Babes in the Woods: Wilderness Aesthetics in Children’s Stories and Toys, 1830-1915

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Abstract
Representations of nonhuman wild animals in children's stories and toys underwent dramatic transformation over the years 1830-1915. During the earlier part of that period, wild animals were presented to children as being savage and dangerous, and that it was necessary for them to be killed or brutally constrained. In the 1890s, an animalcentric discourse emerged in Nature writing, along with an animal-human symbiosis in scientific child study that highlighted childhood innocence, resulting in a valuing of wild animals based upon their similarity to humans. This article will describe the aesthetic devices of children's stories and play materials in relation to the dominant, emerging, and residual ideas about the wild communicated by adults to children through these means.

Keywords
animal-human relations, animals, childhood, childhood innocence, children's literature, culture of childhood, history of child study, history of childhood; teddy bear, wilderness aesthetics

The late-seventeenth-century European legend of Valentine and Orson tells how, after the pregnant Empress is banished to the forest, she gives birth to twin sons. Orson is stolen by a she-bear whose savage inclination to kill him is tempered by instinctive maternalism; instead she nurtures and rears him alongside her own cubs. He grows into a synthesis of bear and human, with extreme strength and cunning that define him as a creature of the wild. The underlying conflict of the story is resolved by Valentine, who was found and raised as a prince. He conquers the legendary wild man of the forest who, unbeknownst to him, is his brother. In an 1858 children's picture book version, Orson, after being defeated by Valentine, becomes his servant (Valentine & Orson, 1858). His fondness for Valentine and the fact that he subsequently follows him everywhere signals that, with adequate acculturation and breeding, even an animal-human has the capacity for faithfulness akin to that of a companion dog. Despite Orson's taming and his equal claim to the throne, his
animalness maintains him as an outsider to fully human culture; he is fit only to serve it.

The resolution of the dichotomous and antagonistic relationship between culture and Nature through the supremacy of the former is a story device that pre- and postdates this particular legend. Fear of the outcome of human-wild miscegenation is represented by the wodewose (wild man) of cultural lore, who, from the sixteenth century on, is a fearsomely repulsive creature with cannibalistic and lecherous tendencies (Goldsmith, 1958). Chronicles of human children reared by nonhuman animals reveal the ambivalent expressions of loathing and desire toward the wild in their being viewed as both threatening to, and revealing of, human nature (Benzaquén, 2006; Newton, 2002).

Children's artifacts are sites of the reproduction of adult beliefs, values, and actions and as such they provide a means for exploring the history of ideas about animal-human relationships and how these have been transferred and transformed across generations and geography. In this article, I analyze depictions of nondomestic animals in children’s play materials and stories in relation to dominant and emerging aesthetics of the wild as presented in scientific, theological, and popular sources. Wilderness aesthetics refer to representations of beliefs and ideas through devices that utilize affective responses to render Nature understandable to humans (Carlson, 1993). Aesthetic techniques in children’s stories include the use of textual formulations that provoke in readers and listeners an emotional response to the wilderness subject. Visual representations, whether pictorial or in the material form of toys, evoke “concepts, perceptions, reflections and emotions” about Nature in a sensory form not capable of being expressed through words and not subordinate to text (Donald, 2007, p. viii).

In this article, I analyze children’s play materials and stories for the period 1830 to 1915. I systematically searched Ladies’ Home Journal (1899-1907) and the Washington Post (1902-1904) for stories about the wild intended for children’s consumption. I located stories in children’s picture books, periodicals, and annuals (such as Boys’ Own Annual, Tiny Tots Annual, and Little Folks) through catalogue and shelf searches of collections housed at the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books, and the Eileen Wallace Children’s Literature Collection. I located additional materials via used bookstores and personal holdings, Web sites, and secondary sources. I have not made an exact count of the books and stories I examined, but I estimate it to be in the multiple hundreds.

The method of research I employed in the selection and examination of the materials consisted of two stages. Each stage involved a systematic review of
the materials available, but differed in terms of the questions asked. Stage one consisted of reading through the materials to identify the explicit and implicit messages produced through visual and textual means. This approach avoided preconceived interpretations of the stories’ contents and visual representations, and the materials were not selected based on their fit with a predetermined theme. Reading through the materials revealed a clear emphasis on particular beliefs about wild animals that underwent a shift by the cusp of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Stage two consisted of reexamining the materials with this knowledge in mind—what Eisner refers to as the “prefigured focus” (1991, p. 33). This did not mean selecting evidence to prove a point, but rather to locate beliefs about the wild, including contradictions, in order to identify how such patterns of thought were being transmitted to children, and their connections to broader sociocultural events and knowledge. The examples included in this paper are representative of the types found through the research.

