurity realigned largely in reaction to American forms of slavery. Duane argues that in the early nineteenth century “the temporal orientation of childhood...realigned backwards” and “the child came to embody a level of permanent dependence” so that justifications for slavery could lean on the comparison of slaves to children.¹⁵¹ By emphasizing children’s permanent dependence, not their futures as able members of society, and then comparing slaves to children, pro-slavery advocates were able to suggest that slaves and their progeny would always be dependent, child-like, and in need of care which the system of slavery proposed to provide. In Duane’s theory, these connections between children and futurity halted somewhere in the early nineteenth century and the child became not as an emblem of potential but instead “the harbinger of inescapable subjection and suffering.”¹⁵²

However, in the late nineteenth century, publishers once again produced images of children such as that in the calendar piece with which this chapter begins, and like “The Little Chief,” who

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 140.

¹⁵² Ibid., 141.

are placed pleasantly back in time and perhaps even more aligned with the future than before. Why?

Lee Edelman, in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, asserts that in twentieth- and twenty-first century Western culture the child is associated singularly with the future in order to justify political movement in the present day, as emblemized by the now-commonplace phrase “children are the future!” Children in this usage become a cultural and political rallying point for which present-day changes are made – or avoided – for the sake of the children who will, in the future, inherit the world. While this child aligned with the future has obvious connections to Duane’s colonial child, the distinction here is that Duane’s children are portrayed as suffering because they bodily represent the ills of the present nation; in Edelman’s configuration, children bodily represent the future nation. They must be protected, but their joy, success, agency, and smiles are not representative of current national ills, but rather the bright future they represent. Edelman uses the twentieth-century example of Annie from the Broadway play of the same name, “gathering her limitless funds of pluck to ‘stick out [her] chin / And grin / And say: ‘Tomorrow! / Tomorrow! / I love ya / Tomorrow / You’re always / A day / Away!’” Though the play outlines Annie’s miserable conditions as an orphan, the play doesn’t linger on her suffering, but rather Edelman notes that “the figure of this child seems to shimmer with the iridescent promise of Noah’s rainbow,” representing the promise of a bright future to come.¹⁵³

In colonial times Duane sketches out an ideology in which fictional children were portrayed as suffering to indicate the present ills of the nation, aligned lightly with the future but not entirely

¹⁵³ Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, 18.

signifying the future. Duane elaborates that this changed in the nineteenth century, saying that American justifications for slavery cause the clock to stop on childhood, so that the child is dis-aligned with the future. The next stop along the academic line of thinking is Lee Edelman, who says that in the 20th and 21st centuries the clock has somehow restarted – so much so that the child is thoroughly aligned with the future, without connections to the present day. There is a gap in the academic timeline that explores children’s connections to futurity, and one goal of this dissertation is to try to understand how American culture moved from a connection between childhood and futurity in the eighteenth century, to a dissociation between children and the future in the early nineteenth century, to the child serving as a signifier of utter futurity in the late twentieth and twenty-first.

Duane demonstrates that there was a cultural reason for an adjustment to how childhood and time were aligned in the nineteenth century; it makes sense that if the connection between the two again changed to produce Edelman’s future-oriented child, then there was again a cultural reason that was a catalyst for the change. I argue that the end of slavery and the perceived threat to white supremacy that emancipated Black citizens posed what was at least one part of this catalyst, and it is the part that this chapter explores. In the rest of this chapter I will demonstrate that in the late nineteenth century white populations that were invested in white supremacy needed new vindications for white supremacy, and found new ways to use the ideology of childhood to justify the supremacy of whiteness. If the mechanism of the child as constantly dependent, fixed in a childish state, no longer functioned to justify a system of slavery that cared for Black enslaved persons coded as children, then cultural makers were free to abandon that ideology of the child as constantly dependent. Instead, what we have in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is

a popular understanding of childhood in which the clock has started again, with the child re-aligned with the future.

Edelman, in his exploration of the child-as-future, asserts that this alignment is in itself an inherently conservative move.¹⁵⁴ Edelman asserts that “For politics...remains, at its core, conservative insofar as it works to affirm a structure, to authenticate social order, which it then intends to transmit to the future in the form of its inner Child. That Child remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention.”¹⁵⁵ Edelman further suggests that despite the “liberal” or “conservative” bent of either of these political moves, all justifications that center the child and the future are an argument that is pro-heterosexual and anti-queer, centering heteronormative understandings of time as centered around reproduction and erasing queer time and subjectivities.¹⁵⁶ The magazines that this dissertation studies represent none of the actual queerness of children and childhood, but instead the heteronormative, conservative fantasy of childhood in which the child embodies the future

¹⁵⁴ While Edelman himself does not mark this futurity as a twentieth- and twenty-first century phenomenon, his examples in *No Future* are from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He does not engage with a starting point to this tradition, but instead speaks of it as timeless.

¹⁵⁵ In *No Future*, Edelman elaborates that “Child” is capitalized to signal the cultural conception of childhood instead of actual persons biologically coded as children. *Ibid.*, 2-3.

¹⁵⁶ What Edelman presupposes here is that the “Child,” as a product of and justification for heteronormative political processes, is inherently heterosexual. Katharine Bond Stockton’s assertion in *Growing Sideways* that “If you scratch a child you will find a queer, in the sense of someone ‘gay’ or just plain strange” troubles this argument, and begs us to consider that children are always already queer figures in Western culture. Bond Stockton further makes the argument that conceptualizing children within “the vertical, forward-motion metaphor of growing up” may not be the best way to engage with how children grow or engage with time, and that some children may indeed “grow sideways.” It’s interesting to see, however, how the pacing of the delivery of children’s magazines could likewise be considered a “vertical, forward-motion,” suggesting that the business of growing up children in which magazines participate is specifically designed to steer them away from queerness and towards heterosexuality. The queerness of children and childhood is a topic with which I engage far too fleetingly in this dissertation, but hope to engage more fully at a later point. Katharine Bond Stockton, *The Queer Child: Or, Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1.

hopes of the society. The early twentieth century was a moment of great chaos and change in which American society both embraced the pleasure and thrill of change while simultaneously clinging to the past values which had long held sway in culture, politics, and the economy. In order to cope with this massive cultural change, this chapter demonstrates that Americans turned to the body of the child as a way to make sense of chaotic fin-de-siècle and to imagine these complexities as simple, simultaneous, pleasant, and unified.

Images such as ‘The Little Chief’ and “Little Grand-ma Red-lip,” pictured in Figure 81, take on new significance when considered as standing between the early nineteenth-century disconnection and the late twentieth-century fusion of childhood and futurity.



LIT-TLE Grand-ma Red-lip,
All her house-work done,
Early Christ-mas morn-ing
Sits knit-ting in the sun ;

Look-ing for her child-ren
That live so far a-way,
Smil-ing just as grand-mas
Do on Christ-mas Day.

Figure 81. “Grand-ma Red-lip.” *Babyland* (January 1879): 10. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The story that accompanies “Lit-tle Grand-ma Red-lip,” which is presented on the page next to “The Lit-tle Chief,” tells of a character who “sits knit-ting in the sun” while she waits for her children to arrive on Christmas day. The only aspect of the piece that makes clear that the text is a humorous joke and not a pleasant story about an aging woman is the image that accompanies the text. In this image the child’s skin, bonnet, and apron come forward to the eye as the only part of the image that remain un-inked, all as purely white as the sunshine that falls upon the tablecloth. While she is certainly racially white, the indicators of her age are a little more indeterminate. The girl featured is childishly small in comparison to the chair in which she sits, and she needs a footstool, but she also has all the trappings of an old woman: glasses, knitting, a knowing stare. Yet her face is unwrinkled: no bags or crow’s feet. Even the glasses are part of the joke: oversized, they suggest that the girl does not need them and has only borrowed them from someone else to play a role. The Western cultural narrative of dress up allows viewers to tell a story out of the piece: this is a girl who is dressing up as a grandmother in play, we tell ourselves, separating the child’s face and diminutive body from the grandmotherly accoutrements that surround her. However, if we train ourselves to leave those cultural narratives behind, we see that this picture can also be read as a person who is simultaneously girl *and* grandmother, negotiating between the extremes.¹⁵⁷ The pleasure here, as in the “Lit-tle Chief,” is in seeing the future embodied in the present child, so seamlessly that it becomes humorous and pleasurable - not culturally horrific, as a child-grandmother might actually be. While children and adults are frequently defined as cultural

¹⁵⁷ Lit-tle Grand-ma Red-Lip’s story is accompanied by that of “Lit-tle Grand-pa Black-Eye” on the next page of the magazine, which follows much the same formula.

opposites, in each of these pictures they are seamlessly combined so that the child may effortlessly embody their biological future without jeopardizing their innocence.



Figure 82. Stereoscope card, circa. 1890s. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.¹⁵⁸

These images allow us to see how late nineteenth and early twentieth century Americans used the child, however casually, to negotiate the anxieties of a modern age in which conceptions of connections between children, adulthood, and time were shifting. In making a joke out of time and allowing the child to lend an air of innocence and play to an anxious subject, modern artistic gatekeepers were using children's bodies to negotiate a cultural anxiety. While these engagements with childhood and time seem fairly innocuous, further study of the ways that children in media were asked to embody futurity, especially racial and national futurity, reveals that the use of the child to negotiate anxieties about racial futures becomes much more complicated.

¹⁵⁸ This tradition is not singular to children's magazines, but instead is seen in many places in the late nineteenth century popular visual culture. We see it again demonstrated by this stereoscope card, one of a whole series held at the American Antiquarian Society which only presents little girls dressed as old ladies. I regret the placement of this image, as the body of my dissertation does not directly engage it. I had hoped to include this image in my footnotes, but the University of Pittsburgh's ETD guidelines does not allow for figures to be included in the footnotes.

3.2 Agency and Suffering in *Wide Awake*



Figure 83. “Right in the middle of the laugh she fell fast asleep.” *Wide Awake* (January 1882): 43.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The story “Ginevra Alveretta’s Merry Christmas” by Margaret Eytinge, published in *Wide Awake* in 1882, tells of the poor but happy Pie family – “colored people” – at Christmas time in New York City.¹⁵⁹ The story details what each member of the family wants for Christmas and then the grandmother Pie’s theory regarding Santa Claus and gift distribution: “...he gibs de walublist [gifts] to de waluabilest folks, an’ de onwaluabilest to the onwaluabilest folks.”¹⁶⁰ Ginevra

¹⁵⁹ Margaret Eytinge, “Ginevra Alveretta’s Merry Chirstmas,” *Wide Awake*, January 1882, 39.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

Alveretta Pie, the family's young girl, takes this knowledge to heart and, once the family has fallen asleep, climbs to the roof to rest against one of her rich neighbor's chimneys so that Santa Claus will mistake her as belonging to the rich home and give her some of the valuable presents, meant for that household, instead of the "tin tipper, or...money-jug" that she expects to receive.¹⁶¹ Ginevra Alveretta falls asleep and nearly freezes to death, as pictured in figure 80, but is soon discovered by the rich family's Irish maid, who mistakes her for a wicked fairy and reports to the rich family that "there's somethin' by the chimbly, ma'am – somethin' all black."¹⁶² The family investigates and brings Ginevra Alveretta inside to warm her. The story ends happily when the rich family shares their Christmas feast with the Pie family, who conclude that their luck in such a lovely Christmas means that they "*did* get some of de walublist things" (even though they conclude that they are some of the "werry onwalubilest folks") because "ole Sunday-Clothes been a list'nin' an' left dem ar splendificent presents dar 'cause he knowed we was a goin' dar to supper."¹⁶³

Though the majority of the action takes place within the Pie family home and then the rich home next door, the illustrator chose not to illustrate a study of the contrast, but instead only the happy Pie home and then a picture of Ginevra Alveretta asleep and nearly frozen by the neighbor's chimney (figure 83).¹⁶⁴ This latter illustration shows the black child wrapped in rags on a cold

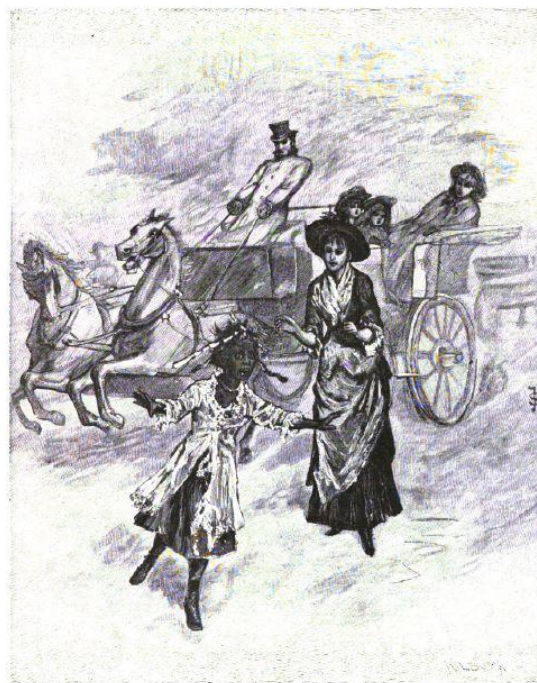
¹⁶¹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 43.

¹⁶⁴ The story can also be read as an interpretation of Hans Christian Anderson's "The Little Match Girl," who is frequently (or exclusively) read and visualized as white. While Anderson's match girl of the London slums dies, Ginevra Alveretta survives – perhaps suggesting that while Anderson's text is a call to London society to recognize the humanity and suffering of the poor, as well as the risk to the English future that the match girl represents, Eytinge's story presents an America that recognizes and alleviates the suffering of its "leasdt waluable people," suggesting a

winter's night, smiling softly as she begins to freeze to death. While the story provides a happy alternative to this fate, what the illustrator chooses to emphasize is the black child as passive, as picturesquely near death, as incapable of saving or helping herself, and in need of intervention. This is one vivid example of what I see as an illustrative tendency to portray black children as suffering and in need of (white) intercession and charity throughout the late nineteenth century. Further study of *Wide Awake* demonstrates that this is a common practice, not an anomaly, as seen in figures 84 and 85, both of which portray black children in need of aid and intercession.



AFTER THE SMALL FLYING FIGURE.

Figure 84. *Wide Awake* (May 1883): 401. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

future in which they survive, but are also very aware of their place in the American nation as well as the debt they owe to their white benefactors.



Figure 85. *Wide Awake* (December 1882): 62. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Building on the last section of this chapter, which investigates children's connections to futurity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this section explores racialized vulnerability and pain, such as that seen in the story about Ginevra Alveretta. Pictures of children in children's periodicals at the turn of the twentieth century worked to develop a visual archive of racial difference that transcended the texts they accompanied and clearly projected different racial futures for black and white American children. The children visualized in these images work as symbols of the future nation, idealizing a future in which white populations ably navigated and controlled American culture while non-white populations struggled. Representations of non-white children were sometimes openly racist and derogatory, but were often simply patronizing, visually encoding an ideology wherein non-white children are less able to negotiate the American landscape than white children. These visual representations of children's bodies participate in a late nineteenth-century conflation of childhood with futurity so that their childhood suffering or ability indicates future suffering and ability as well. Magazines like *St. Nicholas* and *Wide Awake*

invested in illustrations that continue to emphasize black child suffering and white child ability across the span of decades and thousands of pages of text, demonstrating their investment in portraying a future in which the black population suffers without white intervention.

Academic conversations about childhood, race, and the nation have long revolved around the conversation of suffering. Following Duane, Robin Bernstein argues that “At the mid-nineteenth century...writers began to polarize black and white childhood” and that the mechanism for this difference was suffering.¹⁶⁵ Contrary to my own interpretation, Bernstein argues that black children were portrayed as not suffering, or being unable to suffer, while white children were portrayed as having that ability. Bernstein further argues that the black child’s portrayed inability to suffer “removes black children “from the exalted status of ‘child’” and reserves childhood with its protections and its privileges for white children.¹⁶⁶ For Bernstein, like Duane, suffering works to mark otherness and power: in marking the white child as suffering and in need of protection and the black child as invulnerable to pain, suffering become a marker of childhood as well as a justification of racial difference and white supremacy. If a child does not suffer, or at least have the potential to suffer, Bernstein argues, they are not conceptually a child.¹⁶⁷

Bernstein demonstrates her argument with images of black and white girlhood to advertise Cottolene in the 1890s, reproduced in figures 86 and 87.

¹⁶⁵ Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 43; see Chapter 1 for childhood, race, and suffering.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁶⁷ While both *Racial Innocence* and *Suffering Childhood* are texts celebrated by scholars of children’s literature, neither of these texts focus on children’s literature itself, with the exception of Bernstein’s chapter on Raggedy Ann. Instead, both texts are concerned with the cultural deployment of childhood to a wider audience, either to adults and policy makers or to a readerly audience primarily formed of adults, but which some children would certainly have read. This dissertation works to consider how texts made by adults explicitly for child readers asked these readers to understand themselves, which may differ from the way that childhood is used to encourage or oblige adults to feel and act.



Figure 86. Trade card for Cottolene. N. K. Fairbank and Company, circa 1890.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.



Figure 87. Trade card for Cottolene. N. K. Fairbank and Company, circa 1890. Collection of the author.

Bernstein reads the use of black childhood happiness and contentment in the act of picking cotton as making the violent institution of child labor innocent. Bernstein writes that the white child, in a separate advertisement for Cottolene, conversely “is not shown in the midst of any action...she only hovers, cloud-like, with a facial expression of passive contentment. This white child exists as a decoration....the pure, white angel-child.” This child, free from labor and utterly content, is held up against the black child’s happy labor: “Defined, always, in relation to this white angel-child, the black Cottolene girl labors so the white angel may rest placidly.”¹⁶⁸ However, the white child’s freedom from labor only becomes obvious when in contrast to the black child’s labor; in absence of it, the white Cottolene girl is merely beautiful, ornamental, and safe. In the image to which Bernstein refers, the white child exists in a space apart, where labor and pain aren’t at stake. While the black child does not suffer under labor, the conditions for the white child’s suffering are not visually portrayed. The viewer doesn’t know if the white child is portrayed as suffering under the conditions of labor because the conditions aren’t present in the image.

The children’s magazines that this dissertation studies provide a larger archive for viewing images of black and white children in which both black and white childhood are portrayed as having the potential to suffer. The magazines that this dissertation studies present many portrayals of racialized suffering that are quite different than those found in Bernstein’s archive and which complicate Bernstein’s claim that black children are portrayed as unable to suffer, thus writing them out of childhood.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 65



A "BLACK-AND-WHITE" EXHIBITION.

Figure 88. "A 'black-and-white' exhibition." *Wide Awake* (April 1883): 381. Courtesy of HathiTrust.¹⁶⁹

In the 1880s, *Wide Awake* printed several images that portray black children as just as ornamental and safe as the white child in the Cottolene ad, as demonstrated in figures 89 through 91 from *Wide Awake*.

¹⁶⁹ The archive, however, also presents some images that support Bernstein's argument. We see one example of a black child portrayed as unsuffering in a harmful situation in figure 88, published in *Wide Awake* in April 1883. Again, my original intent was to include this image as part of this footnote, but the University of Pittsburgh's ETD guidelines prevent that. Please forgive its interruption in the body of the paper.

In this image, a black child breaks through what I understand to be a mirror and is portrayed as happily unaware of any pain. This image is included as a kind of visual page-filler after a short poem, and goes un-referenced in any text beyond the short caption that follows it. Here the child, visually coded as racially black, shows only joy and humor in the face of a painful situation. This portrayal, according to Bernstein's theory, would suggest that this is not a child at all, as the ability to suffer is, for Bernstein, a key marker of childhood.



"BAKED BEANS," "BROWN BREAD" AND "BUTTERFLY."

Figure 89. "'Baked Beans,' 'Brown Bread,' and 'Butterfly.'" *Wide Awake* (November 1887): 336.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.



MAMMY DANCES "SUGAR-IN-DE-GOURD."

Figure 90. *Wide Awake* (July 1887): 130. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

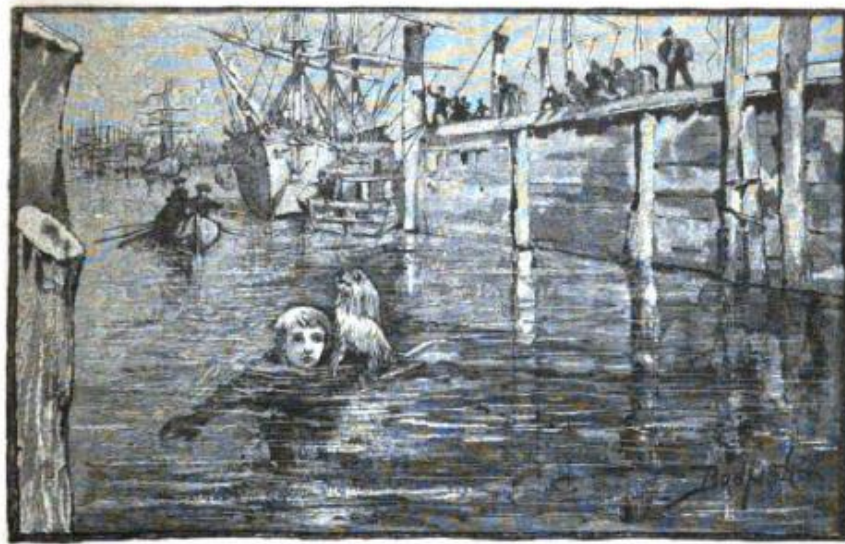


Figure 91. *Wide Awake* (November 1883): 364. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The black children featured in figures 89 through 91, like the white Cottolene girl, exist in an imagined space where pain and labor are not really at issue. In figure 89, the boys named Baked Beans and Brown Bread are both enamored of their friend, Butterfly. While their names are vaguely racist, the boys are not portrayed as ridiculous, ragged, or at risk of pain. Instead, they neatly sit and admire their friend as she herself admires the bouquet that they have given her. We see a similar situation in figure 89. Though the home is perhaps a little sparse, there is no indication of poverty, pain, or labor in this home as the black child sits before the warm fire and listens to music while toasting bread. We see a similar innocence and lack of pain in figure 89, where a child, marked textually as “a quiet bit of color,” sleeps peacefully in what looks like a very comfortable and luxurious bed. While Bernstein suggests that innocence is crucial to childhood and freedom from the threat of pain is crucial to innocence, pain is not at stake in the portrayals of black children from the *Wide Awake* in the 1880’s. This suggests that in children’s magazines at least that the relationship between racialized childhood and suffering are more complicated than those seen in Bernstein’s archive.

In the magazines that this dissertation studies, it does not seem to fully carry that black children were portrayed as unable to suffer and thus were written out of childhood. As the image of Ginevra Alveretta demonstrates, black children were portrayed as suffering. As figures 89 through 91 show, black children were also portrayed as innocently free from pain in a way that Bernstein argues was reserved for white children, to cement their access to the privileged arena of childhood. These magazines seem to work with different definitions of childhood and innocence than are seen elsewhere in the nineteenth century. Importantly, the black and white children portrayed in these texts are both visually and ideologically coded as children – both had the same access to connotations of innocence, and both had the capacity to suffer, if put in the right situation. Suffering is still an important index of the nation, as Duane suggests, but in this archive it does not indicate an access to childhood.

As the nineteenth century turns to the twentieth, it is only black children who are shown to suffer in the magazines that this dissertation studies. *Wide Awake*, like *St. Nicholas*, only portrayed black childhood as innocently free from pain in the 1880s. In the late 1880s and 1890s, black children are marked as extremely vulnerable, in need of white aid and intercession. At the same time, very few, if any, white children are portrayed as suffering or utterly vulnerable in the pages of children's magazines. Instead, white children are portrayed as strikingly capable, invulnerable and agential. While we have already explored evidence of the black child marked as suffering in the story "Ginevra Alveretta's Merry Christmas," an example of white child agency can be seen in the story "From the Hudson to the Neva" by David Ker, an illustration from which is reproduced in figure 92.



JACK SAVES THE LITTLE SINGER'S DOG.

Figure 92. “Jack saves the little singer’s dog.” *Wide Awake* (January 1882): 47. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

“From the Hudson to the Neva” demonstrates how white children, in contrast to portrayals of black children, were visualized in ways that emphasized their valor, readiness, ability to adapt, and their action.¹⁷⁰ The story tells of the adventures of Jack Jervis, who is taken aboard the ship the *John Brown* as a “cabin-boy” after he demonstrates valor in saving a young “crippled” girl’s dog from drowning, as visualized in figure 92. This image, which begins the story, importantly does not feature the “crippled” girl who owns the dog and requires Jack’s help; instead, it only features Jack actively helping the poor drowning dog and swimming her to safety. In contrast to Ginevra Alveretta’s portrayal, Jack is active, helping another, and is visualized as fully capable of saving himself and the dog from this situation. This is the common method of visually portraying

¹⁷⁰ It is also significant that Ginevra is a girl and Jack is a boy, a difference that in the nineteenth century may have coded Ginevra as “naturally” vulnerable and Jack as “naturally” active. While gender certainly plays a role in these magazines and merits much further consideration, I find that both boy and girl children who are visually coded as black are marked as vulnerable; the inverse is true of white children, who are marked as able whether they are boys or girls.

white childhood in children's magazines as the nineteenth century turns to the twentieth: embroiled in a scrape, but fully capable of adapting and surviving due to their own strength and wisdom.

It's important to note that white children frequently need intercession in the texts of stories such as these - the "crippled" girl (who is presumably white and Anglo-Saxon because her words are written in standard English) needs Jack's help with her dog, and Jack himself needs to be pulled from the water by the crew of the *John Brown*. However, what is illustrated - visualized for readers - between approximately 1890 and 1914 is black child suffering and white child agency, so that these magazines page after page become a visual archive of these tropes. While the stories that accompany these visuals offer more complicated portrayals, the visuals of these magazines reinforce racial difference and white supremacy.

There are similarities between this system of portraying black children as suffering and in need of white intervention and Duane's description of nineteenth-century justifications for slavery that marked Black enslaved adults as dependent, in need of white intervention and the system of slavery to survive. These similarities exist because both systems served the same purpose of ensuring that white populations maintained systems of power which they marked as out of the reach of Black populations. The important distinction here is futurity: while the nineteenth-century system implied that Black enslaved populations would never grow up, and would constantly exist as children (even as they have subsequent generations of Black enslaved persons), the emphasis on futurity in children's magazines suggests that Black communities will grow up, but that according to racist interpretations of Darwin's natural selection that these magazines employ, that they will fail without white intervention and the system of slavery that was portrayed as necessary to keep these Black populations alive. It is precisely this social and racial death that these magazines illustrate in the 1910s, when children's magazines slowed the production of images of

black children, eventually ceasing to publish them at all. In slowly erasing black bodies from the pages of children's magazines, they predict and idealize the future in which Black populations are likewise absent, dead. In this way these magazines are not only invested in white supremacy, but also in a future in which Black race suicide becomes a reality.

The system of portraying white children as agential and black children as suffering, in connection to late nineteenth century connections between childhood and futurity, speaks to a vision of the national future. In portraying racialized childhood in this way, white cultural gatekeepers were providing child readers with a vision of an idealized future nation in which white people controlled the nation while black children, suffering, waited patiently for white pity and intervention, a vision that has more than a little in common with the popular nineteenth century science of eugenics.

3.3 Eugenics and Erasure in *Babyland* and *John Martin's Book*

Racial anxieties about the American future come to the forefront in the story "Lit-tle Broth-er," published in *Babyland* in 1882, which tells of four little girls admiring their new baby brother, who is described as having "blue eyes," "gold hair," and as "all white and pink tints, " as shown in figure 93.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ "Lit-tle Broth-er," *Babyland*, May 1882, 40.

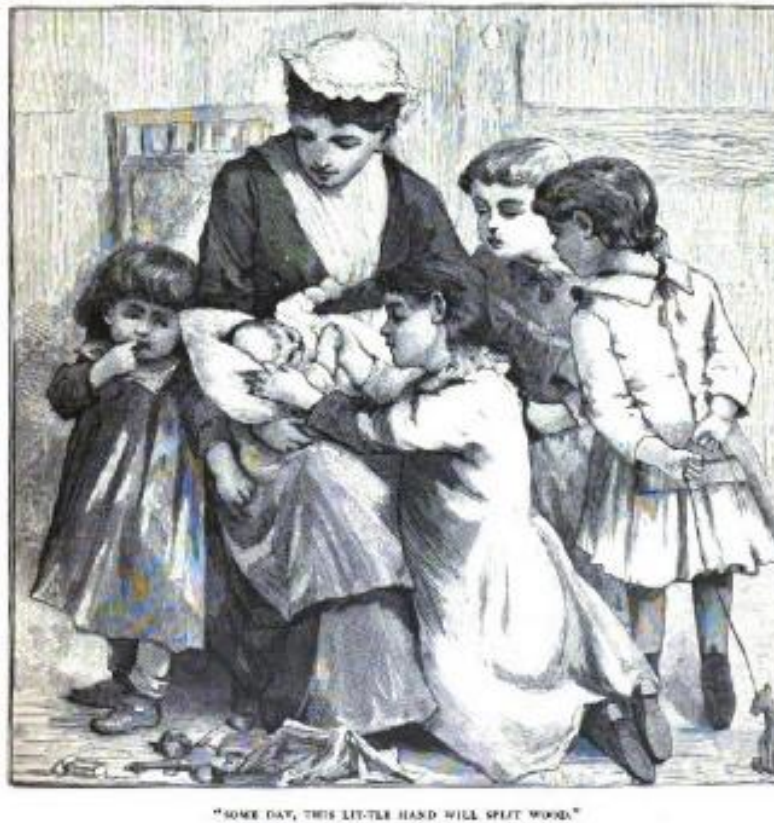


Figure 93. *Babyland* (May 1882): 39. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

The story indicates that the girls are particularly fascinated by the child because “They were nice chil-dren, all four, but they were as brown as gip-seys, their eyes were black, and e-ven Gra-cie’s light hair was brown;” so that “It was like a fair-y sto-ry that the ba-by should be blue-eyed and have gold hair.”¹⁷² While the story describes the girls as having brown skin, the image that accompanies the story visualizes the girls as being just as visually white as their brother.

¹⁷² Ibid. It is further important to note that the story marks their brownness not racially, but ethnically, marking them as “brown as gyp-seys,” indicating Romanian or otherwise eastern European visual darkness of complexion, rather than racial blackness. While the late nineteenth century held non-Anglo Europeans in a complicated racial and ethnic space, the children here are still marked as racially white. Further, they are not specifically marked as ethnic others – just as persons with skin and hair *as* dark as ethnic others.

While two of the girls' faces are shaded in darker tones, the highlights of their cheeks indicate that these are to be read as shadows, not the "brown" of racialized blackness. Likewise, the white neck and hands of the rightmost girl emphasize her racial whiteness, as do the phrenological markings that indicate the features of their faces. The illustration here works to correct the reader's view: while the story describes the children as brown, the accompanying illustration works to ensure that the reader understands their racial and visual whiteness, so that brownness becomes not racial, but rather a variety in the tones of skin color that racially white children could embody.¹⁷³

Michelle Ann Abate notes that marking children with metaphorical darkness became common in the late nineteenth century, especially with daring and hoydenistic characters like Jo March and Capitola Black. However, Abate emphasizes that this descriptive brownness does not "suggest a racially ambiguous status" because "their blackness is metaphoric and not literal."¹⁷⁴ Citing Toni Morrison's article "Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination," Abate notes that while these characters are able to "temporarily play in the dark...this phenomenon is ultimately in service of whiteness," a way to appropriate aspects of racial blackness while staying firmly in the privileges of racial whiteness.¹⁷⁵ The combination of text and image in figure 93 can

¹⁷³ The story, while notable for its interest in visuality and race, is also deeply interested in the baby's future, which is gendered and racialized: the baby is constantly thought of in terms of "some day," so that someday "this lit-tle hand will split wood," "spin tops," "snow-ball, and whit-tle with a knife," will "take hol' o' his sister's hand" so that they may "travel together." The girls imagine that the grown version of this little boy "won't be a-fraid of cows and horses" but instead will "have a horse his own self, some day!" What's fascinating about this baby boy to his sisters is his ability to embody perfect visual whiteness and also his future as a man.

¹⁷⁴ Michelle Ann Abate, *Tomboys: A Literary and Cultural History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 17.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. For more on playing in the dark, see Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*.

be read as doing the same, marking the children as descriptively brown while providing an image that asserts their whiteness so that white children can “play in the dark” of literary brownness while still remaining racially white. We see this again in the many visualizations of white children drawn heavily in black ink who retain their connections to racial whiteness through phrenological signifiers or ensuring that the character’s darkened skin is not the darkest space on the page. While illustrators found many ways to present white children in varying shades of white, grey, and black, illustrators’ and editors’ tasks became much easier once black child bodies were erased from the pages of children’s magazines, which my second chapter indicates became prevalent around the time of the first world war. Suddenly, brown skin, when describing white children, could be re-inscribed as part of racial whiteness, especially in the company of an illustration which could correct any misrecognition on the readers’ part.¹⁷⁶

The first half of this chapter told a story about America, childhood, race, and suffering, suggesting a broad transition in which white children moved from being portrayed as suffering to agential, and black children from childish, to suffering, to absent. I emphasize the roughness of this narrative: there are no exact dates for when these trends begin or end, but instead I suggest that they overlap and become obvious only in retrospect as one begins to explore these magazines as a visual archive of race and childhood at the turn of the twentieth century. While this moment in American culture was a time of massive technological change, ushering in massive transformations in visual print technology, it was also a moment of scientific revolution.

¹⁷⁶ Erasure of black child bodies from the American landscape happens a little earlier in *Wide Awake* than *St. Nicholas*, with no black American children portrayed in either the 1891 or 1893 volumes. I have been unable in my research to locate a volume of *Wide Awake* from 1892, so I am unable to know if the trend beginning in 1891 continues through 1893, or if it is unique to those two years. *Wide Awake* merged with *St. Nicholas* after the final publication in 1893, meaning that subscribers to *Wide Awake* received *St. Nicholas* after the merge. *St. Nicholas* continued publishing visuals of black American children, sparingly as time went on, until 1916.

