

169
5

To the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Deborah J. Hicks entitled "The Meaning of the 'Cabbage Patch' Doll to Children." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communications.

Ronald E. Taylor
Ronald E. Taylor, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Barbara Moore
Robert M. Farnham

Accepted for the Council:

Lew Minkal
Vice Provost and Dean of
The Graduate School

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's degree at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made.

Permission for extensive quotation from or reproduction of this thesis may be granted by my major professor, or in his absence, by the Head of Interlibrary Services when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature Richard J. Hicks

Date May 5, 1986

THE MEANING OF THE "CABBAGE PATCH"
DOLL TO CHILDREN

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Deborah J. Hicks

June 1986

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For their guidance and perseverance through the development of this thesis, I am indebted to the members of my Graduate Thesis Committee--Dr. Ron Taylor, chairman; Dr. Barbara Moore; and Dr. Andrew Forman.

Special appreciation and gratitude is expressed to Dr. Ron Taylor for his guidance throughout my graduate program. I am also grateful for his inspiration and guidance in helping to shape this thesis and direct its development. His direction has sparked an interest in advertising and marketing research which I hope will develop into a successful career.

I also wish to give special thanks to Opal Lee and Margaret Cook. Without their help, I would never have completed my graduate program.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents--Gene Hicks who saw the need for a good education and my mother, Glenna C. Hicks who allowed me to acquire all the education I wanted. Thank you. I love you.

ABSTRACT

Children between the ages of 5 and 12 were interviewed in natural settings to discover the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll in their lives.

The "Cabbage Patch" doll has different meanings for those children involved in the study; however, there are some meanings that are shared. These include the doll as companion, the feeling that the doll gives security, the use of the doll in trying out adult roles and the feeling that the doll gives a sense of belonging to a reference group, giving self-esteem.

Through effective and innovative use of media exposure, the doll has played an important part in the lives of children. This is true for those who own a doll, who want a doll and those who do not own or desire a "Cabbage Patch" doll.

Through study of the procedures used in marketing the "Cabbage Patch" doll, and by investigating the meaning of the doll to consumers, researchers and advertisers can learn how to create and market products effectively.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. THE NATURE OF FADS.	1
Problem	1
Organization of Chapters.	2
Limitations	3
Literature Search	3
The Nature of Fads.	4
How Does an Item Become a "Fad?".	5
How Does a "Fad" Begin? Where Does It Get Its Credi- bility?	9
The "Cabbage Patch" Doll's Emergence.	11
2. MARKETING OF THE "CABBAGE PATCH" DOLL	13
Product Description	13
Target Market Dimensions Defined.	15
Consumer Behavior	16
Cultural influences and changes	16
Trend toward self-fulfillment	16
Parent-centered households become more child-centered	17
Adopting peer group values.	17
Trend toward the supernatural and mystic.	18
Trend toward increased ethnicity.	18
Trend toward the need for security.	19
Increased desire to spend	20
Expressing one's individuality through products	20
What This Says for the Purchase of the "Cabbage Patch" Doll.	21
Social Class Influences	22
Family Influences	25
Lifestyles.	26
Motives	26
3. THE PURPOSE OF TOYS	29
The Socialization Process	30
What is Play?	32
Functions of Play	32

CHAPTER	PAGE
4. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND MEANING--METHODOLOGY.	36
Meaning in Symbolic Interactionism.	37
Nature of Objects	38
Role of the Researcher.	39
The "Cabbage Patch" Doll.	40
Field Procedures.	42
Case Study Questions.	45
Child peer pressure	45
Adult peer pressure	45
Media pressure.	46
Miscellaneous	46
Analysis.	48
5. SUBTHEMES IN INTERVIEW DATA	50
General Themes Suggested by Promotional Literature and Media Use from Coleco	51
Dolls offer companionship and a sense of security	52
Peer group values--Sense of belonging	53
Adoption papers, birth certificates and the cost of the doll.	54
Children see dolls as real babies	58
Adults help promote children's fantasies.	61
Children and the mythology surrounding the doll	63
Children and their responsibility toward the doll	64
Ethnicity of dolls/hierarchy within the "Cabbage Patch" line.	67
General Themes Not Suggested by the Media Promotional Efforts	71
6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	77
What Influence Does Corporate Communication Have on Children?	77
Symbolic Interactionism and How Meaning is Established. .	80
What is the Meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" Doll for Children?	83
This Study and the Toy Industry	86
LIST OF REFERENCES.	89
APPENDIX.	93
VITA.	101

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Life Cycle of a Normal Product	4
2. Drawing by a 5-Year-Old Which Shows the Child and His "Cabbage Patch" Doll Playing Football Together	94
3. Construction Paper "Cabbage Patch" Doll as a Football Player.	95
4. Crayon Drawing by an 8-Year-Old Girl Showing the Girl and Her "Cabbage Patch" Doll.	96
5. Drawing of a "Cabbage Patch" Cab Being Driven by a "Cabbage Patch" Doll	97
6. One Child's Drawing of a Premie and the Premie Being Born . .	98
7. A Picture Done in Magic Markers Showing the "Cabbage Patch" Kid Painting.	99
8. A Construction Paper Representation of a Premie Being Born Out of a Cabbage.	100

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURE OF FADS

In the marketing and introduction of any product there are certain elements, either real or contrived, that are developed as part of that product and its image. Most products seek to develop a unique selling point or some sort of product differentiation. However, it appears that some products gain this status more than others.

Recently one product that seems to have these unique characteristics has emerged. Consumers have, it appears, treated this product differently from similar products. The product: the "Cabbage Patch" doll.

Problem

The problem to be considered is "What the Cabbage Patch Doll Means to Children." The study will center around children for they are the main end-users of the product. While adults are often the purchasers of the product, many times the child is the instigator of the purchase.

Other broad question categories to be considered include: "Does the 'Cabbage Patch' doll give the child a sense of belonging?" "Does the child get his/her values about the 'Cabbage Patch' doll from traditional sources or from the media?" "Does the child use the 'Cabbage Patch' doll to play out fantasies?" "Do adults

promote the image surrounding the 'Cabbage Patch' doll?" "What kind of person wants a 'Cabbage Patch' doll?" "How do children treat their 'Cabbage Patch' dolls?" "Do the children believe in the mythology that surrounded the 'Cabbage Patch' doll?"

Other aspects to be investigated include the importance of the birth certificate, adoption papers and birthday cards that seem to enhance the popularity of the doll.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter 2 includes a product description, target market information, and a subsection on consumer behavior.

Chapter 3, "Children and their Toys," deals with the ways children use their toys to play out their fantasies and to experiment with adult situations before they actually must face them.

Chapter 4 contains an explanation of the methodology used. This chapter includes an explanation of the assumptions inherent in symbolic interactionism and a section on how meaning is gained.

Chapter 5, "Subthemes in Interview Data," ties Chapter 2 and 3 together by drawing on the interview material to show how cultural trends have emerged in the interview data. I also show that the "Cabbage Patch" doll is the instrument through which many children gain access to their peer groups, become familiar with some aspects of adulthood, and through which the child gains some semblance of status.

Chapter 6, "Analysis of the Data," analyzes the interview data according to criteria expressed in Chapter 6 to determine if, indeed, the "Cabbage Patch" doll helps to fulfill these needs in children.

A List of References follows Chapter 6 along with an Appendix which contains some art work created by the children interviewed.

Limitations

While this thesis is not quantitative in nature, it is, nevertheless, valuable in deciding just what this doll means to those children who own it. Much insight can be gained just by asking the children what they think about the doll, why they wanted a doll, and how they play with the doll.

While it is true that there will be no concrete numbers to back up the data, this kind of substantiation is not necessary in a qualitative research study.

This thesis does not seek to give absolute truths about the "Cabbage Patch" doll, but to gain directly from the children their feelings and beliefs. This thesis does attempt to give some understanding into the buying behavior and the usage behavior of a certain segment--children--in purchasing and using a very unique product.

Literature Search

For this study, two separate literature searches were conducted. First a literature search involving articles about the

"Cabbage Patch" doll, its introduction and diffusion was made. A second literature search was conducted to determine present-day thought on how toys are used by children in their play habits.

The Nature of Fads

In the marketing of products, some products follow the cycle shown in Figure 1.

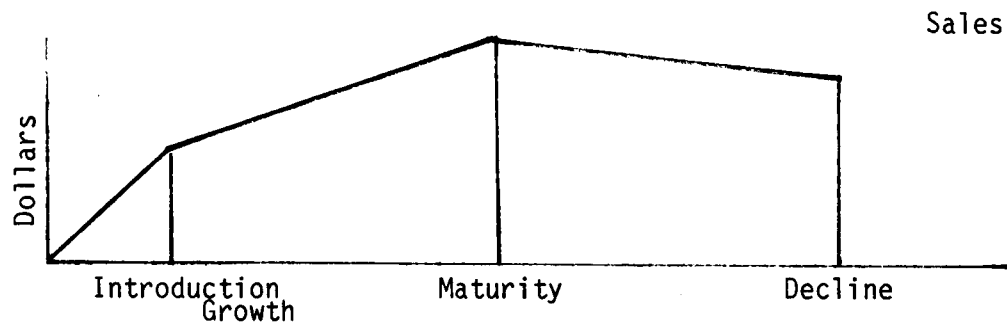


FIGURE 1. Life cycle of a normal product (Cravens, 1980).

In the introduction stage, the product is new and sales begin to build as the consumer becomes aware of it. When buyer interest expands, the growth stage sets in and fairly rapid growth is not uncommon. Then comes the maturation stage where the market reaches a saturation level. After this stage, sales begin to decline.

However, in some products the life cycle does not follow this pattern. Upon its introduction, something in the market-place causes the product to have rapid sales growth followed by a rapid sales decline. After this decline there is little, if any, demand for the product. These products may be termed "fads."

These "fads" often sell quickly. Store owners can barely keep the items in stock. Customers have been known to fight over the items, standing in line to wait until the store opens to insure getting the exact item they wish.

These fads have a predestined life cycle that includes this sharp rise in sales and an equally sharp decline in sales. The "fads" do not have that maturation stage whereby the product is accepted and consumed by the consumer for many years. Products like these which remain for years are familiar. They include television sets, toothpaste, cake mixes, soft drinks, laundry products and automobiles.

The difference in distinguishing the two types of products lies in the timing of the product life cycle and its growth rate. Normally products termed "fads" come and go within a short period of time. Some may cycle in and out as is the case of the bicycle; yet many, like the hula hoop, have short, prosperous lives. Other products, however, grow at a more steady rate and carve out for themselves a niche in the marketplace where they will abide for several years until they become obsolete.

How Does An Item Become A "Fad"?

Fads have emerged throughout history for many reasons. Some have emerged because of their usefulness, such as the horseless carriage (the automobile) and the bicycle. Some have become popular because of some mystique surrounding them such as the "Ouija" board's

popularity during the 50's and 60's. A glove on one hand became popular when worn by Michael Jackson. Some items become popular when the media coverage of that item gives it worth. Such may have been true for the "Cabbage Patch" doll. Fads can emerge as a result of the need by consumers to feel exclusive. Such was the case with the game of croquet. This game became a "fad" in the early 1860's with the genteel class. However after 1905, the game lost its appeal as the middle class discovered and adopted it. Fads can emerge because of internal pressures to belong. This could have been the case with the "fad" of swallowing gold fish. "Fads" can emerge also because of external pressure by peers to acquire or do a certain thing. Such may have been the case with the hula hoop, the monopoly game, or any number of products (Skolnik, 1972).

If one adheres to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, it is relatively easy to understand why fads have become a way of life. For most, the physiological and safety needs have been met to such a degree that many are seeking higher level needs of belonging, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Fads can serve to bridge this link between what one sees as his "ideal" self and what he feels he actually is at the moment (Loudon, 1984).

There are several qualities inherent in most fads that help to bolster these needs of belonging, being loved, increasing self-esteem and self-actualization. One such characteristic is that of exclusivity. Many items become fads simply by virtue of the fact that those on lower socio-economic platforms cannot afford them,

thereby giving those who can afford these products a feeling of exclusivity. Such has been the case with "Polo" shirts, "Aigner" shoes, "Members Only" jackets, "Audi's," and other expensive, exclusive products.

When these items become more accessible to others, the wealthy have less desire for them.

A "fad" needs also to have a quality of uniqueness about it. Edison's phonography started its life cycle as a very unique product. The hula hoop was unique, as were pet rocks and the Monopoly board. While some of these have endured, their popularity seems to come and go.

An important characteristic of a "fad" is that the product or action must give one a sense of belonging to some reference group. This sense of belonging is not only important to children, but also in adults. Just by virtue of the fact that one has purchased a particular product, either for oneself or for another, that person gains entrance into some reference group.

While children are not the primary purchasers of many of these products, they are often the end-users. Children can place a great deal of pressure on adults to buy certain cereals, toys, clothes, and other items. This pressure can begin with the children's peers, the media they most often ascribe to, or from other adults.

