

EXAMPLE

1

Dreams of Romania

Abstract:

A Fordham Faculty Research Grant will play an important part in completing the research stage of my second book project: *Dreams of Romania*, as well as for a collection of essays I will be co-editing with Professor Jonathan Gumz of West Point. With grateful acknowledgment to prior Fordham funding, I have been able to conduct archival research at the Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde (Berlin), the Bundesarchiv-Militärabteilung (Freiburg), the Historisches Institut der Deutschen Bank (Frankfurt), the Österreichisches Kriegsarchiv (Vienna), the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv (Vienna), the Bayerische Staatsarchiv (Munich), and the National Archives Captured German Documents Center (College Park), which within the last eighteen months have resulted in three peer-reviewed articles (two published and one under review), several published book reviews related to this research agenda, as well as conference presentations and panel organizations around its theme.

Although I will continue to seek external funding both for the forthcoming writing of the book and, through the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD), my return to the Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde and Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry, I am seeking a Fordham FRG to fund travel to examine several sets of papers held by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. The Hoover Institution holds papers from Georg Spies, the Deutsche Bank's point man for petroleum exploration in Romania. These papers on the Deutsche Bank's decision to enter the Romanian petroleum market are crucial to *Dreams of Romania's* examination of evolving German imperialism (1878-1918) and its relation to the ordinary institutions and ideologies of modern western economics and politics. Furthermore, the Hoover Institution has the most extensive collection of Romanian papers outside the disorganized Romanian National Archives. The collection includes the papers of Dimitrie Ghika, Nicolae George Caranfil, and I. G. Duca, all prominent figures in Romania before and during the First World War. Finally, The Hoover Institution also retains the records of the Commission for Relief in Belgium's, which

will be an essential cornerstone for my analysis of the place of food and food acquisition in occupation regimes during the First World War. This essay will be extremely important for the collection I will be editing with Prof. Gumz. The Hoover Institution is, therefore, a crucial component to completing both my book *Dreams of Romania* and the essay collection.

Background:

As a result of previous archival work, I have written three articles. The first, “Dummes Geld. Money, Grain and the Occupation of Romania in World War I”, appeared in *Central European History* in September of 2009. The second, “‘Wo sind wir?’ Orientalism, Gender, and War in the German Encounter with Romania”, appeared in *German History* in November 2010. The third, “Water and Empire. Germany, Bavaria and the Danube in World War I”, is under review at the *First World War Studies*. In addition, I have organized a panel discussion of the relation between the experience of the First World War and the articulation of Germany’s post-war imperial visions for the German Studies Conference in Washington for 2009 and I presented a paper on German views of Romanians to the Association for the Study of Nationalities in April 2010.

The extraordinary devastation coincident with Nazi imperialism is one of the central problems of modern history. As with much of German historiography, the nagging historical question is ‘why’? From where in German history did this murderous expansionist impulse develop? To what degree was Nazi imperialism representative of continuities or some fundamental break in German history? The central figure in these discussions has long been Fritz Fischer. Fischer’s masterpiece *German Aims in the First World War* (the original title is much more evocative – *Griff nach Weltmacht*) laid out an argument about Germany’s aims in the First World War that emphasized the fundamental continuities in German imperial ambitions. Those war aims, he asserted, were rooted in Germany’s pre-war foreign political ambitions and clearly anticipated the policies of the Third Reich. Indeed, he continued, the First World War was consciously initiated by German policy makers who hoped to create by force the empire that economic and diplomatic blandishments had not. Nazism, then, was not something novel; it was not a