The period 1830-1915 marks a time during which (a) published stories and factory-manufactured toys were becoming increasingly available; (b) childhood was gaining acceptance across economic groups as a specialized period of life; and (c) an emerging middle class had the means and desire to purchase materials and stories purposefully designed for children’s use. This time period is historically unique for its broad base of animal activism, public debates over humans’ relationship to animals, and, by 1915, the appearance of the idea of the animal-as-human in children’s material and ideological culture.

 Raised in the woods so’s he knew every tree,/Kil’t him a b’ar when he was only three. Davy, Davy Crockett. King of the wild frontier (Blackburn, 1955)

For most of the nineteenth century, attitudes of Anglo-Americans and Europeans toward wild animals were mainly consistent with the notion that the wilderness was a frightening and chaotic Nature that threatened human life, New World colonization, and civilization (Isenberg, 2002). This perspective was validated by theological authority, which invoked the “natural” rights of humans over animals, and by Cartesian arguments that animals were not capable of feeling pain; thus their ill treatment could raise no moral concerns (Lutts, 1990; Nash, 1982). Conquering the wild was considered necessary by members of these groups for achieving supremacy over other living beings and Nature itself. This Manifest Destiny entitled them to place their interests over the needs of any wild animals whom they thought should be killed either for
their own pleasure or to further what they saw as the country’s destiny. Thus, Davy Crockett became a nineteenth-century model for male behavior toward the wild and his 1834 life narrative regaled how commonplace animal killing was, whether fact or fantasy:

We were out two weeks, and in that time killed fifteen bears. Having now supplied my friend with plenty of meat, I engaged occasionally again with my hands in our boat building and getting staves. But I at length couldn’t stand it any longer without another hunt. So I concluded to take my little son, and cross over the lake, and take a hunt there. We got over, and that evening turned out and killed three bears, in little or no time. (Crockett, 1834, p. 175)

Wiping out wild animals from a region was reason for popular acclaim, especially when effected by youthful hunters, such as the three-year-old Davy Crockett’s killing of a “b’ar,” and the celebrated hunting prowess of one Samuel Johnson in 1888:

Samuel Johnsone is the name of a successful young hunter who lives near this village. During the present winter he has shot seven foxes. He has the skins on exhibition. Johnsone is a mere lad, and his hunting exploits have caused him to be envied by the nimrods of an older growth. Johnsone shot all the Reynards in the Catskill Mountains (New York Times, December 28, 1888, p. 3)

Crockett taps into the theme of wilderness abundance that could be harvested through an individual’s hunting skill and hard work. His self-portrayal as continuously needing to hunt bear, despite his unending engagement in manual labor for his own and others’ preservation, melds the image of a righteous man, boundless in energy and fortitude, with the act of animal killing. Theodore Roosevelt would use the same techniques in his biographies of wilderness and range hunting, to similar popular effect.

Although this aesthetic had been contested from the 1700s, it remained a dominant discourse disseminated in books, magazines, and oral stories for children and adults. Little Red Riding Hood is a classic representation of this type. Insofar as the wolf is represented as having a lascivious nature that is uncontrollable in the presence of a sexually innocent female, he is viewed as deserving his fate of mutilation and death. As an oral tale directed toward adult sensibilities, the story could easily be interpreted as a warning about the sexual danger posed to one’s community of females by unknown male visitors. But by the mid-nineteenth century, as the story became a publishing staple for children, who were now expected to be innocent of sexual knowledge, it became a literal, cautionary tale about the threat posed by real wolves to the
unarmed, and a a symbolic warning about the dangers posed by the wild in general. Between 1860 and 1870, the Red Riding Hood characters were available as paper toys (Whitton, 1986), with the wolf depicted as a snarling entity whose very large teeth reveal his true nature, despite the disguise of Grandmother’s bonnet. In the 1880s, the story was published as a moving picture book (*Le chaperon rouge*, ca. 1880). In the bedroom scene, the wolf, who is wearing Grandmother’s nightcap and scarf, sits in bed with his mouth agape and eyes wide open, reaching toward Little Red. Pulling the tab causes his upper body to move toward hers, while hers swings backward. Pushing the tab creates the reverse movement. Moving the tab quickly makes it appear that the wolf is savaging his victim. The toy offered children the vicarious thrill of encountering and escaping death by animal attack.