Adults also feel pressure from several areas which could cause them to purchase a product, whether they purchase the product for themselves or some other person. A particular product can give

an adult a sense of belonging just by its purchase, whether the adult is the end-user or not. It would appear that if a product would appeal to both kinds of pressures, adult and child pressures, success could be somewhat assured.

Many fads also have the characteristic of being mysterious. Certainly when Edison first invented the phonograph, the product carried about it a certain mystique; for who had ever heard a black box talk? Or who had seen a man riding a two-wheeled horse? Who had felt the power of the Ouija board?

It is thought by some that people in a state of economic depression or war often turn to the supernatural and mysterious to give them hope that the future is not so dark (Skolnik, page 20). Fads having this characteristic, then, would have a greater chance of success during periods of economic depression or war. Such was the case with the Ouija board. Its popularity grew during times when men were going to war. People used these devices to try and foretell whether or not their husbands, brothers, and sons would return home (Skolnik, page 20).

Fads also appear to evoke some sort of underlying strong emotion from consumers. Either the consumer likes the fad or he hates it. There appears to be little middle ground. While some consumers make fun of the product, others do not want to be caught without it.

Of course, it goes without saying that any fad must have an audience. "Without them, there is no one to declare the behavior faddish, and thus, no fad" (Skolnik, page 13).

Some fads have investment potential. Products such as coins, gold and stamps become popular whenever potential for earning profit by their resale is at its peak.

The above list is not comprehensive, but does give some idea of some of the characteristics needed to help push those products considered "fads" along toward a successful career in the marketplace.

How Does a "Fad" Begin? Where Does It Get Its Credibility?

"We knew from agenda-setting research that prominence in the media leads to some form of salience in the public mind. On the other hand, from marketing and advertising research, we know that salience in the public mind is correlated with behavioral outcomes such as purchase and market share" (Sutherland, 1981).

Thus, by the mere fact that a product is included in the media, the product gains status. There are, however, at least two different kinds of media coverage which can aid in giving an item status.

The first type of media coverage is traditional advertising. Advertising functions as a cue to consumers that a thing has status. Advertising also helps to judge that what is acceptable and popular with one's peers.

According to Munson, "People seek products and services that are congruent with their self-perception." They are "most often influenced by others with whom they come into everyday contact, people just like themselves" (Munson, 1981). This is one of the reasons advertisers use typical-looking people in their advertising campaigns--people with whom the consumer can identify and aspire to be like.

Moreover, the amount of exposure a thing is given in the media seems to imply its importance. This suggests that through media emphasis, individuals learn how much importance a product is "supposed" to have (Sutherland, 1981). This concept seems to give credence to the theory that the more times something is advertised, the more important it becomes. Of course, there is evidence to suggest that there is a point of diminishing returns at which advertising becomes less effective.

A second type of media pressure, which I will term media exposure, is also important in a product's success. This type of exposure occurs in a nonconventional way other than advertising. By this exposure I am referring to products or actions seen as part of a television program, reported on the nightly news, used as fund raising prizes and other non-conventional exposure methods. These methods serve to keep the product salient in the minds of the consumer--for it must be important if it is on the nightly news.

The "Cabbage Patch" Doll's Emergence

In the late 1970's and early 1980's the "Cabbage Patch" doll made its premiere in the marketplace. The "Cabbage Patch" doll had been individually designed and hand produced by Xavier Roberts in Cleveland, Georgia for several years. In the early 1980's Coleco began mass-producing the dolls.

By the early 1980's, the "Cabbage Patch" doll was "in" and nearly every child felt she had to have one. This sharp, quick rise in sales is one of the first signs of a fad in the making.

Many newspapers and television broadcasts reported parents standing in line and literally fighting over a particular doll they wanted. Of course part of this bedlam was caused by the rumors that "Cabbage Patch" dolls were in short supply and that the manufacturer, Coleco, could not turn out any more than already produced (Adler, 1983).

This type of press release led to the second characteristic of the "Cabbage Patch" doll--that of its exclusivity. Along with the rumors of scarcity of supply were press releases and advertisements proclaiming that no two "Cabbage Patch" dolls were alike--each one was different. Thus, just as every baby is different, every child who possessed a "Cabbage Patch" doll had a unique doll. In addition, "Cabbage Patch" dolls were priced around \$40.00--a previously unheard of price for the masses to pay for a doll. Yet as their popularity rose and rose, more parents found themselves seeking these dolls for their children.

To enhance this feeling of exclusivity, the doll came with a birth certificate, an adoption certificate, and a promise of an annual birthday card from Coleco. Each doll is supposedly dressed differently in what seemed to be hand-me-down clothes.

These features lead to the third characteristic of the "Cabbage Patch" doll--that of its supernatural birth. According to Xavier Roberts, all the dolls are born one night a year in a cabbage patch. He (Roberts) then spends the rest of the year trying to find homes for the dolls (Television/Radio Age, 1983). This type of mysticism served to enhance the charm of the doll, almost breathing life into a mere doll.

This supernatural appeal also served to promote strong emotional ties between the child and the doll. According to the oath taken by the child at the time of the "adoption," the child is now responsible for the care and nurture of the "Cabbage Patch" doll forever.

On the other hand, there are those who scoff at the whole idea as preposterous--merely an excellent advertising campaign to milk millions from the American public. Hence, it is seen that strong, opposing emotions about the "Cabbage Patch" doll have been established.

Finally, there were some who believed that the "Cabbage Patch" doll gave an opportunity for future profit in the investing and resale of the doll at a future time.

CHAPTER 2

MARKETING OF THE "CABBAGE PATCH" DOLL

Product Description

In 1977, Xavier Roberts created the first of his original "kids" using a soft sculpture. This doll, so the mythology goes, is born "one night a year in a cabbage patch and he [Roberts] spends the remainder of the year finding homes for them" (Television/Radio Age, page 93).

The doll could then be adopted out of the cabbage patch at the Babyland General Hospital located in Georgia. The new "parents" had to vow undying love to these "adopted children" (Miller, 1985).

Coleco Corporation and Original Appalachian Art Works, Roberts' company, negotiated an agreement which allows Coleco to mass produce and market their version of the doll under the name "Cabbage Patch" kids (Miller, page 143).

Roberts dressed his creations in clothes that looked like hand-me-downs, using real high chairs and cribs in his display (Madison Avenue, 1983, page 14).

The "kids" come with two Southern-sounding names and have birth certificates which tell something about the doll and what the doll hopes to be when it grows up. These birth certificates, signed by the children to be mailed back to the company, so the

child can formally adopt the doll and become responsible for the doll's welfare. The child is supposed to pledge to love and cherish the doll, remembering always that the "Cabbage Patch" doll is special (Madison Avenue, 1983, page 14).

While the doll comes with two Southern-sounding names, it is possible to change the name of the doll by writing Coleco and requesting a name change (Interview Data).

The "kids" are chubby-cheeked, one-of-a-kind dolls. They have variations in hair, clothing, eyes and skin color. On their derriere Xavier Roberts' signature appears in addition to the year of their birth. The dates are written in different colored ink for different years.

There are limited edition "kids" which have included the American Indian and the Oriental editions. These "kids" come with their own travelling case, dressed in their native costume (Interview Data).

The dolls appear to have a slightly worried look in their eyes. They look vulnerable and may evoke protective feelings. They are soft and cuddly (Television/Radio Age, page 93).

Upon receipt of the adoption papers, Coleco will send each "kid" a birthday card every year. These cards usually show a group of "Cabbage Patch" dolls seated around a birthday cake. A sample card might read:

Dear _____ (child's name) _____,

Your friends in the cabbage
patch wish your kid, _____ ("Cabbage
Patch" kid's name) _____,
the happiest first birthday ever.

Target Market Dimensions Defined

While it is true that many older people do buy "Cabbage Patch" dolls, primarily the "kids" are targeted to children 3 years of age to 12 years of age. The box explicitly states that the doll is designed for those children above three years of age. However, as previously mentioned, the children often are not the purchaser of the doll, but rather the end-user.

"Cabbage Patch" dolls are targeted and sold to both boys and girls. It appears as though some socialization takes place through the traditional means of school, church and family, and boys, after age 7, become interested in the more traditional forms of toys such as footballs, cars and airplanes. However, at the early stages in life, the young boy still may not have gone through this socialization process and many still want a "Cabbage Patch" doll. It is not clear whether older boys would like the doll and feel they would be laughed at were they to purchase it, or whether their tastes have changed.

However, with the onset of age, sex seems to be one of the dimensions that defines the boundaries of the target market for the "Cabbage Patch" doll, along with age.

There are no real "upper" limits to the target market for the "Cabbage Patch" doll. While the majority of users are between the ages of four and twelve, it is fairly common for women in their thirties to purchase a "Cabbage Patch" doll. The motive for this purchase is unclear.

Others buy the doll as an investment proposition or as a collector's item. However, these consumers are not the primary target market for the "Cabbage Patch" doll.

Income is another determinant of the dimensions of the target market. While it is true that some socioeconomic classes will scrimp and save in order to have a luxury, there must still be a certain amount of economic success in the first place in order to be able to afford a doll.

Consumer Behavior

Cultural Influences and Changes

It is a readily acceptable fact among scholars that many external factors shape consumption choices made by consumers.

Cultural trends and values in the United States have changed fundamentally since the 1960's and 1970's. Several of these changing trends are important in the ultimate purchase of the "Cabbage Patch" doll.

Trend Toward Self-Fulfillment

Loudon states that there is a trend toward "maximizing looks and feelings" (Loudon, page 187). There is an increased interest

in the sales of certain high-end products that people associate with the elite group in society. There is a trend, therefore, toward acquiring these products and to flaunt them. The basic overriding feeling is one of "being good to myself" (Loudon, page 187).

The "Cabbage Patch" doll definitely fills this recipe expertly. Through promotional campaigns and other advertising, the doll has emerged as the "in" thing to buy. The doll brings a certain amount of status.

Parent-Centered Households Become More Child-Centered

"Children born into the child-centered homes of the 40's and 50's are now in their 30's and 40's" (Loudon, page 186). There has been a resurgence in the belief that "essential life satisfactions stem from activities centering on the immediate family unit" (Loudon, page 186). These "baby-boomers," while considered a generation of pampered individuals, have matured. They now want to center their lives around their own families, instead of around themselves. While it is true that women have flocked to the work force en masse, women believe it is possible to have both a career and a family, neither one suffering from the other.

Adopting Peer Group Values

Where once values were obtained from the church, school, and home, peer group and reference groups as having a greater effect on one's values. This is also true for the media. With such a complex and readily available mass media network, children and adults

are gaining their values from the media--whether it be by advertising or other reporting.

Along with this trend toward acquiring values from one's peer group and from the media, is the desire to belong to one's reference group. The perfect product would be the one that gives status and entry into one's reference group, yet allows one a bit of individuality (Loudon, page 185).

There is, then, an emphasis on new status symbols and on material possessions (Loudon, page 185).

Trend Toward the Supernatural and Mystic

This trend attempts to give the consumer excitement and stimulation in the practical and mundane world he lives (Loudon, page 185). There is a desire for romance, mystery and adventure. The unexplained can add this romance and mystery to an adult or a child's life.

The 1970's and early 1980's were characterized first by a war and later by an economic depression. As stated previously, it is during these types of periods in history that products with supernatural qualities have a greater chance of success.

While the "Cabbage Patch" doll does not predict the future its very birth in a cabbage patch does give it some kind of supernatural power. For some, the doll fairly breathes.

Trend Toward Increased Ethnicity

There is a trend toward increased pride in one's ethnic background. This pride is shown in various ways such as dressing in

native costumes, speaking native languages and eating native foods without embarrassment. In fact, it appears that the ability to trace one's ethnic background gives one a kind of status in itself.

Ethnic populations are making known their requests for products specifically for their populations, whether they be clothing, educational material or dolls. In other words, there is a demand for native clothing, native educational material and native toys. It is important, it seems, to parents that their children not forget their heritage (Loudon, page 185).

Trend Toward the Need for Security

The need for a feeling of security has long been associated with childhood. The feeling has been long adopted that those children who grow up in a safe, secure environment will probably grow up to be secure, emotionally stable adults.

Children have, through the years, used various articles to gain this security. For instance, most children at one time or another have slept with a teddy bear. Many children have in their childhood carried favorite dolls or blankets as an item which helps to give them security. The "Cabbage Patch" doll may be the product that replaces the teddy bear and the blanket for older children.

As mothers are returning to the work force, some of the security once gotten from the home may be replaced by one or more products. Children may not get the security they need at home anymore as parents are both working or homes become split apart by divorce.

Increased Desire to Spend

Because the consumer sees himself as important, he is not afraid to spend money on things he/she feels will improve looks, well-being, their work situations, their place in society, or that will add beauty to their lives (Loudon, page 185).