sudden, psychotic break in German policy. Nazi imperialism, in this reading, was a particularly bloody iteration of common German aims. While many of Fischer's contemporaries argued that World War I was the consequence of pressures outside Germany (the growing pressure of the entente, the suddenly labile constellation of power in the Balkans), historians have come to accept the continuity thesis, subject to modification. Mark Hewitson argues, for example, that Germany was not responding to the growing power of the entente, nor was it a response to frustrated ambitions, but rather a rational bid for imperial power based on an assessment of waxing German military and industrial strength. Hewitson's argument is rooted in the essential modernity of the Second Reich – the wealth, interests, and influence of Germany's industrial middle class. Other writers have sought to explain the continuities in German imperialism through examinations of the intellectual formations of this group. Woodruff Smith memorably explores the intertwining strands of economic imperialism (Weltpolitik) and emigrationist imperialism (Lebensraum) in German imperial ideology. Recently, Jennifer Jenkins and Bradley Naranch have been working on the connections between bourgeois modernity and German imperial ambitions before the First World War, and Wendy Lower and Jürgen Zimmerer have suggested strong links between Nazi rule in the Ukraine and their understanding of the European imperial experience outside Europe. Taken as a whole, these suggest a strong continuity between the Wilhelminian imperialism before the First World War and that of the Nazis in the 1940s; a continuity rooted in a bourgeois modernity of industrial expansion, social control, and discourses of racial and civilizational superiority.

Contribution:

Dreams of Romania will explore the development of Germany's ambitions, over a substantial time period, in Southeastern Europe, particularly Romania—a small state in closer proximity to Germany than Africa or the Ottoman Empire. Unlike works such as Elke Bornemann's *Der Frieden von Bukarest*, it puts the assertion of German imperial power in Romania in the context of German pre-war interests and especially the experience of total war and occupation. It is significantly more encompassing than Bornemann's analysis, but more focused on the questions of politics and empire than a work such as

Maurice Pearton's *Oil and the Romanian State* or even the more German-centric analyses of Hans Pohl ("Die Steaua Romana und die Deutsche Bank") or Gerald Feldman ("German Business Interests and Rumanian Oil in the First World War").

As such, *Dreams of Romania* will show that relations between Germany and Romania were shaped by multiple forces: the influence exerted by economic relations (with an emphasis on oil, grain, finance, and transportation), strategic and political considerations, and discursive constructions of national identity. The complexity of links between Romania and the highly developed systems of international interdependence in which they were embedded placed important limits on German ambitions to dominate Romania. That is to say, the elements of bourgeois modernity that conspired to foster German imperialism also functioned, in this case, to limit it.

The great crises of the early twentieth century – the First World War, the Great Depression, and the Second World War – shattered those wider systems of interdependence and turned the familiar instruments of more settled times – joint stock companies, military agreements, trade agreements – into the means by which Germany sought to undermine Romanian sovereignty. Thus *Dreams of Romania* studies the evolution of German imperialism and its relation to the ordinary institutions and ideologies of modern western economics and politics. The analysis of the forces that shaped and reshaped the ties between Germany and Romania reveal both continuities and discontinuities in the imperialisms of the Second and Third Reichs and insistently interrogates the liminal space between international capitalism and informal empire. Over this time period of 1878 to 1918 the German vision of Romania was gradually transformed—from little more than an exotic, "Oriental" irrelevancy from which to extract territory to mollify Russia's wounded ambitions and money to satisfy aristocratic German investors—to a valuable, modernizing ally because of Austro-Hungarian and Russian rivalry for influence in the Balkans coupled with the westernization of Romanian elites and the nation's discovery of oil. However, with Romania's entrance into World War I on the side of Germany's enemies, alliance gave way to subjugation, with Romania swiftly overrun by the Central Powers. The occupation became a colonial project *par excellence*, and the moment in which German domestic political economy most decisively influenced

German policy in Romania. Furthermore, this experience of war and occupation informed the Treaty of Bucharest that marked its end: a frank imperial enterprise intended to secure from Romania oil supplies, finances, and transit to the Near East and Black Sea—a strong yet informal empire whereby Germany would draw profit without direct political control; a semblance of bilateral relations that in fact rested on the hegemony of German military and economic interests; in reality an extension of German occupation into the post-war era.

Cost:

A Faculty Research Grant would enable my research travel to explore crucial papers maintained by the Hoover Institution. Fordham has been extremely generous with me in the past, for which I am extremely grateful. I am consciously seeking to keep the expenses at a minimum for this trip. I am seeking funding for a flight to Oakland (a cheaper airport) and I would want to travel in January, further reducing flight costs. I have relatives who live in the East Bay with whom I may stay, so there would be no need to cover a hotel. This will necessitate the rental of a small car, but this should be quite marginal. As a further consequence of the January travel time and staying with relatives I cannot make this a lengthy research trip, and am therefore seeking a rather substantial copying budget, so that I need not spend time taking copious notes on site. In this fashion, I hope to be able to make full use of the Hoover Institution at minimal cost.