In 1859 Charles Darwin published his text *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.¹⁷⁷



Figure 94. Charles Darwin's children's illustration in *On the Origin of Species*. Courtesy of the Darwin Manuscript Project and Cambridge University Libraries.

In the decades after this text was published Darwin's theory that species (humans included) evolved through a process of natural and sexual selection shook scientific, religious, and national communities alike, suggesting to Americans that long-held understandings of human identity and origin as divinely ordained and ordered were perhaps more complicated. While this new theory was rejected by some, it was gladly accepted by others – some of whom used it as scientific proof of the supremacy of the white race. We see the use of Darwin's theory to support white supremacy as early as the 1880s, when Darwin's theories of natural selection were used to undergird a new American science called eugenics. While physiognomy lost its mass appeal in the late nineteenth

¹⁷⁷ *On the Origin of Species* is from its beginning connected with childhood and children's media by Darwin's own children, who used early editions of the manuscript as scratch paper on which to draw. These illustrations can be viewed at the Cambridge University Library, and a sample is included in figure 94. I regret the placement of this figure in the body of the dissertation, but again, the University of Pittsburgh's ETD guidelines do not allow me to place a figure in the footnotes.

century, eugenics picked up where it left off. Gone was the emphasis on skull shape and measurement, but what persisted was the idea that what was visually available about a body revealed a person's interiority, that surface, again, was tied to essence.

Both children's magazines that this dissertation studies and eugenics worked towards the same goal: an all-white future nation. They further both used images, coded as legible, transparent proof of white racial superiority, as their evidence both of the need for and the success of their project. This section lays out the logics that undergirded eugenic thought and then demonstrates how these logics likewise appear in children's magazines of the early twentieth century.

The choice to engage with eugenics and children's magazines is not arbitrary. There is a connection between this racialized science and these magazines, both of which rose to popularity at the same moment in American cultural history and both of which were responding to the same racialized anxieties in the early twentieth century, in which white populations sought ways to re-entrench the supremacy of racial whiteness in the face of Black political enfranchisement and the mass influx of immigrant populations from around the globe. While the history of science and that of children's literature have largely been studied separately, this chapter brings them together to show how children's magazines borrowed the logic and visual methods of eugenics to present their readership with a vision of the future in which white populations thrived while non-white populations fell neatly in line, or disappeared. While eugenics was invested in the erasure of more than just Black populations from the American landscape, including non-Anglo immigrants, the disabled, and criminals, this chapter will maintain its focus on the erasure of Black populations.

Children and race have always been at the center of eugenics. It is the child, and specifically the child's body and genetics, which are meant to usher in a better future. The eugenically produced child becomes not only the exemplar of its race, but, further, the savior of it. Recognizing that

children's magazines participated in eugenic ideologies about the superiority of whiteness, the legibility of the body, the child's ability to embody the future of the nation, and the child as a pure embodiment of their race allows us to understand the kinds of cultural damage these texts sought to enact. Passing under cultural concern because of their connotations of innocence, children's magazines blithely communicated the pleasures of eugenics, the fantasy of an all-white readership, to their populations of child readers who numbered in the thousands.

Eugenics came to social, political, and ideological popularity in the United States in the early twentieth century, a historical moment often referred to as the Progressive Era. As a scientific field, Eugenics promised to identify the strongest genes in a population or nation and, through the selective propagation of those genes, to strengthen the population by creating future generations of genetically superior children. While eugenics came to cultural attention most prominently in the 1920's and 30's, the term was coined by Francis Galton, half-cousin to Charles Darwin, in 1883 to signify a science whose aims were "supplanting inefficient human stock by better strains, and to consider whether it might not be our duty to do so by such efforts as may be reasonable, thus exerting ourselves to further the ends of evolution more rapidly and with less distress than if events were left to their own course."¹⁷⁸

This mission statement utilizes scientific references as much as it does arrogance, positioning members of eugenic societies as the shepherds and husbandmen of the American nation. Their plan to "supplan[t] inefficient human stock by better strains" is a common reference to farming and animal breeding practices, which work under the idea that strong and healthy lines of crops and animals, when bred together under the direction and care of a farmer, will provide

¹⁷⁸ Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, (London: Macmillan, 1883), 2, Google Books.

stronger subsequent generations of crops and animals. The reference to “the ends of evolution,” however,” are obviously Darwinian, and the supposed “duty” to “further” those events “more rapidly and with less distress” are purely eugenic. In this language Galton reveals that eugenics understands the future of the American nation to be populated by those persons who are inherently genetically superior – “the ends of evolution” being those in which the fittest survive. For both Galton and children’s magazines, as will be demonstrated in this section, those who are fittest are white populations of the Anglo-Protestant type. The project of eugenics is thus to speed up the population of the American nation with Anglo-Protestant bodies, a process that is naturalized by reference to Darwinian systems of natural and sexual selection and even made to seem benevolent by the addition of the idea that this acceleration will result in “less distress.”

The eugenic movement leaned on scientific evidence to argue that the “native” American race, by which it meant white Americans of Anglo-Protestant descent, was at risk of extinction through both race suicide and race degeneration.¹⁷⁹ The movement itself, organized by associations and supported by intellectuals and politicians alike, was concerned with improving and strengthening the “American” race through selective breeding methods between human subjects. Eugenics was a science that rooted itself in the logic of Darwinism, especially the theory of gradualism, which Leonard C. Thomas describes as “the theory that evolutionary change in populations takes place gradually and not by the sudden production of new individual types.”

¹⁷⁹ Leonard C. Thomas notes that there is an important difference between race suicide and race degeneration: “In enumerating hereditary dangers, [John R.] Commons carefully distinguished race degeneration (what happened to a given race under adverse conditions) from race suicide (what happened when the superior- by which Commons meant Anglo-Saxon – race was outbred by its more prolific inferiors).” Commons also distinguished between race inferiority, which he said was hereditary, and backwardness, which was environmental.” Both were important to eugenicists. Leonard C. Thomas, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017, 117-8.

Thomas continues, “Gradualism implies that variations in inherited traits are minute. As Darwin remarks in the *Origin of Species*, nature doesn’t make leaps. Organic evolution proceeds very slowly.”¹⁸⁰ Eugenics understood itself as speeding up “natural” work, a concept that suggests a belief that non-Anglo, immigrant, black, mentally deficient, and “degenerate” populations were, in Darwinian terms, “unfit,” and would eventually be culled from the population in due time, according to the principles of natural selection. This belief, which was at the heart of eugenics, clearly marks racially white persons, especially (or exclusively) those of Anglo-Saxon stock, as genetically superior, the “future” of the American nation with or without the aid of eugenic practices.¹⁸¹ The eugenic movement merely sought to speed up what it saw as a natural process: the extinction of non-white persons from the American nation.

It is worth noting that eugenics is explicitly about racial death. In the reference to Darwinian natural selection, in which the fittest survive while the unfit are eventually bred out of a population by a process of natural and sexual selection, eugenic associations make it clear that the goal for the future is not to have unfit populations fall into an appropriate or approved racial order, but instead to hasten their disappearance. In a Darwinian understanding of time and genetic

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 91.

¹⁸¹ While I have discussed eugenics as a racist scientific theory that idealized a future wherein black populations would be erased and white populations would thrive, the racial politics were much more complicated, especially in terms of desirable whiteness. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine expand on this idea, writing: “Eugenics and racism have become almost interchangeable terms, but the association is perhaps too simplistic. Historical work on eugenics shows that much, if not most eugenic intervention was directed at ‘degenerates’ who already ‘belonged’, racially or ethnically: ‘internal threats’ or ‘the enemy within’, whose continued presence diluted the race. ...To be sure, these were projects of of racial nationalism and indeed racial purity – eugenics was never *not* about race – but the objects of intervention, the subjects understood to be ‘polluting’, were often not racial outsiders, but marginalized insiders...” Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.

processes, the unfit specimen does not hang around to be of service: it disappears. Americans invested in eugenics were concerned by the risk of white race suicide, defined as what happened when the superior race was outbred by its more prolific inferiors.¹⁸² The reaction to this fear was an extended plan and program to breed better, stronger, and more prolific white populations which, they were convinced, would survive the threat of interloping racial inferiors whose only strength was their massive numbers.

Not only did eugenic plans center around the breeding of more and more white babies, but Eugenicist social programs such *Buck v. Bell* (which made the case for national sterilization of mental patients) and the Immigration act of 1924 were politically accepted and enforced, suggesting that the methods for speeding up the eventual population of the United States with genetically-fit white Americans also involved making it illegal for some populations to reproduce, and also preventing others from entering the American nation at all. This eugenic plan to strengthen the American white race was enacted through strict immigration policies, anti-miscegenation laws, and the forced sterilization of poor, disabled, and “immoral” persons.¹⁸³ By 1961, over sixty-two thousand eugenic sterilizations had been performed in the United States.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Thomas, *Illiberal Reformers*, 117-8.

¹⁸³ Nancy Ordover, *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xii.

¹⁸⁴ Kluchin, Rebecca M, *Fit to be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America 1950-1980* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 17-20.

This summary of eugenics is short and, as such, broad and incomplete. Regarding short summaries of Eugenics such as this, Diane B. Paul, et. al., notes: “Insights derived from studies of the movement in other countries and regions (combined with new scholarship on the classic cases), have challenged many conventional assumptions, in particular, that modern eugenics began with Sir Francis Galton in the latter half of the nineteenth century, began to lose scientific support in the 1920’s, and came to an end with the defeat of Nazism. In contesting the standard periodization, scholars have noted that concerns with the transmission of hereditary defect and responsible reproduction were rife in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, have underscored the ways in which the disintegration of old empires and creation of new nations and nationalisms acted as a stimulus to eugenics in the years around World War I, and have

In chapter two I introduced the idea that children's magazines in the late nineteenth century, until about 1908, imagined the nation not as exclusively white, but put instead into what Karen Sánchez-Eppler ironically referred to as "good (Christian) order," signifying that many races were present in the imagined American nation but they all fell peacefully into a racialized order that was made to look "natural." Eugenic ideologies participated in a similar conception of the American nation, but instead of "good (Christian) order" used the metaphor of the nation-as-organism. Leonard C. Thomas explains this metaphor, writing that "Henry Carter Adams said that a society, no less than an individual, has 'conscious purposes'" and that John R. Commons preached that individuals were not separate particles but organs 'bound up in the social organism.'" Thomas demonstrates that this organism metaphor was fairly common, stating that Walter Rauschenbush wrote that "Christian economic reform was not a matter of saving humans... 'but of saving the social organism.'" And "Jane Addams described her settlement-house work as a humanitarian movement endeavoring to embody itself 'in the social organism.'" ¹⁸⁵ The concept of the social organism suggested, like eugenics, that the nation had a single purpose, "a necessary unity, and it was not an inclusive one.... a biological conception of American nationality entailed some kind of evolutionary consanguinity. An organism is constituted by its own cells, and uninvited parasites or microbes were potential threats to its survival," suggesting that the eventual expulsion of certain unwanted aspects of the national organism was both natural and beneficial. ¹⁸⁶

challenged the common view that World War II was a watershed event, following which enthusiasm for eugenics evaporated." *Eugenics at the Edges of Empire: New Zealand, Australia, Canada and South Africa*, eds. Diane B. Paul, John Stenhouse, and Hamish G. Spencer (Boston: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 2.

¹⁸⁵ Leonard C. Thomas, *Illiberal Reformers*, 101.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

This emphasis on the nation as an organism also gives it a past and a future, tying it to both a lineage and a futurity through reproduction. Thomas writes that “looking forward, society’s growth and direction can be nurtured, trained, and directed,” and in eugenic terms this control means selecting which children are born and which are written out of the national future.¹⁸⁷ In seeking to control the national future through eugenic programs and ideologies of an all-white national future, both eugenics and children’s magazines were two forces of white supremacy, one which took on the case of science, public thought, and political reform, and the other which took on the ideologies presented to those “imaginary citizens” who were understood, and were asked to understand themselves, as the embodied future of the American nation.¹⁸⁸

While these magazines that this dissertation studies were not openly engaged in a eugenic process of advocating for fitter families, they do provide images of what they present as better babies: these fitter children, the very future of America itself, best suited to survive and thrive in an American landscape, were white, and those children who were connoted as unfit to survive, who suffered and ailed in the absence of white intercession, were black. Both eugenics and children’s magazines relied on the body of the child to demonstrate which race was fittest for the American future, and both used visualizations of ideal children to project an idealized future nation filled with the bodies of perfect white children – and only white children.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 102.

¹⁸⁸ The term “imaginary citizens” refers to Courtney Weikle-Mills’ text *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence 1640-1868*, which was discussed in the introduction to this dissertation.

Both children's magazines and eugenic scientific and social missions centered visuality as the method of justification and communication.¹⁸⁹ David Green suggests that visuality was always central to eugenics, writing:

“Many of Galton's investigations in the 1870s were organized around the problem of tracing ... hereditary differences which were capable of being identified and analyzed in the outward physical character of the body. The assumption was clearly that physiological and anatomical differences between individuals could be regarded as the indices of relative intellectual ability, moral qualities and psychological disposition. Toward the end of the decade, however, Galton argued that it was possible to gauge the prevalent types of human mentality and the temperament with the same degree of precision as their physical character.”¹⁹⁰

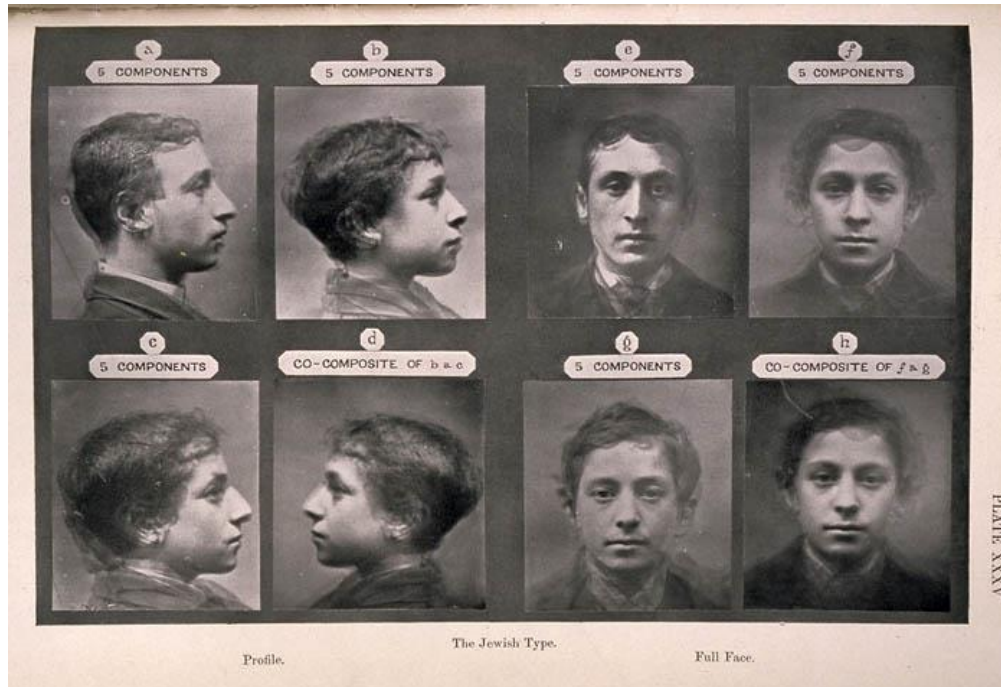
These precepts, especially that “physiological and anatomical differences between individuals could be regarded as the indices of relative intellectual ability, moral qualities and psychological disposition” are a direct hangover from physiognomic thought, and they still privilege the visual as a means to understanding the inevitable, unchangeable truth of a person, or a race's, character. Eugenics thus shares with phrenology a conviction regarding the ability of the body to express “inner” traits, combining this with Darwinist beliefs about genetic reproduction and the progress of humanity.

Visuality became the proof of eugenic claims, both in scientific circles as well as popular ones. We see this eugenic emphasis on the visual in Galton's own texts and experiments with photography. Some of these experiments, as seen in figure 95, were produced by laying the negatives of several posed headshots of the same ethnic or undesirable “type” of person on top of

¹⁸⁹ While I emphasize this visual tradition as part of eugenics and turn-of-the-century American culture, Christine Yao reminds us that this visual tradition begins in the mid-nineteenth century, marking Herman Melville's publication of *Benito Cereno* as a moment in which there was a “fraught interdependence between visual culture and race science.” Yao, “Visualizing Race Science,” 131.

¹⁹⁰ Green, *Veins of Resemblance*, 9.

one another to produce a single image, which Galton proposed visually encapsulated that “type” of person.



Courtesy of The Eugenics Archive.

What Galton hoped to produce was a visual register that allowed for the recognition of traits which carried particular ethnic or undesirable genes. This visual recognition, Galton proposed, could then be used to study how “undesirable” traits are tied to visual traits and passed genetically from parent to child. The goal, generally, was a visual archive of “good” and “bad” traits, used in scientific study as well as “fitter family” and “beautiful baby” competitions to declare the most genetically “fit” and desirable persons and families in a community. While this emphasis on visibility was used to ask Americans to consider their genetic reproduction and choice of mate, what it also does it create a visual archive of desirable visibility, which in this case – as in the

archive of American children's magazines – came down heavily in favor of visual features that had long been coded as racially white.

While the American population and politics were concerned with the prospect of white race suicide, the population and future presented by children's magazines used children's bodies to visualize a fantasy future which represented the opposite: an American landscape populated singularly, and overwhelmingly, by white Anglo-Saxon children. This idealized white future is exemplified by *John Martin's Book*, published between 1912 and 1933 by John Martin's House, Inc. The magazine was edited by Morgan Shepard, whose pen name was John Martin.¹⁹¹ *John Martin's Book*, usually a short 64 pages, was printed using lithographic technology with a maximum of two colors on a page. Instead of working towards visual innovation, as seen in magazines like *Wide Awake* and *St. Nicholas*, the magazine leans heavily on silhouette and simple woodblock-esque illustrations. The result is a nostalgic visual landscape, as if the images were crudely cut and stamped, rather than produced by the same advanced offset-lithographic technologies used by *St. Nicholas* (and in later prints, photolithographs). In *John Martin's Book*, no black American children are ever visually presented. Instead, *John Martin's Book* presents for its readers a eugenic fantasy of a future American landscape populated only by white bodies.

While magazines like *St. Nicholas* and *Wide Awake* tended to stop printing illustrations of black American children, *John Martin's Book*, which started its publication just before the first world war began, never visualized any. If black children were visualized, they were portrayed as persons located outside the American landscape, citizens of foreign spaces (as will be more

¹⁹¹ Martin was joined by Helen Waldo in 1923 as associate editor and in 1924 as editor. For more on John Martin's Book's publishing history, see Anne Menzies, "John Martin's Book," 234-9.

completely discussed in my fifth chapter). We see an example of this in figure 96, entitled “A Jungle Jingle with a Moral.”

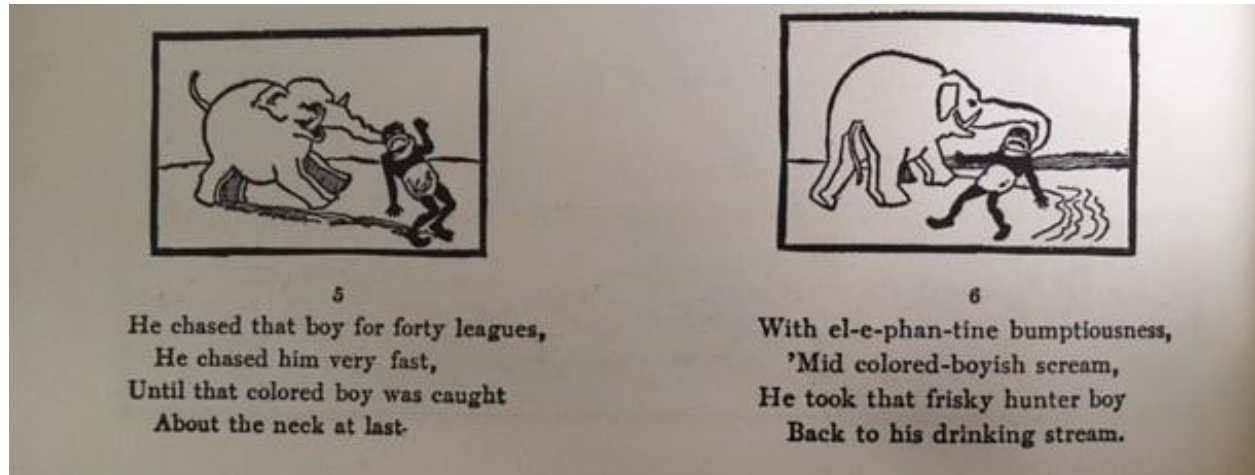


Figure 96. *John Martin's Book*. Collection of the author.

When figures visually coded as racially black figures are presented in *John Martin's Book*, their foreignness is made clear by their story and frequently by accompanying animals foreign to North America, such as monkeys and elephants. The images that accompany the verse in figure 96 do portray a black figure, but the figure's dress and close association with the elephant suggest most clearly that this story takes place outside of America, in the “Jungle” that the title implies (though the images interestingly do not present a jungle, as there are no trees). We see another example of this displacement in the story “Little Boy and Sambo Make A Call,” published in August of 1926, images from which are reproduced in figures 97 and 98.



Figure 97. *John Martin's Book* (August 1926). Collection of the author.

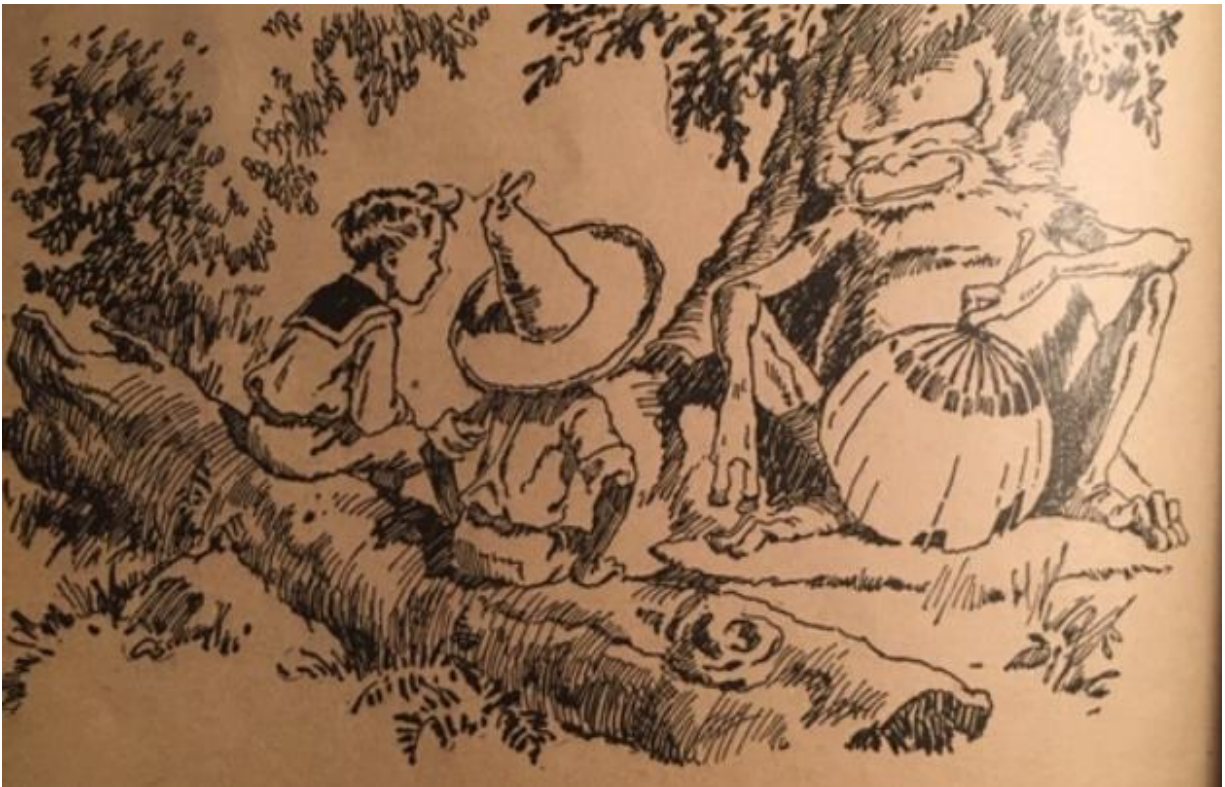


Figure 98. *John Martin's Book* (August 1926). Collection of the author.

While the boys' dress in figures 97 and 98 implies a kind of rural Americanness, the boys' placement next to the fantasy creature the Scoodle-Do in figure 95 suggests that they are not in present-day America – that they exist, instead, either in the past (where magic in the American nation is frequently located) or in a fantasy space. Either way, this interracial friendship (in which the white child is still marked as clever and more capable than his black companion), is not placed within the American landscape, suggesting that the black child visualized here is not a part of the actual American nation that the magazine presents, but is instead part of a half-remembered folkloric past – a funny character that, like the Scoodle-Do, will likewise be half remembered.

The story “An American” by John Ruse Woodward does not displace its white American children, but instead places them solidly within the American landscape. At the top of the page, alongside the title, *John Martin's Book* prints the images of two children, a boy and a girl, whose silhouettes demonstrate that they are both racially white.

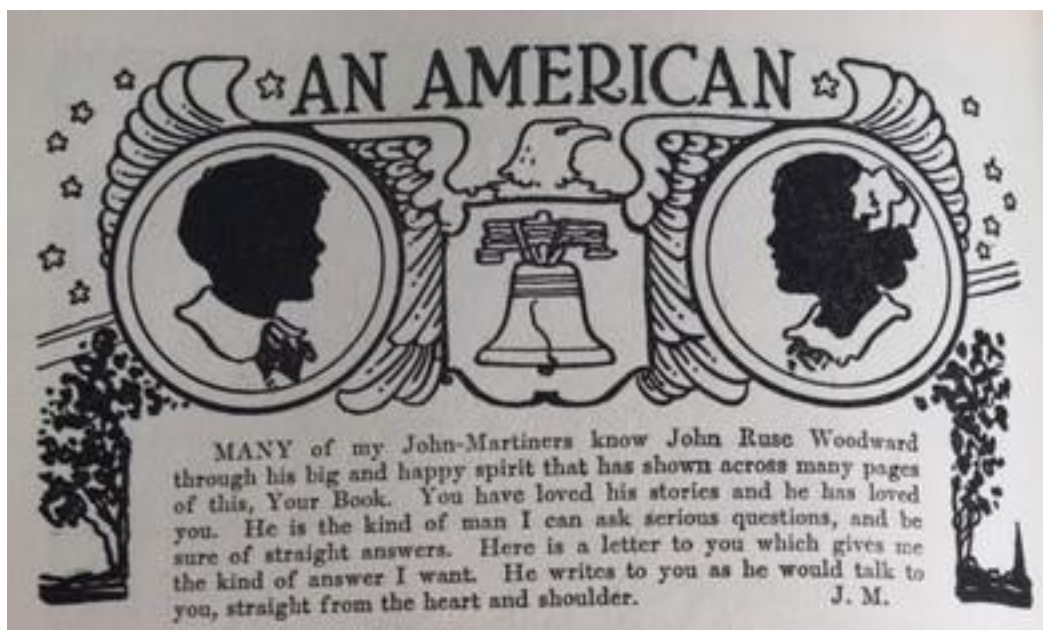


Figure 99. *John Martin's Book*. Big Books 5 and 12. Collection of the author.

Like the image with which this chapter begins, the white children here are able to play in the dark of full inky blackness because, in the absence of black children elsewhere in the spaces of the magazine coded as part of the American landscape, there is no real chance that they will be mistaken as racially black. Beyond that, they are drawn in silhouette, which was an important part of phrenological study from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century as a way to outline a person's profile and thereby study the particular bumps and protusions of their skulls and features. Christoph Siegrist notes that for Lavater, the silhouette's "bare outlines [came] closer to capturing the essence of faces than engravings...Silhouettes," for Lavater, "fix the unchanging and underlying shape of the skull,...while engravings show only the manifold and transitory expressions of the soft, fleshy parts of the face. As Lavater puts it: 'The silhouette is...the truest and most faithful image of a human being that one can give...'"¹⁹² The silhouette's popularity persisted throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, when it was adapted as nostalgic home décor as part of the arts and crafts movement between 1880 and 1920. By the time *John Martin's Book* was published the silhouette had lost most of its direct phrenological influence, but it still used phrenological profile lines to communicate race.

We know even in the twenty-first century by looking at the children in these silhouettes that the children are white because the strength of phrenological visual signification still persists today. The profiles of the boy and the girl still undeniably trace the "angles of the lines of the countenance" which have signified racial whiteness since the eighteenth century.¹⁹³ In general,

¹⁹² Christoph Siegrist, "'Letters of the Divine Alphabet' – Lavater's Concept of Physiognomy," *The Faces of Physiognomy: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*, ed. Ellis Shookman (Rochester: Camden House, 1993), 34-5.

¹⁹³ See John Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy: Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind* (London: William Tegg & Co., 1848), 494-5, emphasis in the original. While I here shorten Lavater's theory to

phrenological theory suggested that the more a human's facial features (forehead, nose, chin) were in line with each other, the more "beautiful" and "productive" that person was, as demonstrated in the visual representation from 1857 reproduced in figure 100.

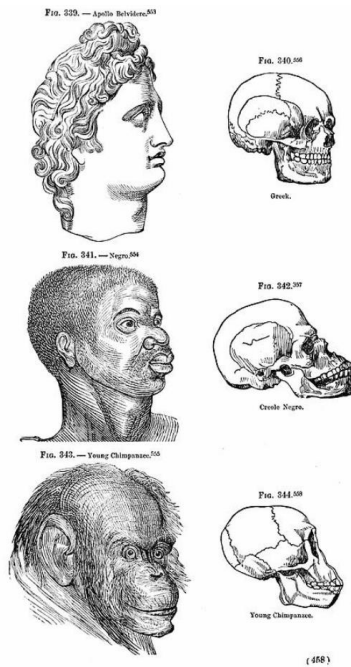


Figure 100. Josiah Clark Nott, *Types of Mankind* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1854): 458.

Courtesy of Google Books.

This straight line from forehead to chin, predictably, became useful in phrenological terms for marking Anglo-Saxon and otherwise racially white persons as more racially advanced, and it

summarize that it signified the supremacy of racial whiteness, Lavater's full theory is that: "The more acute, in general, the angle of the profile is, the legs of which extend from either the closing of the teeth to the cavity of the ear, and the upmost protuberance of the forehead; or from the extreme end of the nose to the outer angle of the eye, and the corner of the mouth, which always ends where, in the skull, the first jaw-tooth begins – the more brutal, inactive, and unproductive, is the animal." Lavater then uses illustrations to demonstrate that animals like frogs and monkeys do not have acute profile angles, suggesting that they are "brutal, inactive, and unproductive." Lavater and his later interpreters demonstrated that classically Greek profiles were the most phrenologically perfect (which is demonstrated in figure 100). As Greece was commonly understood as the cradle of European and white civilization, there is a suggestion that white populations inherited this phrenological perfection. Phrenologists in later decades also produced diagrams (like that seen in figure 100) which demonstrates that black populations did not have the acute angles of facial profile, and could thus be understood as "brutal, inactive, and unproductive."

also became a way of signaling phenotypical whiteness in illustration and silhouette. Silhouettes were popular not only as decorative art and momentos of loved ones in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but further as a way of erasing racial blackness from the pages of magazines by conscripting methods of marking racial blackness (a heavily inked figure on the page) into ways of marking racial whiteness.

While the visual included at the beginning of the story “An American” leans on phrenology to emphasize that Americaness was equal to whiteness, it is the visual absence of the black American child in the rest of this story – and magazine – which marks it as part of the eugenic fantasy of an all-white future nation. “An American” tells the story of three children, only one whom he defines as an American. The first boy, “Sneaky,” is called that because he wants to play a trick on a boy that the author calls Sam, whom he describes as “a very little, tar-black negro boy.” David, the boy defined as “an *honest-to-goodness little American*” is defined as such because he will not let Sneaky play a trick on Sam, but instead “He could not be mean or cruel. He would not impose on one weaker than himself, nor would he allow another to do so. He is a TRUE AMERICAN at heart; a good, fair, clean little *man*, brave and kind in thought and deed.”¹⁹⁴ *John Martin’s Book* is clear here that the only true American among the boys is the one who is strong: the weak boy, also clearly defined as black, needs David’s interference in order to survive. While the story takes place in the present-day in which *John Martin’s Book* is published, they embody a national future in which only David is marked as a *true* American, a “little *man*,” so that he embodies his genetic future as a man even while he is a boy. In this text, as well as others discussed

¹⁹⁴ *John Martin’s Book*, emphasis is in the original.


in this chapter, the image that accompanies the story works to correct the text: though a black boy is present in the narrative, the accompanying image only visualizes the white children. In this way *John Martin's Book*, like other magazines that this dissertation studies, works as a visual archive of American futurity, making it clear to readers that not everyone who lives in the American landscape is a *true* American: instead, only white children are visually marked as part of the American future.

4.0 Chapter 4: Illustrative Difference and Black Futurity in *The Brownies' Book*

Fern Kory, writing of W. E. B. Du Bois's 1920-21 children's magazine *The Brownies' Book*, argues that the "Brownie" of the magazine's title "pointedly appropriates a European folk character," a mischievous and clever elf which the Katharine Mary Briggs identifies as a domestic fairy who comes out at night to perform household chores.¹⁹⁵ While this connection ties the brownie of the title to an inherited American tradition of European fairy tale, the word "brownie" would also have been a word many magazine readers of the early 1920's also strongly associated with photography. In addition to a playful sprite, the "Brownie" was the name of a Kodak camera explicitly advertised to women and children for the ease with which it could be used.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Fern Kory, "Once upon a Time in Aframerica: The 'Peculiar' Significance of Fairies in the *Brownies' Book*," *Children's Literature* 39 (2001): 91. Katharine Mary Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* (London: Psychology Press, 2002), 47.