As the trend toward two people working in the household reaches fruition, increased income and capacity toward spending and greater disposable income becomes a real and viable alternative. People make more so they can spend more. Some people will spend more on luxuries. This is especially true of baby-boomers who grew up in a period of plenty. While their parents were savers, baby-boomers and their children are not. They do not see the same reasons to save as did their fathers and mothers. Consumers today see themselves as "entitled" to certain privileges such as retirement income, comprehensive health care, education and decent housing. They believe themselves entitled to these things regardless of their ability to pay. These people, however, are not savers, they are spenders (Loudon, page 187).

Expressing One's Individuality Through Products

As stated previously the perfect product would be one that is unique, yet gains access to one's reference group. The consumer of the 80's and 90's is one that aspires to show his/her individuality through the products they buy. "They need to be a little bit different from other people" (Loudon, page 185). The emphasis

here is on a "little bit." Products that are too different will probably be abandoned in favor of those that are similar enough, yet maintain that little bit of difference. Examples of this include perfume that smells differently on every woman, different colors of the same car, and such products as the "Cabbage Patch" doll.

It would appear, then, that those consumers of the 80's and 90's are those people who get their direction from their contemporaries, their peers, and the mass media. These people would be heavily influenced to buy the same products as their peers or those that were sanctioned by the mass media, providing the products give some feeling of individuality.

What This Says for the Purchase of the "Cabbage Patch" Doll

Whether by accident or on purpose, the "Cabbage Patch" doll conforms to many of the above qualities and emerging values. Roberts and Coleco have provided the doll with certain characteristics (adoption, soft and cuddly, worried look in face, ethnic lineage) that directly play on these cultural trends that seem to be emerging.

The "Cabbage Patch" doll gives the child a chance to develop his/her own family, creating a fantasy world that produces immediate gratification to her needs of belonging. The child gains almost immediate acceptance from peers after purchasing the doll.

At the same time, by virtue of the fact that the dolls are unique, one-of-a-kind dolls, the child gets a sense of individuality

which leads to a sort of status symbol as ownership gives him a definite distinction. The "Cabbage Patch" doll is probably the new status symbol for children and many adults.

"Cabbage Patch" dolls have also been developed to reach the needs of the ethnic communities. By developing a line of dolls with native costumes, Coleco has in essence given importance to that ethnic portion of our society. Coleco has fulfilled the desire of the parents for their children to remember their ethnic origins.

Through the adoption procedures, the "Cabbage Patch" doll has given children a sense of responsibility for their "child." It is evident that the child has a need to protect and nurture the doll, just as they expect to be protected and nurtured.

Further, "Cabbage Patch" doll owners have received at the time of purchase a pamphlet telling the child how the doll is unique and expressing to the child what the doll hopes to become. Some dolls wish to be cheerleaders, mountain climbers, race car drivers or even gymnasts.

Social Class Influences

A social class is a ranking of people in a society by other members of that society as to power, respect and prestige (Loudon, page 242).

By virtue of the fact that the "Cabbage Patch" doll costs more than most dolls, the very act of ownership places one in an upper or middle class of society. However, the dolls probably do not

appeal to all the upper and middle classes. There are probably three classes which the doll would most appeal to.

The first class that might buy the "Cabbage Patch" doll is the lower-middle class. These people are characterized by the fact that they will scrimp and save to give themselves and their children one or two luxuries. They are not innovators in purchase patterns. They would not be among the first to purchase a "Cabbage Patch" doll. This class has been called the "common class" or the "average class" of working people. This group's occupations consist of white-collar workers, blue-collar workers and small business owners. They strive to be known as respectable adults. This feeling probably carries over to their children (Loudon, page 250).

The upper-middle class is probably the first class in United States society that would purchase the "Cabbage Patch" doll. These individuals find it important that they reach an occupational status within a few years in conjunction with their higher education. The pervasive feeling is that of "keeping up with the Joneses."

These professionals are highly motivated toward success both in income, career and home life. They tend to see the "Cabbage Patch" doll as an outward appearance of this acquired success (Loudon, page 250).

Finally, "Cabbage Patch" dolls would most probably appeal to the lower-uppers; those who have acquired wealth recently and are not quite accepted by the upper-upper class. Their incomes tend to be the highest of all the classes. These people are mostly

self-made. It is important to them that their children have those trappings of wealth that proclaim them to have arrived. Price would be no drawback to them, giving the product that air of exclusivity which would help insure its success with this group.

Lower-uppers tend to be innovators and will try new products quickly if they perceive them to be status symbols (Loudon, pages 250-51).

There are various other groups, however, that influence an individual. One such group is one's reference group. A reference group consists of those persons an individual uses in determining his judgments, beliefs and behaviors (Loudon, page 279). In marketing and advertising concerns, then, a consumer might consider whether the purchase would be consistent with his/her reference group or to that group the individual seeks to belong.

The reference group also is that group with which the consumer compares himself to determine what he/she feels to be that "ideal" state.

Advertising can be very useful in helping to achieve this sense of the ideal state by showing the acquisition of a product as the major factor in determining membership in the reference group one aspires to.

For children, the reference group would consist mainly of their peers or those the child identifies with most often. This could include not only children the child comes in contact with, but also with adults and children prominent in the media.

By incorporating the "Cabbage Patch" doll into many television programs, radio contests and other promotional efforts, the child may identify with the product and be more motivated to purchase the product simply by its high visibility in the media. Coleco and their advertising firm accomplished this in a variety of ways.

- Use of "Cabbage Patch" dolls on various Christmas specials as part of the program or incorporated in a skit.

- Use of "Cabbage Patch" commercials during prime children viewing hours--Saturday morning, prime time and prime time access hours.

- Use of peers in advertisements in addition to the use of adults.

- Prominent people presenting "Cabbage Patch" dolls in high media situations, i.e., when Nancy Reagan presented Korean children a "Cabbage Patch" doll after their heart surgery.

This kind of high visibility serves to aid in the acceptance of a product and its desirability among the target audience.

Family Influences

Another strong influence in the life of a child is that of the family. As previously stated, few children can purchase a "Cabbage Patch" doll without the assistance of their family. However, monetary influence is not the only influence the family exerts.

While some parents simply dislike the "Cabbage Patch" doll and feel the money spent on it to be wasteful, there are those who feel

that it is imperative that their child own a "Cabbage Patch" doll. There are those parents who buy "Cabbage Patch" dolls for their children while they are still babies in an effort to insure their child has a doll when it is old enough to play with it. It is unclear whether these parents feel that ownership of the doll will secure a place for their child in the desired peer group, but is a good subject for further study.

Lifestyles

A person's lifestyle influences his purchase decisions. A person's lifestyle is that person's mode of living--what activities, interests and opinions make up his life (Loudon, page 12).

Motives

In addition to these external influences, there are internal influences upon the purchase decision. We can call these motives. A motive, according to Loudon, is that inner state that mobilizes individuals and directs them in a selective fashion toward goals (Loudon, page 384).

What, then, motivates and mobilizes individuals, directing them to purchase a "Cabbage Patch" doll?

Arousal to the fact that one is without a popular product which has been evident both in the media and with one's peers can be said to be a motivating force driving one to direct his/her attention toward the ultimate goal of purchase. However, arousal is not enough by itself to insure the success of a product. The arousal must be

directed toward the purchase of a particular product, in this case the "Cabbage Patch" doll.

Motives serve to influence consumers to identify and satisfy basic needs. Some of these basic needs, according to Maslow, are the needs for love, affection, attention and security.

The "Cabbage Patch" doll has been designed to fulfill some of these needs. By its very physical structure, the doll is meant to be held and cuddled. The aura surrounding the doll by its birth and the formal adoption procedures give the child a sense of love and security. The child feels responsible for the doll much as the parent is responsible for the doll. The doll becomes a kind of surrogate for the expression of these needs.

However, the doll can also be used as a means to an end, rather than an end or goal in itself. The end in this case might be gaining acceptance into a group of one's peers. The doll does signify to many a certain degree of status and by mere ownership access can be gained into certain peer groups.

This peer group is that group which evaluates the "ideal" state, as presented by advertisers and marketers. Children, as well as adults, can be caught up in status symbols whereby ownership insures an ideal state.

This ideal state must be attainable, however, it is felt that to be too easily attainable would not have the desired effect. As mentioned earlier when the masses catch on to a new fad, those who first became interested because of the exclusivity it offered them seem to reject that particular fad as no longer "in."

The producers of the "Cabbage Patch" dolls have achieved this attainable--but not too attainable plateau by at least two maneuvers. First, the scarcity in the product's availability made the owner part of an exclusive class. This rumored scarcity only served to enhance the product's desirability.

Second, the fact that the "Cabbage Patch" doll is somewhat expensive gave the doll an air of luxury and status. As mentioned previously one must have attained a certain level of financial success in order to be able to afford a doll. This automatically eliminates many from the purchase of a "Cabbage Patch" doll, further enhancing its desirability.

So the "Cabbage Patch" doll not only fulfills those basic needs of love, affection, belonging, and security, but gives the owner a kind of status and a sense of belonging, adding to one's self-esteem.

CHAPTER 3

THE PURPOSE OF TOYS

The symbolic interactionist is not primarily interested in whether or not growth and development occurs in the child in an orderly sequence, but that it occurs. The symbolic interactionist acknowledges that change occurs and that this change is elaborate and complex. The symbolic interactionist's concern "involves an understanding of how the object called 'child' comes to enter the very processes that produce and shape its own self-consciousness and awareness of others. The child is able to shape, define and negotiate its relationship to the external world. The child can, like an actor, enter into the organization of its own development in any sequence it chooses" (Denzin, 1977).

According to Denzin, "children enter the world with no conception of self, other, object, situation or place" (Denzin, page 167). Through symbolic interactionism, the child learns these relationships and learns the appropriate labels and meanings for the objects in his/her own universe (Denzin, page 167).

According to Denzin, "play constitutes the most important interactional experiences of the young child, for in play he or she becomes a more sophisticated member of the outside social world where work is taken seriously and play is regarded as inconsequential" (Denzin, page 167).

This interaction Denzin refers to may involve one or more persons or one or more animate or inanimate objects. Children may mock other individuals or behavior. They may transform objects into playmates. They may impose their own reality on the physical world. They can force reality to fit their own conceptualizations of it (Denzin, page 146).

According to Newson and Newson, by the second year, children can copy complex actions which they have observed others doing. For example, one child, thirteen months old, could barely walk, not having mastered that function. Yet, observers watched as the toddler gave a very accurate performance of "doing the ironing" when coming into contact with a toy iron. The child's mother stated that the child had never seen a toy iron before and had not been allowed to handle a real iron. Yet the child could accurately imitate the actions of ironing through copying the actions she had observed (Newson, 1979).

Denzin states that "in general, play is seen as serving anticipatory socialization purposes for the young child" (Denzin, page 143). This social behavior known as play results in the child learning many functions. Through this learning socialization takes place.

The Socialization Process

Socialization, from the standpoint of symbolic interactionism, represents a fluid, shifting relationship between

persons attempting to fit their lines of action together into some workable, interactive relationship. It is not a process that ends on the completion of adolescence. . . . Nor is it a structurally determined process whereby the values and goals of social systems are instilled in the child's behavior repertoires. Socialization is a never-ending process that is negotiated and potentially problematic in every interactional episode that appears between two or more individuals. It is a process that cannot be separated from the demands of the social situations, from the restrictions of language, and from the self-definitions of the persons involved (Denzin, page 2).

Most societies have addressed the questions of how children are transformed into mature, responsible adults, able to carry out the functions demanded by that society. "Societies everywhere, if they are to be societies, must mobilize their members as self-regulating participants in social encounters. One way of mobilizing the individual for this purpose is through ritual; he is taught to have feelings attached to self and a self expressed through face, to have pride, honor, and dignity, to have considerations, to have tact and a certain amount of poise" (Denzin, page 2).

Childhood socialization "describes those experiences and interactive relationships that build human nature into that object and person called 'child' . . . it is located in special kinds of social objects that range from the child to the caretaker and to those physical objects that endow the child with human-like qualities" (Denzin, page 3).

Play can be said to fulfill these functions. It can help describe relationships and ultimately can give the child those qualities his/her particular society holds dear.

It would be erroneous to say that play is the single necessary element for socialization. Suffice it to say that play is an important part of the socialization process.

What is Play?

As stated previously, play can serve as part of the socialization process. It can also merely be a fun activity the child wishes to enter.

At an early age, the child requires very little in the way of natural resources to develop a make-believe situation. He can use such elements as pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals (Singer, 1973).

Denzin gives several characteristics of play for children that are important.

- Play is often spontaneous.
- Play lacks organization many times.
- Play is usually free.
- Unless there is a change in property, such as playing marbles, play ends in a situation identical to the situation at the beginning.
- Play incorporates the element of make-believe.
- Play incorporates some sort of interaction.

(Denzin, pages 144-5)

Newson gives us some criteria that distinguishes a toy from other objects.

1. The object serves little purpose other than play.

Such an object might be a rubber ball with no other function than play. If that rubber ball is used in another way such as a flotation device or some other use, it no longer can be classified as a toy, purely.