Conclusion:

The support of Fordham University would be of enormous assistance in ensuring that, assuming the funding of the DAAD comes through, my research for *Dreams of Romania* is completed, enabling me to embark on the writing of the book and to submit strong applications for external funding to support this next exciting phase of my project.

EXAMPLE

2

**At the Crossroads of Commerce, Culture and Communication:
The French Café in History, from the Introduction of Coffee to the End of the French Revolution, 1600-1800**

Abstract: Cafés occupy a unique place in French culture. Yet we know next to nothing about their history. In fact, this ambitious book project will produce the first-ever scholarly analysis of the early modern French café. Through extensive original research in archives and on texts hitherto unstudied, *At the Crossroads* will chronicle the invention of the French café, explain why it thrived so quickly and debunk myths that have surrounded it for over three centuries. My study will show that, in the critical period between the seventeenth century and the end of the French Revolution, cafés not only provided the physical setting for the key developments that transformed western societies but they also contributed to shaping those. Fostering the transition to modernity—in the social, economic, literary and political realms—French cafés embodied that heady brew of commerce, culture and communication whose flavor today’s America can never seem to get enough of.

Begun in 2007 with the support of a Faculty Research Grant (in 2007) and subsequent Faculty Fellowship (fall 2008) from Fordham, this project is now entering its final phase, which will result in several scholarly articles, a monograph with a major academic press and a trade publication aimed at a general audience. The academic publishers I am targeting, with the objective to submit a complete manuscript in 2013, are the university presses at Oxford, Cambridge and the University of California, all of which have thriving series in food history and have expressed great interest in my project. I have made major progress toward this goal over the past three summers—during which I completed extensive field research in French archives and libraries—and in the course of the current academic year, during which three short-term research fellowships from Harvard’s Countway Library of Medicine, Princeton’s Rare Books Library and the Grolier Club in New York allowed me to consult rare books in their specialized collections. The findings from this research have formed the basis for my (i) forthcoming article accepted for publication in a collection of essays in France¹; and (ii) presentations on the French café at a dozen major conferences in North America and in Europe (*see* accompanying CV).

These publications, presentations and the research that supported them provide a formidable foundation for moving *At the Crossroads* forward. As such, they will allow me to capitalize on the dedicated time away from teaching a Summer FRG affords in three critical ways:

¹ “Entre histoire et mythes: les cafés à Paris,” in *Histoires de Paris, XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles*, edited by Thierry Belleguic and Laurent Turcot (Paris: Editions Hermann, 2011), forthcoming in fall 2011.

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1. it will expedite my converting the information I was able to gather as a consequence of my Harvard, Princeton and Grolier Club grants into an article on the origins of the first French cafés that I will submit in fall 2011 to the two leading history journals, the *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of Modern History*, with whose editors I have had promising conversations regarding this project;
 2. it will keep my book manuscript on track for completion and submission to the aforementioned academic presses in 2013 as I strive to be the first scholar to publish a major work on this timely, important, yet incredibly neglected topic: the history of French cafés at the crossroads of commerce, culture and communication;
 3. the combination of items (1) and (2) above along with the aforementioned presentations will strengthen the applications I will submit to a series of major external funding opportunities during the academic year 2011-12, specifically: ACLS, ACLS/New York Public Library, Institute for Advanced Study and NEH Fellowships.

Without a Summer FRG at this critical juncture, the timely submission of articles to expectant editors, the strength of my major fellowship applications, and my ambitious timeline for completion of the ultimate book manuscript (so as not to be “scooped” by another scholar) would be placed into serious jeopardy.

Background: Considering the café’s rapid rise to prominence, its quick diffusion, enduring success and critical contributions to the formation of civil society, public opinion and the *bourgeoisie*, it is puzzling that so little is known about its history. This has not deterred publishers from putting on the market a slew of popular histories of cafés and coffee—fittingly in coffee-table format—that are typically as rich in pictures and anecdotes as they are thin on analysis. The authoritative study remains an 1893 volume by French archivist Alfred Franklin.