¹⁹⁶ The "Brownie" would likely also have been associated with Palmer Cox's popular cartoon series, which had its start in *St. Nicholas* in February 1883 and which was also used to sell Brownie cameras. Cox's brownies are seen in the ad featured in figure 2, which was published in McClure's Magazine in August of 1900. While Kodak used Cox's brownies to advertise the camera, the device itself was likely named after its manufacturer, Frank Brownell.



The Brownie Boy

There's great fun out-doors in taking Brownie pictures and there's great fun in-doors in developing and printing.

There's not only the fun of having the pictures but the little camera and the literature we furnish with it, (including the magazine *Kodakery* free for a whole year) gives a good foundation in photography.

Brownie Cameras \$1.25 and up.

EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Figure 101. "The Brownie Boy." *The Youth's Companion* (April 12, 1917): 213. Courtesy of Google Books.

II. THE YOUTH'S

EASTMAN KODAK CO.'S BROWNIE CAMERAS **\$1.00**

Make pictures 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 inches. Load in Daylight with our six exposure film cartridges and are so simple they can be easily

**Operated by
any
School
Boy or
Girl.**



Fixed with five Kauters lenses and our improved mirror shutter for snap shots or time exposures. Simplest design, mounted with instruction booklet, lens included. Develop and produce like magic.

Free page booklet giving full directions for operating the camera, together with chapters on "Snap Shots," "Time Exposures," "Flash Light," "Developing" and "Printing." Free with every instrument.

<p>Send a dollar to your local Kodak dealer for a Brownie Camera. If there is no Kodak dealer in your town, send us a dollar and we will ship the camera promptly.</p>	<p>Brownie Camera for 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 pictures, \$1.00</p> <p>Transparenc-Film Cartridges, 6 exposures, 2 1/4 x 2 1/4.15</p> <p>Paper-Film Cartridges, 6 exposures, 2 1/4 x 2 1/4.10</p> <p>Brownie Developing and Printing Outfit.75</p> <p>Brownie Finder.25</p>
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EASTMAN KODAK CO.
Rochester, N. Y.

Figure 102. "Eastman Kodak Co.'s Brownie Cameras." *The Youth's Companion* (October 18, 1900): II.

Courtesy of The Brownie Camera Page.

The advertisement featured in Figure 101, published in *The Youth's Companion* in 1917, suggested to children their own power as photographers and visual makers, appropriating the name “Brownie” not for “The Children of the Sun,” as *The Brownies' Book* does, but for all children who use the Brownie camera to participate in the art of photography.¹⁹⁷ While this connection between the Brownie camera and *The Brownies' Book* has been lost today, it's likely that readers of *The Brownies' Book* would have been aware of the connection between a Brownie and a popular children's camera, potentially suggesting to them the importance of photography both in their lives and within the magazine.¹⁹⁸

Shawn Michelle Smith, writing of the increasing importance of photography as well as the changing relationship between childhood and photography as the nineteenth century turned to the twentieth, notes that in this era “‘baby's photograph' ... becomes the document through which the middle-class family's future is imagined and mechanically replicated.”¹⁹⁹ This connection suggests that children's photographs in this era are not merely sentimental mementos of familial love (though they certainly played that role as well), but that they had connections to the eugenic ideologies of futurity discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation. In this context, *The Brownies' Book's* explicit focus on over three hundred illustrations and photographs of Black children suggests that the visuals of *The Brownies' Book*, produced and distributed from January 1920 to December 1921, did not merely delight and entertain, but instead worked to imagine a

¹⁹⁷ *The Brownies Book*, ed. Du Bois, cover page.

¹⁹⁸ Kory argues that “Through his choice of title, DuBois was signifying on the exclusionary ideology of these ‘other’ brownies and promising the adult readers of *Crisis* that his magazine for children will rework the most visible materials of popular culture into a mirror that can begin to reflect its child readers back to themselves” Kory, “Once Upon a Time,” 100.

¹⁹⁹ Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999): 120.

different American national future than that seen in the other magazines that this dissertation studies.

While I have demonstrated that *St. Nicholas*, *Wide Awake*, *Babyland*, and *John Martin's Book* were invested in an ideology of white supremacy and an eugenic vision of the future American nation as populated singularly by white Americans, this chapter demonstrates that *The Brownies' Book* functions as an illustrative and photographic archive that uses the ideology of the child as future nation to present a new vision of America's national future in which the black child ably navigates and inherits the American nation.

This chapter begins with a section entitled "Illustrative Difference in *The Brownies' Book*," which details how black American children were illustrated in *The Brownies' Book* and how these illustrations both comply with and diverge from the traditional methods of illustrating black childhood that are seen in the other magazines that this dissertation studies. The next section of this chapter, "Photography in *The Brownies' Book*" explores how *The Brownies' Book* expands the discussion of innovative visuals of black childhood in *The Brownies' Book* to explore Du Bois's use of photographs to illustrate fictional stories. The chapter then moves to study photographs of childhood in the section "Visuality, Photography, and the Future in *The Brownies' Book*" which reads the photographs published in the magazine alongside eugenic photography and Du Bois's Paris Exhibition of photographs of Black Americans. This section shows that the photographs in *The Brownies' Book*, when taken together, constitute a eugenic archive of black American childhood that participates in the eugenic markings of the child body as legible and vacuous. This chapter ends with the section "Goals and Failures: Afrofuturism, Double Consciousness and Black Child Jouissance" which critically considers the problems and possibilities posited by the black national future that the *The Brownies' Book* presents. This section

concludes that despite the limitations of the genre, and perhaps even despite Du Bois's control, some photographs in the magazine offer the possibility of engaging with what Amber Jamilla Musser calls black jouissance.

4.1 Illustrative Difference in *The Brownies' Book*



Figure 103. "Helen and I Were Walking Along the Water's Edge." *The Brownies' Book* (February 1920): 55.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

The girls in figure 99 are rendered in full face and profile as they walk along the lakeshore, an image of black girl friendship, movement, and joy.²⁰⁰ Although the story that they accompany marks the characters Helen and the unnamed narrator as “brown,” their faces and bodies are not filled in with ink, as was the traditional method that children’s magazines published before and contemporary to *The Brownies’ Book* used to visualize racial blackness.²⁰¹ While the story’s placement in *The Brownies’ Book* suggests that the textual marking of the girls as “brown” suggests racial blackness (and not white children “playing in the dark” of racial blackness, as discussed in Chapter 3), the image that accompanies the story defies visual tradition and provides the opportunity for readers of *The Brownies’ Book* to literally see racial blackness differently on the pages of children’s media. In presenting racially black American children on the pages of children’s literature and not filling their faces and bodies with black ink, *The Brownies’ Book* defies at least fifty years of magazine tradition. This divergent visuality continues elsewhere in *The Brownies’ Book*, as the editorial staff includes illustrations like this one that disrupt previously-entrenched methods of visualizing racial blackness in illustrations, a difference which asks viewers to understand racial blackness not as static, and not as an abundance of black ink, but rather as something that is explicitly un-definable in visual terms, and instead assembled visually as a plethora of difference.

²⁰⁰ The full face and profile aspect of the drawing serves to highlight the outline and placement girls’ features in a technique that was common to phrenology and eugenics.

²⁰¹ *The Brownies’ Book*, ed. Du Bois, 54.

The Brownies' Book was published between January 1920 and December 1921 as the child magazine to the NAACP's *Crisis*, also edited by W. E. B. Du Bois.²⁰² *The Brownies' Book*, like many of the magazines that this dissertation studies, was a lavishly visual monthly magazine that spoke to both boy and girl readers under the collective title of children. It included fiction, nonfiction, commentary on world events, and correspondence columns; indeed, it in many ways reproduces the genre of the children's magazine without deviance from the form. Du Bois was clearly aware of the power that mainstream children's magazines had in child readers' lives, as well as the nuances of the genre. Not only was Du Bois familiar with the magazine genre from his experience as the long-time editor of the *Crisis* magazine, but it is likely that Du Bois was acquainted with the genre of the children's periodical from its presence in his home. As figures 104 and 105 demonstrate, Du Bois's daughter Yolande was a subscriber, reader, and apparently a fan of *St. Nicholas*. In this letter, reproduced from the collection of Du Bois's private correspondence held at the University of Massachusetts, Yolande Du Bois in 1916 wrote: "P-S: Did you receive my ST Nicholas subscription? I have not gotten it. YD."

²⁰² Violet J. Harris reports that "At least 5,000 subscribers received *The Brownies Book* monthly; however, 12,000 subscribers were needed to sustain continuous publication." Harris, "African-American Children's Literature," 547. It is likely that *The Brownies' Book* had such a short publication timeline because it was unable to garner enough subscribers to make it sustainable.

[February 15, 1916]

Becholes School
Petersfield
Hants

Dear Papa

We have now quite a lot of snow here (in England) & we have been skating, it was great fun tho. we did not have as much snow as once sleds as at home.

We are going to have a dormitory play at Steepleton next Sat & every one has to go in fancy dress & we are going for the best.

A man came & read Nicholas Nickleby to us and every last week, it was very well done & very funny. Also we have just had a

Figure 104. Letter from Yolande Du Bois to W. E. B. Du Bois. February 1916. Courtesy of W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

3/1-13-98
french play. It was very good.
There was a football match yesterday, we won. We are making jackets for wounded soldiers in sewing class.
I was top in our last maths exam.

your loving
Yolande

P.S. did you receive my St Nicholas subscription? I have not gotten it.

YD.

Figure 105. Letter from Yolande Du Bois to W. E. B. Du Bois. February 1916. Courtesy of W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

The major difference between this magazine and the others that this dissertation studies is *The Brownies' Book's* explicit centering of the Black American child as both the subject and the reader of the magazine. In including stories that continually feature able and clever black child protagonists, illustrating black children in diverse and divergent methods, and providing photographic evidence that Black children subscribed to and read the text, the editorial team that produced *The Brownies' Book* make it clear that the Black American child inhabited the American nation and was fully poised to take a productive place in the nation's future. Du Bois makes this focus on Black childhood clear in the October 1919 issue of *Crisis* (in which *The Brownies' Book* was first advertised) when he noted that *The Brownies' Book* was “designed for all children, but especially for ours,” a readerly population he referred to in the first issue of *The Brownies' Book* as “the children of the sun.”²⁰³ As my previous chapters have detailed, racial blackness and whiteness in American children's periodicals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed a standard format: the blank page had long been associated with racial whiteness and black ink with racial non-whiteness. Some of the illustrations in *The Brownies' Book* do hold up the “traditional” methods of illustrating racial blackness, such as the illustration included in Figure 106.

²⁰³ *Brownies Book*, January 1920, cover page.

Violet J. Harris, citing R. Gordon Kelly's *Children's Periodicals of the United States*, writes that “*The Brownies' Book* generally has been designated the first periodical for African American children created by African Americans.” However, Harris also cites James Fraser in “Black Publishing for Black Children,” who “argues that *The Joy* is the first.” Violet J. Harris, “African American Children's Literature: The First One Hundred Years,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 59, No. 4 (Autumn 1990): 546. 540-55.



Figure 106. *The Brownies' Book* (November 1921): 311.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

This image, which depicts four children of different races running in a circle and holding hands, is meant to demonstrate that children of all races can play together in peace and happiness. The portrayals of both the black and the white children in this image follow the traditional methods of drawing racial blackness and whiteness seen in the other magazines that this dissertation studies: the black child is illustrated with an abundance of ink, while the white child's face is left blank.²⁰⁴

Some of the illustrations within *The Brownies' Book* maintain the tradition of filling in the black child's face with ink while managing to disrupt other traditional methods of signifying racial blackness and whiteness. An example of this is seen in figure 107, which accompanies a fantasy story about a pageant for the four seasons held by King Earth in which the Queen of Summer is

²⁰⁴ Though this dissertation focuses on visual portrayals of racial blackness and whiteness, the magazine's methods of indicating that the other children are Native American and Asian are likewise interesting. Note that their skin is filled in with some color, indicating racial non-whiteness, though their skin is not as darkly filled as the black child. These methods are not unique to *The Brownies' Book*, and deserve further study.

embodied by a “a little brown child.”²⁰⁵

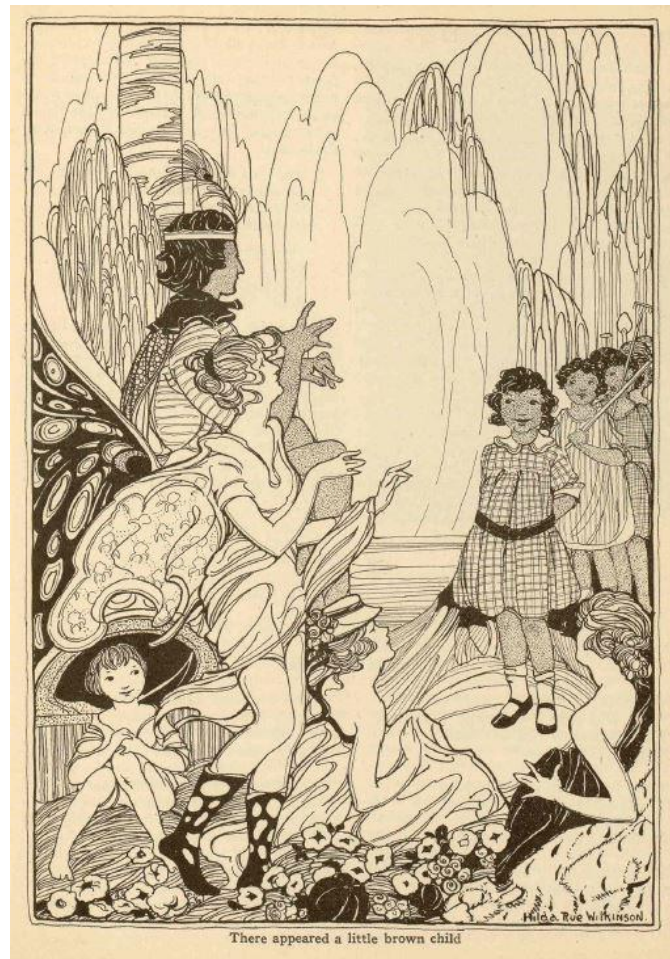


Figure 107. *The Brownies' Book* (August 1920): 243.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

In this image, the Queen of Summer approaches a cast of fairy characters. She is dressed in a drop-waisted checked dress that falls just to her knees, a style fashionable in 1920's America. These choices suggest, though the story does not, that the Queen of Summer is perhaps an American girl transported to fairyland, a choice which leaves open the possibility for readers to

²⁰⁵ This image, like many others in *The Brownies' Book*, was illustrated by Hilda Rue Wilkinson Brown, who illustrated for both *The Brownies' Book* and the *Crisis*. Brown was also an educator, print maker, and painter.

imagine themselves in her place. The illustrator who created this elaborate picture does fill in the black child's face with ink to signify her racial blackness but abandons any phrenological markings of race which were another traditional method of marking race (as discussed in Chapter 2). Indeed, the black child and the fairy child in the lower left corner of the image have the exact same facial features and expression even though the fairy child's skin codes her as racially white (enlargements of both children are included in figures 108 and 109).



Figure 108. *The Brownies' Book* (August 1920): 243.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.



Figure 109. *The Brownies' Book* (August 1920): 243.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

This inclusion of black and white children having precisely the same facial features is visually un-precedented in the archive of children's magazines, and its inclusion disrupts many of the visual methods of defining black and white child bodies as structurally and phenotypically different. It is also important to note that while the illustrators who created the illustrations for *The Brownies' Book* are making deliberate choices in how to mark racial blackness differently, the

technology used to print images in *The Brownies' Book* likewise plays a part. It's very difficult to discern the printing methods of a particular image without viewing the original, and individual print issues of *The Brownies' Book* are exceptionally rare. All of my access to the magazine has been through digital reproduction, which obscures many of the markings which allow me to discern how it was printed. Still, the dappled shading on the Queen of Summer's face suggests that this is a lithograph created with a waxy pencil or crayon drawn either directly on a lithographic stone or on lithographic transfer paper which was later transferred to the printing stone. While many of the images printed in a magazine such as *St. Nicholas* are engravings transferred to lithographic stone, the illustrator here in drawing directly on the lithographic material was able to make use of the crayon's rougher surface texture to nuance the figure's skin tone, making her skin darker than the white spaces of the image but less dark than her hair. Other magazines utilize the ability of lithographic crayons to play with grey space, but *The Brownies' Book* is unique in its choice to use this technique to play with shading skin that was coded as racially black.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Again, I want to emphasize that without seeing the original this is my best estimation of the methods used. Further study of *Crisis* archives or perusal of printed copies of *The Brownies' Book* may very well prove me wrong.

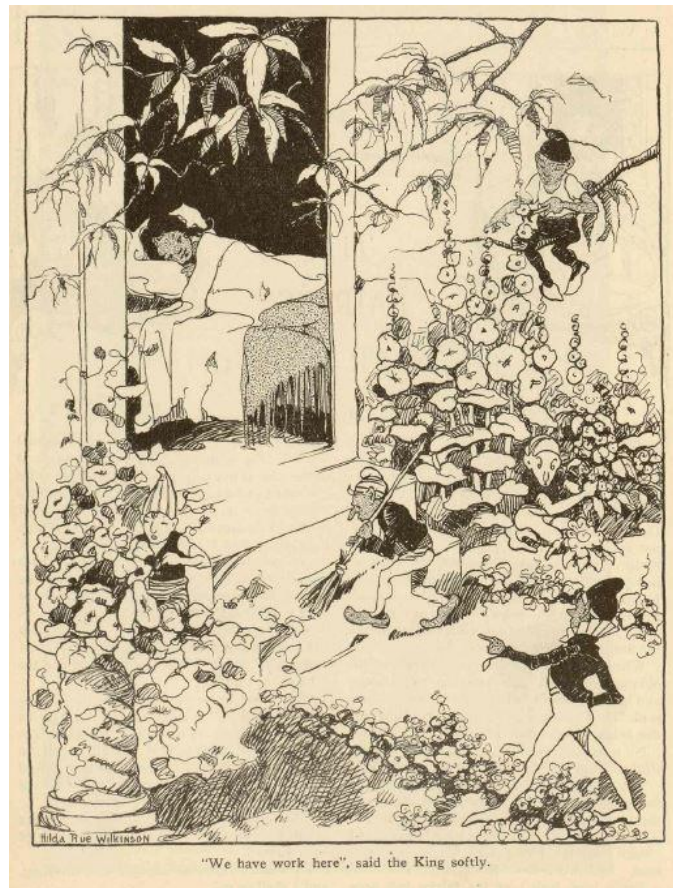


Figure 110. *The Brownies' Book* (May 1920): 132.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

The illustration included in figure 110 also demonstrates this willingness to play with greyscale in the illustration of racial blackness. This image, printed in May of 1920, accompanied a story called “The Fairies’ Flower Garden” about fairies who help a little girl who cries for flowers by turning her “neglected field” into a beautiful garden.²⁰⁷ While “traditional” techniques of illustrating blackness mark racial blackness as the darkest space on the page, this child’s skin is marked in a shade of grey that matches tree limbs and flowers of her garden, while her hair, as

²⁰⁷ *Brownies' Book*, May 1920, 131.

well as the shadows beneath her bed and behind her, are darker. This child's skin is not the darkest space on the page; instead, the artist uses dappled grey to indicate that her skin color falls somewhere between the shades of pure white and black, perhaps working to portray phenotypical skin color in greyscale, as well as racial blackness.

This difference dis-aligns the black American child with shadowed spaces and instead suggests that racial blackness, when made visible, can take any form the artist desires. Racial blackness in *The Brownies' Book* is not aligned with an abundance of ink and a corruption of the pure whiteness of the page as it is in *St. Nicholas*, *Wide Awake*, *John Martin's Book*, and *Babyland*; instead, it becomes mutable so that "The Children of the Sun" are marked in all ranges of light and dark, as indicated by a variety of methods of marking grey space.

Fielder, reading Du Bois's description of his own child in *The Souls of Black Folk* as "beautiful," "olive-tinted," with "eyes of mingled blue and brown," suggests that Du Bois was well aware and invested in "an acknowledgment that Blackness manifests itself not in racial homogeneity, but in a wide array of characteristics."²⁰⁸ *The Brownies' Book* reflects this awareness, becoming the first children's magazine to truly disturb the traditional methods of using black ink and white page to portray racial blackness and whiteness. When the editorial team includes images like these in *The Brownies' Book*, they refuse to allow child race to be defined by traditional visual methods, or even with visual consistency within the magazine. In doing so, the editorial team of *The Brownies' Book* effectively repudiates American mass culture in order to establish a new vision of black childhood. Suddenly, black children are visualized in such a variety

²⁰⁸ Brigitte Fielder, "Before the *Brownies' Book*," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 43, no. 2 (April 2019): 163.

of ways that black childhood can no longer be visually defined at all, in which readers of the magazine can begin to see black childhood as encompassing a myriad of visual signifiers – visually embodying many meanings, instead of just one.²⁰⁹

The Brownies' Book was also the first American children's magazine to use color to innovate the ways in which the black American child was illustrated on the periodical page. Figure 111 reproduces the cover of the May 1920 issue of *The Brownies' Book*, the first time in all of my encounters with children's magazines that I saw black children visualized not in black and white, but in a variety of colors.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ While I mark Du Bois here as visually radical and innovative, it's important to note that I mark this only within the tradition of children's magazines. Within the history of black artistry and visibility there may be examples of illustrating race and childhood in ways that do not comply with the "traditional" methods that this dissertation outlines.

²¹⁰ I emphasize that this is the first example I am seeing and that I am looking specifically at the genre of the children's periodical created for both boys and girls. It is possible that other magazines - especially those for girls and boys, or for a mixed audience of child and adult readers – used color to visualize racial blackness before this point.



Figure 111. *The Brownies' Book* (May 1920): cover.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Significantly, the children visualized here aren't monochromatic: the children appear to the eye as shaded in a huge of light brown. This brown is itself disrupted by the hint of red on their faces that gives the girls red lips and blushing cheeks. This image is a chromolithograph, produced one color at a time so that the brown that comes forward to the eye is actually produced by printing green ink lightly on top of the red ink. This suggests that visual brownness isn't even a sufficient marker of racial blackness, but instead that these children's phenotypical skin tone is produced out of things that have nothing to do with blackness: red and green, as seen in figure 112, which is an enlargement of figure 111. A third shade of ink, black, is added to outline the figures and give shape to the foliage, indicating that this page passed through the lithographic printing process three times to produce the image seen here.



Figure 112. *The Brownies' Book* (May 1920): cover.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Christine Garnier has suggested that the technology of the lithograph offered the first opportunity for artists to break the barrier in portraying racial blackness and whiteness as stark black and white on the page, marking the lithograph as the technology that allows people to experiment with visuals of blackness in many colors in mass printing practices.²¹¹ Garnier traces this experimentation with full-color visual portrayals of racial blackness back to 1863, citing the chromolithographic trade card set “Journey of a Slave from the Plantation to the Battlefield,” designed by Henry Louis Stephens.²¹² However, the first time these techniques appear in children’s periodicals is 1920, suggesting that children’s literature was deeply delayed in visual experimentation. As this dissertation and several other studies have demonstrated, children’s

²¹¹ As Chapter 3 explains, many illustrative practices played with the presentation and coloration of skin coded as racially white as early as the 1880s, experimenting with methods of shading white skin with black ink. Lithographs likewise worked to portray white skin in a variety of colors as soon as chromolithographic printing becomes available on a scale of mass production in the 1880s, portraying white child skin not as blank page, but usually as a collection of yellow and pink tints.

²¹² Christine Garnier, “Chromolithography and the Civil War,” August 20, 2017, *The Mind Making Project*, Harvard University.

literature by the 1920's had long been a bastion for conservative values and lessons regarding American conceptions of race.²¹³ Children's periodicals were a technology through which conservative values and white supremacy were passed, unsuspectingly, to new generations of Americans. While Garnier demonstrates that artists were experimenting with visuality elsewhere in the nineteenth century, it took at least sixty years for colored lithographic expressions of racial blackness to reach the realm of children's periodicals.

4.2 Photography in *The Brownies' Book*

The Brownies' Book also differentiates its methods of visualizing Black children from the other magazines this dissertation studies by including photographs of Black American children within its pages. Unlike children's magazines contemporary to its publication, *The Brownies' Book* prints photographs of Black American children throughout its timeline, including hundreds of photos of Black American children across its twenty-four months of publication. The photographs published in *The Brownies' Book* as a whole played a complicated role. As Fielder notes:

The Brownies' Book deftly employed the technology of photography to proliferate photographic representations of actual Black children. These images served as a counter to the racist caricatures of Black people that had theretofore dominated mass print culture. In the same way that early African American portraiture allowed Black people to 'picture freedom' during the postbellum era, the proliferation of photographs of Black children in *The Brownies' Book* allowed them to picture Black childhood in the early twentieth century."²¹⁴

As Fielder emphasizes, the inclusion of photographs of Black children in *The Brownies'*

²¹³ See Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, and MacCann, *White Supremacy in Children's Literature*.

²¹⁴ Fielder, "Before *The Brownies' Book*," 161. Fielder's use of the phrase "picture freedom" cites Jasmine Nicole Cobb's book *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century*.

Book does index the existence of Black children in the American landscape, indicating – according to the logic discussed in Chapter 3 – that Du Bois and the editorial team of *The Brownies' Book* envision a future in which Black American children are present. However, it's important to note that while these photos do index the presence of Black children in the national space of the magazine, they do not tell us much about the actual lived lives of Black American children. As this section demonstrates, these photographed children instead embody the ideologies of the magazine in which they are situated, rather than any in which they themselves may have believed.

Regarding the role of the photograph in the early twentieth century, David Green notes that “to understand the authority which began to accrue to photography in the late nineteenth century it is essential to consider the functions which it came to serve across a range of scientific, academic and technical disciplines,” as well its cultural cachet.²¹⁵ Beginning with the daguerreotype invented in 1839 and continuing through the late nineteenth century and into the 1920's, photography accrued a reputation for an ability to accurately reproduce reality on the printed page. While theorists of photography have long argued that the photograph does not, in fact, reproduce reality, in the early twentieth century photography had in common with phrenology and eugenics an assumption of “consistency with the empiricist assumptions and methodological procedures of naturalism” meaning a reputation for presenting legible, indisputable truths to even naive viewers - a quality that I have likewise attributed to illustration in both phrenological and children's texts.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Green, “Veins of Resemblance,” 3.

²¹⁶ Ibid. Regarding the idea that the photograph does not reproduce reality, Bertolt Brecht famously said “The situation thus becomes so complicated that a simple ‘reproduction of reality’ is now less than ever able to say anything about reality.” See Bertolt Brecht, “Der Dreigroschenprozess. Einsoziologisches Experiment” in *Werke. Grosse kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe, Schriften I*, ed. Werner Hecht, Jan Kopf, Werner Mittenkzwei, and Klaus-Detlef Muller, Trans Carl Gelderloos (Berlin: Aufbau, 1988), 469. In the same vein, Walter Benjamin wrote “But follow the path of photography further. What do you see? It becomes ever more *nuancé nuancé*, ever more modern; and the result is that it can no longer record a tenement block or a refuse heap without transfiguring

In each of these fields, both artistic (photography) and scientific (eugenic), the observer is presented with a printed visual object which proposes to be “independent of the prejudices and interests of the observer and thus uncontaminated by the potential subjectivism of theory,” or which, in other words, proposed to present the observer with “pure facts” unadulterated by language and indisputable in their representation.²¹⁷

Green continues,

“What secured for photography its privileged position in the domain of science was not simply the technical and mechanical nature of the processes involved....Much more important was the assertion of a seamless relation between the photographic image and appearances whereby, under certain conditions, the image could function as reality itself. This called for the suppression of all evidence of the photograph’s own materiality and the denial of the image’s status as a representation in favour of its immediate identity with its referent.”²¹⁸

Since the photograph in American cultural history in many ways erases its materiality in order to focus on the subject it portrays, the photograph has long been understood as indexing reality, as presenting for the reader the undeniable evidence that something did exist. While Green in the above refers to the photograph in the “domain of science,” this understanding of the

it. Needless to say, photography is unable to convey anything about a power station or a cable factory other than, ‘What a beautiful world!’” See Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer” in *Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2: 1981-1984*, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Gary Smith, and Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2005), 775.

²¹⁷ Ibid. In this light, photography represents the latest permutation in a long history of trusting the visual as the most reliable representation of reality. This tradition began with illustrated newspapers such as Harper’s Weekly, which was sold largely on the merit of its illustrated news, and Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, which went out of business after photography became mechanically reproducible on a large scale. Though children’s periodicals did indeed include photographs, it is worth noting that there came a point in media culture when the illustration disappeared from “adult” culture as the way to represent reality: the illustrated news disappears, to be replaced entirely by photographic representations of news. However, illustration remains in children’s media as an accurate and desirable form of depicting reality. It’s not that kids get no photographs, but by and large children inherit illustration and, by transference, illustration becomes in many ways childish. The effect of this transition is, like so many things, that the illustration denigrated and dismissed, but in being so dismissed to the realm of the childish it is able to carry on many of its old methods without the scrutiny applied to adult texts.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

photograph as documentary, as indexing reality, extended into many popular genres, including children's periodicals. In magazines such as *St. Nicholas*, the photograph was used exclusively as documentary evidence, especially of foreign lives and places. For instance, figures 113 and 114 reproduce photographs printed in *St. Nicholas* in 1921 which accompanied a story about the lives of children in Scandinavia.

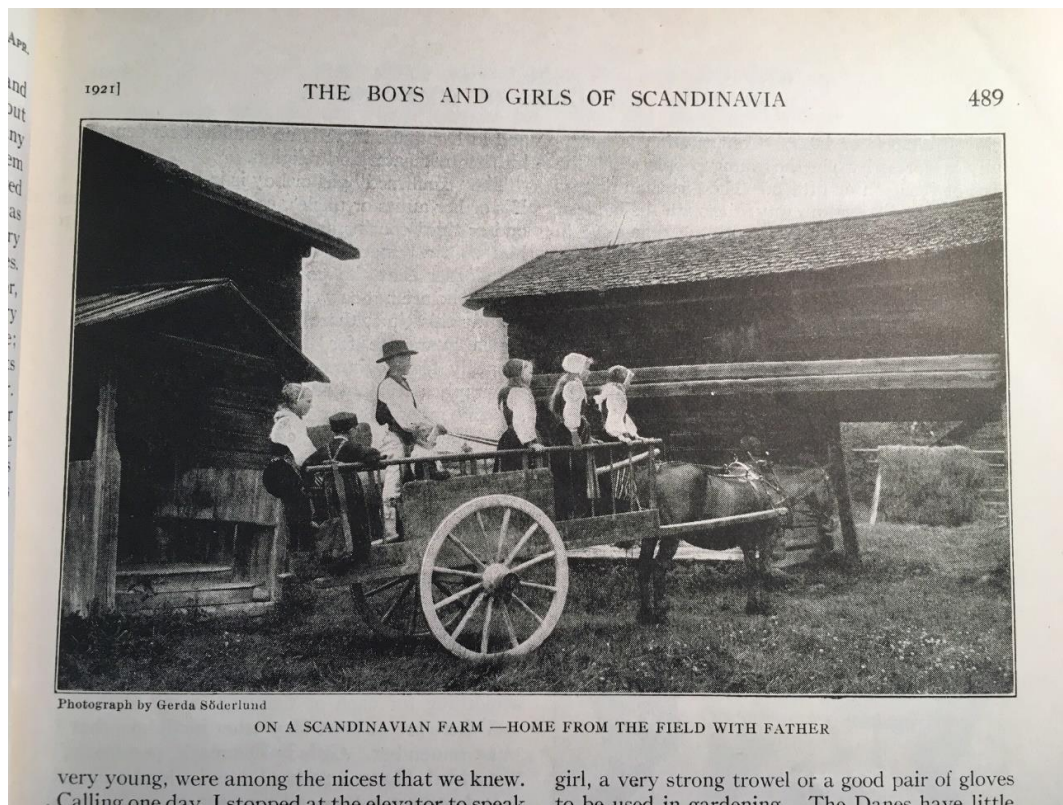


Figure 113. *St. Nicholas* (April 1921): 489. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

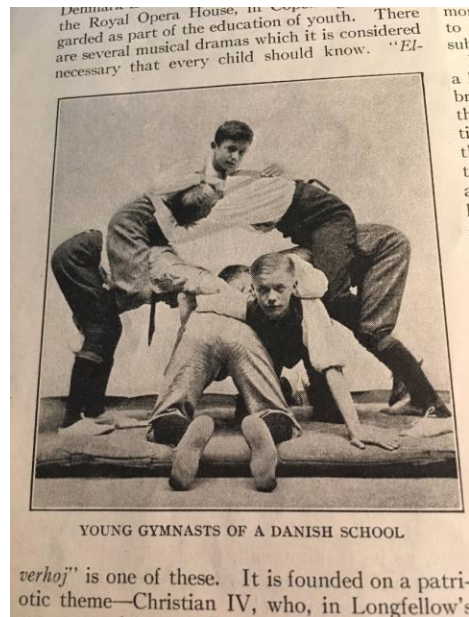


Figure 114. *St. Nicholas* (April 1921): 490. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

In these texts the photograph served to index reality while the illustration was used when an editor required a visualization of that which could be imagined.²¹⁹ For instance, the photograph in figure 113 works to display for the reader what the actual lives of girls might be like on a Scandinavian farm, and the photograph in figure 114 seeks to show what Danish gymnasts look like, proposing that these boys really are the Danish gymnasts that the caption claims they are. Each of these photographs suggests that what is seen is real: these are real Scandinavian girls, these are Danish boys. The magazine proposes that the photograph can be read and trusted as truth.