2. The object imitates the "real" world object.

One example of this kind of toy includes the toy tractor which resembles closely a real farm tractor. Another example is the toy stethoscope which closely resembles a doctor's real stethoscope.

3. The objects are often simplified forms of the objects they represent.

For instance a doll house is a simplified form of a house. A miniature gas station is a simplified form of a real life gas station.

Functions of Play

Many psychologists agree that play can serve a variety of functions. Some of these include expressing the child's worries through play, avoiding problems through play, and helping to teach the child how to interact with others through play. Other functions mentioned by various researchers include:

1. Teaching the child how to take the perspective of others.
2. Children can reverse social roles and see how they "fit."

(Denzin, page 143)

3. Play can allow children to reduce the real world to manageable proportions and help them find their place in it.

4. Play can allow children to try out notions they have about roles in life. They can get reactions from others about these roles and their perceptions of them.

5. Play allows children to identify and mimic adult roles they may be expected to play one day.

6. Play allows children to try out more powerful roles such as the role of policeman, teacher, nurse, etc.

7. Play may allow the child's limitations to be tolerable to him/her.

8. Play allows children to try out emotions in a protected context where the phrase "I was just playing" is readily acceptable and behavior is accepted.

9. Play allows children to gain more flexible control over their feelings.

10. Play can be used to try out forbidden territory such as the examination of each other's physical bodies through the playing of doctor.

11. Play allows children to simply have fun.

(Newson, pages 100-7)

One psychologist has argued that children need to act out ideas symbolically as opposed to real life situations in order to clarify themselves. They can master new notions and situations.

Play can also function as companion for a child. According to Singer, the child's security blanket or teddy bear becomes not only that cuddly, comfortable thing to hold, but a living companion with human feelings and attitudes. The child builds its world around that companion. As the child grows and develops it may still cling to certain of these objects to ensure this sense of companionship and similarity while confronting things in the outside world that may be frightening to him/her (Singer, pages 236-8).

A child's expertise in play then would be expected to be a direct function of the actual amount of time that child has spent

playing that particular form. To draw this one step further, children who practice at being good mothers or good nurses through their toys might be expected to be better mothers and nurses in reality (Denzin, page 163).

Play and fantasy gives the child "the opportunity to experiment with actions, relationships, happenings and feelings . . . , to play with threatening ideas without being actively threatened, to try out a scenario of events without having to carry it through or take responsibility for the outcome, and in general to sort out his ideas, both intellectual and emotive, on the safe play level . . . he is enabled gradually to find himself as a person" (Newson, page 124).

Denzin sums up play by saying that "by learning to play young children learn what elements make up place. They learn to attach different meanings and interpretations to self, others, and object; and to take the point of civil-legal, polite-ceremonial, and relationally specific rules. They learn how to form, break, and challenge social relationship; how to measure time and its passage; and how to assume (or avoid) the biographical consequences of any set of actions. Play becomes life and life becomes play" (Denzin, page 166).

CHAPTER 4

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND MEANING--METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in deriving the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll from children is qualitative instead of quantitative. Qualitative research begins with assumptions that are very much opposite to those of the quantitative study. They are as follows:

- Behavior is guided by interpretation. There are no laws, only consistency and patterns in a qualitative research study.
- There are multiple realities which may change for individual people.
- The data is "soft" data. Some of the data may seem to contradict other data. This contradictory data may, however, simply be different levels of the same topic. The data may not be replicable.
- The researcher seeks to understand from the insider's perspective. The words of the individuals being studied are important and these are the subjects the researcher is interested in uncovering.
- Qualitative research is subjective in nature.
- The researcher collects the data first and then tries to organize the data into patterns which makes use of sensitized concepts derived from the data.
- The instrument is the researcher, not a survey form.

- The inquiry is based on naturalistic settings.
- The researcher does not seek to generalize the findings to the whole universe, but merely to similar environments, if at all.

Symbolic interactionism seeks to organize a methodological stance to reflect the empirical world. The empirical world is full of meaning based on each individual's interpretation. Behavior is guided by meaning itself and is based on how the meaning is experienced and interpreted by each individual (Blumer, 1969).

Meaning in Symbolic Interactionism

The only way to derive meaning is through the perspective of the individual for which that object holds meaning. To understand the individual you must understand their meanings of objects. Meaning may be different for two individuals.

Meaning, therefore, is subjective. It is based on how the subject experienced and interpreted an object or concept. Meaning is, then, internal in nature. The only way to study meaning is through the perspective of the individual for which the object holds meaning. In other words, to understand an individual, you must understand that individual's meaning for particular objects and concepts.

Meaning is also based on interaction with self and/or others. This social interaction can take place between two individuals, between two groups of people, between an individual and self or

any other type of interaction. Behavior is guided by the meaning as interpreted by this social interaction.

According to Dilthey, meaning is seen as the master category which characterizes all of human life. One must see the shared characteristics of nations, classes and other groups of people. Variety in human nature can be seen as the different degrees to which individuals possess common characteristics (Dilthey, 1962).

Nature of Objects

"The position of symbolic interactionism is that the 'worlds' that exist for human beings and for their groups are composed of objects. An object is anything that can be indicated; anything that is pointed to or referred to . . ." (Blumer, page 10).

Objects may be classified into three categories:

- Physical objects
- Social objects (mother, friend)
- Abstract objects (moral principles, ideas)

The "Cabbage Patch" doll is a physical object which has derived its meaning from interaction with peers, adults, and the media.

According to symbolic interactionism, the nature of an object consists of the meaning that the object has for the person for whom it is an object. This includes how a person acts toward an object, how he/she sees the object and the way he/she is willing to talk about the object (Blumer, page 11).

Logically, then, the only way to determine what objects, in this case the "Cabbage Patch" doll, mean is to ask those for

whom the object has meaning and to observe the way these individuals act toward that object.

Role of the Researcher

By the term researcher and its implications, the researcher knows very little about the situation or the people to be studied. According to Blumer, the researcher "is rarely a participant and usually is not in close touch with the actions and the experiences of the people who are involved in that sphere. His position is almost always that of an outsider; as such he is markedly limited in simple knowledge of what takes place in the given sphere of life" (Blumer, page 35).

The researcher must be able to develop and alter his inquiry so that the inquiry rises out of the empirical world the researcher is studying and remains ground in that world (Blumer, page 41). The researcher may shift from one line of inquiry to another. He may adopt another point of view or frame of reference. The researcher may move in previously unthought-of directions or may change her concept of what is relevant.

According to Bogden & Bilken, "qualitative researchers are concerned with what are called participant perspectives, or the ways people make sense out of their lives" (Bogden & Bilken, 1982, page 29).

The researcher must approach an interview situation with several principles in mind.

- There is no fixed sequence of questioning.
 - Subjects can raise important questions on their own which can give new, fresh perspectives.
 - Each individual has a unique way of defining their world.
 - The researcher must role-play in order to establish rapport and gain the desired knowledge.
 - The interview is based on equality between the interviewer and the subjects.
 - All observations have some effect on the interview.
 - There may be an attempt on the part of the subject to present data the subject feels the interviewer wants.
 - There can be too much rapport between subject and interviewer.
- (Denzin, pages 137, 122)
- Interviewer should remain passive and should be a neutral figure.
 - Tries to avoid being forced into relationships with subjects.
- (Bogden & Taylor, 1975, page 44)

Qualitative researchers then are concerned with what matters to the individuals being studied. They seek to study these phenomena in naturalistic settings in an attempt to uncover as many realities as possible from those being studied.

The "Cabbage Patch" Doll

The "Cabbage Patch" doll seems to be an object which many children and adults have given meaning. This meaning may meet psychological and emotional needs for the children and adults. The dolls may give security. They may fulfill a need of the children to protect something.

According to Blumer, objects have no meaning or status on their own. Their meaning can be sustained through indications and definitions that people make of these objects (Blumer, page 12).

It is evident then that to derive the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll, the researcher must question those children for whom the doll has meaning to uncover the multiple meanings of the doll. In addition, the researcher must observe the way the children treat the dolls to help back up the findings of meaning for the doll through questioning.

Most likely these children have interacted with their peers and with adults in order to arrive at the meaning of the doll. They have also very likely interacted with some forms of media in forming their impressions of just what the "Cabbage Patch" doll means.

Through qualitative research, using unstructured interviews the researcher should be able to arrive at some of the multiple realities surrounding the "Cabbage Patch" doll. These realities will probably group themselves into six to eight broad categories as through interaction, common meanings have probably emerged out of this interaction. According to Blumer, "out of a process of mutual indications common objects emerge--objects that have the same meaning for a given set of people and are seen in the same manner by them" (Blumer, page 11).

Field Procedures

1. Human Subjects form was filled out and approved by The University of Tennessee's Office of Research Compliance on October 8, 1985.

2. Kevin Dean of the YMCA was contacted in order to secure permission to utilize children in the YMCA's "Prime-Time Day Care Centers" for this study. This permission was received.

3. Directors for the two "Day Care Centers" were contacted in order to receive their help in getting the necessary forms signed by parents. In addition their help was needed in setting up times and places for the interviews.

4. Permission was obtained for every child who wants to participate. A letter was sent home with each child to be signed by their parent or guardian, explaining the nature of the study. This form was returned to me before any child participated in the study.

More than one letter was necessary in order to gain signed consent forms. Additional time was needed in order to secure these forms.

5. The study was explained to the children who wished to participate. It was explained to the children that the study will be fun for them.

In addition, the children were given a box filled with magic markers and paper which they were allowed to use in making drawings

and other art work about the "Cabbage Patch" doll and how they play with the doll.

6. Upon receipt of the consent forms, interviews began. The children were interviewed in small groups of three to five.

All interviews were conducted in naturalistic settings, within the children's elementary schools. The atmosphere was relaxed with open discussions where any and all answers were acceptable.

The children were allowed to leave the group at any time to go back to their play group or to take the art box and make drawings or any other art work they chose.

Every child was not present every day of the study, due to their parent's scheduling. It took approximately three to five sessions at each school in order to get a good feel for the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll to the children. Each interview session lasted from one to two hours, depending on how tired the children got and how their day had gone.

A total of nineteen children were interviewed; nine children were interviewed from Bluegrass Elementary School and ten children from East Knox Elementary School. These interviews were carried out during the months preceding Christmas in the Fall of 1985. The interviews for Bluegrass Elementary School were held in late November. East Knox children were interviewed the week before Christmas.

In order to insure anonymity, all names were changed in the interview data. The following is a list of the fictitious names

of the children and their ages, along with which school they go to.

Bluegrass Elementary School

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>
John	5
Jimmy	5
Julie	5
Amanda	8
Jennifer	7
Kelly	8
Lisa	8
Angela	7

East Knox Elementary School

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>
Lance	7
Angie	8
Andy	6
Mindy	6
Betsy	10
Melissa	7
Allison	7
Amy	6
Laura	6

The conversation was free-flowing and normal. The children enjoyed the interviews and wanted them to continue, asking the observer why she could not come every day.

Case Study Questions

In a case study, unlike a traditional survey questionnaire, the questions to be posed are broad, general ones that simply remind the researcher of the areas he/she wishes to pursue.

Below is a list of areas of inquiry and broad sample questions for each. There will be some deviation from this list as other possibilities arise out of the interviewing.

Child Peer Pressure

Do many of your friends have "Cabbage Patch" dolls?

How many "Cabbage Patch" dolls do you have?

Did you pick out your "Cabbage Patch" doll yourself or did someone else do this?

What meaning do you give your "Cabbage Patch" doll?

What does the "Cabbage Patch" doll mean to your friends?

Adult Peer Pressure

How do your parents feel about the "Cabbage Patch" doll?

Do your parents pretend they're your "Cabbage Patch" doll's grandparents?

Do your parents buy presents for your "Cabbage Patch" doll?

Media Pressure

Where did you first hear about the "Cabbage Patch" doll?

What promotions were you aware of that used the "Cabbage Patch" doll?

What do you feel caused "Cabbage Patch" fever?

Were you aware of the use of "Cabbage Patch" dolls in programs other than advertisements?

What programs do you watch?

Are you aware of the different products with "Cabbage Patch" names?

How many "Cabbage Patch" accessories do you have?

Miscellaneous

What are the most important qualities about the "Cabbage Patch" doll?

How are people who buy "Cabbage Patch" dolls different from those who don't buy them?

How are people who want "Cabbage Patch" dolls different from those who don't want them?

Why is the "Cabbage Patch" doll important?

Was it important that you had a "Cabbage Patch" doll? Why?

Why do you think "Cabbage Patch" dolls became so popular with children like yourself?

Are adoption papers important? Why?

Is the birth certificate important? Why?

What other kinds of dolls do you have? Do you treat these dolls differently than your "Cabbage Patch" dolls?

Does anyone in your house or family other than yourself have a "Cabbage Patch" doll?

Do you think "Cabbage Patch" dolls are expensive?

In addition to these questions, I will from time to time use some projective techniques. These will consist of starting a story and letting the child finish it or letting the child fill in the blank. The following is a list of the probable stories and fill-in-the-blanks that will be used.

