**What is there to object to in *Noddy*?** (Preparing to apply post colonialist literary theory in order to subvert the ideology underpinning Noddy)

For the Indian novelist and poet Amit Chaudhuri, the unease came from a more direct feeling of humiliation. “I felt the same enchantment others did upon discovering travelling circuses, English villages, bobbies, seasides, picnics, bicycles, hams, scones, rashers of bacon, and pints of milk,” he says, “But I have to confess to a discomfort with that world even as I was reading about it – not a retrospective disquiet based on what I learnt about Blyton later, but something I encountered as a child: a slight sense of alienation in the midst of the immersion. I sensed a cruelty even as I was devouring the stories, and a contempt for countries far away from England.”

Amitiva Kumar (2009) <http://www.amitavakumar.com/?p=3280>

**Black facts and Black fiction**

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| http://www.chronicleworld.org/tomsite/bookarch/books12/pics/Golly.jpg |
| Golliwog History |

British whites loved their "niggers" nice and docile, whether on the plantations or as playthings and souvenirs. Clinton Derricks' book *Buy Golly: The History of the Golliwog* makes that abundantly clear.

Part of the proof lies deep in history.

The Golliwog was the first mass produced "nigger doll" to feature in English literature and popular culture. Spawned during the Empire, black-faced golliwogs appeared in children's books, picture books, magazines and postcards. They dominated the leisure time pursuits of children and adults.

**Ally of Empire**The golliwog was without doubt the birth-child of another significant innovation modern racism, Derricks shows. Plantation slavery and its supporters were the likely seed beds.

* Edward Long's classic defence of slavery and the plantocracy in the three-volume History of Jamaica (1774).
* Thomas Carlyle's The "Nigger Question" (1853) attacked white emancipators seeking social justice for Africans in the New World.
* Some writers said white superiority and Black inferiority was of divine design, among them the novelist Anthony Trollope in his 1859 book The West Indies and the Spanish Main.

**Reflections of social and economic attitudes**Derricks' book demonstrates how closely the golliwog's portrayal matched popular prejudices. Everyman, journalists, scholars and policy makers all delved in the same racist expressions.

"Blacks are lazy, vicious, and incapable of any serious improvement", said the popular writer Rudyard Kipling in his School History of England (1911). "Niggers are like monkeys [with] their subnormal sloping foreheads and large protruding lips", said G W Stevens in The Land of the Dollar (1897).

**Children's minds affected**Derricks reminds us that popular children's story writers and their grotesque Black caricatures expressed widely accepted racial attitudes.

* In Hugh Lofting's Doctor Doolittle a little girl is scared by "a horrible, dreadful [black face]".
* In Enid Blyton's Five Fall into Adventure we encounter a character "with nasty gleaming eyes, and it looked very dark perhaps because it was a black man's face".
* In The Little Black Doll, the doll's face, being black, is a disgrace and needs to be erased in order to be approved by the other toys. When it is washed and becomes pink, it becomes "a nice looking doll as good as any other".

**Persistence in decline**It is strange now to believe that these views were so widely accepted. Moreover, they persisted for more than a half-century. Finally, in the 1960s, public outrage and anti-racist campaigners exposed the harmful effects of Enid Blyton's Here comes Noddy Again. It portrayed Noddy being mugged in a dark wood by golliwogs, who made off with his car and clothing.

Demand soon declined and by August 1981 a correspondent to The Times diary page noted that "only 2,500 golliwogs a year are sold compared with up to 200,000 when the species was in demand after the war".

Today most reasonable people would say: "Golliwogs are gross caricatures of black people and are offensive to them; this is unacceptable in a multiracial society".

**Praiseworthy book**We are indebted to Derricks for exposing the racial stereotypes which, repeated over and over again, distorted British views of Black people. Librarians, collectors and dealers will use his book as a reference source for some time to come. Historians will welcome this valuable addition to our understanding of the roots of contemporary British race attitudes and the resistance of Black people against racism.

**Clinton Derricks, Buy Golly: the History of the Golliwog; ISBN 1 872727 28 X; New Cavendish Books, Tel: 020-7229 6765,**

The claim that Golliwogs are racist is supported by literary depictions by writers such as Enid Blyton. Unlike Florence Upton's, Blyton's Golliwogs were often rude, mischievous, elfin villains. In Blyton's book, "Here Comes Noddy Again", a Golliwog asks the hero for help, then steals his car………..

The Golliwog's reputation and popularity were also hurt by the association with the word wog. Apparently derived from the word Golliwog, wog is an English slur against dark-skinned people, especially Middle or Far East foreigners. During World War II the word wog was used by the British Army in North Africa, mainly as a slur against dark-skinned Arabs. In the 1960s the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, one of the most noted regiments in the British Army, wore a Robertson's golly brooch for each Arab they had killed. After the war, wog became a more general slur against brown-skinned people. As a racial epithet, it is comparable to nigger or spic, though its usage extends beyond any single ethnic group. Dark-skinned people in England, Germany, and Australia are derisively called wogs. In the year 2000, a British police officer was fired for referring to an Asian colleague as a wog. The association of wog with racial minorities is also seen with the word wog-box, which is slang for a large portable music box, the European counterpart of the ghetto blaster. The wog-box is also called a "Third World briefcase."

Some Golliwog supporters tried to distance themselves from the wog slur by dropping it from the word Golliwog. James Robertson & Sons, for example, has always referred to its Golliwog as "Golly." In the late 1980s, when the anti-Golliwog campaign reached its height, many small manufacturers of the Golliwogs began using the names Golly or Golli, instead of Golliwog. Not surprisingly, the words Golliwog, Golly, and Golli are now all used as racially descriptive terms, although they are not as demeaning as wog.

In the early 1980s, revised editions of Enid Blyton's Noddy books replaced Mr. Golly, the gollywog proprietor of the Toytown garage, with Mr. Sparks, to the outrage of many parents of a generation who thought that was a retrograde iconoclasm biased against both gollies and black garage-owners.

Golliwog is a racial slur in Germany, England, Ireland, Greece, and Australia. Interestingly, it is sometimes applied to dark-skinned Whites, as well as brown-skinned persons. Golliwog is also a common name for black pets, especially dogs, in European countries - much as nigger was once popular as a pet name. Golliwog was also the original name of the rock band Credence Clearwater Revival. They sometimes performed the song "Brown-Eyed Girl" (not the Van Morrison tune), dressed in white afros. This is not to suggest that they were racists, only to show that Golliwogs were a part - albeit, a small one - in American culture………

The Black Trinidadian writer, Darcus Howe, said, "English [White] people never give up. Golliwogs have gone and should stay gone. They appeal to White English sentiment and will do so until the end of time." Gerry German, of the Working Group Against Racism in Children's Resources, was quoted in The Voice, a Black newspaper, as saying: "I find it appalling that any organisation in this day and age can produce anything which would commemorate the Golliwog. It is an offensive caricature of Black people."

See <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/golliwog/>