Some stories published for children attempted to persuade them that even nondomestic animals were to be treated well, and this was generally based on the belief that a child who was cruel to animals would grow up to be cruel to humans. Such stories, however, were rare, and the empathy they encouraged was derided as being feminine sentimentality that male children, at least, would need to outgrow. An 1830s children’s verse about a performing bear’s deadly retaliation against an abusive proprietor reiterates the contradictory beliefs held since the Middle Ages that animals, who were “dumb” because they did not possess human mental capacities, were nevertheless capable of adopting humanlike behavior. Thus, the bear of this tale is no less culpable for his attack, despite his ability to articulate a moral rationale (Maehle, 1984). This implicitly makes bears in general—not just the one in this tale—all the more dangerous, as they are not only “naturally” savage, but capable of purposefully selecting and choosing to “murder” human victims. The verse reads:

A BEAR, in gloomy forests caught,
When to politer regions brought,
Was taught to dance, look fierce, or stand,
Obedient to his master’s hand:
[. . . .]
When tricks no showers of pence could gain,
And Pug and Bruin danced in vain, -
Their master’s breast with anger burned,
His faithful followers he spurned,
And raised his club, to strike prepared,
When Bruin’s eye with fury glared,
And, springing forward, at a blow
He laid his base oppressor low;
His paw upon the victim’s breast,
He thus the fallen wretch address’d:
“Those who obey when kindly used,
Are roused to vengeance when abused;
Tyrants must always be abhor’d;
Then take from me thy just reward.”

He ceased—up his foe he rush’d
And life from that vile bosom crush’d. (Hall, ca. 1834, pp. 64-65)

The hunting ethos validated and legitimized killing wild animals, not only for bodily survival but also for sport. A 1900s adventure story for children printed in *Ladies’ Home Journal* (“Blue River Bear”) epitomizes American’s loathing of the wild, along with the place of young males in its subduing. The story features fourteen-year-old Balser, “the happiest boy in the Indiana, for he owned a carbine, ten pounds of powder, and lead enough to kill every living creature within a radius of five miles” (Caskoden, 1900, p. 12). On Balser’s first hunt, he is chased by a male bear who Balser manages to wound with a shot to the neck. The bear turns on Balser, but “although his left arm had been terribly bitten” (p. 12), Balser is able to kill him. The aesthetic device turns on the youthful Balser running from a bear, then becoming a man by his courage and resilience in seeking revenge against the perpetrator of his injury. The accompanying illustration showing Balser shooting at the injured but still vicious bear as it is harassed by the boy’s dogs is intended to make visual the danger he faced. Balser and his father then search out the bear’s mate, and find her at the mouth of a cave. Their conquest is described with relish: “[T]he report of the two guns echoed through the forest almost at the same instant and the great she-bear fell over on her side, quivered for a moment and then died” (p. 12). The she-bear’s death scene highlights Balser’s strength of character, with no indication of whose shot killed the bear; Balser becomes the equal of his father—a hero for the magazine’s young male readers to emulate.

In the same year that “Blue River Bear” appeared, the gentle Golliwogg could be heroized for young children—without irony—as a bear slayer in the Great White Hunter tradition. While he and his Dutch Doll companions are on an Arctic trek to discover the North Pole, a polar bear thrusts its head into their tent (Upton & Upton, 1900). Although the bear’s face expresses more curiosity than menace, the girls are terrorized, and the potential threat to their lives ends with a shot from Golliwogg’s gun. The remorselessness of his act is heightened by the group’s dining on the bear’s meat, not because of need but as a treat. Their consuming the bear heightens the story’s aesthetic of violence, and this defilement denies the animal’s sanctity in either life or death.