Observer will say: We're going to play a game. I'll start a story which involves "Cabbage Patch" dolls and you make up the ending.

1. Ginger had asked her mother three months before Christmas for a "Cabbage Patch" doll. About every week until Christmas she reminded her mother that she wanted a "Cabbage Patch" doll and asked her mother if she had bought her one yet. What kind of girl was Ginger? Why do you think it was important to her that she had a "Cabbage Patch" doll? Which doll would she want?

2. After Ginger got her "Cabbage Patch" doll for Christmas, she didn't send in the adoption papers, but put her doll on her bed where the doll stayed most of the time. Why do you think Ginger did this? What meaning did Ginger give her doll?

3. Mary's mother insisted that Mary have a "Cabbage Patch" doll. Why was it so important to Mary's mother? Was it important to Mary?

4. Joan was watching Saturday morning television. What programs would she be watching? Would she have seen "Cabbage Patch" dolls on any of the programs? On any of the advertisements? Where else would she have seen "Cabbage Patch" dolls advertised? Where would be the best place to advertise "Cabbage Patch" dolls so you would see the advertisements?

5. Tammy won a "Cabbage Patch" doll in a contest. What kind of contest was it? What did Tammy have to do to win the contest? What kind of girl was Tammy?

6. "Cabbage Patch" dolls are born _____.

7. My friend _____ doesn't have a "Cabbage Patch" doll because _____.

8. People who don't buy "Cabbage Patch" dolls are _____.

9. People who don't like "Cabbage Patch" dolls are _____.

10. People who buy "Cabbage Patch" dolls are _____.

11. Sandy has three "Cabbage Patch" dolls. One is a premie, one is a boy, and one is a girl. Which doll does Sandy like best? Why?

Analysis

Upon completion of these interviews, which included approximately 15-20 children, all interview tapes were transcribed. From this data, analysis was made to determine what themes emerged as the most dominant ones. From these dominant themes, the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll emerged for those children

interviewed. By using interview data, art work, pictures and observations of how the children treat their dolls, this meaning emerged as multiple realities to these children.

The method to be used involved making copies of the transcript material. Once accomplished, the transcript is cut apart, being careful to note on every piece of paper which page and which school it comes from. The themes were then arranged into folders to later be assembled in the analysis part of the thesis.

In addition to establishing the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll, there are several other areas to be analyzed. The following is a brief summary of these areas.

- Whether or not most of the child's friends have a "Cabbage Patch" doll and whether the child got the doll first or his/her friends had a doll first.

- Where the child first heard about "Cabbage Patch" dolls.

- If the child is aware of promotions other than advertising of the "Cabbage Patch" doll.

- What difference the child sees between someone who likes and someone who dislikes the doll.

CHAPTER 5

SUBTHEMES IN INTERVIEW DATA

In Chapter 3's subsection on consumer behavior, emerging trends and lifestyles, several emerging cultural trends were noted. These themes emerge in the interview data and fall into two general categories:

- Themes suggested by promotional material from Coleco
- Themes arising from social interaction.

While the children and adults have accepted and incorporated much of the promotions surrounding the "Cabbage Patch" doll into their play, many of the children have extended these situations and have arrived at new areas in which the "Cabbage Patch" doll becomes important. Within these two general categories, the following cultural trends are found in the data:

- Parents center their lives more around their children.
- The values of the peer group are becoming more important than those of the family.
- The child is gaining values from the media.
- Status is expressed through the buying of products.
- Children want a product that gives them individuality, yet gives some feeling of conformity to their reference group.
- Children still desire toys and other objects that give them a sense of security--such as the teddy bear, the security blanket, or a doll.

- Children have a tendency to believe in the supernatural and the mystic.
- Ethnic groups desire to show their ethnicity through products they buy.
- There is an increased desire to spend, instead of saving.

General Themes Suggested by the Promotional Literature
and Media Use from Coleco

There are six themes which emerge from the data that seem to come directly from Coleco's promotional efforts.

- Dolls offer companionship and a sense of security.
- The adoption papers, birth certificates and the relatively high cost of the product enhances its popularity and gives it an air of authenticity and exclusivity.
- Children feel a responsibility for their dolls, both to protect them and to see that the dolls grow up to be what the birth certificate tells the child the doll is expected to become.
- The ethnic line of dolls is most desired. There is a hierarchy of the dolls. The children treat their dolls differently from other dolls and toys.
- While children realize the dolls are not real, they see them as real people and treat them as such. Adults participate in these situations which help to enhance the fantasy.
- The doll gives the child a sense of belonging to the group.

Dolls Offer Companionship and a Sense of Security

A trend toward the acquisition of security in the lives of children and adults is on the rise. It has been common for a child to sleep with a teddy bear or other object in an attempt to foster this feeling of security. As the divorce rate in the United States rises, more and more children may feel a loss of security with the loss of a parent. The "Cabbage Patch" doll, for many children, gives them the additional sense of security and offers them companionship. The children not only sleep with the dolls, but the dolls become friends, someone they can share with and talk to. The children see the "Cabbage Patch" doll as an ideal choice for others who are lonely.

Lance: When I got mine ["Cabbage Patch" doll], I used to be grumpy and grouchy in the morning and most of the time now when I get up, I say, "Good morning."
[East Knox Elementary School, page 39]

Angie: I play cards and draw pictures and practice like drawing or school or something [with my "Cabbage Patch" doll].
[East Knox Elementary School, page 31]

Lance: She wants a "Cabbage Patch" kid because it's a long way to school and she has to ride her bike because the bus tore up. It's five miles to school and she's lonely and bored. She can talk to it.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 36]

Lance: Well, they ["Cabbage Patch" dolls] make people not lonely. You can play with them. You can become like their friends. Well, they are friends.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 36]

Many of the children also see the dolls as snugly and good to sleep with--much as one would see a child sleep with a teddy bear or a security blanket.

John: I think they're snuggly. They're so cute because they have so many clothes and you can sleep with them and hug them. You can act like you feed them.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 15]

Julie: We have a "Cabbage Patch" pillow.

Amanda: It's a little pillow that my Mom stuffs with cotton in it.

Julie: Yeah, and we can sleep with it. And it feels good to sleep with it.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 17]

John: . . . it's cuddly and I can sleep with it. [John puts the doll on his shoulder and hugs the doll.]
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 12]

Peer Group Values--Sense of Belonging

A second trend places less emphasis on gaining values from church and home and more on one's peer group for the acquisition of values. Exclusion from this peer group could be upsetting to a child.

The "Cabbage Patch" doll offers almost immediate acceptance into that all-important peer group. Many children feel that the doll has changed their lives and made them a group member.

Amanda: You see I've wanted a "Cabbage Patch" doll ever since I first saw them. I was going, "Oh, Mom, I've got to have one, all my friends have one and it's making me feel left out like I don't have any friends." You see, they started making fun of me because my Mom couldn't afford anything.

.

We had always, always wanted one ever since we heard about them, [Amanda and her sister]. Ever since we got one it's just changed our lives. We have so much fun with them. Think it's great.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 50]

Lance: They're the most important. ["Cabbage Patch" dolls]
Like Raggedy Ann--kids don't really want them that
much but they really want "Cabbage Patch" kids.
Because they're so popular.

Betsy: Because all the kids want them.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 17]

Kelly: . . . they are so really, really in style. Everybody
has one. I'm not going to let my "Cabbage Patch"
sit around. I'm not going to get another doll.
I like "Cabbage Patch" kids the best.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 55]

Adoption Papers, Birth Certificates and the Cost of the Doll

From the interview data, characteristics mentioned as important by the children include the expense of the doll, the fact that the doll comes with a birth certificate and that one must send in the adoption papers in order to truly own the doll. The children are very adamant in these statements and these three characteristics serve to give the dolls an intrinsic value all their own. Ultimately these three characteristics seem to mingle to produce a new status symbol for the children. It is fairly evident that the "Cabbage Patch" doll has been adopted as the new status symbol.

Some of the children see the "Cabbage Patch" doll as expensive, while others see the expense as a good quality.

Lisa: I think they're expensive. I just can't earn that
kind of money.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 30]

Lance: I saw them at the supermarket in the toy section.
Like at the Old Giant they have a couple, like 25
they would put out a day, even though they had a
lot more in stock. And they was like \$43.00.

Betsy: That's how much Ashley was.

- Robert: I think they're high priced. They're all above \$35.00.
- Lance: They always charge real high because they're so popular.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 13]
- Observer: Why wouldn't someone want a "Cabbage Patch" doll?
[East Knox Elementary School, page 22]
- Betsy: You've got to be a little bit wealthy or you couldn't afford it. I'm not rich and I've got seven ["Cabbage Patch" dolls].
[East Knox Elementary School, page 29]

The interview data also shows that the children give a great deal of importance to the fact that each doll is different. The adoption papers and birth certificates help to promote this feeling. Some children feel that if one doesn't formally adopt the doll, they are not truly responsible for the doll and the doll does not truly belong to them.

- Kelly: I think because hers [someone who got a "Cabbage Patch" doll] was not like anybody else's. Oh, she didn't sign her adoption papers. If she doesn't have adoption papers, that's not good because she isn't really the owner.
- Angela: I didn't send in my adoption papers, but I signed them.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 33]
- Mindy: I like it [adopting the doll]. It makes them special. It's good to play with babies.
- Betsy: Yeah. You get an adoption paper with them and the other dolls you have to make up their name and this one comes with a name and if you don't like it you can still change it.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 6]
- Lance: I like the football players and sometimes other ones [dolls] don't come with adoption papers and

stuff and you can't change their names and you can't get the Koosas with them. [Koosas are stuffed animals that a child can buy so their "Cabbage Patch" doll can have a pet.]
[East Knox Elementary School, page 10]

Most of the children who are adamant about sending in the adoption papers do not understand why others might not send the adoption papers back to Coleco. The adoption papers are valuable to the children.

Mindy: Because when you get adoption dolls made they don't come with their adoption papers. [Adoption papers] tell you their name and what they are going to grow up to be.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 20]

Betsy: They're crazy [if they don't send in the adoption papers]. Because it's free and it's your problem if you don't want it.

Mindy: They're stupid.

Betsy: They're lazy.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 6]

By sending in the adoption papers, the children also receive something in the mail which they see as a special treat.

Andy: . . . you send them in and you might get something back. Mindy sent something in and she got a baby pony back.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 25]

Betsy: I got a birth certificate [in the mail]. You get it when you send it [the adoption papers] back and when you have your "Cabbage Patch" kid for a year, they send you a birthday card with a little packet with something in it. It's got a pacifier or shoes or something.

The birthday card says, "Happy Birthday from all the kids at the cabbage patch to the ones that have been adopted from the ones still waiting in cabbage patch."
[East Knox Elementary School, page 4]

These birth certificates are very important for the children. They allow the children to change the names of the dolls, give specific data about the doll that helps to make the doll more real, and help to make the children feel more responsible for the doll and its future.

Betsy: They've got a place where you can write down the name you want. When I got it, its name was Mary Rose Alicia and I changed it to Ashley because I didn't like Mary Rose.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 5]

Kelly: Robina is so hard to say so I used to call her Robin for short. I changed it because the first I got him (her premie, named Cyreno] with my sister she knew his name by heart; but with my little girl [Robina], I could not remember her name. It's so weird.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, pages 57-8]

Lance: I changed it to Rusty. I made a letter and sent it to the "Cabbage Patch" people. I called information and asked them where they made the adoption papers and stuff and I put it on there and sent it off that I wanted to change the name to Rusty.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 9]

The birth certificates serve to give the dolls a character of their own by telling where they were born, their parents' names and their expectations for the doll.

Amanda: Mine said that it didn't want to be alone at night and that it was afraid of the dark. . . . Then you sign your name and your phone number and send your address, and your Mom signs her name and everything.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 15]

Angela: Joann's said that she likes to play quiet games. Landon's says, "I like to sleep a lot."
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 31]

Children See Dolls as Real Babies

While the children realize that in actuality the "Cabbage Patch" dolls are not real, they often treat them as if they were. In accordance with the popular trend, children want to believe in the supernatural birth and mystic image surrounding the doll. The children seem to be practicing for their future roles as fathers, mothers, teachers, nurses, and other professions through their "Cabbage Patch" dolls.

Adults help to promote these fantasies, becoming engaged in the creation of a fantasy world where the "Cabbage Patch" doll is real. Some of the parents pretend they are grandparents; others buy presents for the dolls, and engage in other activities that suggest they are aiding in the fantasy.

It is clear, then, that the adults are centering their lives more and more around their children and their needs. This is a common event as one matures and takes on the responsibility of children.

The children have birthday parties for their "Cabbage Patch" dolls, inviting their friends and family to celebrate. They buy the doll's products one would normally use on a real baby, changing diapers, feeding and bathing the dolls as one would a newborn infant.