While photographs in *St. Nicholas* hold up what Green calls “the assumption that the photographic image can be treated as the passive reflector of reality,” proposing to represent for child readers *actual* children from Scandinavia and providing access to their lives, photographs in *The Brownies’ Book* frequently do the opposite, accompanying texts which ask the reader to doubt,

²¹⁹ The illustration did not serve this purpose exclusively: illustrations were also included of scientific events and ephemera, especially in terms of drawings of plants and animals which served as examples of the natural sciences.

or reconsider, whether the child visually portrayed matches the text it accompanies.²²⁰ We see this when a photograph of a child is called upon to illustrate a fictional story, such as the photograph of “Happy,” which is reproduced in figure 115.

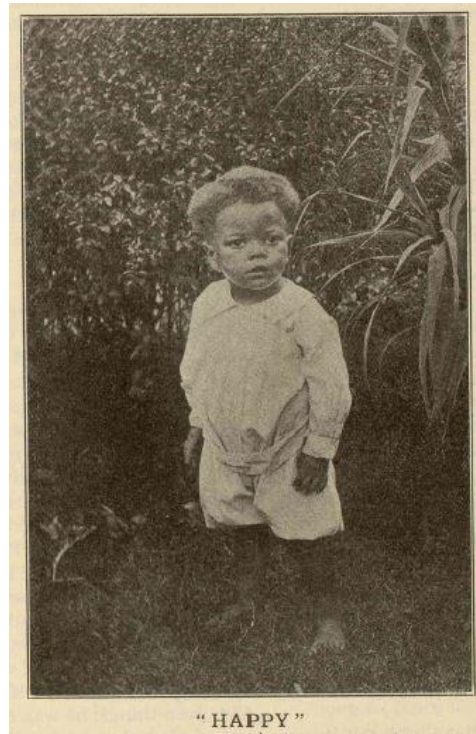


Figure 115. “Happy.” *The Brownies’ Book* (January 1920): 5.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Happy is the main character of a story entitled “Pumpkin Land: A Story” by Peggy Poe, the first story published in the first issue of *The Brownies’ Book*. In this clearly fictional story, Happy hides in a pumpkin patch to avoid punishment, meets an elf called the “Pumpkin-Man,” and is transported to Pumpkin Land for an adventure. While Happy is clearly a fictional character, the image that the editorial team of *The Brownies’ Book* uses to illustrate the story is a photograph

²²⁰ Green, “Veins of Resemblance,” 4.

of a little boy. The photograph, captioned “Happy,” implies that this boy – which the photograph indexes as real – is the fictional main character of the story. While this on one hand lends some credence to the story and potentially asks readers to consider whether the story is fact as opposed to fiction, on the other hand it suggests to readers that the photograph may not be as trustworthy as it has elsewhere previously been, that it may not always index reality.

In this case the photograph of the child titled “Happy” loses any connection it may have had in the situation in which it was taken. This photo loses any connections to the lived life of the boy who was photographed, becoming what Anne Anlin Cheng calls a “relic.” Cheng defines relics as “preeminently a paradox: *dead objects*, the material things left over after the symbolic meanings imbued in them have disappeared. In being the physical residue of meaning, the memory of that signification, these objects are like human corpses whose materiality exceeds human life itself, to people’s horror and celebration.”²²¹ Photographs placed in magazines, like a relic, cease to hold the significance they had for those who produced them and come, instead, to take on the meaning that their new situation demands. While they do hold some reference to their past lives – we have some indication that the boy titled Happy is well cared for and had once visited a verdant garden – they ultimately do not serve to give any real information about the people who are visualized in them. Like the children’s letters discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, the photographic images published in *The Brownies’ Book* (and in the other magazines this dissertation studies) cannot be truly read as expressive of interiority, instead becoming relics: evidence of what the archive asks it to signify.

²²¹ Cheng, *Second Skin*, 20.

In this way the photo indexes the reality of a Black American child, but also obliges that child not to index his own reality, but instead that of Happy, a fictional boy invented by Peggy Poe. Several photographs of children in *The Brownies Book* are often specifically posed to separate the child from any personal narrative the photograph may imply. We see this again in “The Adoption of Ophelia.” In this story the editorial team uses a photograph of a real child to embody not her own life, but instead the idealized version of black childhood that Du Bois seeks to promote in *The Brownies’ Book*. Ophelia as a figure first appeared in the *Crisis* in October of 1919 as an orphan needing a home. As figure 116 demonstrates, Ophelia was pictured as a very small baby posed sweetly on a fur-covered chair, her description noting that “If Ophelia is to grow into a healthy, happy little girl, she must have a home and the care and affection of a kind father and mother.” The article then invites readers to write to the *Crisis* if they’re interested in adopting Ophelia, which Du Bois later reports that several readers did.

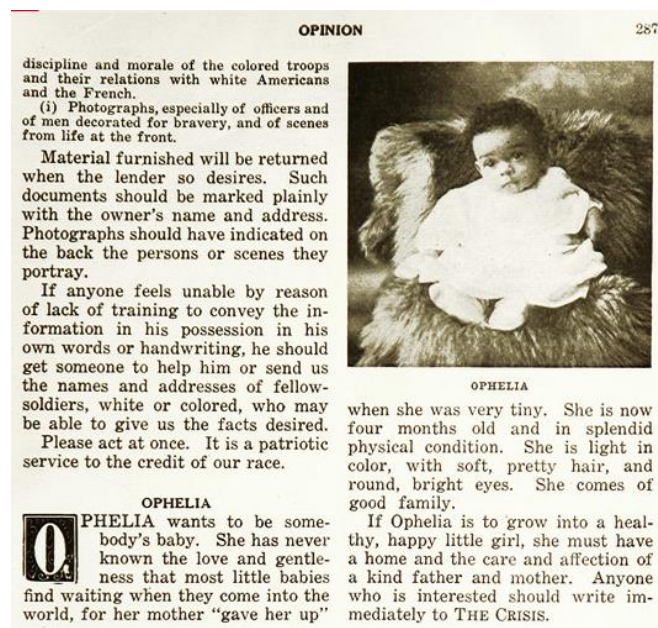


Figure 116. “Ophelia.” *The Crisis*, January 1919. Pg. 287.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

In this article, written primarily for an adult audience, Ophelia is identified by a name and so in some ways given an identity. Her picture is placed with an article that asks its readers to read Ophelia as abandoned and in need of care from a father and a mother. Readers next encounter Ophelia in the pages of *The Brownies' Book* in June of 1920, as seen in Figure 117.

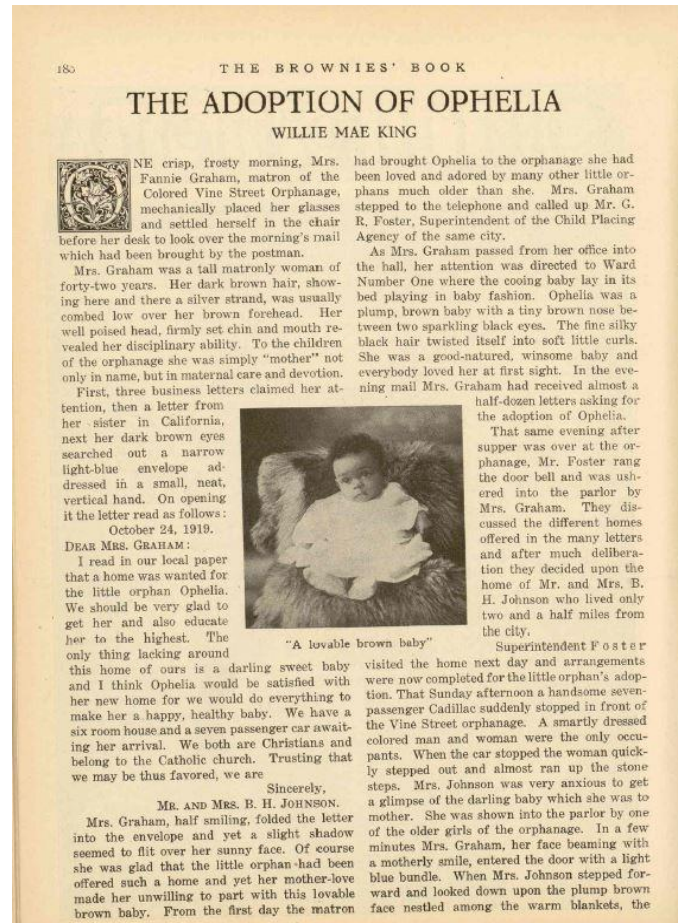


Figure 117. *The Brownies' Book* (June 1920): 180.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Here the photograph of Ophelia stars in its own story about her adoption by the Johnson family. The photograph of Ophelia thus no longer indexes a "real" child with a "real" plight but instead a fictional one. Ophelia further no longer indexes the vulnerability of an abandoned child, but instead a very desired and beloved child who enters a real home. While Ophelia herself may

have been a real child adopted by a family named Johnson, the story itself is fictionalized, a fact that becomes obvious on the next page when the editorial team includes a picture of Ophelia when she is seven years old, “a bright, happy, playful child” (see Figure 118).



Figure 118. *The Brownies Book* (January 1919): 181.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Including a picture of Ophelia when she is seven, when only seven months before the magazine asked its readers to understand her as a real, adoptable infant, requires the reader to rethink or abandon their understanding of Ophelia as a real girl who was adopted. The photograph specifically loses its ability to index reality. Instead, what the photograph does in *The Brownies' Book* is index a generalized, idealized experience: that of a wonderful Black American baby who

was adopted by a loving home and grew to be an ideal Black American girl. Instead of understanding Ophelia as a real girl with a real experience, *The Brownies' Book* fictionalizes her story, perhaps making readers wonder if this little baby was ever up for adoption, whether her name really was Ophelia – and then suggesting that, in many ways, it doesn't matter. Ophelia demonstrates that *The Brownies' Book* isn't interested in visualizing actual children's lives, but instead in how the image of the child can be used to demonstrate that child's successful growth into the ideal future that Du Bois and his team of editors envision. In asking photographs of Happy and Ophelia to represent both reality and fiction, Du Bois distinguishes the photographic image from the "objects or the appearance of the objects to which they refer."²²² In short, the editorial team's use of photographs of both Happy and Ophelia to illustrate fictional stories allows viewers to understand the photograph as an object that does not index truth or experience, but which serves a dialogic purpose within the magazine and the story the magazine wants to tell.

There is a temptation in photograph to read onto pictures an interiority of their subjects, but photographs – like illustrations – serve to index what the archive in which they are placed asks them to index. In revealing that photographs are not indexes of reality in *The Brownies' Book*, Du Bois is able to foreground what it is that his archive is actually trying to do. These photographs (like all photographs in children's magazines, including those of the Scandinavian girls and the Danish gymnasts from *St. Nicholas*) are stripped of their identities and become, like illustrations before them, vacant signifiers for the editor to imbue with meaning. However, because they are photographs, they masquerade as truth, as indexing the "reality" of the ideology that their editors

²²² Green, "Veins of Resemblance," 4.

want them to carry. Du Bois uses photographs to index something that he creates, all the while depending on the photograph's connotation with reality to convince the reader to believe in the truth of what he puts forward. In doing so, Du Bois uses the body of the child to realize the ideology he creates. He makes his ideology of ideal black childhood real for his readers and, in doing so, presents it to them as an ideology that he asks them to embody as well.

4.3 Visuality, Photography, and the Future in *The Brownies' Book*

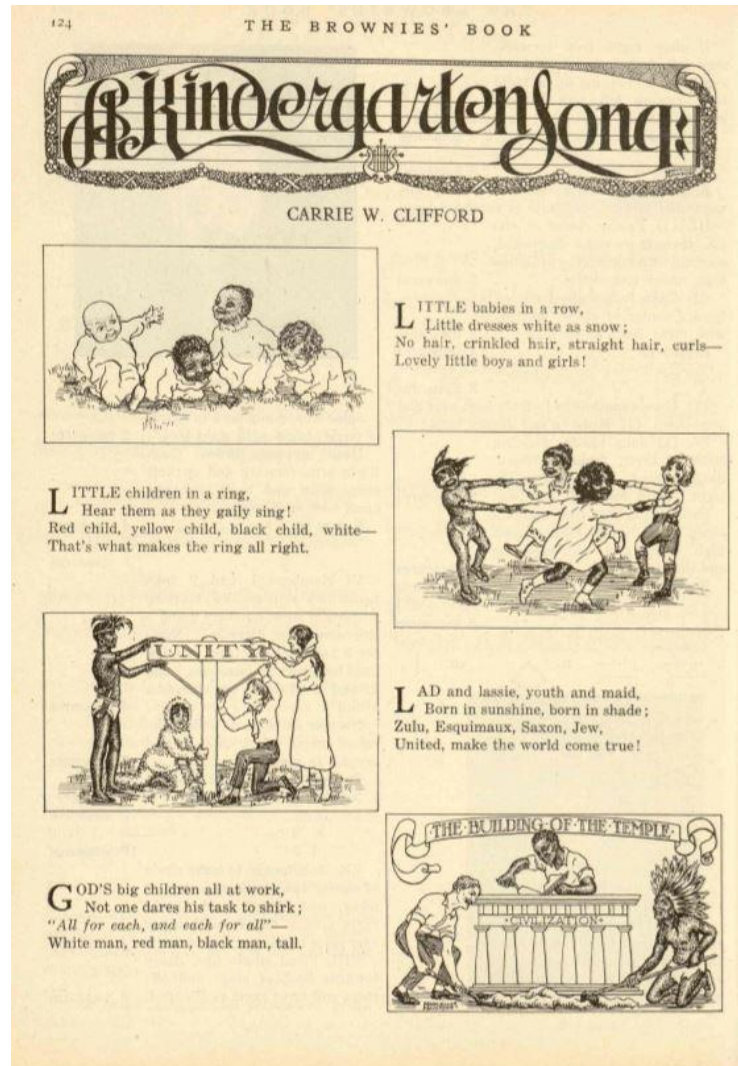


Figure 119. “Kindergarten Song.” *The Brownies' Book* (April 1920): 124.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

While the editorial team that created *The Brownies' Book* was invested in visually innovative portrayals of black American childhood, they were still as invested in futurity as were their fellow magazines, and they promoted this futurity through the use of both illustrations and photographs. The piece “A Kindergarten Song” by Carrie W. Clifford, published in the April issue

of 1920, encapsulates the vision of the American national future that *The Brownies' Book* sought to promote (Figure 119).²²³ This full-page story matches illustrative space with the language of the poem so that word and image together tell a story of unity from childhood to adulthood. As the story progresses, the children at the top of the page grow together from infancy, to young children at play, to older children learning to work, and finally to adults who together build the sacred “temple” of “civilization.” The ground on which the figures stand is marked in black strokes in each of the four images, which likely indicates grass or soil, but this natural space – the “garten” of the title – is not marked as foreign by any inclusion of “foreign” plants or animals (as was the method of marking foreign spaces in *John Martin's Book*). This space thus participates in the national space that the magazine creates by speaking to a national readership of American children.

This vision of the American nation and its future is usefully contrasted with the “Four Babies” piece from *Babyland*, with which this dissertation began. While that piece marked only the white baby as part of the American landscape, the visualized national space of “A Kindergarten Song” includes a variety of races and ethnicities. This story includes visualizations of children who are black, white, Native American, and “esquimaux,” all made visual through a collection of “traditional” visual signifiers including the amount of ink on the page as well as phrenological facial significations.²²⁴ The poem further includes “Zulu,” “Saxon,” and “Jew” to the united national scene, suggesting – as *St. Nicholas*, *Wide Awake*, *Babyland*, and *John Martin's Book* do not – that all these races and ethnicities are a part of the American national future that they mutually

²²³ Carrie W. Clifford was a writer, editor, and women's rights advocate. She published *Sowing for Others to Reap*, *Race Rhymes*, and *The Widening Light*. Clifford edited the “Women's Department” for the *Cleveland Journal*.

²²⁴ It is possible that though race is made visually diverse elsewhere in *The Brownies' Book*, an illustrator challenged with drawing national unity of the races fell back on “traditional” methods of signifying racial blackness and whiteness in order to make the racial differences between the figures clear.

grow to inherit. *The Brownies' Book* here, as in other examples that this section will explore, demonstrates an investment in a national future that includes, even relies upon, the Black American child. Like the other magazines that this dissertation studies, it relies on visualizations of children's bodies to embody and index the presence of Black citizens in the American national future.²²⁵

In terms of this dissertation, it is important to note that Du Bois rejects the white supremacist ideologies seen elsewhere in children's magazines contemporary to *The Brownies' Book*, but that he does so by participating in the ideology of the child-as-future. In his own employment of the child-as-future trope, Du Bois rejects the marking of white children as able and the marking of black children as vulnerable, a practice that in other children's magazines suggested that white children would survive to inherit the American national future while black children would not. Instead, the editorial team of *The Brownies' Book* revises, or simply rejects, this logic and portrays children of all races as able. This implies that children of all races have a place in the American national future, a radical difference from what is portrayed elsewhere.

Fern Kory argues that *The Brownies Book* as a whole participated in this kind of radical revision, and that it "tried to make a place for African American children in children's literature by revising the material of mainstream children's literature...with a Black difference"²²⁶ It is this "Black difference" that is important here because it suggests that Du Bois participates within the

²²⁵ While the page is striking for its racially inclusive investment in the national future, it is important to note that those who are shown to finally participate in the construction of the "temple" of "civilization" are the black, white, and Native American figures who are also marked as men. While *The Brownies' Book* elsewhere celebrates Sojourner Truth as "A Pioneer Suffragette," in subtler spaces such as this it does reveal itself as participating in an ideology that projects conservative notions of gender into the national future. "A Pioneer Suffragette," *The Brownies Book*, April 1920, 120-1.

²²⁶ Kory, "Once Upon a time in Aframerica," 92. Kory paraphrases Henry Louis Gates when she writes "with a Black difference." Henry Louis Gates, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

genres of children's literature, but he adds changes and twists that make them safe spaces for his Black child readership. If the editorial team that created *The Brownies' Book* sought to create a media with a goal to "teach Universal Love and Brotherhood for all little folk – black and brown and yellow and white," as they propose in the magazine's first issue, then in many ways the children's periodical made sense for their choice of vehicle: the children's periodical is a genre which speaks directly to child readers, that engages their trust, and that invites them to participate in a readerly community as a kind of citizen.²²⁷ However, it was also a genre that had for decades suggested to Black child readers that black children were less able to survive into the American future than their white peers. In both including images of children that embody their national future and choosing to engage in the periodical genre, Du Bois and his team engage in systems that had long promoted – and visualized – the erasure of black bodies from the American landscape. While Kory proposes that Du Bois revises mainstream media with a "Black difference" in order to make it radically new, I wonder at the success of the project.

Writing of the twenty-first century, Tina Marie Campt suggests that many Black artists participate in "practices of refusal" in which they "refuse authoritative forms of visibility which function to refuse blackness itself."²²⁸ Campt further defines refusal as "a rejection of the status quo as livable and the creation of possibility in the face of negation, i.e. a refusal to recognize a

²²⁷*The Brownies' Book*, January 1920, cover page.

²²⁸ Tina Marie Campt, "Black Visibility and the Practice of Refusal," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 29, no. 1 (2019), 80.

system that renders you fundamentally illegible and unintelligible.”²²⁹ Here Campt suggests a possible route that Du Bois and his team do not take in the creation of *The Brownies' Book*.

The genre of the children's magazine had for at least forty-seven years prior to the publication of *The Brownies Book* functioned specifically to mark the black body as incommensurate with the American landscape. They functioned as Campt's "authoritative forms of visibility," entrenching in generations of children's media the idea that the black body exists as the darkest space on the page, as vulnerable, as erased. They refused to print photographs of Black children, rendering them invisible in the nation that the pages of the magazine proposed to represent. These magazines became the status quo – presented to thousands of children over decades of reading, these magazines were in the business of growing children up into a national future in which they embodied the white supremacist lessons their magazines presented. Fascinatingly, Du Bois does not reject these "forms of visibility," this genre that works so hard to subjugate Black Americans. Instead, he participates in them. He does so, I would argue, as an experiment and an attempt to use the photograph to assert the reality of Black lives in America. Perhaps recognizing the power of the children's magazine to influence Black child lives, and persuaded that the photograph does function to index interiority, Du Bois chose not to reject these forms but instead uses them. The rest of this chapter seeks to explore how Du Bois uses these tools which I argue have long been in service of, and indeed were created for, the promotion of white supremacy and further considers whether they worked. Either way, I read *The Brownies' Book* as

²²⁹ Ibid., 83.

Du Bois's great experiment in using visuals of children to engage with and mitigate the logic of white supremacy by the establishment of Black futurity.

Du Bois and his editorial team created a magazine that, like magazines created by white cultural elites, emphasized to his readers that visual appearance could be read for signs of interiority and as the embodied future of America. Du Bois participated in this logic largely through the publication of photographs of Black children which both tied the body of the Black child to American futurity and also his suggestion that the body of the Black American child could be read as a sign of Black children's positive interiority. Importantly, like the photographs of Happy and Ophelia, these images do not index very many realities of actual interiorities of Black American children, but come to index the ideology of ideal Black childhood that the magazine asks them to embody. We see these ideologies encapsulated in figure 120, which pairs a poem with a photograph of a small boy dressed as a soldier.

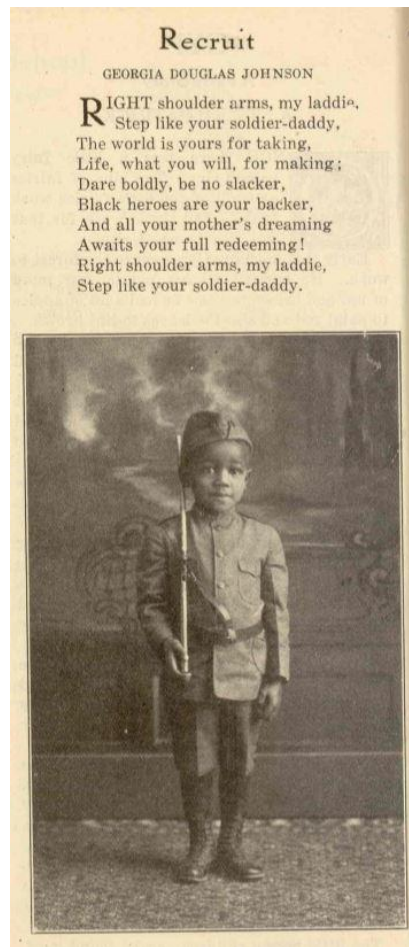


Figure 120. “Recruit.” *The Brownies’ Book* (January 1920): 32.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

In January of 1920, *The Brownies’ Book* published this photograph of a small Black boy in a soldier’s uniform that recalls those worn by American troops in World War I (figure 120). The photograph is preceded by the poem “Recruit,” by Georgia Douglas Johnson. While it is unlikely that the poem was written about the photograph, the pairing suggests that the boy pictured is the poem’s “laddie” who should “step” like his “soldier-daddy.”²³⁰ The poem explicitly writes the

²³⁰ Georgia Douglas Johnson was a poet, playwright, educator, musician and public servant. She wrote several plays, including *Blue Blood* (1926) and *Plumes* (1927). It is unlikely that the included photograph is either of Johnson’s sons, who were born in 1906 and 1907, and thus would have been too old to be thus pictured at the time of the first world war. Instead, it is more likely that this photograph was sent by readers of *Crisis* and matched with this poem in *The*

child's future in which he will fulfill his mother's dreams and in which the world "is [his] for taking."²³¹ The image, like that of the "Lit-tle Chief" of Chapter 3, likewise writes the pictured boy's future as that of heteronormative nationalized masculinity: the pleasure in the image is seeing the boy, so sweetly young, embody his own future as a soldier.

Du Bois himself was explicitly invested in the idea of the child as the national future. We see this in his 1904 writing *Darkwater* when he writes:

If we realized that children are the future, that immortality is the present child, that no education which educates can possibly be too costly,...that no nation tomorrow will call itself civilized which does not give every single human being college and vocational training free and under the best teaching force procurable for love or money....All our problems center in the child. All our hopes, our dreams are for our children...."²³²

Here Du Bois spells out a national futurity in which no race is singled out as superior, and notes that universal education – of which texts like *The Brownies' Book* could be considered participants – is the method by which this future can be perfected. Particularly striking is Du Bois's invocation of immortality, suggesting an awareness of the social death of Black Americans. Here Du Bois projects children as the solution to this problem: in order to survive into the future and not be wiped from the American national space, Du Bois proposes that Black Americans must invest in present-day children. This investment on Du Bois's part took form, in part, in *The Brownies' Book*. While Du Bois in *The Brownies' Book* does reject ideologies of white supremacy, he engages with an understanding of Black futurity by including photographs of children that

Brownies' Book because they are an apt pair – a common practice used by the *Brownies' Book* editorial team. Of courses, there is always the possibility that Johnson did write the poem to match the image – further exploration at the *Crisis* editorial archives at the University of Massachusetts Amherst may provide more insight.

²³¹ I read the note that "world is his for the taking" as the magazine's participation in American ideologies of global imperialism as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

²³² W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and How, 1920): 212-13.

reflect the logic of eugenics for their proofs.

Du Bois's fascination with photographs of children began in *The Crisis*, and, as Katharine Capshaw Smith notes, "the pages [of the *Crisis*'s Children's Number] are dominated by visual representations of children. As a way to build readers' pride in black beauty and physical vitality, and perhaps as a response to the eugenics movement and the Progressive Era's interest in health reform, the Children's Numbers published hundreds of photographs of 'perfect' babies and covered NAACP 'Baby Contests' throughout the magazine's first two decades."²³³ Here Capshaw mark Du Bois's use of photography as a way to build pride and to valorize black beauty, an oft-quoted reason for his creation of *The Brownies Book*. However, eugenics and progressive reform are heavily present in the choice to include photographs of children in such abundance in both *The Crisis* and *The Brownies' Book*.²³⁴

Du Bois was actively interested in the science of eugenics, as demonstrated by his albums entitled *Types of American Negroes, Georgia, U.S.A.* (volumes 1-3) and *Negro Life in Georgia, U.S.A.*, which he exhibited in the 1900 Paris exhibition and which Autumn Womack describes as including "depictions of black middle-class men and women [that] function as a corrective to the

²³³ Capshaw Smith, *Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance*, 8.

²³⁴ As the twentieth century progressed into the era in which *The Brownies' Book* was written, eugenics became an ever more prevalent part of social culture, scientific thought, and political reform. As Alice Boardman Smuts writes in *Science in the Service of Children*, "The 1920s, usually seen as the decade of the flapper and the bootlegger, was actually the decade of the child. More than in any other period of American history, before or since, trends in science and society converged to place the child at center stage." This centering of the child in the early twentieth century brought about the establishment of the "child sciences," a field that combines both natural and social sciences to study child physical and social health. Boardman Smuts writes that in the 1920's it became conventional wisdom that "Improving the child was perceived as the key to improving the nation." Smuts especially credits the "child study movement," pioneered in the late 1890s by G. Stanley Hall with "paving the way for the founding of the child sciences that occurred rapidly after the end of World War I. Hall was foremost among the early behavioral scientists who were dissatisfied with academic advances alone and sought to promote social progress through the application of science to interactions with children." This is significant in part because G. Stanley Hall was heavily invested in a particular brand of masculinity that eschewed, and sought to eradicate, homosexuality. Alice Boardman Smuts, *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 2, 3.

objectifying, dehumanizing representations of black life (and death) circulating in the public sphere.”²³⁵ In this exhibition, for which he won a gold medal, Du Bois presented photographs for viewers that Smith argues “recall unmistakably the photographic archive of early race scientists,” notably Louis Agassiz and Francis Galton, who used photography as scientific evidence of racial difference, as seen in of chapter 3, as well as figure 121 below.

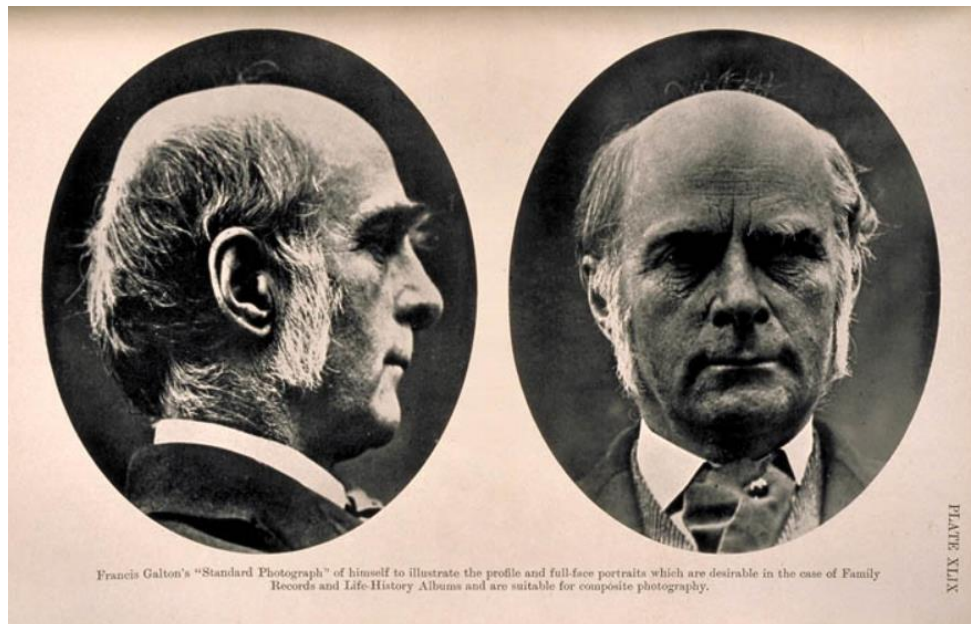


Figure 121. “Francis Galton’s ‘Standard Photograph’ of himself to illustrate the profile and full-face portraits which are desirable in the case of Family Records and Life-History Album and are suitable for composite photography.” From Karl Pearson, *The Life, Letters, and Labours of Francis Galton*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), Plate XLIX. Courtesy of The Eugenics Archive.

Galton, amongst other practitioners and promoters of the science, used visuality as the proof of his assertions that some races, ethnicities, and persons were superior on a genetic level. Galton himself produced a variety of image collections in pursuit of proving this to be an

²³⁵ Autumn Womack, “Lynching’s Afterlife,” *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 6, no. 1 (2018): 205.

undeniable truth. Figures 122 and 123 were created by Du Bois and submitted to as part of the *Georgia* album, part of the Paris Exhibition.



Figure 122. Selection from the Georgia Album. W. E. B. Du Bois. Photographic print, gelatin silver.

Circa 1899 or 1900. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Figure 123. Selection from the Georgia Album. W. E. B. Du Bois. Photographic print, gelatin silver.

Circa 1899 or 1900. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

In figure 117 we see an image that Galton had produced of himself as an example of an ideal eugenic study. Here Galton includes a profile and a front facing photograph which allow the view to study his features from two angles. Galton in his *Life History Album* advises that “The

ideal portraiture for anthropological purposes is an exact full face and an exact profile, each one-seventh the size of nature.” He further comments that “the souls of artistic photographers revolt from taking [this type of photo.] These unseemly portraits are, like the finger-print, made in prisons.”²³⁶ Galton title this image “The Average Man,” suggesting that he himself should be the standard by which normalcy should be measured. The similarities between these images and those drawn for phrenological study should be noted: both sciences emphasized the importance of study of both a front and a side view in order to fully comprehend the mental and emotional faculties that they proposed to be evidenced by the facial composition and the shape of the skull.

Du Bois’s photography for *Georgia* repeat the kinds of poses and visual tropes that Galton used in his racial and eugenic studies, as seen in figure 122 and 123. Drawn from Du Bois’s *Georgia* album, these images of a young African American woman clearly repeats Galton’s investment in visualizing both the front facing and profile view. In creating this image Du Bois participates in the visual language of eugenics, implying that the visual can be “read” for interiority. Du Bois participates in this visual language throughout his photographic submission to the Paris Exhibitions. However, Smith argues that in Du Bois’s albums for the Paris exhibition “Du Bois’s images ‘signify’ on the formal visual codes of scientific photography, repeating those visual tropes ‘with a difference’ in order to invert the dominant significations of those particular photographic signs.”²³⁷ Here Smith suggests that Du Bois engages in the visual codes of eugenics, but disrupt the white supremacist ideologies that these kinds of visualizations were used to uphold.

²³⁶ Francis Galton, *Life History Album* (London and New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902), 7.

²³⁷ Shawn Michelle Smith, “The Art of Scientific Propaganda,” in *‘Art, Sex and Eugenics’: Corpus Delecti*, ed. Anthea Callan (New York: Routledge, 2017), 66. Here Smith, in referencing a “difference,” refers to Henry Louis Gates’s *The Signifying Monkey*.

The difference in the Paris Exhibitions is that Du Bois provides photographs not of degenerative types, but instead Black Americans who did not exhibit any of the racist visual signifiers of degeneracy that were usually attached to portrayals of racial blackness, those seen, for example, in the two photographs of black children published in *St. Nicholas* in 1924. Instead Du Bois uses the eugenic insistence on the visual as revealing the essential to establish a new understanding of the “American Negro” and counter stereotypes that other forms of visibility – eugenic and popular alike – had long worked to establish those coded as racially black as a race apart, the lowest form of human evolution.²³⁸

Smith continues that in Du Bois’s Parisian studies as well as a later one, *The Health and Physique of the American Negro* (1906) (which reproduced many of the images from the Paris Exhibition), “it appears that Du Bois has embraced photographs as transparent scientific documents; indeed, Du Bois’s ‘objective’ documentation here is disturbingly objectifying. None of the subjects are named, and the descriptions which accompany these photographs are numbered notations of physical characteristics, moral character and intellectual aptitude – the very categories of racial classification outlined by Francis Galton.”²³⁹

While Du Bois’s photographic albums for the Paris exhibition focus on Black American adults, what Du Bois has then created in *The Brownies’ Book* is another archive used to counter

²³⁸ Smith further notes that Du Bois participates in scientific and eugenic discourse in order many ways to dismantle it: “Further, while the first images in Du Bois’s 1900 Paris Exposition albums formally recall the photographs that eugenicists and biological racialists used to codify bodies in racial terms, du Bois’s albums as a whole dismantle the physical coherence of the imagined racial type, disengaging the images of African American men and women from the circumscription of a sliding evolutionary scale. For what is the ‘Negro type’ as represented in Du Bois’s photograph albums? First, it is plural – ‘types’ – a diverse array of individuals who are not bound by physical appearance, by the ‘hair and bone and color’ that Du Bois rejects as singular signs of racial belonging in his essay of 1897, ‘The Conservation of Races.’” Ibid., 76.