Pilfered and repackaged many times, it has been updated only marginally. All studies so far have been derivative and have relied on a razor-thin set of tired sources. Worse, just about every writer to date has interpreted these few documents in a literal manner, almost naïve at times and always devoid of any contextualization, ignoring that most 17th- and 18th-century writings were polemical and sought to define an ideal space rather than describe existing cafés. As a result, all studies have perpetuated a series of myths about the origins and the history of both coffee and cafés. *At the Crossroads* will not only expose and rectify these myths, but will also analyze them in their own right, recognizing that many legends actually sprang forth during the 17th and 18th centuries, precisely when cafés began to spread. Because these stories shaped the representations of cafés, they conditioned what people expected from coffeehouses and therefore how they experienced them. Moreover, many legends served to

domesticate a beverage and an institution that appeared alien and exotic at first, thereby creating myths of origins that are well worth studying.

My study relies on insights and methods developed in a variety of fields that have been energized by stimulating new works. In particular, I will build upon the excellent recent studies on the history of 17th- and 18th-century English coffeehouses by Brian Cowan and Markman Ellis; on early-modern Ottoman coffeehouses by Ralph Hattox, Ekrem İşin and Cengiz Kirli, among others; and on modern French cafés by Scott Haine. In the last few decades, food and drink history has come into its own as a genuine field of study, following the lead of sociologists and anthropologists such as Sidney Mintz and Arjun Appadurai who have carved out exciting conceptual paths along which I am treading. Oddly enough, though, if in recent years nearly every conceivable foodstuff, beverage or condiment has received its own history, to this date coffee has been left out and the early modern French café has fared no better. Meanwhile, innovative studies on tobacco, drugs and medicinal substances are providing templates and insights that I find very productive for the study of coffee's history, which cannot be dissociated from that of the café. A further benefit from my approach is that *At the Crossroads* will speak to scholars in other fields in the humanities and social sciences from which I am borrowing and drawing inspiration.

This project builds on my dissertation and my first book—which focused on printers and booksellers in 18th-century France—as well as on a more recent study I conducted on the diffusion of news and the formation of public opinion in that time and place, to further my exploration of the nexus among commerce, culture and communication, which is the overarching interest driving my scholarship. *At the Crossroads* will position me firmly among a small group of historians pioneering historical research on the birth of commercial society and the rise of consumption in early modern France, which we see as having experienced during the late 17th and the 18th century a “consumer revolution” much akin to that observed in Great Britain by historians such as John Brewer and Neil McKendrick. In a critical methodological shift, this new approach aims at re-balancing cultural history towards social and economic contexts, and refocusing on individuals rather than texts (while continuing nonetheless to use the very important insights and methods brought by literary critical theory). It fits perfectly with my vision—informed by training under such historians as Robert Darnton, Anthony Grafton and Gyan Prakash—of history as a fundamentally interdisciplinary endeavor in which I strive to blend social, cultural,

economic, political and intellectual approaches in order to capture the full range and texture of human experience.

Contribution: In a work that has had a profound influence on the last generation of historians as well as humanists and social scientists, German philosopher Jürgen Habermas theorized that coffeehouses played a pivotal role in the creation of a “bourgeois public sphere.” Thus *At the Crossroads* engages and benefits a similar assortment of scholars across disciplines by putting Habermas’s theses to the empirical test. It validates some of his insights—by grounding the public sphere of the café in the commercial world of a nascent *bourgeoisie*, for instance—but also forces us to revise some of his arguments. My research shows, for example, that French cafés played a much greater and much earlier role than Habermas thought in the development of literary criticism—and therefore in the formation of an autonomous public sphere. My findings portray a public sphere developing in close interaction and synergy with official media and institutions, rather than in opposition to them, as Habermas theorized.

More generally, today’s scholars concur that cafés were critical to public discourse during the seminal period extending from the reign of Louis XIV in the late 17th century to the French Revolution of 1789, which saw public opinion arise, paving the way for democratic politics. Their conclusion may be correct, but not necessarily for the right reasons. In the absence of a thorough examination of the subject, everyone so far has relied on myth rather than on facts. As an illustration, French cafés have been intimately connected since their inception with literature and the theater. *At the Crossroads* will show that all the literature depicting cafés as a space fostering free-flowing, egalitarian discussions never attempted to describe the actual place. Instead, it should be seen as a self-serving fiction concocted by writers in their efforts to impose a new definition of the literary field as an autonomous space liberated from aristocratic patronage and royal institutions, in which writers, now posing as “authors,” would play the central role. In the process, however, writers did endow the café with tremendous cultural significance. We must sort out metaphors and representations of idealized features from descriptions of actual places, but it is also important to study how powerful representations, such as those of cafés, can ultimately create their own new reality, as exemplified by the “literary café.”