Young readers of the children’s section of the 1902 *Washington Post* could also find the Great White Hunter discourse directed specifically toward them.
The story, about children playing at being indoor safari hunters, provided instructions to readers on how to carry out the game themselves, including how to construct an imitation shotgun “adapted for either large or small game” and recommending the use of real ammunition:

If a dozen or so small shot, say No. 6 or 8, is used instead of a marble for the birds, rabbits, and other small game, and a single buckshot is used for the large game, it will add to the sport. Set up your animals in any position you choose, and take turns shooting, using any sort of ammunition you like. The boy who can bag the most game before the animals are all knocked out is the best sportsman. One elephant, lion or bear is equal to three of the smaller animals. (Washington Post, November 20, 1902, p. 44)

The story’s blending of realism and fantasy is an aesthetic that aids child players to experience the imagined killing of animals as a pleasurable pastime, one that will replace the boredom of a rainy afternoon—a pleasure augmented with handling, loading, and firing live ammunition.

Animaltainment

The enactment of human superiority over wild animals is also manifested through their display in exotic collections, circuses, and shows (Hahn, 1988;
Rothfels, 2002). In such venues, they are subjected to control over every aspect of their being and are variously used for entertainment purposes ranging from the innocuous to the hideously cruel. Panorama and pop-up books became available in Western Europe from the 1870s and their pictorial representations of the animal displays available at zoological gardens, circuses, and menageries provided children with an aesthetically pleasing and risk-free opportunity to symbolically participate in animal captivity. The three-dimensional *The lion’s den* (ca. 1880) shows a caged lion leaping through a hoop held by a woman. The illustrated scene of thick iron bars enclosing the lion and trainer, and barren of any decorative elements, highlights the danger posed by the lion to the audience, and the daring of the trainer. *In the menagerie* (ca. 1875) has a fold-out page showing a tethered giraffe, caged lions and birds, and a mounted alligator’s body; *The lively apes* (ca. 1880) is a moveable pop-up book showing two well-dressed children watching the antics of caged monkeys (Whitton, 1986, pp. 162 and 172).

From the early eighteenth century into the mid-twentieth, the bear pit was a popular site of animaltainment. These enclosures ranged in diameter from fifteen to twenty feet, and were fitted with a tall wooden pole for the bears to climb (Hahn, 2003; Ritvo, 1987; Rothfels, 2002). The front cover of the 1858 children’s book *Puck & Peasblossom in London* provides a picturesque illustration of the pit in the London Zoological Gardens. The pink roses and elegantly dressed women that partially obscure and soften its cement walls inform readers that viewing the bear pit is not to be mistaken for the now illegal bear-baiting pastime of the lower classes but is an acceptable middle-class leisure activity. Although bear enclosures provided humans with a sense of safety from nature’s unpredictability, this could not be guaranteed, and the potential for danger was likely part of the attraction. The bear’s antics so frighten Puck that he falls from the fence post upon which he had climbed for a better look. In the 1870s, a child in fact fell into the Sheffield Botanical Gardens pit, and the bears were “removed” in consequence (“Sheffield Botanical Gardens,” Bear Pit). Animals were even less protected from harm than the humans, as the open pits enabled spectators to hurl abuse and objects at the bears while reveling in their torment. In effect, under the auspices of zoological societies, the pits were a substitute for bear-baiting, that, while certainly less deadly, were now legitimated in this form as sites of cruelty to animals (Rothfels, 2002; Hahn, 2003).

Nineteenth-century symbolic containment of the wild was also heralded by the advent of factory-produced wild animal toys in figurations of bondage and performance. Roullet & Decamps, the French toy manufacturer, produced animal automata including a mid-1880s wood-sawing bear fitted with a wire
muzzle and with a foreleg chained to the base (Karp, 2000). Around 1900, the company produced a performing bear “that beats a drum, plays the cymbals and opens his mouth” (Vectis Auctions Ltd.). The figure’s coat is thick, dark-brown rabbit fur that gives a gorillalike appearance and thereby enhances the imagined potential for ferocity, despite the creature’s musical “abilities.” Standing on hind legs with a wire muzzle enclosing a wide-gaped and sharp-toothed mouth, the bear’s body is strapped to a marching bass drum with cymbals, and her/his long-clawed forepaws are attached to drumsticks. Objects such as these were probably intended for adult manipulation, but they nevertheless taught children that their own animal toys were not just childish things that would later need to be abandoned but were juvenile forms of acceptable adult entertainment.