²³⁹ Ibid., 72.

these same eugenic stereotypes, this time of Black American children. *The Brownies' Book* reproduces the techniques of Du Bois's photography in the Paris exhibition, including pages and pages of photographs of children which go unnamed but beg to be read for interiority, as positive specimens of the American Black childhood and black futurity that *The Brownies' Book* promotes. *The Brownies Book* can thus be read as a eugenic archive, this one singularly interested in black American childhood and all it signifies for the future nation. Figure 120, demonstrates that Du Bois again presented the children in *The Brownies' Book* as subjects, unnamed exemplars of their race, and again reflects Galton's structure of photography, this time repeating some of the structures of composite photography seen in figure 125.

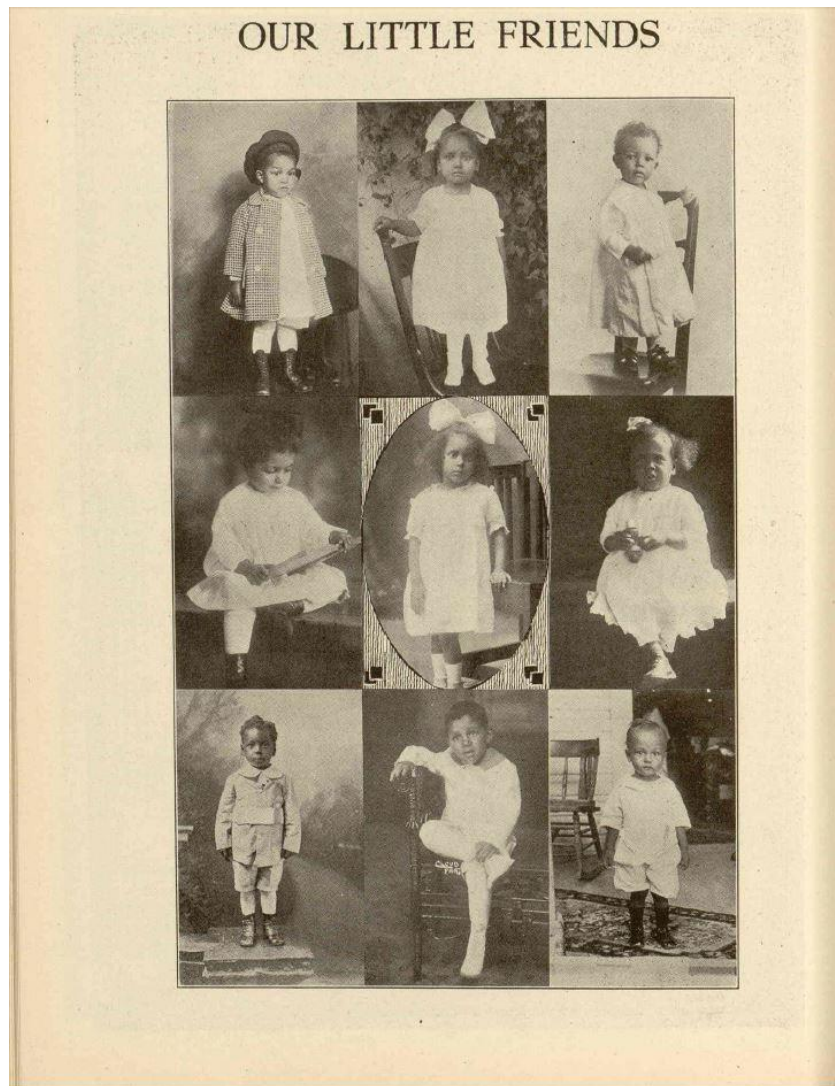


Figure 124. “Our Little Friends.” *The Brownies’ Book* (April 1920): 114. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

The captions that accompany these kinds of collective images in *The Brownies’ Book*, when present (as they are not in figure 124), focus on “moral character and intellectual aptitude” rather than identity.²⁴⁰ Eugenic physical descriptions are absent in *The Brownies’ Book*, but in all

²⁴⁰ Smith, “The Art of Scientific Propaganda,” 72. This is not exclusively true. The majority of the photographed children in *The Brownies’ Book* are unnamed, but some are, especially those featured in “Children of the Month” articles.

other ways Du Bois's use of child photography in his children's periodical mimics a eugenic album, scientific "evidence" of racial traits.

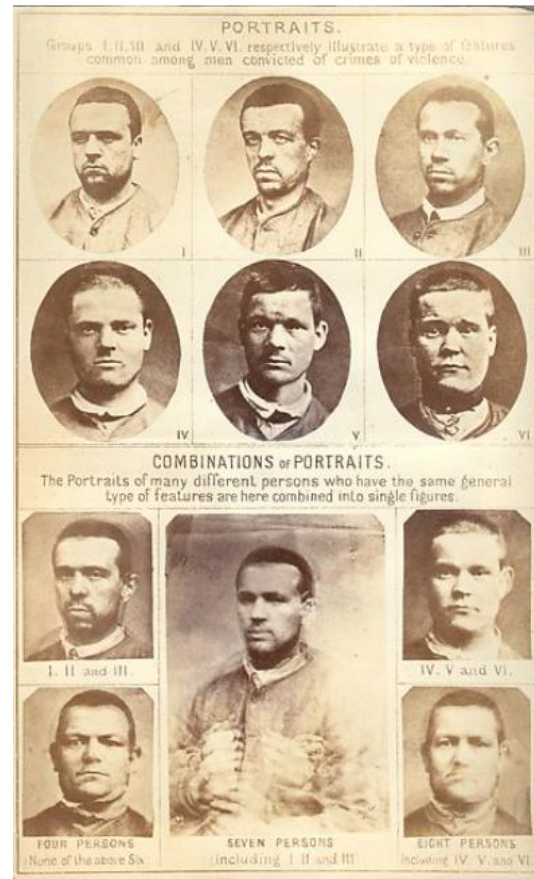


Figure 125. "Combinations of Portraits." Francis Galton, 1877. Albumen silver print from glass negative.

Courtesy of The Galton Archive, University College London, Special Collections.

We see this form of portraiture again in figure 125, labeled "combination portraits." This image, like that discussed in Chapter 3, layers photographic negatives of individual portraits on top of each other, producing an image that represented not one individual, but instead a combination of all three. We see this in the photograph labeled "I, II, III," which combines the portraits numbered as such at the top of the page to create an image that makes the existence of any actual person but instead what Galton understood as a "type" of person. Galton proposed that these combination portraits allowed people to understand which physical features indicated certain

“types” of persons, typically those marked as undesirably ethnically or racially, those marked as degenerate (alcoholics, mentally disabled persons, amongst others).

The Brownies’ Book functions in many ways as a kind of album of the future in which the idealized future nation – embodied in the photographed child – thrives with the influence of black intellectuals. In creating an album and an archive of Black American childhood, Du Bois again takes his cue from eugenic practices. Galton was likewise fascinated with photographs of children and family albums as evidence of racial inheritance. Under the conception that children are the vessels which would reproduce racial purities or impurities in future generations, Galton created two family albums, precursors to twentieth-century “baby books” in which families combine records of children’s growth with commentary on their capabilities and personalities. Galton’s albums, titled *Record of Family Faculties* (1884) and *Life History Album* (1902) were designed “for those who care to forecast the mental and bodily faculties of their children, and to further the science of heredity.”²⁴¹ While the *Record of Family Faculties* was intended to catalogue the heredity of an entire family, the *Life History Album* catalogued the life and photographs of one child and proposed itself to be “eminently, when complete, worthy of becoming an heir-loom, being filled with comforts and warnings to generations to come.”²⁴² *The Record of Family Faculties*, however, was meant to serve as data for understanding race in Great Britain. Smith reports that Galton encouraged families to send the *Record of Family Faculties* back to him, and “hoped that by encouraging a standardized method of accumulating and documenting ‘biological

²⁴¹ Francis Galton, *Record of Family Faculties: Consisting of Tabular Forms and Directions for Entering Data, with an Explanatory Preface* (London: Macmillan, 1884), 1.

²⁴² Francis Galton, *Life History Album* (London: Macmillan, 1884), 2.

histories, a vast colloquial resource could be tapped for scientific purposes. As an incentive, Galton opened a national British competition and offered 500 pounds in prize money to those who could supply him with the best family records by May 15, 1884.”²⁴³

Galton’s creation of the family photobooks, which each call for the inclusion of recorded measurements and photographs of children as they grow, make it clear that the child’s body was understood as evidence of their family’s genetic potential. Childhood and photographs of children, these projects propose, provide insights into genetic futures that when read correctly, they propose will provide “comforts and warnings to generations to come.”

The photograph was further important to eugenics because, like the child itself, it proposed to carry the ideologies of the present moment into the future. Tina Campt, in *Image Matters*, queries:

...rather than using photographs as documents or evidence of the past in the sense of an illustration, confirmation, or supplement to historical facts or information we already know, what if we thought of the image instead as itself *an enactment* of that past? What I am suggesting is that we engage these images ... as objects that capture and preserve those articulations in the present *as well as for the future*.²⁴⁴

As Campt suggests, the photograph is itself an object of futurity, meant – like the child – to preserve something, to carry it into the future. The photograph carries ideologies as it persists into the future unchanged, even while the object or person photographed ages or decays. The photograph becomes a time capsule that proposes to let the future viewers access the past. It thus

²⁴³ Shawn Michelle Smith, “‘Baby’s Picture is Always Treasured’: Eugenics and the Reproduction of Whiteness in the Family Photograph Album,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Cultural Reader*, ed. Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (London: Psychology Press, 2004), 364. Emphasis in the original.

²⁴⁴ Tina M. Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 7. Emphasis mine.

makes sense that both eugenics and children's magazines became invested in the photograph of the child as evidence of the future: both photographs and children were understood as capable of carrying ideologies of the present moment into the future, projecting them forward in time by embodying those ideologies. The body of the photographed child, then, is the perfect conservative tool: carrying the ideologies forward as the child grows while simultaneously holding the child static in the past and allowing future generations to visually access the ideologies that they embody by returning to the photograph itself.

Writing of family photo albums in general, which likewise document the history of a family, Smith notes that "the family album became one of the social institutions through which heredity was charted. Within this eugenicist context, photographs of children became powerful familial records through which racial hierarchies could be reproduced and maintained."²⁴⁵ Smith writes that "Galton's images, drained of sentiment, would not have been valued simply as keepsakes, but as testaments to the family bloodline."²⁴⁶ While these images may have likewise worked as sentimental objects within the family, removed from that space - as they were when the *Record of Family Faculties* was sent back to Galton as evidence of British family excellence and family photographs were sent away to be published in magazines like the *Crisis* and *The Brownies Book* - they are stripped of their sentimental value and become, instead, whatever the archive they join asks them to embody.

²⁴⁵ Smith, "'Baby's Picture is Always Treasured,'" 360.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 369.

4.4 Goals and Failures; Afrofuturism, Double Consciousness, Black Child Jouissance

Many others have speculated on the existence of *The Brownies' Book*, considering why it came into existence in the precise moment that it did.²⁴⁷ Harris, reading *The Brownies' Book* against other children's literature of its era, writes that *The Brownies Book* symbolized one attempt to create an "oppositional or emancipatory potentiality" that would "counter the selective tradition in mainstream children's literature," signaling "the creation of an emergent or oppositional tradition imbued with the New Negro philosophy in children's literature."²⁴⁸ While this argument usefully places *The Brownies' Book* within the tradition of children's literature, Capshaw further considers the creation of *The Brownies' Book* within the genre of Du Bois's own writing: "*The Brownies' Book*, then," Capshaw writes, "became an answer to the difficulties writers for children expressed within the pages of the *Crisis*: how to prepare children to contend with the unavoidable prejudice that threatens to corrupt and dispirit them."²⁴⁹

In each of these arguments, *The Brownies' Book* becomes the solution to a problem for the Black child reader in early twentieth century America, a "problem" that recognizes that the Black child in early twentieth century America did not fit neatly into popular conceptions of identity and power by dint of race and age. This section of the chapter likewise engages with the existence of *The Brownies' Book*, seeking to put it into conversation with Du Bois's goals of social equality for

²⁴⁷ Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance pg. XIX..

²⁴⁸ Violet J. Harris, "Race Consciousness, Refinement, and Radicalism: Socialization in *The Brownies' Book*," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 193.

²⁴⁹ Capshaw Smith, *Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance*, 27.

Black Americans and discerning how the text might serve the needs of its readers, and when it might fail them.

In using *The Brownies' Book* to imagine an alternate future, Du Bois in many ways participates in an early form of afrofuturism, a genre of speculative and frequently fantastic fiction in which an author imagines an alternative racial future for black citizens, whether in this world or another. Adriano Elia writes that “[Afrofuturism’s] political agenda...is intended as an epistemology rewriting the history of the past and imagining a positive future for people of African descent and, with a transnational stance, for the whole African diaspora, through an accurate speculation about the condition of subalternity and the alienation of the past as opposed to aspirations for modernity.”²⁵⁰ While both Elia and Alex Zamalin cite Du Bois’s short story “The Comet” as his work that engage with the idea of a utopian future, *The Brownies' Book*, in visualizing idealized children and the idealized future they project participates in this kind of speculation about black futurity, positing an idealized future for black Americans not by sketching out future landscapes but by embodying it in the body of the early twentieth-century child.²⁵¹ “The Comet,” like *The Brownies' Book*, participates in some of the rhetorics of eugenics. The story images what would happen if a comet colliding with the earth killed all the humans except for a black man and a white woman. In this story the characters meet and begin to engage in the wasteland of New York City, a kind of eugenic utopia in which everyone has died and the future of the human race can spring again from these two individuals. Their union imagines a future that

²⁵⁰ Adriano Elia, “W. E. B. Du Bois’s Proto-Afrofuturist Short Fiction: ‘The Comet’” *Il Tolomeo* 18 (December 2016): 175.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 177-8; See chapter 3 in Alex Zamalin, *Black Utopia: The History of an Idea from Black Nationalism to Afrofuturism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

would erase the black and white divide in the American landscape because their children, the result of their union, would be of both black and white heritage and would exist in a world with no social memory of racism. While this vision is ultimately thwarted by the sudden arrival of the white woman's fiancée, the comet that destroys the earth in this tale can be read as enacting an eugenic dream: bringing about what Du Bois sees as an ideal (and perhaps inevitable) racial future "more rapidly and with less distress."²⁵²

Clayton D. Colmon expands the definition of afrofuturism to include an emphasis on technology, noting that "The term now... 'addresses African-American concerns in the context of twentieth-century technoculture.'" ²⁵³ However, pieces like *The Brownies Book*, when included in the umbrella of Afrofuturism, suggest that techno culture has long been important to the way that Black authors and editors engage with a vision of the future. At the moment when *The Brownies' Book* is produced, visuality, photography, and eugenic science were at the height of early twentieth-century techno culture, and it is precisely these things with which Du Bois engages to make his argument about black futurity. Understanding this vision of the future as the heart of *The Brownies' Book*, and the child as the embodiment of this future, in many ways makes clear why *The Brownies' Book* exists in the midst of so many other of Du Bois's seemingly more serious projects, and also as separate from his *Crisis* magazine which, as Capshaw Smith notes, frequently included selections for child readers.

Du Bois in his stand-alone as well his periodical work demonstrates that the child was

²⁵² This quote references Galton's mission statement for eugenics quoted in Chapter 3.

²⁵³ Colmon, Clayton D. "Queer Afrofuturism: Utopia, Sexuality, and Desire in Samuel Delany's 'Aye, and Gomorrah,'" *Utopia Studies* 28, no. 2 (2017): 329. Colmon quotes Mark Dery, "Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose," in *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture*, ed. Mark Derry (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 180.

central to his understanding of race, racial awareness, and the all-important concept of double consciousness. In her article “The Children of Double Consciousness: From *The Souls of Black Folk* to the *Brownies’ Book*” Michelle H. Phillips importantly recognizes that Du Bois’s problem of double consciousness is explicitly a problem of childhood, writing “Du Bois is describing the ‘self,’ the ‘soul,’ and the ‘sensation’ of childhood together with race. It is a crucial intersectionality.”²⁵⁴ Du Bois most famously engages with the problem of double consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folk*, writing:

It is in the early days of rollicking boyhood that the revelation first bursts upon one, all in a day, as it were. I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thingIn a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting- cards--ten cents a package--and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card, --refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil....It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”²⁵⁵

Double consciousness has long been understood as a description of the experience of being black in America, a split identity in which the Black subject is always aware of being both Black and American, identities which together are a “problem,” if not ideologically coded as mutually exclusive. As Phillips highlights, though, the “problem” of double consciousness is a thing that Du Bois (and by implication, many Black Americans) realized, or experienced, in childhood. In

²⁵⁴ Michelle H. Phillips, “The Children of Double Consciousness: From *The Souls of Black Folk* to the *Brownies’ Book*,” *PMLA* 128 no. 3 (May 2013): 590.

²⁵⁵ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1907), 2.

marking this as a moment in his own childhood, Du Bois participates in the common Romantic ideological understanding of children as innocent, of culture as corrupted, and of the process of growing into adulthood as a corruption, or “loss” of that innocence. In Du Bois’s description, the racism that ruins his innocent “boyhood” is a “shadow,” a kind of darkness that - like the black ink that disrupts the whiteness of the page - corrupts his original, intact, intelligible understanding of himself. Du Bois goes further to project this identity onto all Black Americans, putting childhood experiences of internalized racism - and thus childhood itself - at the center of the Black American experience.

What is further interesting about Du Bois’s description of double consciousness is the emphasis on visibility and measurement Du Bois describes this experience as a kind of visual taxonomy. Society, he says, is asking him to “loo[k]” at himself, to “measur[e]” himself, and this is not something that comes from within, but rather “through the eyes of others.” Thus there is an awareness in Du Bois’s work that the explicitly eugenic tools of measurement and visibility are important, even crucial, to understanding the cultural construction of race as well as the experience of race in American culture at the turn of the century. An awareness of the influence of eugenic thinking on Du Bois’s conception of internalized racism makes the visual and the eugenic central points in his work for children. However, if Du Bois puts particular emphasis on “looking at one’s self through the eyes of others,” as a child, then we can ask: what visuals does he provide for Black child readers in the magazine he creates explicitly for them? How does he ask Black child readers to view black childhood, to see portrayals of themselves through his editing eye?

As Phillips writes regarding double consciousness, “the vast majority of [Du Bois’s] working strategies actually reach, not toward the resolution, but toward the democratic suspension

of the double.”²⁵⁶ She elaborates that state of double consciousness is “dialectical,” “one in which the black American hopes to achieve ‘self-conscious manhood’ by ‘merg[ing] his double self into a better and truer self,’” so that “the black American ‘wishes neither of the older selves to be lost....He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American...”²⁵⁷ Thus while double consciousness is a clear burden to the Black American adult, Du Bois here does not seek a loss of his identity of himself as Black nor as American; instead, what Du Bois seeks is a different American space in which the black identity is not forced to be split.

We read about this different space further in Du Bois’s contemplation on double consciousness, when he writes: “He,” meaning a man who has experienced double consciousness, “would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world.”²⁵⁸ While Du Bois recognizes double consciousness as a phenomenon of his own experience and that of Black persons of his own generation, I argue that Du Bois offers the *The Brownies Book* as a solution to the “problem” of double consciousness: an album of Black American children that, in afrofuturist style, projects a future world in which children no longer have to experience the pain of double consciousness. Further in the afrofuturist style, Du Bois leans on technology and science to solidify this future in his writing for Black American children, and then, presumably, in their understandings of their selves. In imagining a different future for America, as embodied by the children of *The Brownies Book*, Du Bois creates for future

²⁵⁶ Phillips, “The Children of Double Consciousness,” 591.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., quoting Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 4.

²⁵⁸ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 4.

generations a space in which one can be both “negro” and American: where it is America that changes, not the “negro” race, so that the two are no longer incompatible. Thus in many ways *The Brownies’ Book* functions as Du Bois’s afrofuturist experiment in the possibilities of what double-consciousness could produce, rather than what it is. In *The Brownies Book* we are able to see the future America that Du Bois imagined, with neither American Africanized nor the “Negro soul” bleached, in the visualizations of black children he provides which - like the visualizations of children in contemporary magazines - embody the idealized future that their editor envisions.

While scholars such as Katharine Capshaw write that “Children’s literature became a crucial component of the training of a generation of ‘New Negroes,’ ... in community galvanization, militancy, and racial pride,” it has long been understudied how much of that training was based upon eugenic ideologies and ideals.²⁵⁹ In the issue of the *Crisis* in which *The Brownies’ Book* was first advertised, Du Bois noted that a goal of *The Brownies Book* is “To make [black child readers] know that other colored children have grown into beautiful, useful and famous persons” and “to inspire them to prepare for definite occupations and duties with a broad spirit of sacrifice”²⁶⁰ As these goals clearly indicate, futurity was on Du Bois’s mind: like other children’s magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the goal is not merely to delight and entertain, but instead to raise a generation of future citizens who embody the ideologies of the magazine.

²⁵⁹ Capshaw Smith, *Children’s Literature of the Harlem Renaissance*, xvii.

²⁶⁰ Violet J. Harris expands on these goals, writing that “DuBois and Fauset sought to achieve seven goals: to ‘make colored children realize that being ‘colored’ is a normal, beautiful thing’; to inform them of the achievements of their race; to teach them a code of honor; to entertain them; to provide them with a model for interacting with Whites; to instill pride in home and family; and to inspire them toward racial uplift and sacrifice.” Harris, “African American Children’s Literature,” 546. Harris draws the quotes in her list of goals from the opening pages of *The Brownies’ Book*.

While scholars such as Capshaw and Harris credit *The Brownies' Book* with revolutionary change, and while Du Bois is certainly imagining a radically different and improved future, the eugenic conceptions of childhood that he uses to imagine that future are, like the children's periodical itself, tools that had long been invested in the denigration of persons racially marked as black. Du Bois, like the other magazines that this dissertation studies, does not use photographs of Black American children to index the realities of their lives but instead to embody the ideologies that he creates for them. This critique of his practice is not to hold Du Bois accountable for sins which other magazines are likewise guilty, but rather to point out that the magazine is a genre, a form, that colonizes child bodies: that separates visualizations of children in photographic form from any realities they may usually embody and asks them, instead, to carry the ideologies of the magazine. These magazines are thus all guilty of this kind of ideological violence against children. American children do not have voices in any of these magazines which each propose to so lovingly care for them, their opinions, and their lives. In participating in forms of photography that recall eugenic logics and practices, Du Bois further suggests, again like the other magazines that this dissertation studies, that the Black body is indeed legible, that it can be read for interiority. *The Brownies' Book* suggests that this reading will reveal good things about Black interiority, but in confirming the legibility of the Black body opens doors to many other interpretations as well. Why not, as Campt suggests, simply refuse? Why not suggest that the body, any body, is instead illegible?

The answer is, in short, that it's very complicated. *The Brownies' Book* invests in eugenic logic while still presenting American readers with photographs of Black childhood, indexing both their presence in the American nation and their future as active, able citizens. Ultimately, I would conclude that the odds were stacked against the editorial team of *The Brownies' Book* and they

used the most sophisticated scientific tools and technologies available to them to assert the positive futurity of Black childhood, even if these technologies were themselves flawed.

In considering the possibility of appropriating and using the magazine for the promotion of a radically different future that manages to defy the confines of eugenic thought and white supremacist technology, it may be interesting or useful to understand the black child's presence in white-produced children's magazines as the synthome that Lee Edelman discusses *No Future*. In his text Edelman figures the synthome as the "synthomosexual," the queer who plays a specific role in "a social order intent on misrecognizing its own investment in morbidity, fetishization, and repetition."²⁶¹ In my own metaphor of the black child as synthome, the children's magazine plays the role of the misrecognizing social order. These magazines are spaces obsessed with genetic reproduction, social death, and the anxious production of child bodies to carry conservative ideologies into an imagined and idealized future. For Edelman, morbidity is the death drive against which all heterosexual culture fights to reproduce itself in the attempt to not die, constantly holding up heterosexual reproduction as the only solution to death. For the magazines that this dissertation studies, morbidity is the perceived threat of white racial death, the solution to which is the production of more and more white children printed in the pages of the magazine every month and sent out to readers for readerly consumption, a kind of fetishistic defense against the onslaught of black suffrage and non-Anglo-Saxon immigration. For Edelman, the synthome is embodied by the homosexual who, in Western culture, is villainized and ostracized because of his unwillingness to heterosexually reproduce and for his insistence on enjoying "meaningless," non-reproductive sex.

²⁶¹ Edelman, *No Future*, 47.

The synthome thus presents a threat to society's future – without productive reproduction, which the synthome refuses, there is no future.²⁶² Edelman details how synthomic characters, such as Dickens's Scrooge and Hitchcock's Leonard, are either convinced by a child of the joys of normative society, or killed for their noncompliance – thus nullifying the threat. For my metaphor, the black child in my metaphor plays the role of the synthome: “to inhabit the place of meaninglessness,” an “unregenerating” figure which society must exorcise to make safe the white American future that they propose.²⁶³ And that's what the magazines that this dissertation studies do (*The Brownies' Book* again aside): they first figure the black child as the degenerative threat to the American future, and then they wipe visualizations of black children from their pages.

It is against this situation of the black child as synthome which *The Brownies' Book* fights, seeking to make space for Black childhood in a world that desperately wants to erase it. But again, I wonder if the children's magazine is an effective method for this fight, if by seeking to work within the form of the children's magazine that the editorial team only relegates the Black child to a fate like Scrooge's: forced to give up their own space outside of white culture by being convinced, eventually, that the culture that despises them is better, and that they need to change and join up. This seems to me a sad fate.

Edelman in *No Future* makes space to celebrate the synthome, to see the synthome's access to jouissance not as triumphant, but instead as a kind of dancing on the edge of the abyss that is

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Edelman makes room for considering alternate populations in the category of synthome, stating: “For even though, as Butler suggests, political catachresis may change over time the *occupants* of that category, the category itself, like Antigone's tomb, continues to mark the place of whatever refuses intelligibility” Ibid., 114.

Freud's death drive, a pleasure in being pushed aside that is not separate from pain, but somehow beyond it. Overall I have sought some evidence of this kind of side-stepping in *The Brownies' Book*, seeking what I have thought of as Black child jouissance, a term that relies heavily on Amber Jamilla Musser's definition of "brown jouissance" in part as "performativity, and ... that mysterious fleshiness that resists legibility but hovers on the surface."²⁶⁴ Her use of "surface" here indicates "the undersides of the scientific/pornographic drive toward locating knowledge in an 'objective' image," a definition which cites "Anne Anlin Cheng's argument that the twentieth-century fascination with surface emerges from a fetishization of the transparency and the 'mysteries of the visible.'"²⁶⁵ For Musser, then, the "surface" is that which twentieth-century culture (in eugenic and phrenological tradition) marked as visually available and legible. Musser thus suggests that brown jouissance is presented, achieved, or cited when the flesh presented on that surface "resists," or defies legibility, maintains part of its mystery – holds back from the "scientific" transparency of the image, or, in other words, when the visual fails to conform to a system of signs and signifieds that link the "surface," the flesh, to a legible form of interiority. For Cheng, this potential gap between surface and transparency can produce "profound engagements with and reimaginings of the relationship between interiority and exteriority, between essence and covering."²⁶⁶ There is one photograph in *The Brownies' Book* that does this for me, and I have included it in figure 126.

²⁶⁴ Amber Jamilla Musser, "Surface-Becoming: Lyle Ashton Harris and Brown Jouissance," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 28, no. 1 (2018): 34.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 34-5. Citing Cheng, *Second Skin*.

²⁶⁶ Cheng, *Second Skin*, 11.



Figure 126. *The Brownies Book* (January 1920): cover.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Photographs of children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are expected to index something about the relationship between childhood and futurity. The photograph of the dancing girl included in figure 126 elicits these even as it “allows,” in Musser’s words, “us to imagine an inhabitation that exists in excess of them.” This image, unlike the photographs of the white children published in *St. Nicholas*, exhibits the queerness of childhood in a striking way. We

still have no access to this girl's personal interiority or essence, but she still performs a surface which is in excess of what the magazine asks her to perform. I emphasize: *excess*, not *defiance*. What is visualized is a kind of grace that's not explicitly graceful – not like the kind of grace exhibited by the girl dancing in figure 127, which is a more conventional kind of grace – coordinated, unmistakable, expected, and even cited by the caption which states that “She Was Graceful and Lovely.”

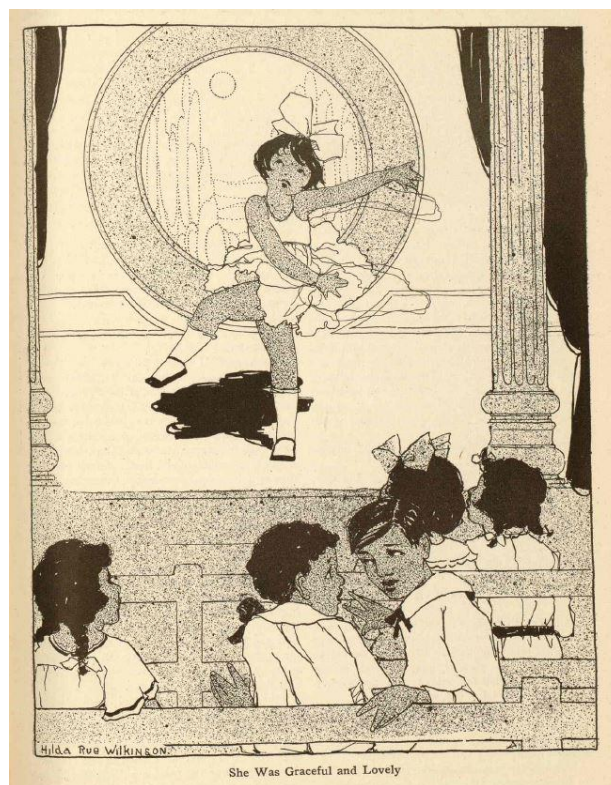


Figure 127. “She Was Graceful and Lovely.” *The Brownies’ Book* (June 1921): 165. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

But in this photographed image the girl uses her body to access something more unexpected, unprecedented, and unreadable. What’s imaged is a figure who is neither girl nor fairy, who is outside of space, who performs a surface that I find totally unlike other visualizations of childhood anywhere else. I think it is something about her gestures, her performance that strikes

me as something more. Her placement against the black backdrop suggests a kind of floating, even though her body implies that she is a human girl who, of course, cannot fly, but her hands are curved as claws, a grasping – or attacking – that is betrayed by her smile. Her shoes are those of a ballerina, her dress that of a fairy, her crown of a queen – all disparate aspects that come together to signify no coherence, no story that I am able to put together. And yet she does smile, exhibiting a joy that I cannot root in the photo. In refusing coherence, the image refuses the visual signification and transparency that images are supposed to embody in the nineteenth-century. In exhibiting nothing truly legible except Black child joy, the image steps beyond the systems it is supposed to embody, and into jouissance.

In writing black children out of their magazines, white media culture has in some ways made the black child take the place of the synthome: outside of culture, outside of reproductive futurity, doomed to “fail.” *The Brownies’ Book* is an attempt to reincorporate Black culture and Black lives into American culture – to suggest to the American nation as a whole that the black child is not the synthome. Instead, like so much of Du Bois’s work, it seeks to prove Black humanity and place Black humans back into the reproductive timeline of American futurity. But the photograph of the dancing girl gives us moments that are outside of Du Bois’s control and outside of his ideology because the photograph is created, in part, by a subject who has not yet learned (or who refuses) Du Bois’s ideologies. Instead of working to prove that she is not synthomic by performing legible American childishness and innocence, this girl steps to the side and instead performs something else. Something that’s critical to jouissance is pain – the pain of going “beyond the pleasure principal,” of stepping beyond what has been structured as possible. Musser makes this clear when she writes that “this fleshy mixture of self-production, insatiability,

joy, and pain, is brown jouissance.”²⁶⁷ For Edelman, this pain is embodied by the “synthomosexual.” The dancing girl doesn’t exhibit any surface pain – instead, she indexes the innocence, futurity, and idealized ideology of black modern childhood that the magazine asks her to index. But she also embodies a level of surface joy that I think white American culture hoped to make impossible for Black children in 1920. Her life was, I am sure, not without pain – but she dances anyway. This, then, is the beauty of *The Brownies’ Book*. Even though I think the magazine was trying to do something else, it opened the possibility to publish representations of Black child jouissance which defy re-inscription and legibility and which present for the readers of *The Brownies Book* not the synthome of white-edited magazines, and not the evacuated child that embodies Du Bois’s black modern childhood, but, instead, something in excess of both.

²⁶⁷ Amber Jamilla Musser, *Sexual Excess: Queer Femininity and Brown Jouissance* (New York: NYU Press, 2018), 5.