That scholars have accepted instead of examining such myths can be explained, but not excused, by the unusually scarce and extremely diffuse nature of archival material on the subject. This is due in part to the

disappearance of the key archive—containing the files of the Paris guild of café owners—destroyed by fire during the Commune revolution of 1871. For this reason the study of early modern French cafés presents daunting methodological challenges. Fortunately, during the research for my first book, in which I studied from multiple angles the activities of booksellers and printers throughout France over the entire 18th century, I have acquired inside knowledge of and extensive hands-on experience with French archives. It is my familiarity with a wide range of French archives that enabled me to look in unusual places to identify a series of alternate sources: coffeehouse bankruptcy records; surveillance reports by a branch of the Paris police in charge of spying in cafés; court cases involving coffeehouses; provincial guild archives in Marseille, Lyon and Bordeaux; tourist guidebooks and travel literature describing cafés; as well as memoirs, diaries and private letters by men and women who patronized cafés or drank the then-elite and exotic substance of coffee. Together, these documents allow me to recreate and analyze the world of early modern cafés in an original way never before attempted.

Cafés touched many aspects of people's lives. They opened up a space where people consumed and socialized, where they engaged in conversation, where they circulated and discussed news, where opinions formed and criticism flourished. Thus the study of the early modern French café must be interdisciplinary, for its history unfolded at the crossroads of global economics and small-business entrepreneurship, world history and local urban space, commercial networks, diasporas and national identities, law, medicine, religion, literature and politics, and social relations, including class and gender. It calls for scholars willing and able to combine multiple approaches. My training and earlier research for my dissertation and my first book on 18th-century booksellers and printers, which offered very similar challenges, have prepared me well, as they gave me the opportunity to develop all the necessary skills for this project.

Conclusion: This exciting, much-needed and eagerly-expected history of the French café has the potential to be a milestone for my career. A Summer FRG would be pivotal in providing timely support that will enable me to capitalize on earlier research and external grants to submit an important article to the aforementioned academic journals, a series of strong applications during the coming year for the major external awards cited, and most of all to complete in timely fashion my book-length examination of French cafés *At the Crossroads of Commerce, Culture and Communication*.

EXAMPLE

3

**The Playthings of Empire:
Exoticized Children and the Politics of French Femininity, 1780-1895**

Abstract: *The Playthings of Empire* examines 18th- and 19th-century French texts and images that feature dark-skinned children as gifts and fashion accessories. The changing representation—visual and textual—of non-European children between 1780 and 1895 produced parallel discourses of femininity and empire. My book project explores the intersection of these representations and documented cases of actual children who were brought to France from Senegal, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Morocco, India and the Ottoman Empire to be offered as travel souvenirs to upper-class French women and youngsters. By reading these narratives in juxtaposition and noting how they merge at the site of the exotic child-gift, I offer a fresh perspective on the ways in which French female identity was imbricated with empire building and the French colonial project.

If awarded, I would use my FRG to accomplish the following: 1) I would undertake a systematic study of the 18th-century fashion engravings collection of the *Estampes Nationales* in Paris in July and August of 2011, 2) I would prepare for fall 2011 submission applications for prestigious fellowships (including, but not limited to, the NEH and ACLS offered fellowships). I have already completed months of substantial archival research in France, but a thorough exploration of this particular collection will provide an accurate view of how frequently exoticized children appeared in print between 1780 and 1895. Focused research into these fashion engravings will constitute the basis for an article I plan on writing in English that will also be the first chapter of my book. I applied for several prestigious grants last year and received very encouraging feedback, convincing me that *The Playthings of Empire* has strong potential for receiving one of these awards with re-application strengthened by the research an FRG would support. I have received unsolicited requests for a book proposal from Ohio University Press and



Palgrave/McMillan; I have presented my work at several conferences and completed another article in French relating to later chapters. External funders have indicated that submitting an article in English might be the missing piece to a winning proposal, emphasizing the importance and timeliness of the research and writing a Fordham FRG would support at a critical juncture for *The Playthings of Empire* and the development of my career.

