

Ann duCille

The Shirley Temple of my familiar

In America, Shirley Temple is often represented as a child star with "universal appeal", the perfect child everybody loves. Ann duCille argues however that this belief in the universal appeal of a "perfect" white girl is itself a sign of the privilege and hegemonic power of whiteness.

Much of the critical commentary on Shirley Temple has centered on her sexuality. In her films, Shirley Temple was often surrounded by crowds of doting adult men. The image cultivated for Temple was at once both innocent and erotic. Temple could quite safely play "a wife" to the various white father figures that populated her films. On the other hand, the African American dance legend and Temple's frequent dance partner Bill Robinson had to be kept at a safe distance from her. Black male sexuality was considered such a threat to the white girl that when the film *The Little Colonel* (USA 1935) played in southern cities, scenes depicting physical contact between Temple and Robinson were cut from the film. The relationship between Robinson and Temple was not so much that of a "dancing couple" as that between a mistress and a slave.

Shirley Temple has been a positive role model but also a source of pain. Ann duCille sees as particularly problematic the fact that her adorable perfection was construed against blackness. Casts of mostly anonymous black characters provided Shirley Temple with comedy and companionship throughout her career. She on the other hand made

them look stupid and inferior. For example in *The Littlest Rebel* (USA 1935) Shirley Temple is contrasted with the simple and inarticulate slave children who willingly defer to their white owners, have no conception of the meaning of freedom, and help the southern rebels to protect the institution of slavery.

The power of popular culture to define blackness can seem overpowering for many African Americans who have had to struggle to confront the stereotypical representations of blackness in media. DuCille argues, that the real power of whiteness is illustrated by the way many African Americans have accepted the notion that authentic blackness is illiterate and impoverished. She argues against the common tendency to view a black child's rejection of mass-mediated images of blackness as an expression of internalised racism. Such a diagnosis, duCille emphasises, confuses the reductive fictions of the screen with the complicated lives of black people, and in so doing, plays in to the hands of the dominant culture.

Mari Pajala

Greetings from Spice World! Spice Girls fans as producers and consumers

In much academic writing it has become customary to view fans as active consumers of popular culture. However, public debate on Spice Girls fans still often makes use of stereotypical ideas about fans. Spice Girls fans are easily represented as hysterical masses and pre-pubescent girls for whom fandom is a normal interlude on the way towards adult sexuality. The present article uses

Henry Jenkins's views of the productive and social nature of fandom as a tool to question these kinds of popular representations. The aim, however, is not to simply verify Jenkins's theory with new material but also to question some of his more optimistic assumptions.

The article discusses different groups of Spice Girls fans – little girls, adult heterosexual and lesbian women and men – in an attempt to find out what kinds of different meanings the group can offer for its audience. Practices discussed in the article include consumption, "confessional" fan writing (fans describing their own fandom), lesbian readings of the Spice Girls and fan fiction. The aim is to represent some of the diversity of the uses and interpretations of the Spice Girls while also noting the limits – based on for example ethnicity, sexuality and age – that govern fan activity.

Susanna Paasonen

Barbie™ Talks: Dolls, Pleasure, and the Politics of Consumption

Barbie is an icon of impossible feminine beauty, an ultimate commodity, the queen of pink. During the doll's 30 year history, a certain *signature* has been created for Barbie: it includes the trademark protected by Mattel corporation, but also sets of values like friendliness, enthusiasm, and innocence. However, this signature can also be subverted, assimilated, and attached to narratives, images and situations unacceptable for those perpetuated by Mattel.

This article looks at moments when Barbie speaks or is spoken for on pornographic

Web pages, Barbie magazines, Barbie Liberation Organization (BLO) Videos, Barbie games and other products. Looking at these different takes on Barbie's signature and public image, I look at the practices of use, interpretation and appropriation at play with the doll. What does Barbie speak for? Who can talk for Barbie?

As several critics have pointed out, Barbie is synonymous with overtly thin body ideals, compulsive consumption, and femininity coiled around appearances. But there is more to Barbie than this, namely, the pleasures derived from playing with the doll. The narrative elements marketed with Barbie, such as profession or hobby, are always left open, as Erica Rand has noted, for the user to fill in and elaborate upon. Thus the doll can be seen as a surface for different fantasy scenarios, as well as for processes of identification, role play and mirroring as depicted by Jackie Stacey in her reading of female cinema spectatorship.

Christopher Csikszentmihályi

Lara Croft in the Gallery of the Automata: Fictions intersect the rationalist agenda to model the human.

Sony Playstation's Tomb Raider, from 1996, was the first video game in 15 years to feature a female protagonist. The heroine, Lara Croft, has since become something of a popstar, particularly among teenage boys. This article looks at Croft beyond an analysis of user interaction, an analysis of the narrative of Tomb Raider, or of her importance in popular culture. Instead, it analyses Croft as part of the history of automata, including female automata, and the relationship of that history to mechanistic mod-

els of human behavior and experience.

The tools used to create Croft were first used to model human behavior. The Croft artifact thus carries some imprint of these tools, and exists only because they were made in the first place. More importantly, automata conflate the categories of human and machine, thus opening behavior and human experience to mechanistic explanations. This is important, because behavior and experience are observed by scientists who are themselves necessarily engaged in culture, and their mechanisms serve to reify aspects of that culture. While seen by scientific practitioners to be pure manifestations of universal laws, automata always represent current understanding of what it is to be a (necessarily gendered) human being. Fictional automata like Frankenstein's monster, or the robotic Maria in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, usually are unmasked or destroyed at the end of the narrative, thus helping to separate the boundaries of human and machine. Scientific models and Lara Croft do not have narrative closures, and the story they tell is essentially different.

The article looks at various moments in the history of automata from Vaucanson to Shelley and Babbage, and shows their relationships with contemporaneous technoscientific practices. By contrasting current projects with historical ones, it reveals a discourse of automata which moves freely between fiction and scientific practice, a discourse which remains strikingly familiar over one hundred years.

Tarja Laine and Remus Thei Dame:

The Girlfriend from Japan: Inflatable doll as a love partner

Love dolls, life-sized plastic dolls, are usually considered as devices for masturbation. But do these dolls have other specific functions? Love dolls offer satisfaction for instance to men that are worried about their sexual performance. A plastic doll certainly doesn't evaluate its partner's features. Women in turn seem to buy these dolls rather as a sign of sexual independence. Love dolls also may attract men that need to objectify women. Making love to a lifeless, plastic doll carries also features of necrophilia.

However, their main function seems to be the most simplistic and seemingly obvious one. Love dolls are bought mainly by lonely men looking for a relationship they otherwise cannot get. But how is this possible with a lifeless object? In a certain sense the relationship between a love doll and its user is similar to cinematic experience. Similarly as the spectator experiences the film as a real experience, the living partner of a love doll can experience the doll being a real, living partner. Love dolls can give lonely men and women looking for sexual and emotional satisfaction the illusion that they have a partner. The most important function of love dolls seems to be that they resemble real life partners. For the same reason there can also be a real "relationship" between the love doll and its live partner.