5.0 Children's Magazines and Imperialism: Nation, Body, Future

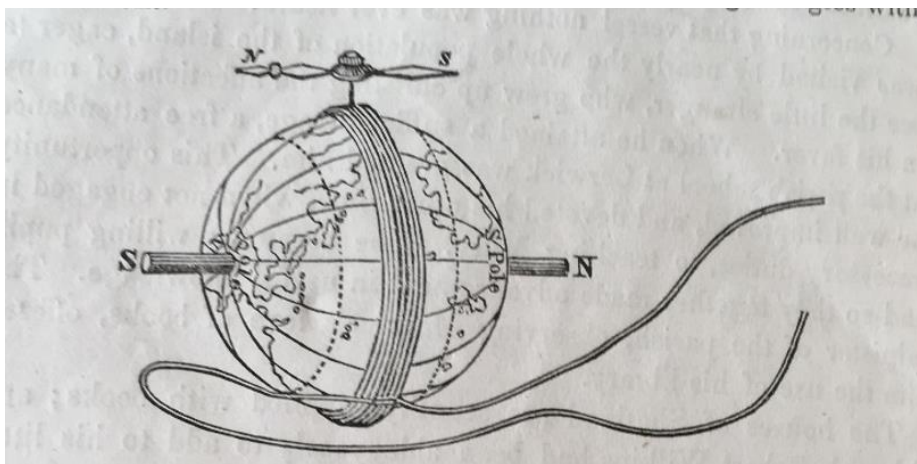


Figure 128. *Boys' and Girls' Magazine and Fireside Companion* (March 1849): 143.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

In its March 1849 issue, *Boys' and Girls' Magazine and Fireside Companion* presented child readers with an image of the earth that proposed to teach readers about scientific magnetism at the north and south poles (figure 128).²⁶⁸ The article which the image accompanied, entitled “Magnetism,” explained that solar rays (now understood as gamma rays and gamma radiation)

²⁶⁸. The *Boys' and Girls' Magazine and Fireside Companion* was published in Boston between 1848 and 1857, edited by Mark Forrester, Francis Forrester, and “Father” Forrester. In 1858 the magazine merged with *The Student and the Schoolmate* and took on that name. *The Student and the Schoolmate* ceased publication in 1872 and was edited by N. A. Calkins, and William T. Adams. The magazine eventually failed, potentially because editor William T. Adams (known by his pen name Oliver Optic) may have turned his attention to his eponymous magazine, *Oliver Optic's Magazine* (1867-1875). For more on *Boys' and Girls' Magazine and Fireside Companion*, see R. Gordon Kelly, “The *Boys' and Girls' Magazine and Fireside Companion*,” in *Children's Periodicals of the United States*, ed. R. Gordon Kelly (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), 31-36.

The article this picture accompanies elaborates, “It is supposed that magnetic currents are constantly flowing around the earth from east to west. And it is thought, by learned men, that certain rays, which come from the sun, produce or excite them. Here I have a picture, which will help me explain to you how these currents affect the needle. It is found that if a current of magnetism be made to pass on a wire, over and parallel to a magnetic needle, that the needle will turn one quarter round, and stand at right angles with the current.” “Magnetism,” *Boys' and Girls' Magazine and Fireside Companion*, March 1849, 144.

sometimes affect compass needles and cause them to point in unexpected cardinal directions. To express the complications of the scientific experiment that proves this theory, the magazine presents an illustration of the earth wrapped in wire, stabbed through the poles with a metal rod, turned on its side, and topped with a compass needle, thus visualizing man's triumph over the earth's scientific mysteries with an image of the earth entirely under man's control, trussed like a Thanksgiving turkey. While an effective scientific visualization, this image likewise makes visual the imperialism of the early twentieth century. As this chapter will demonstrate, children's magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries printed thousands of images that communicate to the reader that the earth is not vast, frightening, or unconquerable; instead, these magazines that this dissertation studies present a visual understanding of the earth as small, easily seen, captivated, and controlled – standing at the whim and behest of the scientist, the explorer, and the curious child. We see this conception of the earth again in figures 129-132, which each likewise visually portray the earth as a small thing, available and legible to the curiosities of child readers.

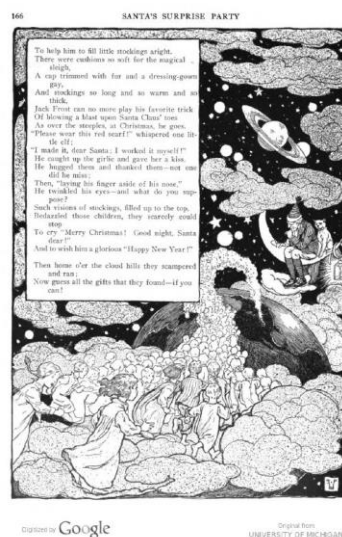


Figure 129. "Santa's Surprise Party." *St. Nicholas* (December 1908): 166. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

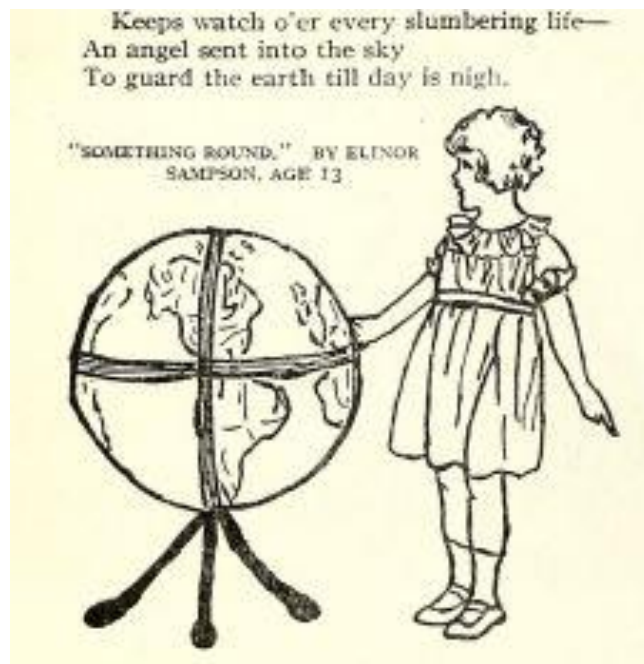


Figure 130. "'Something Round' by Elinor Sampson." *St. Nicholas* (February 1921): 378.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

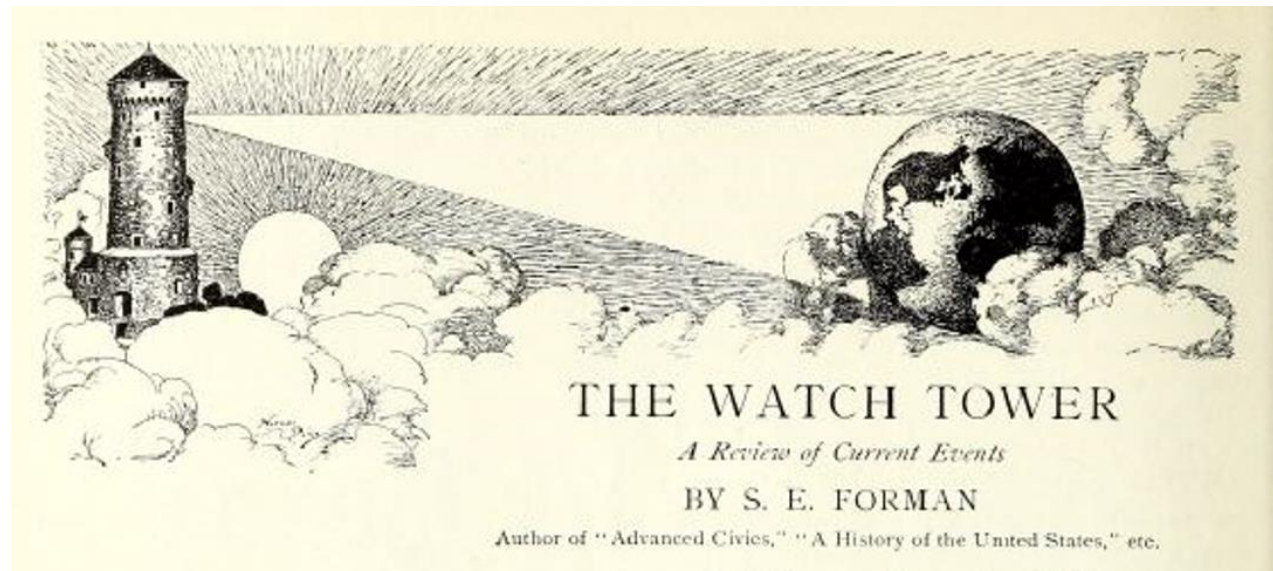


Figure 131. "The Watch Tower." *St. Nicholas* (October 1915): 1068. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

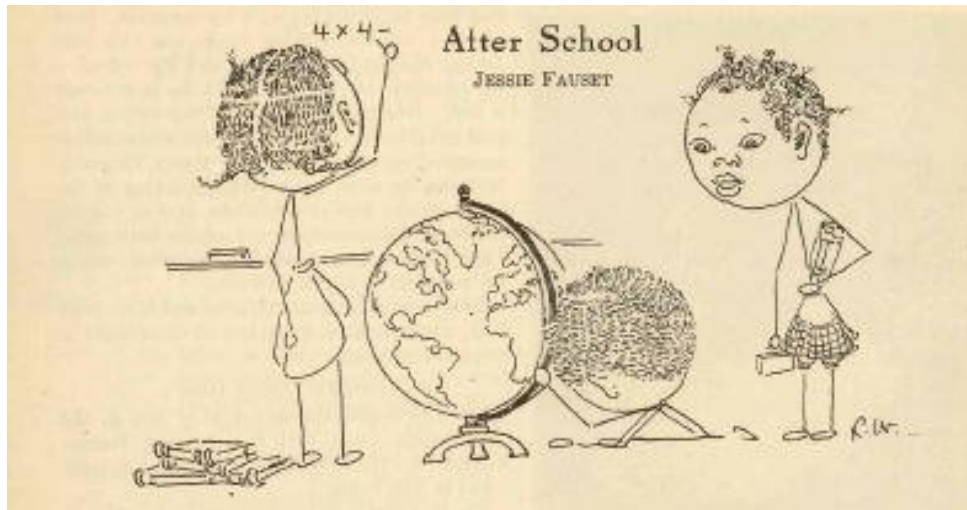


Figure 132. “After School.” *The Brownies’ Book* (January 1920): 30. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Figure 129, published in *St. Nicholas* in December of 1908, shows hundreds of children – all drawn as racially white – swarming through the atmosphere and traveling easily after helping Santa with his chores. They travel almost instantly back to their homes in America, just a step away on the globe. Their travel is marked as exciting, fun, and remarkably easy and the earth, as it is in figures 128 - 122, is a small thing, easily accessed, traversed, and explored.

Figure 130, published in *St. Nicholas* in 1921 likewise presents the earth as diminutive in comparison to the girl. In this image the child, portrayed as racially white, stands next to what can be visually understood as a globe, but which likewise is an image of the earth again wrapped and trussed, dwarfed in comparison to the girl who happily touches it. This piece did not accompany a story, but rather was submitted by a reader of the magazine, Elinor Sampson, age 13, suggesting that not only did children read and understand the visual language of the earth as small and comprehensible, but that they were able to themselves visually reproduce this lesson.

Figure 131, printed in *St. Nicholas* in October of 1915, was the header published monthly at the start of the Watch Tower feature, which became a regular monthly aspect of the magazine

at the start of the First World War. In this image we see a fortress tower shining a light through the darkness (a light so powerful it breaks through the rays of the sun) to make visible – and watchable – a sizeable portion of the earth. This image portrays vision as very powerful and the earth as totally available for surveillance – the watch tower, this image, implies, can see and know everything, and the earth is unable to hide anything from its powerful gaze. This monthly feature marks the first time that *St. Nicholas* breaks with Mary Mapes Dodge’s vision of the magazine as a space separate from the adult world and instead reports on current worldly affairs. The Watch Tower section regularly updated child readers with news of the War in Europe and encouraged their continued faith and patriotism, promising to keep an eye on the world for the readers of the magazine, as the accompanying illustration suggest.

Figure 129, published in *The Brownies’ Book* in 1920, presents a classroom scene in which one child figure works on math while another two engage with a globe. While this figure most explicitly suggests that the earth drawn here is a classroom tool, it still participates in the visual rhetoric of the earth as comprehensible, learnable by school children who know how to engage with it independently without the aid of a teacher.²⁶⁹

At the turn of the twentieth century, the visual essentialization of race and naturalization of white supremacy in children’s magazines expanded beyond American borders to endorse an international ideology of American imperialism. Through a variety of methods that this chapter will explore, *St. Nicholas*, *Wide Awake*, *John Martin’s Book*, *Baby Land*, and *The Brownies’ Book*

²⁶⁹ The children in this image also use a very unique method of coding black American childhood through the combination of stick figures and traditional methods of marking racial whiteness: leaving the face blank and sparingly marking eyes, nose, and mouth. The children here are marked racially black largely through the texture and style of their drawn hair – another inventive method of marking racial blackness that *The Brownies’ Book* uses to disrupt long-entrenched and racist drawings of black American childhood seen in the other magazines that this dissertation studies.

each published images that promoted the idea that Americans were superior to all foreign persons and customs and thus that Americans, and especially American children, had the right and ability to travel the globe at will, taking whatever pleasures they desired. This ease with which American children access the furthest reach of the world is portrayed as harmless fun; however, I argue that it worked to suggest to child readers the right of Americans to take the world's resources as their playground, an ideology that translates well into adult acquisition of foreign territory and economic resources as these child readers grew to be adult citizens of an imperialist culture. While this theory may at first suggest that the non-white American child was likewise held as superior to non-American persons, it's important to remember that the American children's magazines which this dissertation studies began a process of writing the non-white American child out of the American landscape in the early twentieth century, visually white-washing the pages of the American children's magazine and presenting an idealized view of the American landscape and future as populated singularly by white bodies. The Americanness presented as superior to foreign others was thus a white Americanness in all of these magazines except *The Brownies' Book*, so much so that non-white child bodies printed in children's magazines after the first world war came to be coded as themselves foreign.

This chapter explores the connections between childhood and imperialism as presented by children's magazines at the turn of the twentieth century, ultimately arguing that each children's magazine that this dissertation studies sought to project its idealized vision of American childhood not only into the future, but further into foreign lands. This chapter has three parts, which reflect what I parse as three different ways in which childhood was used to promote the American imperial project in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first part, "Visual Portrayals of Imperialism in Children's Magazines," explores the varied visual methods by which American

imperialism was promoted to child readers through their beloved magazines. One way of doing this was to portray those cultures in a demeaning or silly light; another was to demonstrate the white child's utter safety in their travels to foreign lands, portraying American children as safe to the dangers normally implied by foreign spaces. And, finally, by featuring many visual enactments of the white child's free and easy travel to and joyful exploitation of "exotic" spaces, children's magazines suggested that the child's body was the vehicle by which positive, peaceful American imperialism was imaginatively carried into "foreign" lands. As a method for the promotion of American imperialism, these magazines required child readers and viewers to exercise their gaze – often an imperial one – upon "foreign" lands and peoples. In this moment, the child's gaze becomes the primary method of learning about "foreign" lands and persons as well as their own proposed relationship to them as gazer.²⁷⁰

While the first half of this chapter studies imperialism in the magazines, the second section, "A Global *St. Nicholas*," studies the imperialism of the magazines themselves. This section moves from ideological promotions of imperialism to explore the imperial spread of the magazines themselves across the earth. This section summarizes a digital project that uses ArcGis software to digitally map the first ten years of *St. Nicholas*'s readership. I then analyze the visualizations produced by this digital experiment to explore *St. Nicholas*'s self-promotion as a truly "global" and cosmopolitan magazine. The third section of this chapter, "The Body of the Child and the Colonization of the Future," functions as a capstone or a coda to this dissertation, considering the

²⁷⁰ While this dissertation studies this imperial gaze in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this is not the first time that this technique is presented for child readers. This chapter will engage with the continuation of this tradition that we see demonstrated in the early nineteenth century, as seen in *Peter Parley* geography books written by Samuel Griswold Goodrich between 1820 and 1860. These texts likewise used images of "foreign" peoples to educate American child readers, marking a potential beginning to this history, though it very well may have begun before *Peter Parley* as well.

gaps that this dissertation creates as well as directions for future research. In particular, this section returns to the child readers of the magazines, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, considering them as figures both colonizing and colonized as they are conscripted to sell subscriptions of their beloved magazines to new batches of child readers. This chapter shows that American children were central to imperialist agendas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and that American appeals for imperialist agendas used children to naturalize the dominance of American whiteness in foreign lands. I conclude that the child's body is the device by which eugenics, racist, and imperial ideologies were imagined as being carried into future decades of American history.

5.1 Visual Portrayals of Imperialism in Children's Magazines



Figure 133. “The Modern Columbus.” *St. Nicholas* (October 1915): advertising pg. 9.

Courtesy of HathiTrust.

In 1915, *St. Nicholas* published an ad for Campbell's Soup within its advertising pages which featured a white child Columbus conquering "The land of Campbells Tomato Soup" in the name of Hungry First. In this image, the child stands in a posture of rhetorical victory, holding the flag of his nation as he claims a new land in its name. While the logic of the image is tenuous, its humor is obvious: the child-as-Columbus, with his chubby knees and wide eyes, is pleasing as the conqueror of hunger, presented as virgin territory. However, it's important that the child-Columbus is not ridiculous, but instead cute because not only is he big-headed and wide-eyed, he is further a child embodying already his adult role (as discussed in Chapter 3). Further, the ad asks the viewer to understand themselves as an explorer and potential conqueror of soup themselves, asking "Have you too discovered this happy land?" The image asks the viewer not to see the child conqueror as ridiculous, but pleasant. The ad itself encourages the benefits of "tak[ing] full advantage" of "this happy land," the soup, and suggests doing so will free mother's time, sooth "Father's grouch" and silence "Sissy's whine." Clearly, the imperialized pursuit of Campbell's soup solves many of the family's problems. Here imperialism is presented jokingly, but its pleasures and benefits are very real: imperial conquest, even recast as child's play and made humorous, is still cast as solving a variety of American familial woes.

American children's magazines are replete with this kind of imperial imagery at the turn of the twentieth century, and its inclusion is a subtle part of the ideology of American imperialism at the turn of the twentieth century. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were known as the "Age of Imperialism" in American history, a moment when the American government (among other national governments) launched imperial projects to gain territories and benefit

economically from their annexation.²⁷¹ American imperialism begins with the many seizures of Native American territory under both British and American governance and notability continues with the mid-nineteenth century doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the Mexican-American War in 1846, in which the American government annexed 525,000 miles of Mexican territory. Though it does not stand alone, the many atrocities committed against Native American persons in order to colonize the American West are encapsulated in the California Genocide of the mid- to late-nineteenth century, in which state and federal laws sanctioned the enslavement, kidnap and murder of thousands of Native persons by white settlers, particularly during the Californian gold rush. At the turn of the twentieth century, however, the United States government set their eyes on territories that were not physically connected to the continental United States, a policy that resulted in the colonization of Puerto Rico in 1898, the annexation of Hawaii in 1898, and the acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone in 1903.²⁷²

Building the American empire was a political agenda built around about gaining territory and benefitting economically from the natural resources or defensive positions in those territories; however, major social and political campaigns worked to sell imperialist ideologies to the American public that had little to do with economic gain or military might. In his 1894 book *Winning the West*, Theodore Roosevelt writes:

Every such submersion or displacement of an inferior race, every such armed settlement or conquest by a superior race, means the infliction and suffering of hideous woe and

²⁷¹ While the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were known as the “Age of Imperialism,” the Western imperial projects really began much earlier. For instance, British imperialism arguably begins with the conquest of Ireland in 1556 and continues through the colonization of the American colonies in the 17th century to the imperial conquest of much of American and India in the nineteenth century.

²⁷² Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, Alaska, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands were likewise annexed in this era.

misery. It is a sad and dreadful thing that there should of necessity be such throes of agony; and yet they are the birth-pangs of a new and vigorous people. That they are in truth birth-pangs does not lessen the grim and hopeless woe of the race supplanted; of the race outworn or overthrown. The wrongs done and suffered cannot be blinked. Neither can they be allowed to hide the results to mankind of what has been achieved.²⁷³

Here Roosevelt justifies American imperialism not for financial or military prowess, but as the natural progression of civilization and culture, its violence and agony cast as childbirth: merely the pains necessary to bring forward “a new and vigorous people,” here figured both as a newborn child and simultaneously as the vigorous new example of the race that it will grow to inherit. Thus white media-makers in high positions of power sold American imperialism to the American public with rhetorics of both Darwinist natural selection and white supremacy, using the metaphor of the child-as-future to justify the violence inherent in the imperial process. This chapter demonstrates that children’s magazines were one of the devices by which this ideology was sold to American subjects, and particularly to American children.

The American project of foreign imperialism coincides neatly with the crisis of national and personal identity that I have marked as part of the massive cultural and technological change that occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Booth and Rigby, building on the work of Couze Venn, note that the study of imperialism is not merely a study of geographical colonization, but a study of the psyche of persons living in the modern era at the turn of the twentieth century, so much so that “the critique of modernity has involved examining how the modern subject was also an inherently ‘colonizing’ subject.” Couze Venn elaborates “‘The colonized becomes the object through which Western ‘man’ absolves and resolves himself. ...

²⁷³ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 3 (New York: The Review of Reviews Company, 1910), 265.

Violence is intrinsic to this project, epistemic (Derrida, Spivak), ontological (Levinas), and psychic (Fanon), adding to the brutality of the conquest; together they collude to bend the other to that project. Western imperialism is the expression of this subjugative and subjectifying enterprise.”²⁷⁴

Here Booth and Rigby point out that Imperialist processes are thus not merely physically violent, but also psychically, ontologically, and epistemologically. The study of American imperialism is not merely the study of geographical expansion, but a study of the American ideologies and consent that make this expansion possible. In asking why does America expand, we must also ask what ideologies expand with it, which are crushed, and which make such violence psychically possible. Venn argues that Western imperialism “functions as proof of the power, righteousness and authority of the Western modern subject” so that “violence is not merely a contingent feature of Western civilization,” but instead, “rather, its unspeakable dynamic.”²⁷⁵ In this way we see that imperialism is an integral part of the ideology of white supremacy at the turn of the twentieth century, and that it engages with the same project to re-assert white supremacy after the Civil War that is also seen in eugenic social programs and the erasure of visualizations of black American child bodies from American children’s magazines. Imperialism can in part be understood as another branch of the project of white supremacy, a fight to not only re-entrench the supremacy of the white subject within the American nation, but to further secure this supremacy across the earth.

²⁷⁴ Couze Venn, “History Lessons: Formation of Subjects, (post)colonialism, and an Other project,” in *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History*, ed. Bill Schwarz (London: Routledge, 1996), 42-3. This passage is quoted by Booth and Rigby: *Modernism and Empire*, ed. Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 4.

²⁷⁵ Qtd. In Booth and Rigby, *Modernism and Empire*, 4.

Each of the American children's magazines that this dissertation explores, including *The Brownies' Book*, participated in this imperial message in some way, promoting an idea of American exceptionalism and positively-portrayed American imperialism by featuring the free and easy travel of American children abroad and demonstrating American children's safety where exposed to foreign "dangers." While *The Brownies Book* does not portray non-American cultures in a negative light, it does participate in a rhetoric of the right of American children's right to travel and consume the pleasures of the globe. This section will proceed by discussing methods of promoting American imperialism and white supremacy in *St. Nicholas*, *Babyland*, *John Martin's Book*, and *Wide Awake*, returning to *The Brownies' Book* at the end of the section to demonstrate how *The Brownies' Book* again participates within child magazine culture while managing to maintain its policy of measured and critical difference.



Figure 134. "Maya Women." *Wide Awake* (April 1883): 356. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 135. “A Bedouin Boy.” *Wide Awake* (July 1888): 117. Courtesy of HathiTrust.



Figure 136. *Wide Awake* (1889): Ambiguous pagination. Courtesy of Haithi Trust.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ This issue of *Wide Awake* has extra pages included at the end of the document. The image of the sedum rhodiola is included on a page marked 23, but it’s ambiguous regarding which month of the magazine would have included this storyline.

The first method by which many children's magazines participated in an imperial process was by presenting visualization of foreign persons that portrayed them not as people, but instead as specimens to be observed. For example, in figures 134 and 135 the Maya Women and the Bedouin Boy printed in *Wide Awake* in 1883 and 1888 (respectively) are presented as representatives of their species in much the same way that children's magazines and scientific discourse present bird or other animal species for the viewer's gaze and edification, as exemplified by the image of the Sedum Rhodiola pictured in figure 136. The Sedum Rhodiola, a succulent that grows in cold climates of the Northern Hemisphere, is picturesquely visualized in its native climate and labeled with its proper name – both genus and species. The Maya Women and the Bedouin Boy are likewise presented as scientific objects in their natural spaces and dressed in their native garb, labeled not with their genus and species but rather with their national ethnicity and a signifier indicating both age and gender. In each of these images, the persons and the plant are presented as objects, not individuals. In each case the figure sits passively on display with full face exposed for the viewer, a eugenic presentation not unlike those seen in Galton's collection of composite imagery. Here it is the label in particular that does much of the work that marks these foreign persons as specimen to be studied, but also the fact that they are presented not as individuals or in any action, but rather passive, like the plant. Each of these images is likewise not a visualization of a character in a story or a historical figure. Unlike American children drawn or presented photographically in magazines, these images are not individualized by any proper name or by any independent action or portraiture. They are, instead, asked to be an exemplar of their race, wiping them of individuality. These combinations of visuals with labels mark the thing pictured as a distinct, separate race or species, providing the viewer with a way to identify the object presented

the next time they encounter it. These kinds of visualizations suggest that Maya Women and Bedouin boys, like Scottish plants, have a distinct visual type that can be classified and organized.

Writing of nineteenth-century European accounts of the colonization of Africa, Paul S. Landau writes that images of foreign spaces printed in Western media presented not information about the realities of African life, but instead “a set of ideas associated with Africa” and that “the history of the European view of non-European peoples has always reflected Europeans’ history of imagining themselves,” not the non-European peoples whom they propose to represent.²⁷⁷ In the same way, the presentations of foreign persons in American children’s magazines tell us not so much about foreign places, persons, and experiences, and instead more about the American ideologies that placed them on the page. The images of the foreign persons presented as specimen in figures 134 and 135 provide the reader not with any real information about Bedouin or Maya persons, but they reveal insight into how American editors and illustrator understood their own relationships to foreign persons. The relationship they present, then, is one of supremacy: the scientist studying the foreign specimen, a position of cultural power.

In figures 137 and 138, we see a different method by which American children’s magazines visually marked foreign persons as inferior. Here the non-American child is not presented as a scientific object, but instead in direct visual contrast with the American subjects who visit his country.

²⁷⁷ Paul S. Landau, “An Amazing Distance: Pictures and People in Africa,” Intro. to *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, eds. Paul S. Landau and Deborah D. Kaspin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

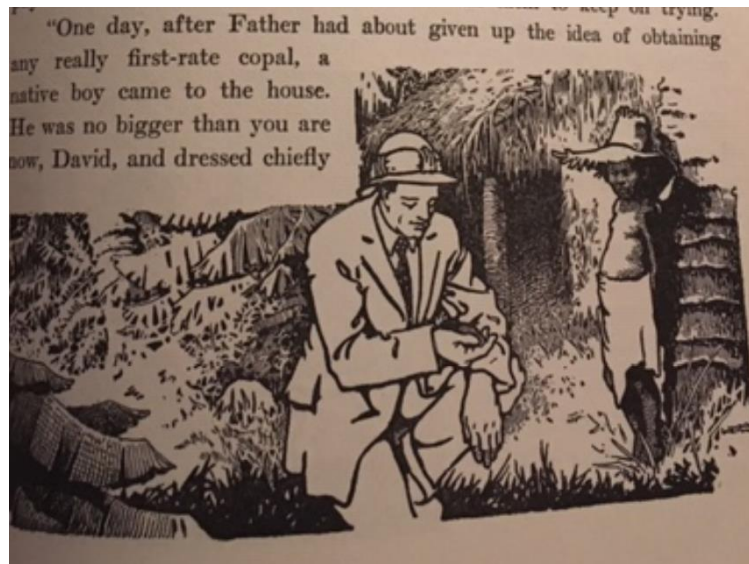


Figure 137. *John Martin's Book*. Big Book 15. Collection of the author.



Figure 138. *John Martin's Book*. Big Book 15. Collection of the author.

In this story titled “More About Amber” and published in *John Martin's Book*, we see that the white American figures are drawn mostly in outline, their bodies and skin left blank and only their major features delineated in black. This is in sharp contrast with the unnamed child character, who the story identifies as a native of the Philippine Islands. While the white characters stand out starkly from the dark background, their skin having no shadows at all, both the landscape and the

boy are deeply shaded. While the shading in the landscape reflects the natural shading of shadows and light, on the boy it indicates racial non-whiteness which is lightened by sunlight – much like the ferns and trees against which he stands. Thus while the borders of the white American figures are strictly defined at their edges and show no shadowing, the boy and the landscape are both drawn as subjects of shadow and light. The boy is delineated at some of his edges, but at others he merges with the landscape and reflecting the sun so that he, in the rules of the image, is not an independent figure, but instead a part of the natural scene. Even though parts of the child's body remain un-inked, which in some traditions would mark him as racially white, the image is at pains to ensure the viewer that he is indeed racially non-white, using shadows at his sides and his hat to demonstrate that only in the reflection of light is he bright. The white American's hat does no such work. In this way we see that children's magazines use methods of marking racial non-whiteness as further marking foreignness, ensuring that the racially white American is visually differentiated from the space and the "native" figure.

While figures 137 and 138 feature adult travelers, children's magazines frequently portrayed American children as freely and easily traveling in foreign spaces, untouched by the cultures they encounter. A striking example of this comes from the 1883 issue of *Babyland*. *Babyland* is typically filled with domestic imagery: very young children sitting on their mother's knees, playing with kittens in the parlor, smelling flowers in the gardens - but it sometimes includes foreign travel in the serialized section of each issue, a one-page feature that generally followed one or two characters through an episodic story that would last the span of a year. An example of this is the serialized story "What Blue Eyes and Black Eyes Saw in Foreign Lands," which was

included as the last page of every issue in the 1883 publication year.²⁷⁸ Images from this serialized story are included in figures 139 and 140.

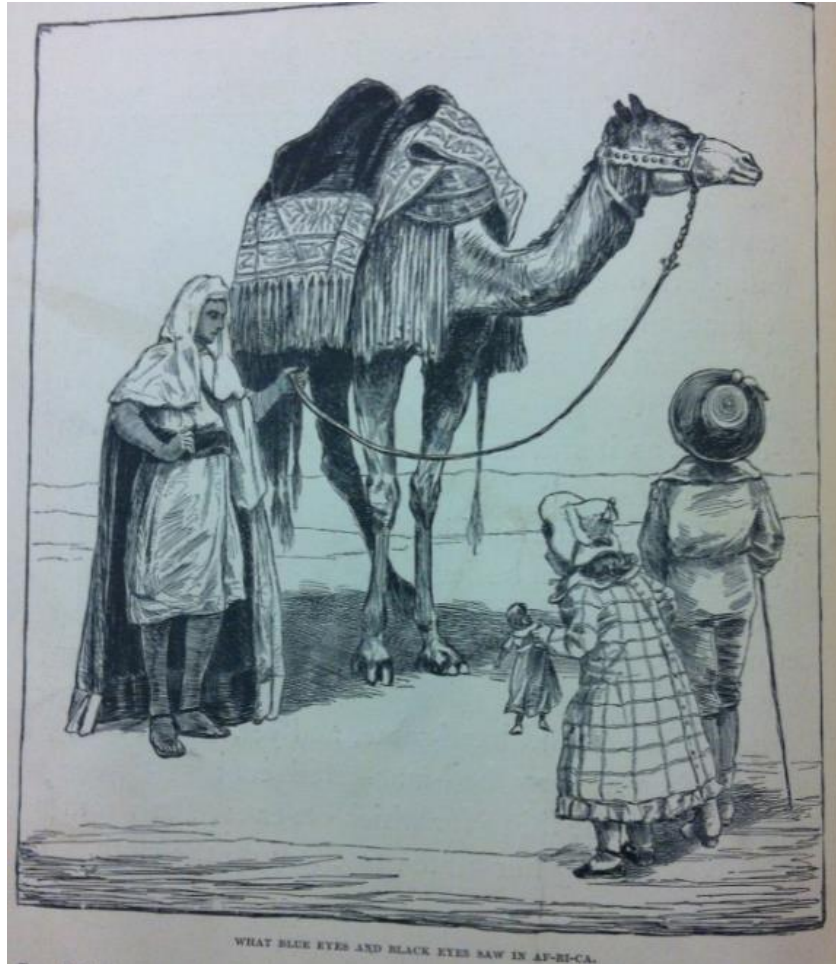


Figure 139. “What Blue Eyes and Black Eyes Saw in Af-ri-ca.” *Babyland* (May 1883): 48.

Courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Libraries.

²⁷⁸ While the serialized title of the series is “What Blue Eyes and Black Eyes Saw in Foreign Lands,” the publishers frequently changed the order of who was listed first in the text of the serialized story.



Figure 140. “What Blue Eyes and Black Eyes Saw in Jap-an.” *Babyland* (January 1883): 16. Courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Libraries.

In this story, an American boy and girl travel to a variety of foreign locations without any adult figure present, implying that they travel alone. These foreign cultures in “Black Eyes and Blue Eyes” are not portrayed in starkly derogatory terms, but the American children’s interaction with them expresses their ability to journey to these cultures and exercise their apparent right to their heritage of the world’s beauty, oddities, and riches. For instance, in the May issue (Figure 139), Black Eyes and Blue Eyes, a white American girl and boy are shown in “Af-ri-ca”

encountering an “A-rab” and a “Cam-el.”²⁷⁹ The children do not interact with the African man; instead, they simply marvel at him, staring openly at his body, his dress, and his camel. The same occurs when the children visit Japan (figure 136), where they encounter a Japanese woman and her child, whom they merely stare at as she passes.