Over the waters—home again—/Success has been their lot,
And when that other hunter comes—/There’s nothing to be got!!!
(Upton & Upton, 1909)

By the second half of the nineteenth century, evolutionary ideas were challenging theological explanations of Nature, including the belief that it was created for the benefit of humans. Although exploitation of the wild remained possible, it became necessary to admit a genealogical kinship with animals, and this made it more difficult to dismiss concerns for their well-being as effeminate sentimentality. Nature writers Henry David Thoreau, John Burroughs, and John Muir inspired the public to “see” their immediate natural environment as having value for emotional and physical well-being, rather than for economic benefits alone. The recent annihilation of the North American plains buffalo and the imminent destruction of Western wilderness through timber, mining, and farming settlement, were possibly the impetus for the growing celebration of the wilderness as the essence of humanity. These writers were not only encouraging a new human attitude toward the wilderness, but engaging in acts of literary conservation whereby the past would be memorialized through their publications.

By the last years of the nineteenth century, the nature writings of Ernest Thompson Seton were central to a reconsideration of the wild animal aesthetic in children’s culture. Seton emphasized respect for, not domination over, nature, with animals having an inherent right to existence. In his stories, animals have an inner consciousness as complex as that of humans, imbued with abilities for instinctual learning and lives governed by a moral order—one that might be threatening to human survival and might require humans to kill animals but which was not inherently evil (Anderson, 1986; Wadland, 1978).
Ideas about the wild were also being influenced by the growing acceptance of Jean Jacques Rousseau's seventeenth-century arguments that childhood was a period of moral innocence. This was enhanced by the adoption and adaptation of Frederick Froebel's early nineteenth-century transcendentalist philosophy of development and education. A central motif within Froebelian teachings was the school garden that provided a space for children filled with sunshine, fresh air, and plants from which they would absorb into their own developmental processes the meaning of unity between themselves and other beings (Harrison, 1895; Shapiro, 1983).

In white middle-class culture, the physical evidence of childhood innocence was chubby limbs, symbolizing infancy, the most innocent of ages; widened eyes, symbolizing ignorance of adult depravity; translucent skin, denoting purity; bare arms and legs, signalling vulnerability and asexuality. John Everett Millais' 1886 painting, *A Child's World*, later renamed *Bubbles*, is of a young white boy in middle-class attire with widened eyes watching the soap bubbles he has blown float above him. His expression of wonder signifies liberty from world-weary knowledge; the transparency of the soap bubbles mirrors his vulnerability. That the painting became the iconic advertisement for Pears' Soap attests to its emblematic status in adult consciousness.

The paradigm of childhood innocence and its inherent connection to Nature was given scientific credence in the late nineteenth century with the application of recapitulation theory to human development by the child study authority G. Stanley Hall (Ross, 1972). Based on the Lamarckian premise of inheritable abilities, recapitulation theory posited that individual development was a successive passage through the evolutionary phases of one's race (Gould, 1967). Accordingly, infants and young children were in a stage of unenlightened morality analogous to that of animals and that provided for an “instinctive love of animals and [their] understanding of them” (Drummond, 1901, p. 15). Ernest Thompson Seton was a staunch believer in Hall's theories, and he effectively incorporated the scientific discourse of childhood innocence into an atavistic perspective of the wild in which young animals were more like humans than their adult counterparts. Seton's Woodcraft association for boys, the precursor to America's Boy Scout movement, attempted to harmonize human male development with that of animals. Seton's prolific output and the popularity of his writings gave broad dissemination to this biologically deterministic outlook, which fueled an already existing desire to embrace the wild as a kindred spirit.

One of the most effective characterizations of inherent animal-child synthesis was Seton's *Johnny Bear* (1904). Johnny, a lame bear cub, is captured by Yellowstone Park employees as he and his mother eat garbage. When Johnny's
mother abandons him, he is cared for by Norah and becomes a docile pet who desires cuddling and soothing like a young child. But, unlike real pet bears, who grow up to become a danger to humans, Johnny’s human-childlikeness is intensified by his having a tubercular condition. Then, replicating the nineteenth-century trope of childhood death, Johnny’s innocence is forever preserved by his dying while resting in Norah’s lap.

The uniting of the sublime wild aesthetic with that of innocent childhood created, by the cusp of the twentieth century, a belief in a natural kinship between animals, especially young animals, and children, who in their naiveté and guilelessness were superior to adult humans. An earlier proposition that the innocent child was a moral antidote to the depravity of adults (Calvert, 1992) was now extended to animals, who were symbolically imbued with the power to guide and educate children, and who could share with them the joys and pains of childhood. The increasing merging of childhood innocence into ideas about the wild resulted in the production of stories and material goods for children that emphasized a more gentle nature. However, it did not result in a wholesale or abrupt end to the belief about a dangerous wild. Rather, there was a blending of both aesthetics, which manifested itself as a “fractured consciousness” (Donald, 2007, p. vii) toward the wild.

