

women (and a few men) who built the first children's museums. Swigger's work is a sensitive, thoughtful telling of all they accomplished.

—Jon-Paul C. Dyson, *The Strong National Museum of Play, Rochester, NY*

Bear with Me: A Cultural History of Famous Bears in America

Daniel Horowitz

Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2025. Contents, preface, introduction, coda, acknowledgments, notes, index, select bibliography, and images. 267 pp. \$29.95, paper. ISBN: 9781478032373

As someone who is interested in playfulness in everyday life, I was immediately intrigued by what I read in the preface of Daniel Horowitz's *Bear with Me: A Cultural History of Famous Bears in America*. Horowitz recounts a charming tale of pillow talk involving imaginary animals, like Polar, that he and his wife, Helen, engaged in as they attempted to fall asleep. Horowitz explains that what began as a hobby and an escape from the worries of modern America, evolved into a close examination of America's relationship with bears as both terrifying beasts and honey sweet icons.

The book is organized thematically, and Horowitz's interdisciplinary foundation provides deep insights into how bears symbolize American values. In chapter 1, "Folkloric Bears and Actual Ones: Sacred and Profane from Those Biblical Times to Contemporary Celebrities," Horowitz notes that bears appear only fourteen times in the Bible as compared to other species

such as lions, sheep, and lambs who are referenced hundreds of times. Eventually bears became prominent figures in popular culture. The chapter includes representations of bears from the Bible to modern day. Horowitz provides a rich discussion of Baloo from Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) and how Disney incorporated the character in its 1967 film of the same title. Although Disney's illustrations of Baloo present the character as playful, almost humanlike, the story still echoes American racial stereotypes. In the same chapter, Horowitz writes about Jim Davis's comic strip character Garfield and the first appearance of his teddy bear Pooky in 1978. One of the arguments Horowitz emphasizes throughout the book is that bears serve as emotional surrogates. Yet there is little attention paid to Pooky as a transitional object, as psychiatrist and theorist D. W. Winnicott called it in his 1971 book *Play and Reality*. Though Winnicott is mentioned in chapter 6, a greater engagement with his theory would have reinforced Horowitz's observation that "unlike what is true with so many other nonhuman animals, humans can project onto bears, especially fabled ones, an immensely wide range of characteristics that over time both remain constant and shift significantly" (p. 32).

Chapter 2, "The Stories of Hugh Glass: The Case of a Disappearing and Reappearing Dangerous Bear," explores stories about Glass from when they originated in 1923 to the 2015 film *The Revenant*. Horowitz later examines other complicated relationships between bears and humans in chapter 4, "Grizzly Adams: Bears He Tamed, Those He Displayed, and Those Responsible for His Death," and chapter 5, "Captive Bears

and Their Captors as Workers.” A compelling observation in chapter 5 is “The Walt Disney Corporation’s portrayal of bears and other wild animals points to the complications and contradictions involved in our understanding of how designers labor so that we can work as tourists who witness bears as unwitting performers” (p. 99). In American history, performance, spectacle, and space, as with the toys, games, and dolls that they inspire, often prove problematic. Chapter 3, “Out of Hibernation and into Children’s Literature” discusses treasured bears like Winnie the Pooh, Paddington Bear, and The Berenstain Bears.

Researchers interested in play and material culture will consider the discussion in Chapter 6, “Teddy Bear Another One Quickly Disappears and Frequently Reappears” valuable. The American legend of the teddy bear involves President Theodore Roosevelt (Teddy, to some) and his 1902 hunting trip. The story goes that one of his companions cornered a large black bear, tied it to a tree, and encouraged the president to shoot it. Roosevelt declined and reportedly said he would not be proud to shoot a tired, worn-out bear. Clifford Berryman, a political cartoonist, satirized the president’s refusal to shoot the bear in his cartoon “Drawing the Line in Mississippi,” which was featured in the *Washington Post* on November 16, 1902. Inspired by the cartoon, Rose and Morris Michtom, Russian Jewish immigrants and Brooklyn candy shop owners, created a cuddly stuffed toy and dubbed it Teddy’s Bear. The toy was available for sale by Christmas 1903. Horowitz draws the conclusion that “the actual bear quickly disappears and then prolifically and almost immediately reappears. If the actual bear

died, it lived on in so many versions that it is no exaggeration to say the story of TR and teddy bears marks a major point in the history of bearmania” (p. 129). Horowitz questions the story’s authority and provides thought-provoking insights into the obscured history of the first teddy bears. He credits Donna Varga for sending him “on the road to understanding how Teddy Roosevelt’s adventure led to the creation and then popularization of teddy bears in ways that challenge the oft-told tales” (p. 136). As with the origin stories of many toys, the legend of the teddy bear is blurry and entangles intricacies relevant to adulthood and not childhood play. At the end of the chapter, Horowitz writes “seeing teddy bears as huggable should remind us of the tension between cuteness, vulnerability, and the potential for violence” (p. 148). Some scholars have explored these ideas within the context of dolls and girlhood, and I would have liked to see Horowitz expand on the topic.

Bear with Me is engaging overall, but a bit niche. Researchers across disciplines may find areas of interest as Horowitz covers the subject over a vast landscape. However, the book might not prove as accessible to individuals interested in teddy bears as a commodity of play.

—Michelle Parnett-Dwyer, *The Strong National Museum of Play, Rochester, NY*

Unsettling Catan

J. Rey Lee

Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2025. List of figures, credits, note to the reader, introduction, glossary, note on game editions, notes, references, and