Background: Working from largely neglected 18th- and 19th-century sources, my book project asks what these children can tell us about an image of empire that depended in large part on the construction of the feminine for its success. My archival data show that owning a dark-skinned “plaything” was fashionable for many decades. The real-life non-European children whose cases I study inspired multiple novels, plays and images, as well as fictional tales in which young dark-skinned human “gifts” play central roles. Located at the intersection of French literature, colonial history and material culture, this project considers three specific cultural-historic periods: the Revolutionary Era (1780-1804), the Restoration (1815-1830) and the early Third Republic (1870-1895). The book analyzes travelogues, memoirs, correspondences, vaudeville plays, bestsellers, and archival sources from the French Ministry of Education alongside paintings, fashion plates, illustrations and caricatures. This juxtaposition of the visual and the textual reorients questions of empire towards the everyday and relocates its operations in the feminine sphere.

Contribution: This book treats previously unstudied material and brings a variety of discourses and media into dialogue, thus significantly opening our eyes to new modes of analysis and uncovering new objects of study. Below, I offer a more specific breakdown of the book’s structure, which provides a context for understanding the book’s potential contribution to the fields of fashion studies, imperial studies, women’s studies and visual culture.



PART ONE focuses on the Revolutionary Era. As stated above, I am requesting funding to work on an English language article that external funders have indicated may prove the winning element in my reapplication for prestigious fellowships, and which will also constitute Chapter 1, “Fashion and Compassion.” This chapter illustrates the ubiquitous power of the child-gift phenomenon through an examination of late 18th-century fashion plates in which a non-European child attends to a lady’s needs. Here, I examine the ways in which the plates mark a type of “evolution” from the treasured pet monkeys that had habitually adorned ladies’ laps in the 18th century. By the end of the century, these pet monkeys ceded their positions on ladies’ laps to dark-skinned children. These dark-skinned “pets” not only marked a vogue for African children as fashion accessories, but more important, they highlighted the fair complexion and thus, implicitly, the moral sensibility of their owners. Unlike their monkey counterparts, these human gifts provided ladies with the ultimate fashion accessory and signaled their charitable/motherly sensibility and superiority. I advance a political reading of the child-gift trend, placing it in a historical context in which women were themselves often depicted as commodities passed along to husbands by omnipotent fathers. Owning a dark-skinned child was a sign of wealth, but also, patently, of feminine power, expressed in clear colonial terms.

Chapter 2, “Page, Pet and Prop,” focuses on Zamore, arguably the most famous child-gift. “Zamore l’Africain” was born in India in 1762 and offered by Louis XV to his lover, the Countess du Barry. Remarkably, it was Zamore, the former lover’s gift, who sent the Countess to the guillotine. His case initiates a study of several texts and paintings detailing the practice of giving and acquiring dark-skinned children in 18th-century Europe. My reading discusses the complex rationales and methods for bringing so many children into far-flung courts for so many years. I also explain why Zamore became a fictional character in modern French literature, notably in several of Dumas’ works, as well as in recent popular biographies penned by twenty-first-century French women authors. The tension between early modern texts and recent French



bestsellers in which the real becomes mythologized demonstrates the scope of the phenomenon and points to the unresolved status of race in the French imaginary.

PART TWO focuses on the Restoration period. Despite the dissolution of the Old Regime, exoticized children continued to appear both as gifts in French narratives and in the sphere of feminine cultural expression. Chapter 3, “Accessorizing Nostalgia,” explains why fictionalized accounts of the lives of “gifted” children became wildly popular after 1815. While France’s case is undoubtedly one expression of a broader European practice, it is also rooted in specifically *French* experiences of childhood, domestic service, and above all slavery. Indeed, the documents that interest me have much to reveal about French attitudes toward blacks in the last decades of the slave trade. I also show that these narratives persist in France after the abolition of slavery, and become the very center of a colonial rhetoric of good intentions. In the end, I argue that these stories function at once both to hide expansionist motives and to contest masculine power.