Amanda: Well, on Felicia's birthday instead of the "Cabbage Patch" company, I decided to throw a party for her, so we did. She climbed up on top of that canopy again. She didn't want to come down to the party. I go, "O. K., Felicia, no party if you don't get down." So, I went into Mom and said, "Can I invite some of Felicia's friends [to the party]?" And my Mom goes, "No, we've something else to do but you and Julie and her doll can come to the party."

. . . she only got four birthday presents: some books, a little baby rabbit, and a gold chain that Julie got her and I gave her some rings to play with and I made her a paper crown.

On her birthday party it got kind of boring with all of us there. So I fixed her a pinata with Halloween candy. Me and Julie just pitched in all our Halloween candy into the pinata. And we couldn't bust it open! So I took out the scissors and clipped it and all the candy fell out on top of Felicia's head and all she did was open her mouth and millions of pieces of candy fell in.

Then she opened her presents, she eats the candy and then I went and got some cookies and she ate the cookies and then we went out and played with the doggie.

[Bluegrass Elementary School, pages 49-50]

Amanda: When I got mine ["Cabbage Patch" doll] for my birthday, I thought I could like take her to the dentist with me and get braces put on her like me.

[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 11]

Betsy: My cousins and my friends, they bring their "Cabbage Patch" kids and come over and we have one birthday candle on it [the cake] and we slice enough for everybody and then we had little bitty cherries that we put on a toothpick for the "Cabbage Patch" kids. [Did they get presents?] Well, Ashley's, the one we had a birthday party for, she got a pacifier and people brought shoes and a lot of them brung clothes.

[East Knox Elementary School, page 7]

Mindy: They feel like babies should. Because when newborn babies are born, they feel real soft and because "Cabbage Patch" dolls are cutest because they look cutest. . . . They're so special. I took mine to the grocery store. It's fun to do things with them [like] play house, holding him on my lap when I slide down my Dad's slide. You can take them to the park and do all that stuff.

[East Knox Elementary School, page 17]

Angela: I've got a little bassinette. I take care of mine ["Cabbage Patch" doll] just like she is a real baby. Every night I put her in it and change

her pajamas and change her diaper. And I rub lotion on her face. Then I put her to bed.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 30]

Betsy: They're like real babies.

Angie: [You can] change their diapers.

Melissa: Give their bottle to them.

Joy: . . . they can suck a pacifier.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 28]

The children imagine their "Cabbage Patch" dolls in various situations that occur in their lives and allow the dolls to participate in events that are normal in their lives such as Halloween or going to a ballgame or the grocery store.

Lance: At Halloween, you know that mascara stuff that you put on your eyebrows, I got some of that and put it in his hair so the sun won't get it.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 21]

Betsy: I take her [the "Cabbage Patch" doll] to my cousin's. She comes and gets us when we go to the store . . . and she gets one of those buggies when we go shopping--and she puts her doll in the front like she's the mother.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 8]

Lance: Like I went to the U. T. football game with my uncle when they played Vanderbilt. . . . I took Rusty [the "Cabbage Patch" doll]. . . . We went and I got the football player's autograph and I said, "Rusty, that's my doll I told you about, likes to play football, too." The man says, "Where is he?" And I say, "I got him in the car."
[East Knox Elementary School, page 16]

The children have routines for their dolls to follow similar to a routine of a newborn. They have developed appetites of their own, with their own specific tastes.

- Angela: I wake them up from their morning nap and feed them one at a time. I wake them up one at a time in the morning and in the afternoon. And, they always sleep before they eat.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, pages 72-3]
- Kelly: I feed them both the same thing when they're sick and when they're normal; chicken soup and apple juice. Sometimes I feed them spaghetti. . . .
- Angela: . . . She's a finicky eater. She doesn't eat a lot of stuff. [The "Cabbage Patch" doll].
[Bluegrass Elementary School, pages 72-3]
- Angela: It's hard work [to take care of three "Cabbage Patch" dolls at once]. You're running here and running there.
- Amanda: . . . You're rushing around. Like one's crawling and another's crying. You're getting bottles ready and your're getting gray hair.
- Lisa: They're crying all at once.
- Angela: I stick Landon's pacifier in his mouth real quick when he starts to cry.

Adults Help Promote Children's Fantasies

As baby-boomers mature and start their families, they center their lives more and more around their children and less around themselves. The parents promote such fantasies as the Easter Rabbit, Santa Claus, or perhaps the "Cabbage Patch" doll. The adults also pretend they are the "Cabbage Patch" doll's grandparents further promoting the imaginative play by their children.

- Amanda: He [her father] doesn't like being a grandparent too well.
- Kelly: Neither do my Mom and Dad.

- Amanda: Sometimes I make him [her father] babysit her [the "Cabbage Patch" doll]. . . . just watch her [while he sits on the couch]. I took a picture with him babysitting once.
- Kelly: [my parents] don't take care of them [the "Cabbage Patch" dolls]. But they are grandparents. I just act like they're the grandparents. My Mom doesn't feel too good about that. She doesn't want to be a grandparent.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 35]
- Betsy: She'll be sitting there [Betsy's mother] and I'll pretend like I have to go somewhere with one or two of them [her parents] and the other one's in there [the house] and I make them babysit them [the "Cabbage Patch" dolls].
[East Knox Elementary School, page 6]
- Amanda: One time we went to Silver Dollar City and I took my doll with me. We went on the log ride. I didn't want to take her [the "Cabbage Patch" doll] because I was afraid she would get soaked. So my Mom didn't go and she held them. And you see here comes these two dogs and Mom had them [the "Cabbage Patch" dolls] sitting down on her two legs, and she goes, "Oh, Holy Moley." And so she picked them [the "Cabbage Patch" dolls] up and put them on top of her shoulders and she goes, "Scat! Get away!" So she sat back down and put the dolls back on her shoulders and we got off the log ride.
- Lance: My Dad says the Italian guy kind of looks like him and he pinches him in the stomach.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 10]
- Amanda: When I got mine ["Cabbage Patch" doll], I acted like I had just had him and I stayed in my room for two whole days. I laid down on my bed. That's just about all I did and I was holding my "Cabbage Patch" doll. [Did your Mom bring your food to bed?] Yeah. She works at this desk and it has one of those roll chairs. I sat in it and [acted] like it was my wheelchair.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 35]

Parents also become active in the child's fantasy world by buying things for the "Cabbage Patch" doll as if the doll were a member of the family.

- Betsy: My Momma got my "Cabbage Patch" kid a Koosa . . . it's an animal like a cat.
- Mindy: My Daddy buys me . . . something for my "Cabbage Patch" every year for Christmas. Last year he bought me a dress.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 22]
- Kelly: One time on Easter he [the "Cabbage Patch" premie] got a little Easter basket. My Mom made it and gave it to him.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 53]

Children and the Mythology Surrounding the Doll

One quality of childhood is that quality of believing in a fantasy world. Most children have very active imaginations and some even create a fantasy world for themselves which may involve other imaginary playmates. The fantasy and mythology surrounding the "Cabbage Patch" doll is readily accepted by the children. While they probably realize that in reality babies do not come from cabbage leaves, the fantasy is believable and will fit in with the rest of their world at this young age.

- Angela: They're born in a cabbage patch. Premies are born early. "Cabbage Patch" kids are born late.

They have real parents. The adoption papers say so. It says, "Mother and Father born in Cleveland. Father is Xavier Roberts." I don't know the mother's name.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 67]
- Kelly: I'm going to read part of this story [that I made up]. Well, the first page--Once upon a time there was a place called the "Cabbage Patch." It was a very lovely place. Everyone liked it. It had little people and they were very good friends, and they were special indeed."
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 62]

John: They ["Cabbage Patch" kids] are born in cabbage patches and they are born in the cabbages and before they are born, they just open and these little babies with all the names are born.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 23]

Children and Their Responsibility Toward the Doll

This characteristic is one that is highly promoted by Coleco. A mass adoption was held to introduce the children to the idea of adopting the doll and to assume the responsibility for it. On a large scale, this type of promotional effort could be associated with efforts by parents in attempting to teach their children responsibility for pets when they are brought into the home.

The children appear to feel responsible for their dolls' safety, welfare, food, nursing, upbringing, and punishment.

Kelly: I'm going to have to make him [the premie] wear a seat belt for whenever I don't want him to do something.

Amanda: Mine sometimes get out of hand. . . . Joann [the "Cabbage Patch" doll] doesn't like to go to sleep. I hardly ever have to punish her and if I do it's usually for something like beating up her brother, because her brother is younger than she is. Her younger sister and her younger brother are twins.

I hardly ever have to punish Joella [another "Cabbage Patch" doll] because she's good. Landon is the one I have to punish most and I don't have to punish him much.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 75]

Kelly: If he [the premie] does something really, really bad, I do [discipline him]. I make him stay in my room.

Angela: I'd give him a big whack on the rear end.

Kelly: Sometimes I do that. Sometimes I go, pow, pow, pow.

When he's really bad I do that but sometimes I just send him to his room and let him stay up on my platform. That's really, really punishment.

Angela: Spankings are better.

Observer: What is the best discipline?

Kelly: I don't know. You could make him stay outside for an hour and a half.

Angela: That's really hard when it's pouring down rain.

Kelly: No, I wouldn't do that. I really wouldn't do that. I promise you I would not do that! [Why?] Because that's child abuse.

Lisa: What's child abuse?

Kelly: When you do something bad to your child like making him go out in the rain for punishment. [Bluegrass Elementary School, pages 68-70]

Angela: I've got a "Cabbage Patch" boy premie and he's going to have to grow up the right way or be punished all his life.

What I do is if he doesn't do something, well-- first of all when he came home, I go over the rules with him. I have rules like not getting into magic markers and not saying cuss words and stuff like that. And if he disobeys the rules, I've got three levels of discipline. First of all, you get a warning. Second of all, you have to sit in the room for twenty minutes. Third, you get a real whack on the behind. [If he didn't mind then] he'd be in real big trouble. . . . I would put him in bed without any supper. [Bluegrass Elementary School, page 71]

John: I wouldn't take him out in the rain. He'll get wet. This is cloth. [Bluegrass Elementary School, page 15]

Kelly: Well, I bring my "Cabbage Patch" doll over to her [friend's] house one time and they play together a lot [the two "Cabbage Patch" kids]. They both want to be gymnasts.

She [the friend] has this garage door opener. She took a rope and rigged them [the dolls] onto the door. She pushed the button and they go UPPPP! I wouldn't let her tie the rope around their neck. She had them around the arms. I kept shouting, "Katy, don't put that thing up. I'm going to get really mad at you if you don't stop doing that."

I didn't want it to be up. I wanted it to be down. I said, "Katy, don't! Mom's going to find out and get really mad." She stopped doing it and I let mine down.

[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 25]

Andy: [Someone might not play with their "Cabbage Patch" doll] if they didn't have any shoes, they wanted to wait until they got some shoes so if there were some staples in the floor, the staples wouldn't get in her [the "Cabbage Patch" doll's] feet. And if they fall down the staples wouldn't get in their hand.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 37]

Andy: Premies need extra special care, like they say in the commercials.

Betsy: [They need extra special care] because they're born littlerer. They're supposed to be new-borns. That way they're not supposed to be as big as the other ones. They're not as healthy.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 3]

The birth certificate that comes with each "Cabbage Patch" kid tells the child something about each "kid." Some of the data included deals with what the "kid" wants to be when it grows up. Some want to be race car drivers, gymnasts, mountain climbers or football players.

Lance: With Rusty [the "Cabbage Patch" doll], I hope that he's going to be a football player one day when he grows up. I wad up paper and I hold him and make him run like from one end of the living room to the other. If he falls four times, that's the other team's ball.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 20]

Ethnicity of Dolls/Hierarchy within the "Cabbage Patch" Line

Promotional material and price have helped children see some "Cabbage Patch" dolls as better than others. Dolls from other countries are highly prized because they have a costume from their original country, they come in a travelling suitcase and they are more expensive. As seen previously, premies are special because they need extra special care. They are supposed to be newborns.

Few of the children have dolls from other countries, yet they all seem to know about them and desire them.

Jimmy: Have you seen those things ["Cabbage Patch" dolls] that have that thing on the front that says "I'm from Africa" or something like that?

Angela: Yeah, they come in a suitcase--like a box and they've been to another country and they have clothes from that country. A couple of outfits.

Lisa: They are like \$50.00. [Regular "Cabbage Patch" dolls].

Angela: No, these aren't \$50.00. They're just about \$39.00. Those [from Africa] are about \$50.00.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 29]

Betsy: I like them [the dolls from foreign countries] but I don't like the clothes they wear except the hat. There's this one that has this white thing [hat] and that's really slick.

Lance: I like the Italian ones. I like his hair.

Betsy: He don't have any hair. It says, "Lay it beside you and see that it's bald." He's bald. He doesn't have any hair.

Lance: My Dad says the Italian guy kind of looks like him. . . .
[East Knox Elementary School, page 10]

Betsy: He isn't a German doll because he doesn't have the outfit. It has to come in the official box and have the outfit.