Within children’s story and toy culture, this meant that wild animals could be represented as engaging with humans rather than acting against them, alongside residual messages of the dangerous wild. In the 1890 Barnum & Jumbo A.B.C., animal circus scenes are presented for teaching letters. “A” for animals shows an elephant in leg irons while “B” for bears shows them sans muzzles or chains; one is dressed as a woman and waltzes with a tuxedoed man, as both hold onto the trainer’s whip; others are shown trainerless as they climb a ladder, perform a handstand, and take a boxer’s stance. That bears could now be objects of entertainment because of their humanlike abilities, rather than because of their savagery, is also conveyed in the verse: “Bears which from Russia were brought/To play and to dance and to skate they were taught.” A day in the zoo (ca. 1900) imparts an exotic serenity with its images of families entering the zoo under a canopy of uncaged, brightly colored parrots and enjoying a ride on an unfettered elephant. The presence of caged tigers and monkeys is a reminder that some animals still required enclosures for human safety.

Stuffed-cloth wild animal toys produced by the German company Steiff (a felt manufacturing company) from 1880 were the first such products to be successfully mass-marketed. Unlike the earlier toy animals created by Roullet and Decamps, those by Steiff were clearly created for children and were devoid of explicit savagery. Its first toy was a small elephant adorned with a felt saddle,
manufactured in 1880; eight were sold (Pfeiffer, 2005). The elephant quickly became a major product line for the company, with 596 sold in 1885. In 1886, the company produced a stuffed-cloth monkey. Between it and the elephant, 5066 of the products were sold. The next year, production was diversified to include donkeys, horses, camels, and pigs. By 1890, Steiff was manufacturing thirteen different animals, all available in multiple sizes and some as pull or push toys.

On the one hand, these soft-bodied, mutely coloured toys marked a shift toward considering young children’s contact with the wilderness in the form of play objects as a benignly pleasant activity. On the other hand, they were still grounded within the aesthetic framework of a captive wilderness and servitude to humans in their being bedecked in saddle cloth, bridle, collar, or other type of harness. Monkeys, because they were considered analogous to African persons, were dressed in the servant’s clothing of a coachman or wagon driver. Steiff retained minor vestiges of the dangerous savage iconography with its 1892 skittles set, which had a stuffed bear figure wearing a red jacket with gold trim, chained through its nose to the peg; its 1899 naked dancing bear was similarly chained to a pole (Maniera, 2001). In both cases, however, the bears are passive rather than rancorous beings.
Can you feel the love tonight?/The peace the evening brings
The world, for once, in perfect harmony/With all its living things.
(Rice, 1994)

The upholding of the dangerous wild aesthetic was not long lasting once the teddy bear made its appearance. The toy’s mythical origins reside in President Roosevelt’s November 14, 1902, refusal to shoot an adult female bear during a Mississippi hunt. The bear had been chased for miles by dogs, and when she became trapped in a water hole, she was brutalized by them and knocked unconscious by the esteemed African-American hunt guide Holt Collier. Collier then roped the bear to a tree, and Roosevelt was summoned to shoot it. He refused to do so because the bear had been caught by another and beaten unconscious; he told his hunt manager to “put it out of its misery,” which was done by knife (Washington Post, November 15, 1902, p. 1; New York Times, November 15, 1902, p. 1). The carcass was slung over a horse and taken back to the camp, where it was weighed in at 235 pounds, a size described as lean, and butchered; the bear’s meat was consumed over the next two evenings and her paws roasted for Sunday’s dinner (Washington Post, November 17, 1902, p. 1).

A political cartoon depicting Roosevelt refusing to kill the bear himself, drawn by Clifford K. Berryman, was published on the front page of the November 16 Washington Post. In this image, the bear is a large animal whose eyes suggest fear and who pulls strongly against the rope wrapped around her neck. The circumstances of the bear’s death would have been familiar to readers of the November 15 Washington Post, in which the hunt was described. The iconography of the cartoon illustrating the story, as one image in a four-part montage, would have been understood at the time of its publication as a satiric critique of the president’s conservationist proclamations and accusations against others of extravagant hunting practices, while himself engaging in excessive animal slaughter (Varga, 2009).