In each of the lands they visit (Italy, India, and Algiers among them) Blue Eyes and Black Eyes take similar action: they encounter a non-American (most often one not of Anglo-Saxon ethnicity) adult and stare at him or her, exercising their American, white, child gaze on the foreign other with no apparent hesitation, only interest and delight. In the last issue, Black Eyes and Blue Eyes return home and declare that “...they liked noth-ing so much as a dear lit-tle white house in a small A-mer-i-ca vil-lage. They jumped out of the hack with a glad shout: ‘Home a-gain!,’” definitively establishing the superiority of the American landscape to all they have seen.²⁸⁰ The story is above all else a visual narrative about the white American child’s ability and even right to exercise their gaze upon foreign subjects, who are pictured as fascinating and impassive objects. Even further, the children here are defined by their sight: their names, Black Eyes and Blue Eyes, refer to them singularly as viewers, as if they are not people but all but instead merely walking eyeballs that travel, their whole purpose merely to see. The title of the piece emphasizes not what the children thought, ate, encountered, or did – but merely what they saw, marking their purpose abroad as visual consumer and nothing else. In doing so, the magazine re-emphasizes the visual as the important part of travel, suggesting an imperial possession of foreign spaces through the child’s gaze.

²⁷⁹ As explained more completely in the introduction, the words are hyphenated in *Babyland* because the text was created for very young readers.

²⁸⁰ *Babyland*, October 1883, 104.

The children here likewise work allegorically, functioning for the readers as the mechanism through which they themselves are able to gaze upon the Arab man, the camel, and the Japanese woman. Here the story presents the same kind of image to readers at home as seen in figure 134 and 135 of the *Maya Women and the Bedouin Boy*: these, too, are specimen, marked not as individuals, but specifically as things in the captions, which read “what Blue Eyes and Black Eyes Saw” in the places they visited, not “who.” This story, however, makes it clear that it is American child travel that makes this visual knowledge available to home readers, an emphasis which valorizes the traveling American child as much as it objectifies foreign persons.



Figure 141. *John Martin's Book*. Big Book 15. Collection of the author.

We see the American child's traveling gaze again take priority in *John Martin's Book* in the story “Amber the Deserted City” (figure 141). In this story, a mother tells her two children about the childhood trip she took to India with her parents and her little sister, Judith. We see the narrator and her sister stare openly at the foreign man they encounter as they leave the train, taking

pleasure in looking. What is particularly interesting in the images presented in both “Amber the Deserted City” and “What Black Eyes and Blue Eyes Saw in Foreign Lands” is the way that the reader/viewer is instructed to look. In both of these stories the reader is not simply treated to a viewing of the foreign other – indeed, in figure 141 the Indian man’s face is not even presented for the reader. Instead, the reader is asked to exercise their gaze upon the child looking at the foreign person and to take pleasure in the drawn child’s own pleasure in looking. In these instances, the child becomes both the gazer and the gaze-ee while the foreign other becomes a third party, the object that enables the interaction between the reader/viewer and the imagined child on the page.

What the continual propagation of this kind of travel narrative over many pages and magazines suggests is that American children, defined by the magazines themselves as singularly white, had an ability and a right to traverse the globe unharmed, taking pleasure from their experiences within it. The child readers of the magazine were not themselves expected to travel abroad (though some did and reported their travels to the magazine in letter and photo, which were frequently published in the Letter-Box sections). However, the magazines, and particularly the visuals they produced, stood in for a kind of imagined travel so that readers could participate in what were presented as international experiences of looking alongside Black Eyes and Blue Eyes. Child readers could imagine themselves traveling, viewing, and understanding what the rest of the world was like without leaving their own bedrooms or parlors. This was a popular turn-of-the-century promise of visibility that became popular in other forms of parlor entertainment, such as the stereoscope, a visual device that allowed viewers to engage with 3D visualizations of foreign

spaces while still at home.²⁸¹ While these kinds of visual technologies purported to present non-American spaces objectively, what they actually present is a very calibrated, selective experience in which cultural makers of magazines and stereoscopes are able to choose precisely how these foreign spaces are seen. In children's magazines, this choice fell on the side of fantastic, safe, and ultimately inferior to the pleasure of the American home, no matter how delightful and fascinating the trip.

The visual in both "What Black Eyes and Blue Eyes Saw in Foreign Lands" as well as "Amber the Deserted City" functions as it does elsewhere in the magazines, delineating for readers who, specifically, get to travel and gaze and who functions as the gaze-ee. In *St. Nicholas*, *Babyland*, *Wide Awake*, and *John Martin's Book* the child who is marked as having access to free and easy travel is inevitably marked as racially white by the illustrations, though the child's race is not mentioned in the story itself. The foreign bodies upon which these white children gaze are marked as non-white through the traditional methods of shading, phrenological markings, and features, and also through their dress. Thus the visual in these children's magazines serve to reinforce the imperialist and eugenic understandings of America as populated by white persons, and that these white Americans – even or especially children – have a right to take pleasure in foreign travel and in looking at the foreign "other" they encounter there. While this travel is coded as a learning experience and as harmless, it is still a training ground for later kinds of travel that will include business and commerce, colonization and exploitation. It works with the

²⁸¹ The stereoscope is a viewing device first invented in 1883. The viewer holds the device to their face and looks through a pair of lenses at two images which look very similar, but which in actuality are very slightly different perspectives on the same scene. The viewer's binocular vision combines the two images into one, enabling the images to combine into one image that looks three-dimensional and provides the illusion of perspective. This viewing device was very popular in the nineteenth century, especially for scenes of foreign travel.

understanding that whiteness allows access to social power within the American landscape as well as imperialist control outside of it.

Inherent in this idea, as well as in the white child's newly invulnerable state where they are expected to successfully progress into adulthood, is the idea that the child will eventually take part in those economic and political systems of power as they grow into adults. Already granted social power and practiced in world travel - at least in their imaginations if not in actuality - these magazines propose that the child will be in a position to exercise their political and economic powers in the foreign lands that they became comfortable imaginatively traveling to while they were young. These magazines were, in short, teaching white American children not only that they are clever and able enough to navigate the American landscape without harm in ways that non-white populations are not, but also that the world is open and safe for them to travel in, effectively extending that American landscape to a global scale in a watered-down version of manifest destiny.

Rod Edmont writes that imperialism was implemented in many ways as a response to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fears of degeneration, hoping to spread Western culture far and wide in an attempt to not only prove its dominance but also to ensure its longevity by making more of it. Of these fears of degeneration, Edmont writes, "One of the most vivid and repeated expressions of the fear of degeneration in colonial settings was the phenomenon of 'going native,' of the European becoming uncivilized in savage surroundings."²⁸² This theme is explored in much European and American modernist literature of the early twentieth century, most famously Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). We also see it expressed in children's literature, such

²⁸² Rod Edmond, "Home and Away: Degeneration in Imperialist and Modernist Discourse," in *Modernism and Empire*, ed. Booth and Rigsby, 44.

as Francis Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1910-1911), which maintains that white children who visit colonized lands for extended periods of time are negatively affected by the colonized culture. Danielle E. Price notes that for Mary Lennox, who grew up in India before moving to Yorkshire after her parents' death, "Plunging her hands into English soil becomes a cure for creolization."²⁸³ Price further notes that the return to her native English soil effects a racial transformation, stating that "Mary's stay in Yorkshire transforms the color of her skin, taking away the 'yellow' and giving her the whiteness that is rightfully hers" and suggests that Mary's early childhood in India threatened not only her health but further her race.²⁸⁴ *The Secret Garden* was originally published in *The American Magazine* in between November 1910 and August 1911.²⁸⁵ *The American Monthly* was an ostensibly adult or family magazine with some child content. The inclusion of a text like *The Secret Garden* in a family magazine, rather than one specifically written for children perhaps indicates that adult magazines emphasized a different kind of vulnerability of and for children and that children's magazines emphasized an invulnerability and agency on the white child's part that was not effective for adult readers.

Edmont notes that this fear of "going native" encapsulated "a set of fears common to a great deal of colonial discourse in the nineteenth century, namely that civilization is skin deep, that Europeans cut off from the roots that nurtured them are easily de-civilized, and that native

²⁸³ Danielle E. Price, "Cultivating Mary: The Victorian Secret Garden," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (January 2001): 4.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ *The American Magazine* succeeded *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* and was edited by John Sanborn Phillips during the publication of *The Secret Garden*.

populations are ineducable.”²⁸⁶ However, this fear of “going native” is not present in children’s magazines, which instead work as reassurance that race is deeper than skin and that the white race is the strongest of all. The children who are visually portrayed in children’s magazines as entering foreign places are shown to be totally untouched by them.

This untouchable and unsulliable fantasy of white childhood demonstrates that the youngest members of the white race embody their race perfectly, even in exposure to other races and foreign spaces – so much so that even their perfect white clothing remains un-inked on the periodical page, representing a spotlessness not only of vestments but also of race - portraying the Western white child “as so powerful and so internally coherent that it was unaffected by its contact with other cultures.”²⁸⁷ However, it’s important to note that white children are not spotlessly unaffected in their home territories – in the American landscape they get into all kinds of scrapes from which they emerge unharmed, but perhaps a little dirtier and stronger for their experience. In stories of foreign travel, magazines seem to take particular care to emphasize that white children are entirely untouched, particularly because of the social anxiety that traveling abroad comes with the risk of “going native.”

We see an example of the portrayal of child unsulliability in children’s magazines in figure 142, drawn from the story “Lost Among the Savages” published in *Wide Awake* in September 1882.

²⁸⁶ Edmont, “Home and Away,” 46.

²⁸⁷ Helen Carr, “Imagism and Empire,” *Modernism and Empire*, ed. Booth and Rigby, 65.



FROM ISLAND TO MAINLAND.

Figure 142. “From Island to Mainland.” *Wide Awake* (September 1882): 188. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

This image portrays the free and easy travel of two friends, Nell and Praskovia, as they secretly venture from the safety of their ship and cross a newly fallen log into the foreign jungle. While the story tells of their dangerous encounter with a baboon baby (which they mistake for a native baby) and a gigantic snake, the visual that accompanies their story demonstrates not their danger, but instead their safe travel into the dark jungle, showing how easily they traverse the fallen log and enjoy the wonder and beauty of the foreign space – all without even dirtying their snow-white faces, hats, hands, or petticoats.



Figure 143. “Nell Began to Sing.” *Wide Awake* (October 1882): 250. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

In figure 143, from a different chapter in “Lost Among the Savages”, we see Nell encounter the violence and danger of the foreign others who charge at Nell as she enters their village. Nell handles the situation with grace and equanimity: though three foreign men (marked as such by their shaded skin and lack of clothing) rush towards her, Nell shows no fear or panic and instead seems to float patiently and gracefully – her hair and the ribbons of her elaborate bow lifted by a gentle wind that does not affect the trees or the clothing of the man next to her, marking Nell as ethereal, part of another world. The image communicates to the reader that though the men are dangerous, Nell is in no real danger. She also wears a peacock headdress that clearly communicates a foray into foreign cultures but, importantly, Nell does not “go native” – she does not, like the

men she faces, run or throw her arms. Instead, Nell stands with her arms gently akimbo and her back straight. This visual difference implies that Nell, the white American child, can easily dabble in foreign culture and come out unchanged and unscathed. While non-white and immigrant cultures were expected to “turn white and disappear” in an American landscape, the same is not true of American children who venture abroad: they remain intact.²⁸⁸

In visualized interactions between American children and explicit foreign dangers, both within and outside the American landscapes, we further see that the white American child is portrayed as utterly free from danger. This message about the safety of the white American child is, of course, an exaggeration, if not an outright lie. American children were not invulnerable to the threats abroad, but the magazine portrays them as such to emphasize the strength of American whiteness and also to make good on the magazine’s promise to function as a safe space, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation. In working as a proxy for the child readers’ travel to these foreign spaces, an imagined travel instead of an actual trip, the magazines did actually make the experience safe. As such, magazines were at pains to make interactions with the foreign appear very safe, an act that was done largely by the visuals of the magazine, which again frequently correct the text.²⁸⁹ We see this, for example, in the image submitted by a reader of *St. Nicholas* of herself with lion cubs.

²⁸⁸ Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States*, 202.

²⁸⁹ The “again” here is a reference to Chapter 2, and also to Chapter 3, when we see magazines providing a textual description of a character that is corrected by the accompanying visual.

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LION CUBS

THE BRONX, NEW YORK CITY.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: When asked to be photographed with the lion cubs, I thought it would be great fun playing with them. I have changed my mind since then!

Two keepers brought the cubs, put one on each side of me and told me to hold them tightly and no matter what happened to hold on, as they might run away.

The heart, beyond organ, has nothing to the human voice wh phone is placed as d is placed anywhere :



Photograph by courtesy of the New York Zoological Society.

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LION CUBS.

Figure 144. "Photographed with Lion Cubs." *St. Nicholas* (November 1908): 78. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

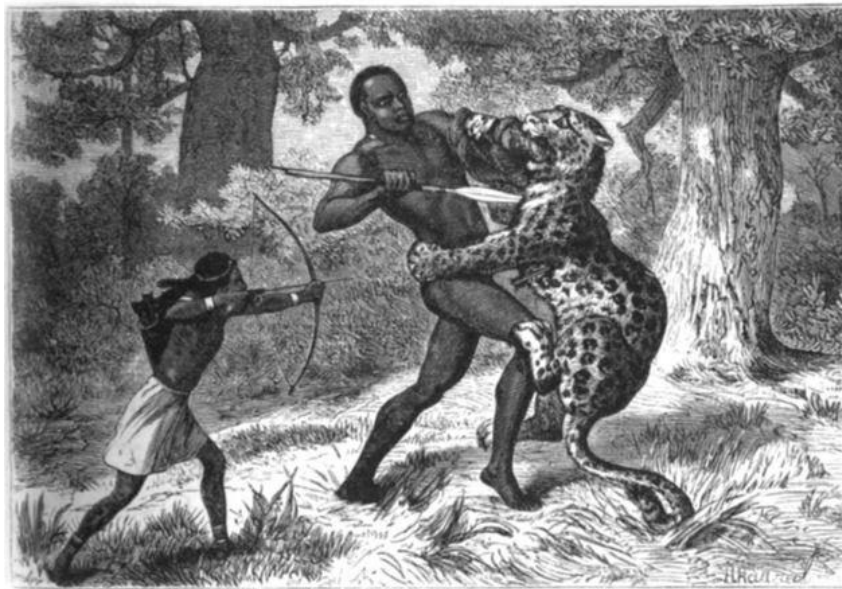


Figure 145. *St. Nicholas* (February 1874): 233. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Though lions are notoriously dangerous beasts native to Africa, and in visual portrayal of wild cats in Africa readers are often treated to visual examples of their danger and ferocity (as seen in figure 145), in figure 144, the girl's safety and easy control of the lions is presented as given – she easily tames the lion cubs and seems to pet them calmly. This calm visual, however, is in direct contrast with her letter, which states that she was told to “hold them tightly and no matter what happened to hold on.” An image of a girl with lion cubs communicates not only the desirability of the lion cubs and the bravery of white American girlhood, but further the safety and pleasure that can arise from interacting with foreign spaces, creatures, and persons – and that these experiences were safe as well as pleasurable and easy because the world will lay itself easily at the white American child's feet, should they choose to interact with it at home or abroad. Visuals of children traveling in the magazine that this dissertation studies thus functions to assert the white child's safety as they travel; even when the text suggests some dangers, the visual works to suggest to the reader that the danger is secondary to the child's happiness and pleasure.



Figure 146. *John Martin's Book.* John Martin's Big Book 15. Collection of the author.

We see this lack of danger again in the *John Martin's Book* story “Amber the Deserted City,” (figure 146, from the same story which is also featured in figure 141). Here we see the narrator offering her hat to a dangerous crocodile – but while the crocodile openly threatens her, the girl’s face and posture betray nothing but serenity as a breeze rustles the lace and ribbons of her clean white dress. While the story continues to tell of how the crocodile snapped the hat out of her hand and her family scolded her for her foolishness, what is pictured, and thus emphasized for the readers, is the girl’s safety and pleasure in proximity to the dangerous animal. While Robin Bernstein and Kyla Wazana Tomkins have detailed the extent to which black children were commonly portrayed as humorous victims to American alligators in nineteenth and early twentieth century illustration, the visual provides no indication that the white American girl is in any real danger – an effect communicated not by any docility on the part of the crocodile, but rather by the white American child’s body – its grace, its comfort, its lightness and whiteness in the presence of foreign danger.²⁹⁰ Like the image of Jack swimming to save the dog discussed in Chapter 3, the child here is clearly embroiled in a scrape, but the image implies no immediate worry that the child won’t survive unharmed. These images, while encouraging a curiosity about foreign people and cultures that could be considered positive, also communicates to child readers and viewers the same messages that they do about white children in the American landscape: that white children are strong, capable, and fully able to thrive in the American landscape as well as among dangers abroad – and, indeed, that they will grow to inherit both.

²⁹⁰ See Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 34 and 75; See Kyla Wazana Tomkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York and London: NYU Press, 2012), 169.

The Brownies' Book, as in its portrayals of black childhood, again presents itself as different from the other magazines that this dissertation studies. Violet J. Harris likewise credits *The Brownies Book* as rejecting imperial and colonial agendas. In reference to *The Brownies' Book's* monthly "As the Crow Flies" column, Harris writes: "Colonialism as portrayed...was not the White man's burden but the White man's exploitation. The Crow criticized colonialism in a majority of the issues. The following excerpt demonstrates the tone of that criticism:

'India, with 315,000,000 brown people, is very poor and illiterate. The average earnings of an Indian is only \$9.50 a year, and 98% of them cannot read and write. Large numbers of Indians want to be an independent country and not part of the British Empire. The English are seeking to suppress this desire by harsh laws and some concessions.'"²⁹¹

In this section, as Harris points out, Du Bois criticizes the British empire for suppressing the desired self-rule of a "brown people," creating subtle yet critical connections between the plight of the Indian populace and the continuing fight of African American populations for suffrage and civil equality. Michelle H. Phillips continues Harris' argument, stating that Du Bois came to see imperialism "as integral to the failure of American democracy to cross the lines of inequality separating races, nations, genders, and (we may now add) generations."²⁹²

While *The Brownies' Book* does support the idea that the American child has free and easy access to the globe, it does not engage with the promotion of white supremacy that is seen in the other magazines that this dissertation studies. Instead, *The Brownies Book* suggests that the effect of American child travel is international friendship and understanding. Again, Du Bois participates in magazine tropes established elsewhere but changes them so that they do not support white

²⁹¹ Harris, "Race Consciousness," 195. Harris quotes *The Brownies' Book*, January 1920, 24.

²⁹² Phillips, "The Children of Double Consciousness," 602.

supremacy, creating what I portrayed in Chapter 4 as an ethically grey space. Regarding imperialism, child readers of *The Brownies' Book* are encouraged to understand their travel as free, easy, and safe, which does participate in an imperialistic right of child travel that leads well into adult conceptions of easy access to foreign lands and resources. However, the kind of travel in which these children participate suggests that the end result need not be all about the child's easy access and pleasure, but instead cross-national brotherhood lead by the black American child.

We see *The Brownies' Book* reproducing some of the imperialistic language seen in the other magazines that his dissertation studies in figure 120 (also discussed in chapter 4), which says to the pictured "laddie" dressed in a soldier's uniform that "The world is yours for taking." This phrase, while minor, does imply the child's right to "take" the world, a common but still imperialistic turn of phrase that is in contrast to the condemnation of imperialist ideologies that is seen elsewhere in Du Bois's writing. In his May 1915 article "The African Roots of War," published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, W. E. B. Du Bois rails against imperialism, stating that American and European imperialism, under the guise of democracy, is a return to "aristocracy and despotism - the rule of might" and that white populations are convinced to exploit non-white persons abroad because they have been offered the chance to "share the spoil" of exploitation. Du Bois continues that "It is no longer simply the merchant prince, or the aristocratic monopoly, or even the employing class, that is exploiting the world: it is the nation; a new democratic nation composed of united capital and labor."²⁹³ In other words, Du Bois suggests that the mania for imperialism at the turn of the twentieth century in America, as well as Europe, has caused nations

²⁹³ W. E. B. Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1915, 709.

to unify themselves via the exploitation of other lands and peoples. The result of this, Du Bois suggests, is not only governmental expansion and exploitation but a change in how individuals understand their access to the world according to their nationality and race:

...in the minds of yellow, brown, and black men the brutal truth is clearing: a white man is privileged to go to any land where advantage beckons and behave as he pleases; the black or colored man is being more and more confined to those parts of the world where life for climatic, historical, economic, and political reasons is most difficult to live and most easily dominated by Europe for Europe's gain.²⁹⁴

In 1925 Du Bois further wrote:

And thus again in 1925, as in 1899, I see the problem of the Twentieth century as the Problem of the Color Line," though he revises his definition of the "Color Line" to include the denial of Black citizen access to means of power and production by apparently "democratic" imperial systems in Europe: "[In Liberia] political power has tried to resist the concentration in the power of modern capital. It has not yet succeeded but its partial failure is not because the republic is black but because the world has failed in this same battle; because the oligarchy that owns organized industry owns and rules England, France, Germany, America and Heaven. And it fastens this ownership by the Color Line....unless the world escapes, world democracy as well as Liberia will die: and if Liberia lives it will be because the world is reborn as in that vision splendid that came in the higher dreams of the World War."²⁹⁵

Du Bois's writings on the global effects of imperialism align more with the story entitled "Cueva Onda," by Hallie Elvera Queen, published in *The Brownies' Book* in November of 1920, which tells of American children traveling abroad to Puerto Rico.²⁹⁶ The image that accompanies the story shows children of many skin tones, which in this visual tradition implies many races, adventuring together, not bothering to specifically differentiate which children are the Americans and which the children of Puerto Rico (figure 147).

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 712.

²⁹⁵ W. E. B. Du Bois, "Worlds of Color," *Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 3 (1925): 444.

²⁹⁶ Hallie Elvera Queen was a writer and educator who taught at the Tuskegee Institute and also traveled to Puerto Rico to teach English. She wrote two plays, *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *The Two Orphans*.

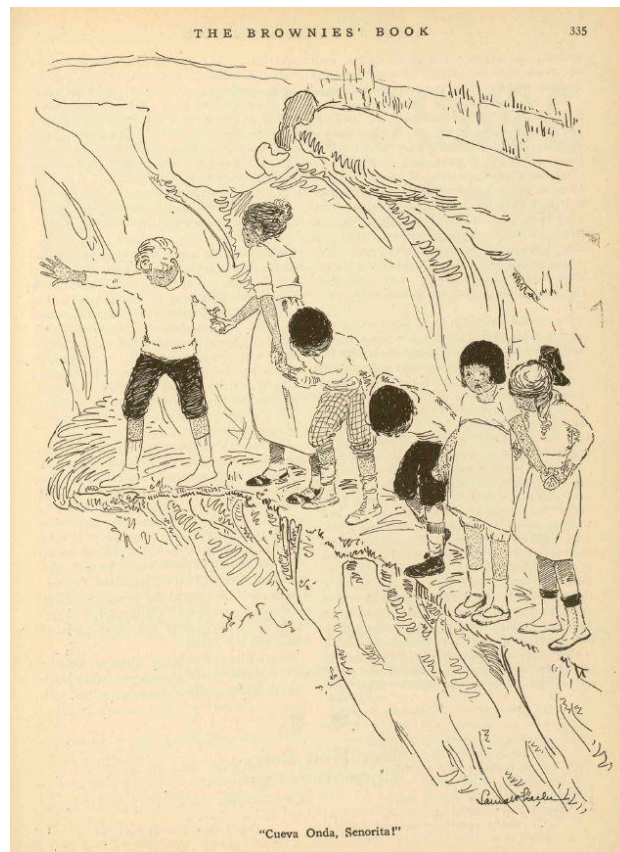


Figure 147. “Cueva Onda, Senorita!” *The Brownies Book* (November 1920): 335.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division

Likewise in the image, the children are not portrayed as free from the danger that the cliff-walk adventure poses – the one girl whose face is visible is clearly anxious about the precarious drop. However, the children all hold hands and work together, suggesting a feeling of safety that comes not from racial purity but instead from cross-national friendship. This image defies the logics which govern the image of foreign travel seen in the other magazines that this dissertation studies, as well as the language of the soldier boy’s right to take the world. Here readers are presented with a different view of American child travel as precarious, but worth the danger: in putting themselves in this risky situation American and Puerto Rican children alike gain friendship,

understanding, and a deeper level of trust. Black American children traveling, this image indicates, do not merely marvel – they interact, and learn.

In many ways the images that I have marked as “imperialistic” take a different meaning in light of Du Bois’ assertion that while “a white man is privileged to go to any land” while “the black or colored man is being more and more confined.” The black children studying the globe in figure 132 can in this light be seen as radically liberating, learning about the globe in order to envision themselves elsewhere upon it, unconfined. The language that “the world is ours for the taking” for the soldier boy becomes not yet another utterance of American right, but perhaps a statement of ability in a world that otherwise suggests to Black children that they have no right at all to space, whether in the American landscape or abroad. Du Bois, as he did elsewhere in *The Brownies’ Book*, does not disavow the toxic mechanics of promoting white supremacy, but uses them – with an important difference, a twist, that turns them toward Black liberation and equality.

5.2 A Global *St. Nicholas*

While the magazines that this dissertation studies often present foreign persons and places as available to the needs and whims of American child readers, the magazines all present themselves as global, cosmopolitan texts that had international readers and scope. *St. Nicholas* particularly prided itself on its international readership, writing that it understood “every boy and girl who can read English, or look at a picture, as belonging in some way to *St. Nicholas*.” We see this in the language of the letter to “Oriole,” featured in figure 148, particularly in the first lines, which read “You and all the other young folks are welcome to write to the Letter-Box, whether

subscribing to ST. NICHOLAS or not. We look upon every boy and girl who can read English, or look at a picture, as belonging in some way to ST. NICHOLAS.”

“ORIOLE.”—You and all other young folks are welcome to write to the Letter-Box, whether subscribing to ST. NICHOLAS or not. We look upon every boy and girl who can read English, or look at a picture, as belonging in some way to ST. NICHOLAS. Yes, you may join the army of Bird-defenders, too, provided you are resolved to keep the requisite pledge, even though you never expect to buy a copy of the magazine.

As for printing your letters, that is another thing. One entire number of the magazine scarcely would hold half the letters that come to us every month. We therefore must, as far as practicable, select those of the most general interest; but we make no distinction between the writers who “subscribe” and those who do not.

Figure 148. “Oriole.” *St. Nicholas* (November 1874): 57. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

Here visuality is central to membership in the community of *St. Nicholas*, and is a kind of universal language. Though I argue in the introduction to this piece that Dodge was talking to a readership of American children and that the magazine created a national community of child readers, here Dodge extends the readership beyond national and linguistic boundaries to everyone who can “look at a picture,” suggesting that non-American viewers are welcome among the community. In reading the Letter Box of *St. Nicholas*, this universal rhetoric becomes even more inclusive and letters from child readers in Japan, and Paris, and Africa stand out as exotic from those from writers in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Maine. The inclusion of these letters across several editions of the Letter-Box suggests to readers that this magazine had quite a global readership. These claims to universality, however, increasingly brushed against the positive portrayals of imperialism that I explore in the first section of this chapter, which suggest together the privileging of white American childhood. In order to further probe the claims to international significance that *St. Nicholas* self-promoted, I designed a digital project that uses a digital mapping program called ArcGis to map the Letter-Box section of *St. Nicholas* for the first ten years of its

run so that I would be able to visualize the places from which readers sent back letters to the magazine and the frequency with which letters came from non-American spaces.²⁹⁷ This project, and this section within this chapter, explores *St. Nicholas*'s claims to universality and cosmopolitanism, inquiring: is the text speaking to as global and inclusive a readership as it claims? Or, is the readership more in line with the ideologies of American superiority that the magazine's portrayal of non-Americans suggests?

ArcGis is digital mapping software that is used by today's modern city planners, cartographers, and data analysts to see how mass data works in visual landscapes. S. Janicke (et. al.) explain that "A major impulse for this trend [to visualize 'the vast amount of information in various contexts'] was given by Franko Moretti ...[who proposed] the so-called *distant reading* approach for textual data...instead of reading texts in the traditional way – so-called *close reading* – he invites to count, to graph and map or, in other words, to visualize them."²⁹⁸ This desire to organize the chaos of my periodical archive was in many ways the impulse for my digital project, which responds in part to the massive archive of magazine material with which this dissertation engages. For scale, consider: at 800-1200 pages published every year over a 67-year span, *St. Nicholas* presents an archive that includes approximately 67,000 pages of material. This is just one of the five textual archives that this dissertation studies, though it is by far the largest. Digital tools

²⁹⁷ I had originally intended to map the subscriber list for *St. Nicholas*, believing this list to be held at Princeton Library's Special Collections Archive. Unfortunately for my project, what their archive lists as a "subscriber list" is a list of American libraries that paid for the magazine – not a complete subscriber list. The New York Public Library also holds collections of *St. Nicholas* editorial archives and may hold a subscriber list. Until and if it is found, though, the data used in this digital project more completely represents the editorial decisions regarding how to portray the readership as editors chose which letters to print in the Letter Box and which to leave out. If subscriber records are eventually located, they will provide a fascinating compliment to the data visualized here.

²⁹⁸ S. Janicke, G. Franzini, M.F. Cheema, and G. Scheurermann, "Visual Text Analysis in Digital Humanities," *Computer Graphics Forum* 36, no. 6 (2017), 226.

can help us see and understand the data in these kinds of large archives differently, though not necessarily in a way that suddenly makes clear the mysteries of the text. As this dissertation seeks to explore, visibility has a long reputation in American history for transparency and clarity that I argue is flawed and frequently misleading. In visualizing this data that I have drawn from *St. Nicholas*, I seek to participate in the method that I critique and thus to better understand its possibilities and limitations. In doing so, I have found that visualizing data allows me to come to new and interesting interpretations of my archive's data, though not conclusions that are without their flaws, as well be explored in the next section of this chapter. To begin, though, I will describe the technology that I used and the process by which I organized my data.



Figure 149. Shawna McDermott, “St. Nicholas, 1874,” [map]. Scale not given. Using: ArcGIS [GIS software].

Version 10.0. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc., 2010.

The standard ArcGIS map shown in figure 149 functions as the base map for this mapping project, a basic map of the world provided by National Geographic that is uploaded into the ArcGIS system.²⁹⁹ ArcGIS connects the continents visualized in the above image to coordinates of many cities, towns, and counties all over the world, so that the program can “drop” (or visualize) a point onto the map once that city is included in the data. The green point in figure 149 represents New York City, the place of publication of *St. Nicholas*. This map visually represents *St. Nicholas*’s Letter Box from November 1873 through February 1874, because at that point, it had not yet published any letters from its readers.



Figure 150. Shawna McDermott, “St. Nicholas, March 1874,” [map]. Scale not given. Using: ArcGIS [GIS software]. Version 10.0. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc., 2010.

²⁹⁹ The maps in this chapter were created using the National Geographic World Map basement created by ESRI. The National Geographic World Map is the property of ESRI and has been made available for informational and educational purposes. Sources for the data within the National Geographic World Map are National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, and INCREMENT P.

The map in figure 150 represents March of 1874, when Mary Mapes Dodge began the Letter-Box section. In the Letter Box section, as was her process throughout her editorship, Dodge posted both responses to letters and full texts of a reader's letter. Sometimes, with more frequency towards the middle and end of her editorship, Dodge would print the global location of the writer, so that many of the letters in the Letter-Box are tied to a location. In March of 1874, the magazine printed only one letter with a location: Alexandria, Virginia. Since Alexandria is now the only point of data, it is now made visual as a red dot on the map in figure 150.



Figure 151. Shawna McDermott, “St. Nicholas, May 1874,” [map]. Scale not given. Using: ArcGIS [GIS software]. Version 10.0. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc., 2010.

In April of 1874, the Letter Box was still forming, and there were no letters marked by location. Figure 151 represents May 1874, a month that saw several new letters with marked locations published in the Letter Box. In this visualization, the dots indicating previous locations (in this case, Alexandria, Virginia) fade from red to pink, so that new letter locations are marked in red and previous locations are pink. Figure 151 thus allows us to visualize where letters had come from, as well as the location of new letters in May 1874.

While I have created individual slides that represent each new month, what I aimed to create in this digital project was a way to visualize the change in the Letter Box over time. To enact this, I linked together the individual slides in an animation that mimics the passing of time, displaying both the place from which the letters arrive as well as the place from which they had come from in previous months. The animation included in the link below represents the entire first year of St. Nicholas's letter box, starting with March 1874 and going through October of 1874 (the month in which periodical "years" commonly closed in the nineteenth and early and twentieth century) which completed the first year of St. Nicholas's run. This video animates the ArcGis maps that I have made for the Letter Box of St. Nicholas. Each changing slide represents a new month, and in each new month the red, labeled dots represent the new letters that Dodge published in the pages of St. Nicholas that month. Each pink dot represents a place from which the magazine had have previously received a letter. The green dot, when present, represents New York. The animation can be viewed by clicking the link below, which will take you to YouTube: <https://youtu.be/qYwCKqr4hao>.

This first animation is a beta-version of a larger project. After viewing this, I conclude that it serves its purpose: on this map we have a visual representation of all the places from which readers have written letters, in 1874, as Dodge herself chooses to label them. This animation

represents how Dodge wanted to present the readership of her magazine geographically over the course of the year, and as readers would have experienced it periodically over the course of that year. As seen in the Introduction, Dodge required that all writers send their names and locations, writing “Henceforth, we hope to be able to give space every month to a Young Contributors’ Department, the articles in which are to be signed with their writers’ initials only, though we must require in each instance the real name, age, and address of the author.” However, Dodge selectively chose to publish some locations in the Letter Box and not others, thus purposefully constructing the magazine’s geographic representation in the Letter Box.

The next animation is more complex. It has 18 slides and animates the letter box from 1873 through 1883 – the first 10 years of St. Nicholas’s publication. Each new slide represents a year’s worth of Letter Box locations. After each new slide, I present a “fade” slide, which fades those locations from red to pink so you can more clearly see the locations of the next year’s letters. I also no longer label points because there are too many points to label and the visualization becomes too complex (though I retain this data in a spreadsheet). The animation can be viewed by clicking the link to the right: <https://youtu.be/8Ha5-qNBvcM>.