[I have a special one]. It's bald and he's wearing these baggy pants. He's from Germany. He's got the official outfit of Germany. It has a little bag with Germany on it. I put it up [because] I've got a collection of them and that's one of the collection.

Brandy Calire, she's the one that's got the fancy dress on. It came with the doll. That makes the price higher. There were only 200 of these dolls made.

Laura: I want one [of the limited edition dolls].

Lance: I want twins because they've got red clothes and my favorite color is red. The clothes are like velvet and real soft. It's got curly hair and I like them with curly hair. They have white shoes and I like white shoes.
[East Knox Elementary School, pages 15-16]

The next most popular "Cabbage Patch" dolls appear to be the twins and the premie. The twins are relatively new on the market and children with other "Cabbage Patch" dolls want to expand their collection with twins.

The children who have only one doll most often request the premie.

- Julie: [If someone got to choose a "Cabbage Patch" doll, they would choose a premie] because they're so cut. They're better.
- Amanda: Because their clothes don't cost so much. That's what my Mom tells me that their clothes don't cost so much.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, pages 36-7]
- Amanda: [Suppose someone won a "Cabbage Patch" doll in a contest. What kind of doll would it be?] Let's say that it was like a drawing a picture contest and they picked his picture and he got a boy premie. He drew a bicycle and he picked a boy premie.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 38]
- Julie: [A girl had three "Cabbage Patch" dolls. Which one did she like best?] I think the premie. I'll say it was a boy. Well, she likes the boy premie because she likes to play with it. She likes to take it outside and let it play with her friends that have "Cabbage Patch" dolls.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 44]
- Mindy: They're cute [premies]. They have pacifiers.
- Andy: Premies need extra special care like they say in the commercials.
- Betsy: [They need extra special care] because they're litterer. They're supposed to be newborns.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 3]
- Observer: What would you have done if you had gotten a doll other than a "Cabbage Patch" doll?
- Lance: I would have felt terrible.
- Laura: Terrible.
- Lance: If I had got a Michael Jackson doll, I would have felt almost the same as a "Cabbage Patch" doll. It's not that I like Michael Jackson dolls more. I like Rusty more than Michael Jackson. He [Michael Jackson] doesn't do many good songs.

Laura: I would feel terrible [if I got another kind of doll]. [Why?] Because they're cute ["Cabbage Patch" dolls] and I like them, that's why.

Lance: They're ["Cabbage Patch" dolls] the most important like.
[East Knox Elementary School, pages 18-19]

Children treat their "Cabbage Patch" dolls differently than other kinds of dolls. The way the children treat their "Cabbage Patch" dolls show that these dolls are, in the children's opinion, superior to other types of dolls and therefore to be valued and protected.

Amanda: [Someone might put their "Cabbage Patch" doll up and not play with it] because she didn't want to get it dirty. Because she cared for it a lot.

My Mammaw in Cincinnati, Ohio [just lets her doll lay there]. She just lays it down like it's an antique doll on her bed.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 37]

Kelly: [I pick my "Cabbage Patch" doll over others] because it's so popular and I think it's cute. That's about it. Everybody has one. I think I should play with mine such as everybody plays with theirs because nobody ever plays with any of their other dolls anymore.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 55]

Angie: It's ["Cabbage Patch" dolls] bigger than a "Barbie" doll. You can play with it better.

Angela: Because it's got more movement to it [I play with it more].

Lisa: It's good to play with especially for people that can't see well.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 32]

Lisa: Pumpkin Kids [are on the market but different].

Amanda: Their shoes don't come off.

- Angela: Yeah, they're plastic and just sewed on.
- Amanda: The other dolls [Pumpkin Kids] copied off ["Cabbage Patch" dolls].
- Kelly: They did! Because the "Cabbage Patch" kids were the first kids made anything like this.
- They [Pumpkin Kids] do look alike, but they have sort of lighter skin.
- Angela: Oh, on the premies (Pumpkin Kid premies), you you can hold them up to the light and see right through them.
- Amanda: They have those other kids of shoes and ragged hair. Their legs come off and their arms come off.
- [Bluegrass Elementary School, page 32]

General Themes Not Suggested by the Media Promotional Efforts

As previously mentioned, there are some themes that emerge from the data that do not appear to have been promoted directly by advertisements and other media exposure. Generally, these themes seem to be an extension of the child's imagination. These themes seem to be the child's way of putting themselves into adult situations. They can practice real-life situations and solve them to their own satisfaction. Some researchers feel this to be a good way for children to "practice" growing up--to try out situations before the child actually must make a real-life decision.

Some of these situations involve the child's views on punishment.

Kelly: He [her premie] tries to pour more water in the toilet. Well, he gets a cup and he gets a bowl or something big.

Angela: Landon clogged up the toilet one time. He stuffed paper in the toilet.

Kelly: I gave him [Cyreno] a spanking, no matter what. He threw his fruit all over me and even worse, he goes into the kitchen, into the refrigerator and there are a lot of glass things and he drops them all over the floor--spaghetti sauce. And then he gets the carton of milk and you know how those things are really soft, that's the kind of milk we get. Well, he throws it on the floor. I had to clean up the spaghetti sauce, the dressing, ugh.

TO CYRENO: "You're going to get punished. You're going to bed early tonight."

CYRENO TO KELLY: "You mean not even watch Bill Cosby?"

KELLY TO CYRENO: "You're going to bed at 7:30."
[Bluegrass Elementary School, pages 74-5]

In this example, the child contrives a situation in which the "Cabbage Patch" doll is acting in a way that is against the rules. The doll's behavior is not acceptable in the real world. Most probably this incident never happened, yet the child imagined this in her mind, creating a situation in which the "Cabbage Patch" doll acted in a nonacceptable way. The child then dealt with the doll as the child would expect her parents to deal with her had she executed the same behavior.

The children play doctor, school, mother, and other familiar childhood games with their "Cabbage Patch" dolls. This behavior is somewhat traditional for children to involve their dolls and

stuffed animals in real-life grown-up situations. Again it is evident that the dolls get special care. The children are again trying out real-life situations to see what kind of decisions must be made and to have experience making them.

Kelly: When mine ["Cabbage Patch" doll] is sick, I serve him breakfast in bed. You know those little stools you stand on? Well, one time in the summer he was sick and I got this stool and a bowl. . . . I fed him in bed. [What did you feed him?] Chicken soup. That's good for him and I fed him apple juice.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 71]

Amanda: I put a little bit of blush on her [the "Cabbage Patch" doll]. I got her this little punk dress with holes on the sleeves and stuff. . . . I put a whole bunch of jewelry on her and she looked adorable. I took a picture of her and she's got cool sunglasses on and I tried to separate her thumb.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 57]

Amanda: I would have brought my "Cabbage Patch" doll but my "Cabbage Patch" doll is sick today.

She's in the hospital. She's getting her tonsils out. She might have to. She came up with strep throat. My Dad had it and she got it from him.
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 63]

Betsy: [I play] nurse. You get them ["Cabbage Patch" dolls] real ill. And then you give them shots. My granny works at the hospital and she brings home these shots without the needles that have been used. Then I pretend like that.

Melissa: I play house with mine. I feed them a bottle.

Amy: I play house. I play school. I whop [whip] them.

Laura: What I do is terrible. I put them in the principal's office for nothing. I put check marks by their name [the child has been bad].
[East Knox Elementary School, page 4]

Robert: [I would play] checkers [if I had a "Cabbage Patch" doll]. I would cheat.

Lance: I would play football with it. I would cheat.

Mindy: [I play house.] I get my little play set and make a house.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 3]

Amanda: I took Felicia's hair and I brushed it straight up for Halloween and it stuck straight up. And I showed it to my Mom and I said, "Hey, Mom, how do you like my little punk rocker?" She said, "Oh, she looks adorable."
[Bluegrass Elementary School, page 57]

Some of the children at East Knox Elementary School did not have "Cabbage Patch" dolls; however, they made art work showing what they would do with their "Cabbage Patch" doll if they had one. These children, too, seem to transfer the "Cabbage Patch" doll into situations not directly mentioned in the media.

This study, because it was conducted around Christmas, has a lot of illustrations that use Christmas and Christmas-type elements. The children undoubtedly had Christmas on their minds, however some of their ideas for the "Cabbage Patch" dolls show their vivid imaginations also.

Andy: Well, they're ["Cabbage Patch" kids] going to put on a play at 8:30 and the "Cabbage Patchers" are practising. They are coming out one by one and they're going to put on a Christmas play special and they're all going to come out and tell their names.

Robert: [It will be] at 8:30 because it might get real pretty and dark.

Andy: [On the bottom] is the floor of the stage. This is the stage and these are the seats. This whole part right across here is the stage.

Right now they're just practising. . . . it's
[the play] at school.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 24]

The children also made up art work and stories about the
"Cabbage Patch" dolls. Some of these stories give the traditional
views of right and wrong. The "Cabbage Patch" doll is usually
seen as the hero and the other characters are the villains.

Andy: This is a Christmas tree and this is me and
this is Elliott Johann [his sister's "Cabbage
Patch" doll].

Now [in this picture], he [the "Cabbage Patch"
doll] is driving a car and here comes this
other car and he bumps into the car and this
car lands over here [on the side of the road].

The football player is in the plane and he
shoots at that one [the one that ran the
"Cabbage Patch" doll off the road]. He shoots
at the car and the car shoots at him. And
then the car does that, too, like it's hit
[crashes]. And then when it's about to blow
up, one jumps out and he shoots the one up
there [in the plane] and then the airplane
is coming down for a landing. And this is
the "Cabbage Patch" car and he is delivering
two twins.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 22]

Lance: [He has made a football stadium.] The "Patchers"
are the "Cabbage Patch" kids. They're the
champs. The "Barmers" are like shovels with
faces on them. I taped it [the stadium]
together.

O. K. The champs [the "Patchers"] are supposed
to win. The score is supposed to be 71 to
46. There's the referee.
[East Knox Elementary School, page 7]

It is fairly evident from the above that the children do
take real-life situations and play them out, using their "Cabbage

Patch" dolls. Whether this is an effort to experiment with the outcomes, to try out different situations, or an effort to establish that right prevails is unsure. What is clear is that the dolls are used in imaginary situations thought up by the children and played out by their dolls.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

What does all this data and literature search have to say then to those marketing children's toys and "fads" in general? In this chapter, four issues will be summarized in an attempt to draw meaning from the interview data and to shed light on how children derive this meaning. The four questions to be addressed are:

What influence does corporate communication have on children?

What is the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll for children? From the symbolic interactionist's point of view, how was this meaning derived?

What does this say about introducing toys on the market?

What Influence Does Corporate Communication Have on Children?

As stated earlier, there are two types of influence that can and do affect a child's willingness to buy and his desire for products. One of these is, of course, traditional advertising.

As has been shown, Coleco navigated an extensive advertising campaign, aimed at both children and adults. By their use of both children and adults, the doll held appeal for both and exerted pressure on both to buy. The advertising firm, Richard and Edwards and the public relations firm, Richard Weiner, Inc., effectively

used the media so as to achieve this blend whereby the doll appealed to the children, but adults gave their approval to the doll.

The public relations firm sought to apply a different kind of influence on children and adults through their use of media exposure in nontraditional ways. For example the public relations firm sent Jane Pauley of NBC's "Today" show one of the dolls. The doll gained five valuable minutes of air time on a November 18, 1983 show. Note that this show was merely six weeks before Christmas. As one author puts it, "that gave this (The "Cabbage Patch" doll) the third-person endorsement it needed to be picked up by the other media" (Advertising Age, December 26, 1983).

The public relations firm also obtained extensive coverage for the dolls in various women's magazines November issues for good Christmas gifts for children (Advertising Age, page 18).

The dolls were also featured on NBC's "Tonight" Show several times and were incorporated into a sketch in Bob Hope's Christmas Special in 1983 when Brooke Shields and Catherine Bach appeared as lifesize "Cabbage Patch" kids. By effectively using celebrities like Brooke Shields and Catherine Bach (from "The Dukes of Hazzard") the public relations firm got further endorsements that would eventually influence children to want the dolls.

By featuring the dolls on such programs as "Bob Hope Christmas Special" and the "Tonight" show, the public relations firm put pressure on adults to buy these dolls for their children.

But the public relations firm did not stop with these measures. They found ways to endear the "Cabbage Patch" doll to other consumers. Since the doll was relatively expensive and therefore gave status, the public relations firm, in an effort at showing generosity, coordinated an effort with many children's hospitals to give away scores of the dolls to young patients. Radio stations and newspapers began using the dolls as prizes, sometimes buying the dolls, sometimes getting the dolls through the public relations firm (Advertising Age, page 18).

With all this media exposure, traditional and nontraditional, it is small wonder that the "Cabbage Patch" doll became an overnight success. When a product is seen this much on television, in the newspapers, as part of programs and giveaways, is it any wonder people, both children and adults, want to own one?