Berryman immediately began to use the bear (whom he referred to as “Bruin,” thereby regendering Roosevelt’s hunt victim) as a critical commentator on the president’s hunting conduct. He also quickly anthropomorphized Bruin by giving him a more cublike appearance. Public enthrallment with Bruin apparently resulted in a National Press Club request that Berryman provide it with “Drawing the Line” (the name of the cartoon) for display and archival purposes, but, since he could not locate the original, he drew it anew (Mullins, p. 43). The date of this occurrence remains obscure, but likely took place between 1903 and 1906. The differences between the first and the second images are notable. In the second drawing, the scene is more pastoral than wild, and the bear’s captor more civilized than rustic. Roosevelt no longer
carries his hunting knife in readiness for the kill. The bear, whose size makes him of no use as meat, is diminutive, wide-eyed, and vulnerable, and poses no possible danger to humans. This drawing strengthens Berryman's antihunting message by merging it with the aesthetics of the sublime wild and the discourse of the morally innocent child.

These sentiments were helped along by Steiff's 1903 introduction of a bear toy. Based on the European brown bear, it had a humped upper back, rounded lower back, long front legs, large feet, long muzzle, and stitching to represent claws (Cockrill, 2001). While made of stuffed cloth and covered with mohair plush, it was a stiff-rod jointed toy that was intended to appear crawling on four legs or standing upright on two. This bear was introduced to the American marketplace via a New York toy fair in 1903. The toy was reinvented in 1906 as innocent child by the Mitchom Toy Company. In this version, rods were not inserted into the body and the bear's appearance was clearly infantile, with chubby limbs, largish head, low-set, wide-spaced eyes, and round torso; its coat was softer and its hump had been reduced (Maniera, 2001). These characteristics made the toy remarkably similar in appearance to Seton’s illustrations of Johnny Bear, and it was the style that quickly became popularized first as Teddy's bear, and then as the teddy bear.

By 1907, the teddy was a normal companion of childhood, gracing nurseries, cereal advertisements, and musical scores. The 1907 Moving picture teddies, a children's flip book, depicts teddylike bears who, even as adults, are dressed as if children and romp childlike in pastoral scenes and, together with human children, have a tea party, catch butterflies, sled, and roller-skate. Recalling Millais’ painting, discussed earlier, one of the scenes, also titled Bubbles, is of a boy and bear blowing soap through pipes. The boy is dressed in early twentieth-century style, and stuffed animals, including the Steiff elephant, are positioned behind them. The book's maudlin verse situates the teddy as inseparable from sentimentalized childhood:

My fuzzy-wuzzy Teddy Bear
I'm very, very 'tached to you,
My fuzzy-wuzzy Teddy Bear
I don't know what I'd ever do
If you were lost somewhere.

Even bears without the teddy moniker were established by the second decade of the twentieth century in children's stories as nonthreatening creatures who, even if they were illustrated in their bare nakedness, acted as if they were kindly humans. An example is The Browns book of verse (Parker, c. 1906),
whose bear family of mother, father, and three children eats at a cloth-covered table, reads newspapers, wears spectacles, and sleeps in beds. While still wild enough to enjoy raw fish, they play as human children and celebrate a birthday with cake and candles. The eponymous Three Bears were themselves trading in their rougher behaviors for more “humane” ones.

The animal-human dichotomy of Anglo-American and European culture was not resolved once and for all, even as humans and other animals were more closely entwined in children’s stories and toys. But from this period, representations of killing and abusing wild animals as normative or comical in children’s stories slowly succumb to the pressure of anticruelty and antihunting lobbying, which was strengthened by sociocultural beliefs in a childhood innocence with an instinctive and biological tie to young animals. While stories ennobling the killing of wild animals continued to be produced and to be popular, they were principally limited to colonial themes found in boys’ periodicals, Tarzan picture books, and new but unrevised editions of Helen Bannerman’s output, which would not be purged until the antiracist activism of the second half of the twentieth century. Wild animals were consistently being presented to children as friends of humans, especially of the human child. Wild animal characters and toys were increasingly modeled on the characterization of the vulnerable Johnny Bear and his teddy bear usurper through a synthesis of the sublime wild and childhood innocence.