Chapter 4, “From the Harem to the Convent,” focuses on two famous female child-gifts and their eponymous fictionalized counterparts: Ourika and Aïssé. Senegal-born Ourika was two when the Chevalier de Boufflers offered her to Madame de Beauveau in 1786. Less than sixty years later, another high-society lady, Madame de Duras, wrote a bestseller with her fictionalized version of the child’s story, *Ourika* (1823). Aïssé was born in Constantinople in 1693 and bought by M. de Ferriol when she was three or four. Aïssé’s refined sentimentality, as well as the elegance of her written French, first intrigued Voltaire, who published her letters in 1787. Not coincidentally, the second edition of Aïssé’s correspondence was not published until 1823 – the same year as Duras’ *Ourika*. The fascination for Ourika’s and Aïssé’s “perfect” upbringing exemplifies the impulse to have exogamic characters define an emerging sense of French femininity in the 1820s. The repeated use of two highly-charged feminine spaces in these narratives: the Harem / Slave market (from which they are extracted) and the Convent (where they both die) reveals the limits imposed on them by their perceived “Otherness.”



PART THREE centers on the 1870s-1890s, when stories of exoticized children given as presents to French boys and girls re-emerged as a powerful trope in edifying literature written by women. Chapter 5, “Human Dolls, Educational Toys,” focuses on children’s literature. Several texts, such as an 1876 bestseller, *La Dette de Ben-Aïssa*, show the power of this redeployment. Required reading in Parisian middle schools, the novel begins with Hervé, a soldier sent on a mission to Morocco, who promises his young sister Diane a gift such as a parrot, a gazelle, or a camel. He eventually offers her a ten-year old boy, Ben-Aïssa, who becomes the young girl’s favorite “doll.” Diane undertakes the boy’s education, teaching him to eat with a fork, to learn the value of work, to be a good Christian and eventually to die for his new country. Ben-Aïssa dies a civilized man, and Diane becomes the ideal republican mother, ready to raise perfect French citizens, having already practiced her motherly skills on her favorite toy. In this case, the exotic child offered as a gift to a French character functions as both toy and tool for the story’s hero, author, and reader alike.

Chapter 6, “Playthings and Playwrights,” focuses on the explosion of vaudeville productions dealing with child-gifts in 19th-century France. Vaudevilles provided their audience with an unusual frame of reference for discussions on slavery a few years before its abolition. Because of its unique participative qualities, vaudeville solicited the acting out of conflicting emotions about race in general and slavery in particular. Vaudevilles about child-gifts produced around the abolition of slavery were rediscovered in the 1870s. I show how the genre provided a type of education for adults and children alike. Indeed, vaudevilles written for French youngsters allowed them to impersonate non-European characters, as is the case with *Seliko*, an edifying play penned for nine-year olds and concentrating on the destiny of a miserable child-gift.

Cost: As indicated in the abstract section at the outset of this narrative and my accompanying Budget Proposal Form, if awarded, this FRG would fund my travel to Paris in July and August of 2011 in order to undertake a systematic study of the 18th-century fashion



engravings collection only available in situ at the *Estampes Nationales*, which is essential for the article I will submit to journals at the end of the summer, external fellowship applications I will submit this fall, and ultimately for my book project. I will spend six weeks undertaking this phase of my research; an FRG will cover the approximate cost of airfare (\$1,000) and ten days of my stay at the US Department of State Office of Allowance maximum per diem for Paris of \$550. I will cover any additional costs out of my personal finances because of my commitment to this project and its importance to my career.

Conclusion: Young human gifts were used in many different ways between 1780 and 1895. But their fate was almost invariably linked to the feminine – high-society ladies, female authors, not to mention a significant feminine readership. These women became the vehicles through which the Other was brought into the most basic education of French citizens. Ultimately, my study proposes that the connection between textual and visual representations of exoticized children and feminine artistic practices begs to be linked with a new understanding of the place of feminine agency in the imperial project. A FRG would allow me to make significant progress on this project. It would help me produce an English language article to supplement my prior publications on this subject in French, and enable me to submit competitive external grant proposals in 2011. If awarded, an external grant will expedite completing my book manuscript and enhance its prospects for prestigious publication.