The slide included in figure 152 encapsulates the first 10 years of St. Nicholas’s Letter Box – these are all the places from which Dodge printed letters that noted the location of the sender.

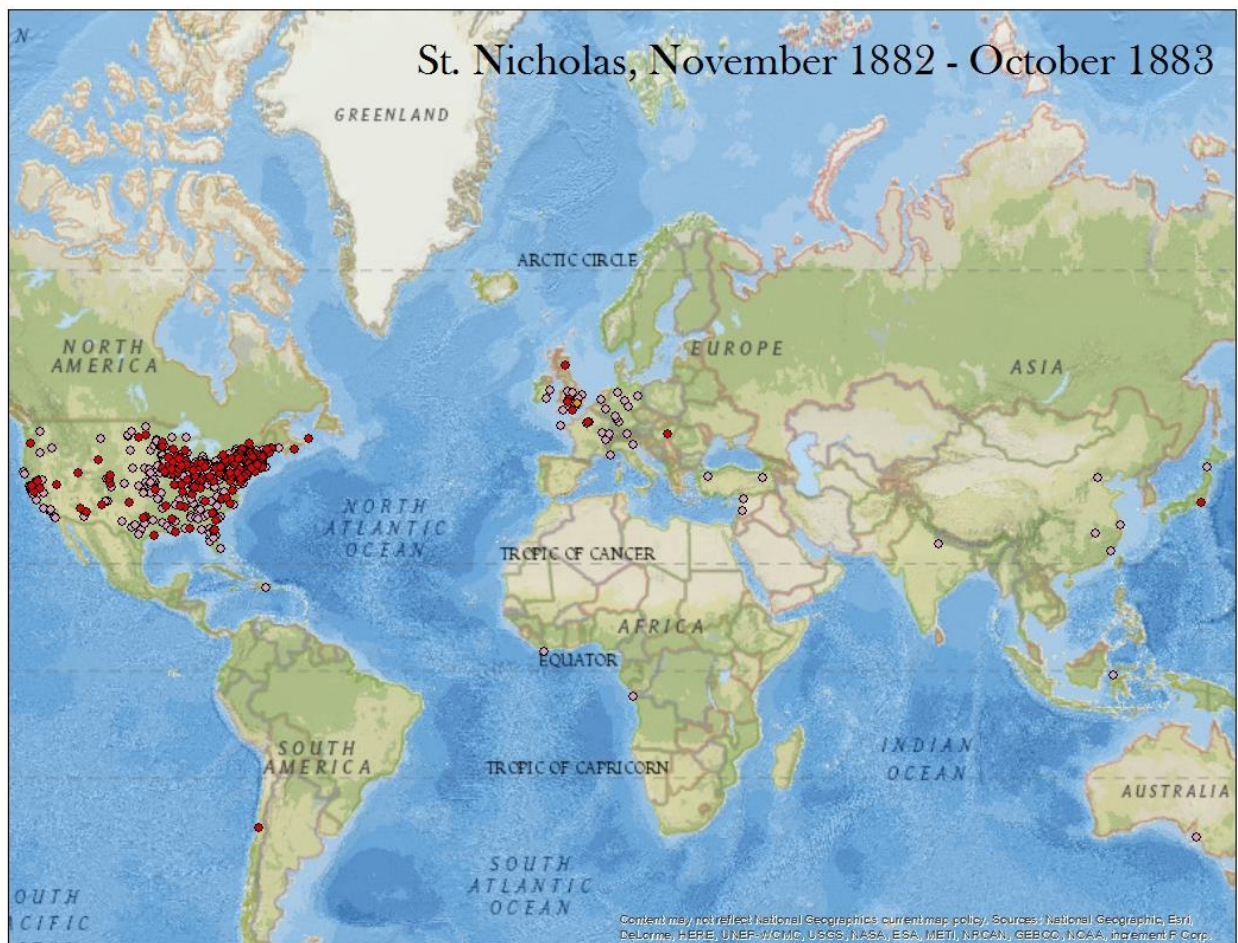


Figure 152. Shawna McDermott, “St. Nicholas, November 1882 – October 1883,” [map].

Scale not given. Using: *ArcGIS* [GIS software]. Version 10.0.

Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc., 2010.

While I’m certainly struck by the variety of international readers who wrote to *St. Nicholas* to express their love for the magazine, I’m also absolutely struck by the preponderance of northern and northern-mid-western readers, as well as by the lack of contributions from Canada and Mexico. I also note that *St. Nicholas* reached the mainland of Europe, but besides one point in India, and another in east-central China, the rest of the foreign cities that *St. Nicholas* reaches in its early years are coastal cities that in the late nineteenth century were under European colonial rule and had strong missionary presences, suggesting that these readers and writers are as likely to

be the children of colonizers as missionaries as they are to be international readers. Further exploration of these letters frequently demonstrates that they are indeed sent from the children of American expatriates and colonizers.³⁰⁰

Leaving the global behind, though, I'll conclude by saying that the portrayal of American readership, within the American Landscape, is likewise interesting. In Figure 153, I have narrowed the view of the ArcGIS program to focus on the American landscape of figure 152.

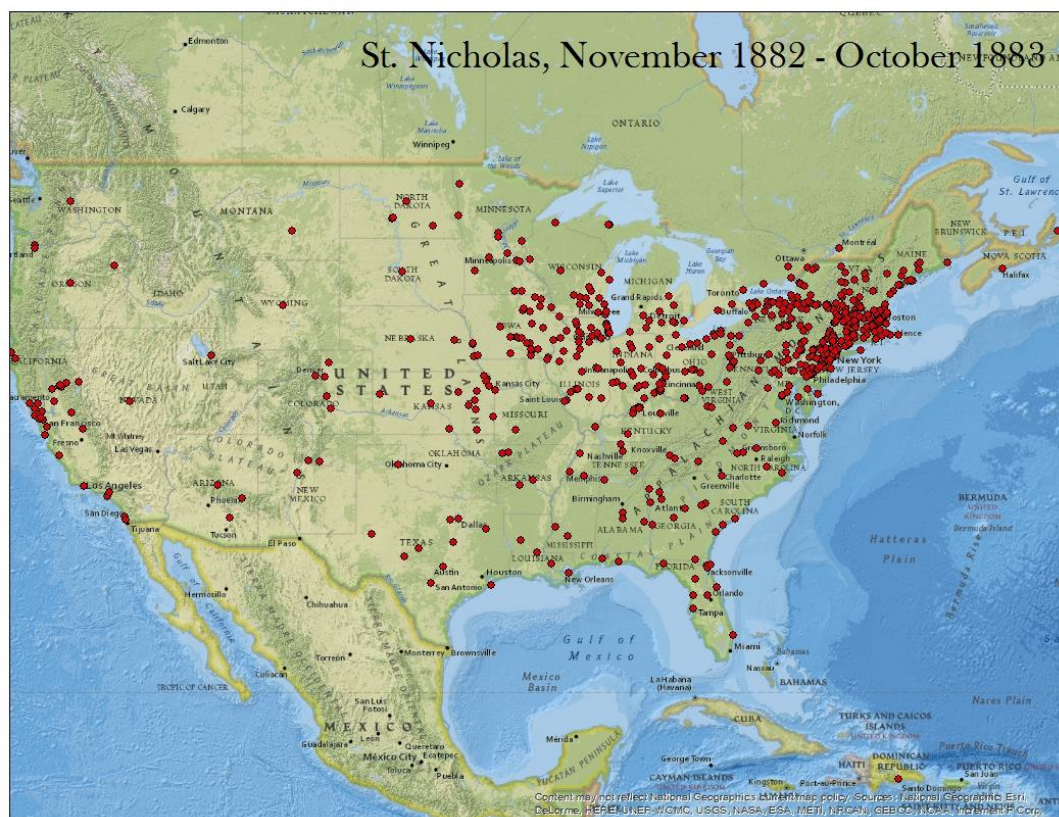


Figure 153. Shawna McDermott, “St. Nicholas, 1874,” [map]. A close-up of Figure 151. Using: ArcGIS [GIS software]. Version 10.0. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc., 2010.

³⁰⁰ I say “most frequently” as a way of making space for my own potential error. I have not yet found a letter from China in the first ten years of *St. Nicholas*’ run that was from a Chinese child. While I have been careful, there is always a chance that I missed something in this large set of data. What the presence of this letter, as a reputed example of a readership in China, is that while the language of the magazine touted a world-wide readership of children, I argue that this digital mapping project demonstrates that this language masked white colonialism in children’s literature.

When I was collecting data for my second animation, I came across a quick aside from Harlan H. Ballard in February of 1883 in his report for the Aggasiz Association, which was a natural history club run in the Letter Box of *St. Nicholas*.³⁰¹ It begins “By the way, how much geography we can learn by finding on the map the home of each Chapter” of the Aggasiz Association. He continues, “We might take a map of the United States and make a red dot on each town represented. The map would look as if it had been sprinkled with red pepper” (figure 154).

petrified.
 But Bryan is far behind us, and we are in State College, Pennsylvania. By the way, how much geography we can learn by finding on the map the home of each Chapter! We might take a map of the United States and make a red dot on each town represented. The map would look as if it had been sprinkled with red pepper. But to return: Mr. George C. McKee thinks it is “bad news” that four brave, persevering members are keeping up their interest in the A. A., when “seven of twelve have resigned, and one gone away on a long visit.” By no means! Four zealous workers are better than a hundred half-hearted ones. A Chapter never loses anything by *pruning*.
 What a leap! A sniff of salt air a long ocean voyage in a second

Figure 154. *St. Nicholas* (February 1883): 318. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

It was uncanny, to say the least, while working on a mapping project that uses red dots scattered across the American landscape to find that I was visualizing Ballard’s idea 136 years after he wrote of it in his letter. However, his idea of the map looking “as if it had been sprinkled with red pepper” turns out to not be fully accurate. Sprinkling implies to me a delicacy, and a desire to evenly cover the surface. Instead, the map looks more like someone tipped the pot of red pepper on New York, and then a breeze came from Nova Scotia and blew it ever so slightly south and west. As the Letter Box represents the letters that Dodge chose to publish, I’m curious if this emphasis on the north and east occurred because that’s where the majority of the readers were

³⁰¹ The club was named in honor of Louis Aggasiz, a famous naturalist who was also a strong proponent of scientific racism that was not rooted in Darwinian concepts of evolution. Aggasiz’s early daguerreotypes of Renty Taylor and Delia Taylor, used to support white supremacist theories of polygenism, were the subject of a lawsuit against Harvard University (who holds the daguerreotypes) in which the Taylor family petitioned to have them returned.

writing from, or if Mary Mapes Dodge was really invested in portraying her magazine as staunchly rooted in the north eastern cities, with exotic forays into the American south, the American west, and beyond. Perhaps for Dodge this magazine is primarily a North Eastern one that merely dabbles in spaces that Dodge marks as exotic and foreign. This asks viewers to reconsider what cultural elites understood as American in this era, and to understand that it may be more complicated than what is visualized in a geography text.

St. Nicholas continued to tout its international readership into at least the 1930's, publishing the images included in figures 155 and 156 in the March issue of 1930.

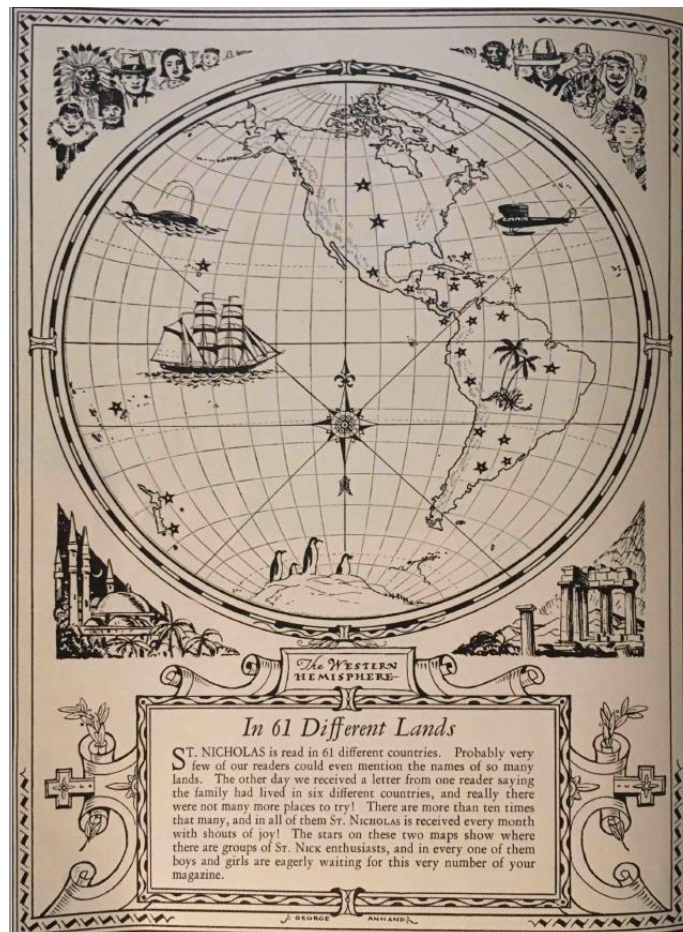


Figure 155. *St. Nicholas* (March 1930): 390. Collection of the author.

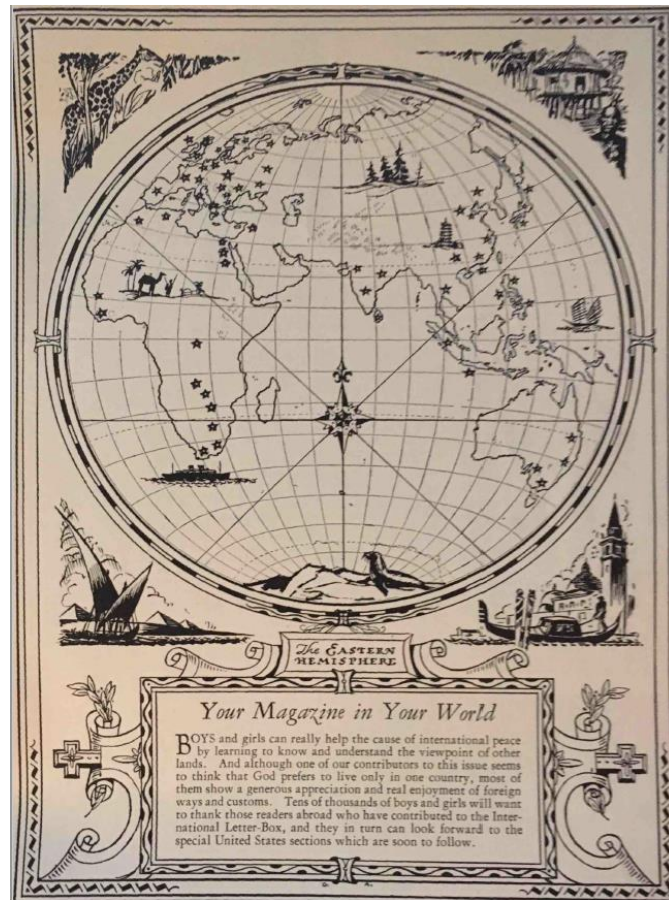


Figure 156. *St. Nicholas* (March 1930): 391. Collection of the author.

These maps, which I discovered when an issue of *St. Nicholas* ordered in August 2019 and presumed lost arrived as if by magic on my doorstep two weeks before the final draft of this dissertation was submitted to my committee, demonstrate that I'm not the only one interested in mapping the magazine's readership. It appears that in 1930 *St. Nicholas* portrayed its readership as significantly expanded, this time claiming readers in South America, Africa, and Australia, amongst other places. It would be fascinating to compare the data in these maps to that of the Letters-Box of the same year to see how they match up.

5.3 The Body of the Child and the Colonization of the Future

As I enacted and reconsidered the digital project that I completed in the second part of this chapter, I wondered at the effectiveness of using a map at all to chart readership. Unlike Janicke, who highlighted the benefits of digital mapping, Johanna Drucker suggests that “such graphical tools are a kind of intellectual Trojan horse, a vehicle through which assumptions about what constitutes information swarm with potent force.” Drucker justifies this statement, continuing: “These assumptions are cloaked in a rhetoric taken wholesale from the techniques of the empirical sciences” so much so “that they pass as unquestioned representations of ‘what is.’”³⁰² I find myself, in the end, taking Drucker’s side in the debate. After all, location gives no indication of identity or citizenship. In participating in the project, I, too, was simplifying the world and the identities within it, repeating the flaws inherent in the illustrations of globes that the beginning of the chapter critiques: I was making the world small enough to comprehend in a new way, but in doing so erasing the complications of a world large enough to house billions of people, thousands of cultures, and hundreds of languages. My project also makes the mistake of equating the nation with the land, a flaw inherent in maps in general. The digital mapping project does allow me to differently organize information and it provides further evidence for the argument that magazines like *St. Nicholas* wave a banner of cosmopolitanism while, ultimately, serving the needs of white supremacy in the American modern era. But, ultimately, I’m not sure how much closer it gets us to the answers this dissertation truly seeks.

³⁰² Johanna Drucker, “Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display,” *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2011): 1.

This section of the chapter gestures – like so much in this project – towards the future. It considers gaps left open and paths of thought yet to be explored. So much of this dissertation has been a process of selection, of choosing what, in this vast archive I constructed, I should explore and what I should leave behind. Each of these choices represents a kind of necessary failure. They are failures because in choosing to study one subject, I had to leave others behind. They are necessary because without making that choice, I don't think I could have completed the project. One of the failures is my failure, really, to discuss race in all of its complexities. In choosing to focus on the black/white dyad in children's magazines I made my archive manageable: it would have been, I think, truly impossible in the scope of this dissertation to discuss the variety of complicated representations of race and ethnicity beyond visualizations of blackness and whiteness – the archive is just too big. Another missed, yet crucial, intersectionality is that of gender. To engage gender, however, would have necessitated adding at least six new magazines to the study – those written for gendered national readerships of boys or girls. Like my digital project, each of these elisions has allowed me to draw conclusions and make arguments – but I wonder if, again like my digital project, these conclusions and arguments are thus rendered faulty and slim.

One question at the heart of this dissertation has been: what is the nation? Then, that narrowed to what is the American nation in this moment of cultural turmoil at the turn of the twentieth century? Then, who gets to be a citizen, and are they a citizen or a subject? And who gets written out of these definitions, and how? While each of these represent significant decisions and narrowings of my archive, this dissertation has proceeded under the conviction that not only are children and children's media part of this complicated debate, they're essential to it. Even at its heart the concept of nation is connected to children and childhood. As Kelen and Sundmark note, "Etymologically, 'nation' refers us to the idea of 'being born' and thereby localizes and

connects a prime term in identity to the personal origin of those individual subjects for who the nation (their nation) is home.”³⁰³ But, as with children, the birth is only the beginning.

One way to understand imperialism is the land-grab model, a horizontal spread of a nation’s control across the map – a nation’s conquest of landed territory. That’s akin to understanding the nation’s physical landed territory. Historically, people have conceived of a nation in many different ways. In pre-modernist thought, the nation was land - owned and at the service of a monarch or a small group of aristocrats. Anthony D. Smith argues that after the French revolution, Western communities began to conceive of a nation not as its land but as its people.³⁰⁴ Imperialism as a concept is thus interesting, especially in terms of children and childhood, because on its surface it is about a government seizing more land, but the dilemma becomes that land comes with the people who live on it. The real question of imperialism becomes: what does the nation, understood as its people, do with the people that come with the land it/they have seized?

If we understand a nation as is people, we see that the “horizontal” model of control, of merely seizing land, does not do much to address the new questions that are introduced, such as: are these new people on seized lands citizens, or subjects? Do they become part of the new nation, or do they become something else? Do they fall into Eppler’s “good (Christian) order,” or do they become marked as Edelman’s synthome – that which needs to be wiped from the national organism, a threat to the national body and its genetic future? Or, again, something else?

One way to begin to address these questions is to stop understanding imperialism as merely horizontal, as just acquisition of land, and start to consider how persons in power put mechanisms

³⁰³ *The Nation in Children’s Literature: Nations of Childhood*, ed. Christopher Kelen and Björn Sundmark (London: Routledge, 2013), 1.

³⁰⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2013), 17.

in place to ensure that imperialism worked vertically as well into a 4th dimension: time. All of my research has suggested to me that the child is the method by which this kind of colonization of the future is achieved, and that children are thus critical to an imperial project. In order to ensure the success of the imperial endeavor, the conquering nation must ensure the longevity of their power by setting up mechanisms that preserve that power in the future. This preservation, I argue, was achieved by colonizing the body of the child: filling it, metaphorically and in visual terms, with ideas that they are asked to embody and carry into the future as they grow to be adults, so that they may live those futures. Although studies of early twentieth century white supremacy, eugenics, and imperialism focus on adult bodies and minds, these militant projects drew on the understanding of children and childhood as the base from which to launch their fleet. In order to project their ideas into the future, they needed a wellspring of children's bodies to carry it, and literature to educate them in those ideologies. My future work will explore that argument within children's media, but also beyond it.

My own plan for this project is to expand this dissertation into a book project entitled *Images of the Future: Childhood, Race, and Science at the Turn of the 20th Century*. This book will study the centrality of childhood to three cultural phenomena indicative of modernity at the turn of the twentieth century: white supremacy, eugenics, and imperialism. It argues that each of these cultural institutions use the metaphor of the child-as-future as the base of their cultural projects and ambitions. This project will expand beyond children's media to explore the portrayal and leverage of childhood in powerful "adult" archives as well, especially those connected with eugenics, white supremacy, and imperialism. Childhood, however, will remain central to the study.

One method by which I will begin to fill in the "gaps" of this dissertation is to return to the child reader that I engaged in the introduction of this dissertation. I will explore the children as

themselves agents of the magazines they read, figures that I understand as at once colonized by their reading as well as colonizers themselves. Children's magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were invested in expanding readerships – an act of imperial aggression on a different scale. This expansion was done for obvious capitalist reasons: the more children who subscribed, the more money the magazine made. However, this spread of the magazine to more and more subscribers in more and more territories can also be understood as an imperialist system: as with the idea of imperialism, the more “territory” the magazine or empire controls, the more money it brings in, enriching the empire/magazine and allowing it to do its work. In many ways we can understand these magazines in terms of empires: with an editor at the helm in place of a dictator or president, the goal of the magazine is the same as the imperial projects that mark the early twentieth century, except with child readers instead of land as the territory to be seized. Understanding magazines as empires with imperialist agendas under the guise of loving educational material helps us to understand not only magazines, but further imperial thought and agenda in the early twentieth century. Because, as I have argued, imperialism is more than just the seizure of land and resources, but instead is an agenda for organizing the homeland and foreign spaces, and ensuring that the system persists into an idealized future.

While empires in imperialist conceptions were understood as spreading their control via military conquering and expansion, children's magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were invested in using their current subscribers to spread the message about the pleasures of subscribing to the magazine.³⁰⁵ This, of course, was also a common method of evangelical

³⁰⁵ This is true of “adult” magazines as well as those for children.

imperialism, spreading the “good word” of the magazine/nation from converts to those who are yet to be converted. Children’s magazines, like missionary forces, encouraged children to act as imperial agents on behalf of the magazine, encouraging them to get new subscribers to better their own lives and also the lives of the readers. Children were also encouraged to pass on their magazine to other readers, whether or not they could subscribe, expanding the magazine readership to aspiring subscribers who could not yet afford it. In this way the children become at once the colonized and the colonizers, first adopted into the readership – a valuable addition to the magazine territory – as well as the colonizer, encouraged to expand the magazine “territory” which first adopted them. Not only does this use imperial and capitalist rhetorics to build the magazines readership, but at the same time convinces child subscribers of the pleasures and benefits of imperial tactics, so much so that they become themselves participants in the imperial scheme.

Magazines further enticed child readers to view imperialism positively by encouraging them to be imperial agents themselves as sellers of magazine subscriptions. While many magazines encouraged child readers to sell the magazine for the readership, evidence of the incentives provided to children to sell the magazine are rarely preserved. Included as “additions” to the magazine and frequently printed on inferior paper within or as a part of the advertising papers, these aspects of magazine culture were marked textually as outside of the magazine itself as pieces which could be thrown away, which they frequently were.³⁰⁶ The American Antiquarian Society

³⁰⁶ The paper on which the *St. Nicholas* Premium List is printed is thin and flimsy, very different from the glossy, weighted paper on which the numbered pages of the magazine are printed. Close observation shows that the ink used in the advertisement for “SCOURIN[G] SOAP” on an adjoining page have, over time, bled into the premium list and marked it permanently. This difference in paper is important and communicates/scripts the action of the readers, suggesting to them that it may be thrown out with the advertisements, while the story pages should be kept and preserved.

maintains a copy of the St. Nicholas Premium List from 1873-4 (the first year in its run), which has been partially reproduced in figure 157. *The Brownies' Book* printed its short premium list in the pages of its magazine, which has been reproduced in figure 158.

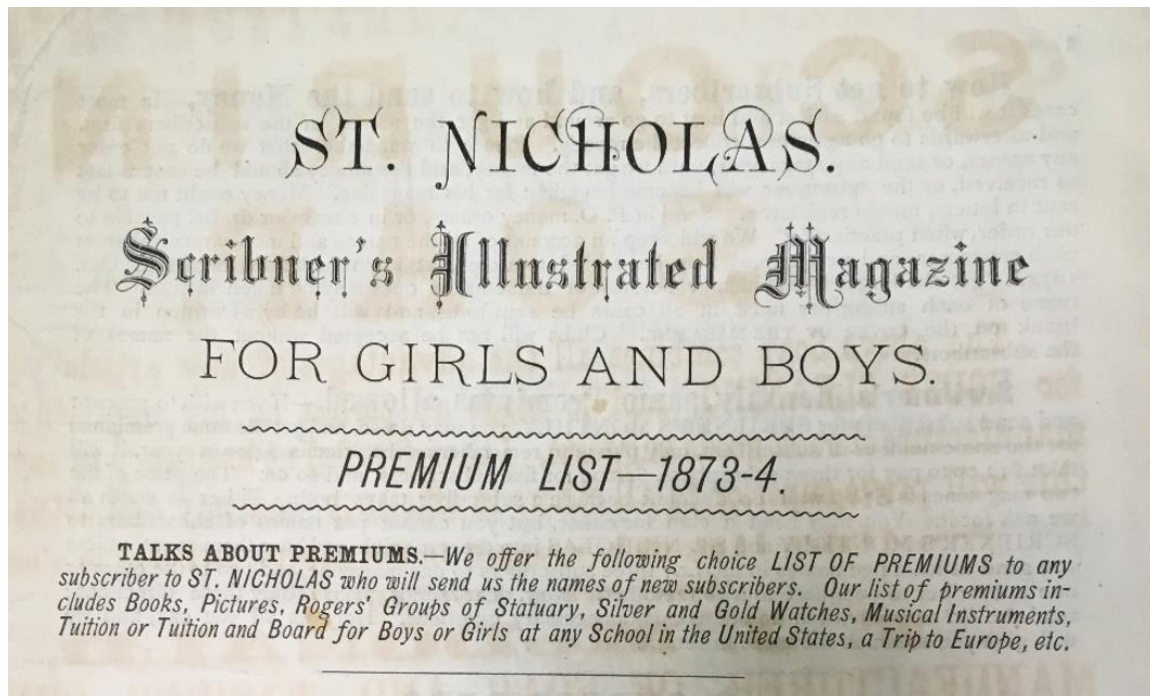


Figure 157. *St. Nicholas Premium List 1873-4, 1.* Charles Scribner's Sons Publishing.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

A CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST

THE BROWNIES' BOOK should have a hundred thousand subscribers and should be read by a million children who especially need its inspiring pictures, stories and news of colored youth.

To introduce this magazine to many new readers we are launching a SPECIAL CIRCULATION CAMPAIGN and, in addition to regular liberal commissions to agents, we offer championship medals on the following terms and conditions:

100 Championship Medals

50 GOLD MEDALS

To the person in each State or Territory of the United States who sends us the largest number of subscriptions to THE BROWNIES' BOOK mailed to or delivered at our office on or before July 1, 1921 (provided the highest is not less than 25 annual subscriptions), we will send a beautiful Championship Gold Medal, besides paying the usual agent's commission. The subscription price is \$1.30 a year. Foreign subscriptions \$1.75 a year.

50 SILVER MEDALS

To the person in each State or Territory of the United States who sells the largest number of copies of THE BROWNIES' BOOK bought on or before July 1, 1921 (provided the number of copies totals not less than 250), we will send a beautiful Championship Silver Medal, besides allowing the usual agent's commission. The sale price is 15¢ a copy.

The contest is open to any man, woman, boy or girl.
In case of a tie for any prize, each tying contestant will receive a prize identical with that tied for.

\$50 Scholarship for Four Years

To the person who makes the best showing in this Championship Contest a scholarship of Fifty Dollars a year for Four Years is offered by Mr. Thomas J. Calloway, a business man of the race, who is anxious to see THE BROWNIES' BOOK widely read and who desires to encourage the youth in industry and zeal. To win the scholarship it is necessary to win a gold or silver medal. The \$50 a year will be paid to the school to which the winner goes for education.

Write at once for agent's terms, subscription blanks, sample copies and current copies to sell.

DU BOIS and DILL, Publishers
2 West 13th Street New York, N. Y.

Figure 158. *The Brownies' Book* (May 1921): advertisement pg. 2.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

The premium advertisement for *St. Nicholas* reads “We propose to give Premiums to those subscribers, boys and girls, parents and teachers, who feel an interest in our success, and who desire to recommend the magazine to their friends, and who will take the trouble to procure and forward the names of new subscribers. This is fair and generous on both sides. The price of the magazine is kept the same to all, and we pay for the loving service rendered.” The magazine is here is marked as its readership, just as the nation is sometimes marked as its people. It continues, “We prefer to let the magazine speak for itself – those who have subscribed for it and read it, can best tell others what it is...”

While the front page of the premium list notes that readers interested in the premiums should merely send the “names of subscribers,” page two gives more details and notes that “it will be found easiest and best to go around and get the names of the subscribers first, and afterwards to go again and collect the money. Please to remember that we do not enter any names, or send any magazines, until we get the money, and the money should be sent as fast as received, or the subscriber will become impatient for his magazine.” This is interesting in part because the child is working as banker here, or as trustee of the magazine’s money. The premium list instructions conclude: “Help us all you can, and we will give you so much more in return.”³⁰⁷ The premiums offered to the sellers of *St. Nicholas* are quite varied, but aimed, apparently, at a child audience. The least valuable premium, offered to procurers of three subscribers, is “a set of SIXTEEN BEAUTIFUL COLORED PICTURES, mounted on white paper...ready for framing or the portfolio.” The prizes quickly escalate in value, providing the opportunity to own books, gold watches, and, for 300 subscribers, a piano (figure 159).



Figure 159. *St. Nicholas Premium List 1873-4*, 13. Charles Scribner’s Sons Publishing.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

³⁰⁷ Children were also allowed to send subscribers to Scribner’s Monthly to add to their premium list. As *Scribner’s Monthly* was the “parent” magazine to *St. Nicholas*, the money all went relatively to the same place, even though *Scribner’s Monthly* cost \$4 a year to *St. Nicholas*’s \$3.00. Ibid, 2.

The most interesting premiums are those that come on the last page of the list, which are marked as most valuable: “Full Tuition, or Full Tuition and Board AT ANY SCHOOL OR ACADEMY IN THE U.S.” as well as “A Trip To Europe.” The premium packet details: “We have arrangements in view whereby we can offer as a premium, for obtaining subscribers to *St. Nicholas*, to those girls and boys, young ladies or gentleman, desirous of earning their own education.” The premium packet continues:

Those who wish to try this plan of earning an education will find it one of the easiest, and yet the most *self-reliant* and *independent* methods ever yet offered to the youth of America. Upon writing to us, designating the institution at which attendance is desired, we will reply by letter, stating the number of subscribers necessary to be obtained in order to pursue any prescribed course, and also giving any other information that may be needed.³⁰⁸

The advertisement for the trip to Europe is vague, nothing that 50 to 500 scribes are required, and that “Particulars made known on application,” perhaps suggesting that the canvasser must make it clear which countries they which to visit and for how long, and the *St. Nicholas* editorial team will let them know how many subscriptions are required.

Paul B. Ringel in his book *Commercializing Childhood* reads these kinds of incentives as part of the magazine’s role in ushering the child into the world of commercial culture, suggesting that the magazines were a force which “defin[ed] and legitimitiz[ed] young readers’ expanding roles as consumers.”³⁰⁹ However, in enticing the child reader of the magazines with lavish prizes and the rhetoric of “growing” the magazine “family” into “unseen realms,” magazines also encouraged child readers to become imperial agents within the American landscape, to see the

³⁰⁸ *St. Nicholas Premium List 1873-4*, Charles Scribner’s Sons Publishing, 13.

³⁰⁹ Paul B. Ringel, *Commercializing Childhood: Children’s Magazines, Urban Gentility, and the Ideal of the Child Consumer in the United States, 1823-1918* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 4-5.

imperial spread of magazine capitalism as both intimate and positive, and to visualize themselves as evangelical agents of the magazine's good work. The question is thus not merely an economic one, but also one about the child body as both imperial object and agent, at once colonized in illustrative form and colonizing as it is sent out to capture more readers within the American community.

While magazines visually promoted an ideology of white supremacy and imperialism to child readers, they were simultaneously cultivating the American children - both imagined on the page and the imagined child reader — as the vehicle of imperialism itself. The children visually presented in these magazines, both racially essentialized and functioning as a visual representation of their race's future potential, becomes nothing more than the vacuous shell through which white supremacy, American imperialism, and more and more children's magazines are sold to generations of child readers particularly disposed to love them. I am curious, in future research, to see how children are likewise leveraged in eugenic and other white supremacist systems to sell — figuratively and literally — these ideologies to an American public struggling to understand its identity at the turn of the twentieth century.

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