Figure 3. Bubbles. From Moving picture teddies (1907). Photograph courtesy of the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books, Toronto Public Library, Canada.
Although the danger threatening Peter Rabbit still remained, by now it was the animal, rather than the hunter, who was idolized. A sign of the changing times is *Golliwogg in the African jungle* (Upton & Upton, 1909), clearly intended as a retort to Theodore Roosevelt’s African expedition of animal slaughter in that same year. In this story, the animals, instead of being objects of ridicule or fear, are mostly presented as rational beings. After having an epiphany during an encounter with a lion, Golliwogg throws away his gun and renounces hunting, “for friendship is best.” He and the Dutch Dolls convince the animals to return with them to England where they could live in a zoo they planned to create and thereby find safety from “A man well known to fame” who “had started for East Africa/To shoot its biggest game!”

By the second decade of the twentieth century, stories about animals who exhibit humanlike emotions and behaviors began to appear again in school texts after an interlude that rejected the humanization of animals. An instance in William Davenport Hulbert’s *Forest neighbors*, initially published in 1900, 1901, 1902, and republished in 1914, exposes the pressures on a beaver community by hunters who repeatedly slaughter its families. *The Biography of a Beaver* follows one of the animals over the course of his life during which he experiences the loss of parents and other family to gruesome trapping deaths. The story ends with the narrator detailing, with pathos, how the beaver was killed for his pelt, which, by this point in his life, was virtually worthless economically:

> [H]e put his foot into Charlie Roop’s beaver-trap, jumped for deep water, and was drowned like his father before him. Charlie afterward showed me the pelt, which he had stretched on a hop made of a little birch sapling. It was not a very good pelt, for, as I said, The Beaver had been losing his hair, but Charlie thought he might get a dollar or two for it. Whether he needed the dollar more than the Beaver needed his skin was a question which it seemed quite useless to discuss. (1914, p. 39)

> “Mother, what we gonna do today?” (*Bambi*, 1942)

The analysis provided in this article demonstrates the shift in wilderness aesthetics over the 1830-1910 period and how such aesthetics have been communicated by adults to children in story and toy form. Such change had positive repercussions for animals in that it contributed to the strengthening of antihunting movements and animal protection activism. However, it retained and magnified the earlier valuation of animals calculated in terms of their dis/similarity to human beings. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the inclusion of wild animals within the sphere of sentimental child-
hood innocence, especially as expressed in teddy bear lore, elicited positive emotive responses based on “their” being “just like us,” and thus, within the broader sociocultural discourse, continued to deprive wild animals of any inherent worth.

The transformation of the wilderness from dangerous to sublime in children’s stories and toys is itself a method of taming, and thus controlling, the wild by remaking it into human nature. With the wilderness reconstituted into the personae of childhood innocence, animals are stripped of innate animality, with their needs becoming the attainment of human comforts and of comforting humans. Through children’s stories and play materials, adult humans are able to imagine, and convey to children, that animals have been saved from the tragedy of the wilderness. The hunting ethos is reversed, and it is the animals who become the great white hope wherein it is they—in signifying childhood innocence and its protection—who are responsible for redeeming humankind.

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Notes

1. Although no longer a dominant ideology, the belief that wild animals are culpable and capable of predetermined malice toward humans remains a residual attitude in the twenty-first century. An example are the newspaper and on-line reports of a bear having intentionally swum across an estuary and boarded a fishing boat to attack its owner; the animal’s amorality seemingly proven because he bypassed a person cleaning fish to attack an “innocent” victim (Black bear means business, 2008; Hunter 2008).

2. The golliwogg character was created by the artist and author Florence Upton. His bodily features and apparel were modeled on the minstrel stereotype of the African male, with coal-black skin color, frizzled hair, exaggerated mouth, and goggle eyes.

3. There is no record of what happened to the child.

4. The story was first published in 1901 in both Scribner’s magazine and in Seton’s collection, Lives of the hunted.
5. The original image can be viewed at http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/kidscorner/tr_teddy.htm. The revision can be found on almost every teddy bear history Web site, such as http://www.teddybearandfriends.com/archive/articles/history.html, but unfortunately it is inevitably identified (including the image held at the Smithsonian) as having been produced in 1902. The mythology that has developed through the confusion of the second with the first image is discussed in detail in Varga (in press).

6 Originally published in England and Scotland, it was published in the U.S. by 1910.

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