

# THEORIZING AMERICAN GIRL

Veronica E. Medina

Dr. David L. Brunnsma, Thesis Advisor

## ABSTRACT

Pleasant T. Rowland designed *The American Girls Collection* with the goal of providing a line of toys and books to “enrich the lives of American girls by fostering pride in traditions of growing up female in America and celebrating the lifestyle of girls today.” However, American Girl presents a *whitewashed* version of girlhood *and* nationhood. This project addresses how American Girl constructs constrained, yet commercially profitable, Native American and Latina racial and ethnic identities for its consumers through the characters Kaya and Josefina.

Historical omissions and misrepresentations contribute to perpetuating the myth that the legacies of internal colonization experienced by Native Americans and Latinos are individual problems, rather than structural ones. Additionally, theorizing internal colonization in *The American Girls Collection* cannot take place outside of addressing how American Girl creates self-reinforcing cultural industries to produce and market its products and a particular set of “American” ideologies and values for consumption by young girls.