Children are known to mimic what they see adults do and what they see in the media. Coleco and its media program effectively used this fact to help ensure the success of its product. They effectively set the standards for acceptable behavior--the purchase of a "Cabbage Patch" doll, and they did it so well that they were unable to fill all the orders for the doll.

It is safe to state that effective media planning and usage made children aware of the "Cabbage Patch" doll and made their desire for a "Cabbage Patch" doll soar. The corporate communication by Coleco and its advertising agency and public relations firm can be

said to have created, developed and insured the success of the "Cabbage Patch" doll. How long this development will last is up for speculation.

Symbolic Interactionism and How Meaning is Established

Symbolic interactionism is a theory or perspective that states that meaning is derived through interaction with self, with others and with objects. The symbolic interactionist feels that a child has no knowledge of self, other, object, or situation on his own and these relationships are learned through interaction. It would seem logical then that the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll could only grow out of interaction.

The question arises then, if meaning is derived from interaction, with whom do the children interact to derive this meaning?

The answer to this question is not a simple one and involves varying degrees of interaction.

As stated previously, the children have reacted to a great extent with the medium of television. Most of the children I talked to told me that the medium of television was where they first heard about "Cabbage Patch" dolls. A few mentioned the medium of catalogues, primarily J. C. Penney catalogues. Only one or two children mentioned newspapers and none mentioned radio or magazines as the place they received their information about "Cabbage Patch" dolls. Some did mention in-store displays as a source of ongoing information. Still, television is the medium most used by these children to learn about products, to learn about what is acceptable behavior.

As stated in Chapter 3, one emerging trend in the United States is that trend toward acquiring values from the media. Television plays this role for many of the children in the United States today. One child told me that, if he is not in school, he turns the television on at 8:00 in the morning and turns it off at 9:00 at night when he goes to bed. This seems to be a typical behavior, however, many of the children do state that they watch television extensively.

So, it is fair to state that the various media interacted with both the children and the adults to give the "Cabbage Patch" doll new meaning--not just a toy, but rather a status symbol.

The children also interact with adults. As seen in much of the interview data, adults take an active part in the fantasy world created by Coleco and extended by the children in which "Cabbage Patch" dolls become living, breathing children. The adults, in interacting with the children, help to give the feeling that the doll is a real person, something to be treasured. Many of the children stated that their parents would not allow them to take their "Cabbage Patch" dolls out of the house for fear they would get dirty or torn.

Adults have given children the feeling that this doll is superior to others by their very treatment of the doll as if it is something to be treasured. Part of this feeling stems from the cost of the doll and the fact that some parents have sacrificed in order to give their children a "Cabbage Patch" doll.

Many parents may feel that this sort of toy aids in the socialization process, allowing their children to play out their fantasies and become more responsible adults. This feeling may have been furthered by the fact that Coleco encouraged adoption of the doll and tried to make the child feel that he/she is responsible for the nurture and upbringing of the doll.

Finally, the child interacts with himself/herself and with other children to give meaning to the doll. Play, as stated in Chapter 6, constitutes a very important form of interaction. It makes no difference if the play is between the child and the doll, the child and himself, or the child, the doll and someone else, or the child and someone else. Interaction takes place in play. This interaction helps children grasp meaning for the objects they play with and the roles they will later assume.

As seen in the interview data, children, who have "Cabbage Patch" dolls tend to group themselves together, almost forming cliques. These children have been known to exclude those who do not have "Cabbage Patch" dolls. One child tells of being laughed at for not having a "Cabbage Patch" doll and the acquisition of one changed her whole life.

The doll does not have one meaning for all the children, however, it is safe to say that the children have derived their individual meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll through their interaction with other children, as well as adults, the media and themselves.

Thus, in accordance with symbolic interactionism, it can be seen that the meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll does indeed spawn from interaction--whether this interaction be with self, with the media, with others, or with the object in general.

What is the Meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" Doll for Children?

It must be emphatically stated that there is not just one meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll. While there are shared meanings of the "Cabbage Patch" doll, each child has his/her own peculiar meaning for the doll. Each child has his/her own interpretation. This interpretation is based on interaction. Since interaction is different for each child, it is logical that meaning for each child is different, based on his/her understanding and interpretation of the interactions that have taken place.

Some children have essentially the same interactions in their lifestyles. These children then have shared meanings for the "Cabbage Patch" doll. One of these shared meanings sees the "Cabbage Patch" doll as a real baby. These children realize that the doll is not real, however, in their "world," the doll is real and lives and breathes. The child is responsible for its care and nurture. The children have assumed the responsibility of parent, teacher, doctor/nurse, and/or other roles.

Many of these children state that the reason they like the "Cabbage Patch" doll is because the doll looks real, feels real, is

about the same size as a real baby, and is cuddly. They can buy baby "things" for the doll, such as diapers, pacifiers, feeding sets and diaper bags. Not only can the children buy "Cabbage Patch" accessories, many articles one would buy for a baby can be bought and used by the children in their play with the "Cabbage Patch" dolls. For example, one child bought a medicine dropper, made for babies, to give her "Cabbage Patch" doll medicine. Others have bought booties, originally intended for real babies, for their dolls.

To many children, then, the "Cabbage Patch" doll is a real baby and is to be treated like a real baby in every sense, from feeding to bathing to discipline.

Other children feel the "Cabbage Patch" doll is their companion. One child takes her doll to the dentist whenever she has to have braces put on. The child also wants to have braces put on the doll.

Most of the children talk to their dolls, as one would talk to a close companion. This is true of the same children who treat their dolls as babies. The "Cabbage Patch" dolls do, it appears, have the ability to change roles at the whim of the child.

The "Cabbage Patch" doll means a status symbol to many of the children. The children recognize the doll as important and that ownership sets them apart from those who do not have a doll. Through interaction with adults, media and others, the children have established this object as the "thing" to have.

Many of them stressed this fact in the interviewing. These children felt that the "Cabbage Patch" doll was the most important doll right now. They are not sure how long the doll's popularity will last but at the present, they all agree that at the present time, the "Cabbage Patch" doll is the doll to own and play with. Many children stressed that they felt they had to play with their "Cabbage Patch" doll as much as their friends played with their "Cabbage Patch" dolls.

For many children, the "Cabbage Patch" doll means "I belong." Some children who otherwise would not belong to the group, have gained access through the ownership of the "Cabbage Patch" doll. While it is true that they tend to be followers in the groups, they have nevertheless gained access to a once forbidden reference group.

The "Cabbage Patch" doll is also an object used by many of the children to try out new roles, such as mother, teacher, or nurse. This type of interaction helps the child find out where he fits in society.

The "Cabbage Patch" doll also means individuality to many children. The doll seems to have those two all-important qualities of conformity to the group norms, with enough individuality to give the individual a feeling of uniqueness. Coleco has effectively nurtured this idea with different names, different clothing, and different physical qualities.

So, it can be said that meaning of the "Cabbage Patch" doll is as individual as each child is an individual. Meaning varies

from child to child depending on their experiences and interactions with media and others and their interpretation of these interactions.

This Study and the Toy Industry

In Chapter 6, several functions of toys were mentioned. Among these were the concepts that toys and play allows children to try out their notions about other roles; that play allows the child to bring to manageable size the real world; that play allows children to mimic adults and learn about their roles; and that play allows children to interact with others in social situations. The "Cabbage Patch" doll allows children to perform all these functions.

By utilizing this information and the information about the influence corporate communication has on children, marketers and advertisers should gain some insight into the most effective way to new products.

Not every toy that comes on the market has the potential to have the success of the "Cabbage Patch" doll. Not every company can spend the kind of money spent by Coleco and its advertising and public relations firm on such a saturated media plan. Not every toy includes so many consumer trends and plays upon these trends.

However, if marketers pay more attention to emerging trends within a society and attempt to see these trends from the child's point of view, with effective marketing and advertising, success of the object is more likely.

Is the "Cabbage Patch" doll a "fad?" The following is a summary of the ten characteristics already mentioned as common to "fads":

Mysterious--The birth in a cabbage patch one night a year gives the dolls this mysterious, supernatural quality.

Feeling of exclusivity--By price and the characteristic that every doll is unique, this feeling of exclusivity is achieved.

Gives sense of belonging--This has been achieved through price and media exposure. Adopting the doll also helps to achieve this element.

Status symbol--As stated because of price and uniqueness, the doll is the new status symbol for the young.

Not to easily accessible--Shortages in supply helped to achieve this feeling.

Uniqueness--Each doll is different, yet ownership meets the need to conform.

Evoking a strong emotion--There seems to be no middle ground, either one loves "Cabbage Patch" dolls or one hates them.

Must have an audience--Effective media exposure helped to achieve and ensure the audience and sustains the audience over time.

Some investment potential--This is uncertain, however, with collector's editions and other limited editions, it is felt that at some point in time, the "Cabbage Patch" dolls will have some financial value.

Is the "Cabbage Patch" doll a fad?" Probably. However Coleco has, either on purpose or through luck, capitalized on trends that are emerging in the United States and lifestyles of several different groups. By effectively reaching this audience, Coleco has created an unusual fad, one that may last for several years. However, as in all fads, this one will eventually lose its momentum and another product will replace the "Cabbage Patch" doll. With improvements and new innovations, such as the twins, however, the doll may well last for several years.

LIST OF REFERENCES

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adler, Jerry, Frank Maier and Nikki Finke Greenberg. 1983. "Oh You Beautiful Dolls!" Newsweek: 102:24, page 78-81. December 12, 1983.
- Advertising Age. 1983. "Behind-scenes look at Cabbage Patch pr." 54:54, page 18, December 26, 1983.
- Advertising Age. 1984. "Kids Name Favorite Characters." 55:24. June 23, 1984.
- Baig, Edward C. 1983. "The Billion-Dollar Cabbage Patch in Cleveland, Georgia." Fortune, 108:13, December 26, 1983.
- Blumer, Herbert. 1969. Symbolic Interactionism. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969.
- Bogdan, Robert C. and Sara Knopp Bilken. 1982. Qualitative Research for Education. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1982.
- Bogdan, Robert C. and Steven J. Taylor. 1975. Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods. New York: Wiley Publishing, 1975.
- Business Week. 1984. "How Long can Cabbage Patch Kids keep Coleco Afloat?" October 22, 1984.
- Cravens, David W., Gerald E. Hills and Robert B. Woodruff. 1980. Marketing Decision Making. Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1980.
- Denzin, Norman. 1977. Childhood Socialization. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977.
- Denzin, Norman. 1978. The Research Act. New York: McGraw Hill, 1978.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm. 1962. Pattern & Meaning in History. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- Flax, Steven. 1983. "The Christmas Zing in Zapless Toys." Fortune, 108:13, December 26, 1983.
- Getfryd, Bernard. 1983. "The Fads of Yesterday." Newsweek. 102:24, December 12, 1983.
- Kern, Richard. 1985. "How we do it and how well." Sales and Marketing Management, 135:2, September 1985.

- Kern, Richard. 1985. "Demographic roundup '85." Sales and Marketing Management, 135:3, October 1985.
- Langway, Lynn and Ann Hughey. 1983. "Harvesting the Cabbage." Newsweek, 102:24, December 12, 1983.
- Letscher, Martin G. 1984. "Separating Trends from fads can make the difference between success and failure." Madison Avenue, 26:2, February 1984.
- Loudon, David L., and Albert J. Della Bitta. 1984. Consumer Behavior. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Madison Avenue. 1983. "Cabbage may create crop of kings." 25:14, August 1983.
- Miller, David L. 1985. Introduction to Collective Behavior. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1985.
- Munson, J. Michael and W. Austin Spivey. 1981. "Product and Brand-User Stereotypes among Social Classes." Journal of Advertising Research, 21:4, August 1981.
- Newson, John and Elizabeth Newson. 1979. Toys & Playthings. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.
- Sales and Marketing Management. 1984. "Kids rake in the Cabbage." 132:1, January 16, 1984.
- Singer, Jerome L., Ephraim Biblow, Joan T. Freybert, Sybil Gottlieb, and Mary Ann Pulaski. 1973. The Child's World of Make-Believe. New York: Academic Press, 1973.
- Skolnik, Peter L., Laura Torbet and Nikki Smith. 1972. Fads: America's Crazes, Febers and Fancies. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1972.
- Soldow, Gary F. 1983. "The Processing of Information in the Young Consumer: The Input of Cognitive Developmental Stage on Television, Radio and Print Advertising." Journal of Advertising, 12:3, 1983.
- Sutherland, Max and John Galloway. 1981. "Role of Advertising: Persuasion or Agenda Setting." Journal of Advertising Research, 21:5, October 1981.
- Television/Radio Age. 1983. "Product or Advertising?" 31:93, December 19, 1983.

Trostle, Susan L. and Thomas D. Yawkey. 1983. "Facilitating Creative Thought Through Object Play in Young Children." Journal of Creative Behavior, 17:3, 1983.

Wilke, John. 1985. "Are the Programs Your Kids Watch Simply Commercials?" Business Week, 2887, March 25, 1985.

APPENDIX

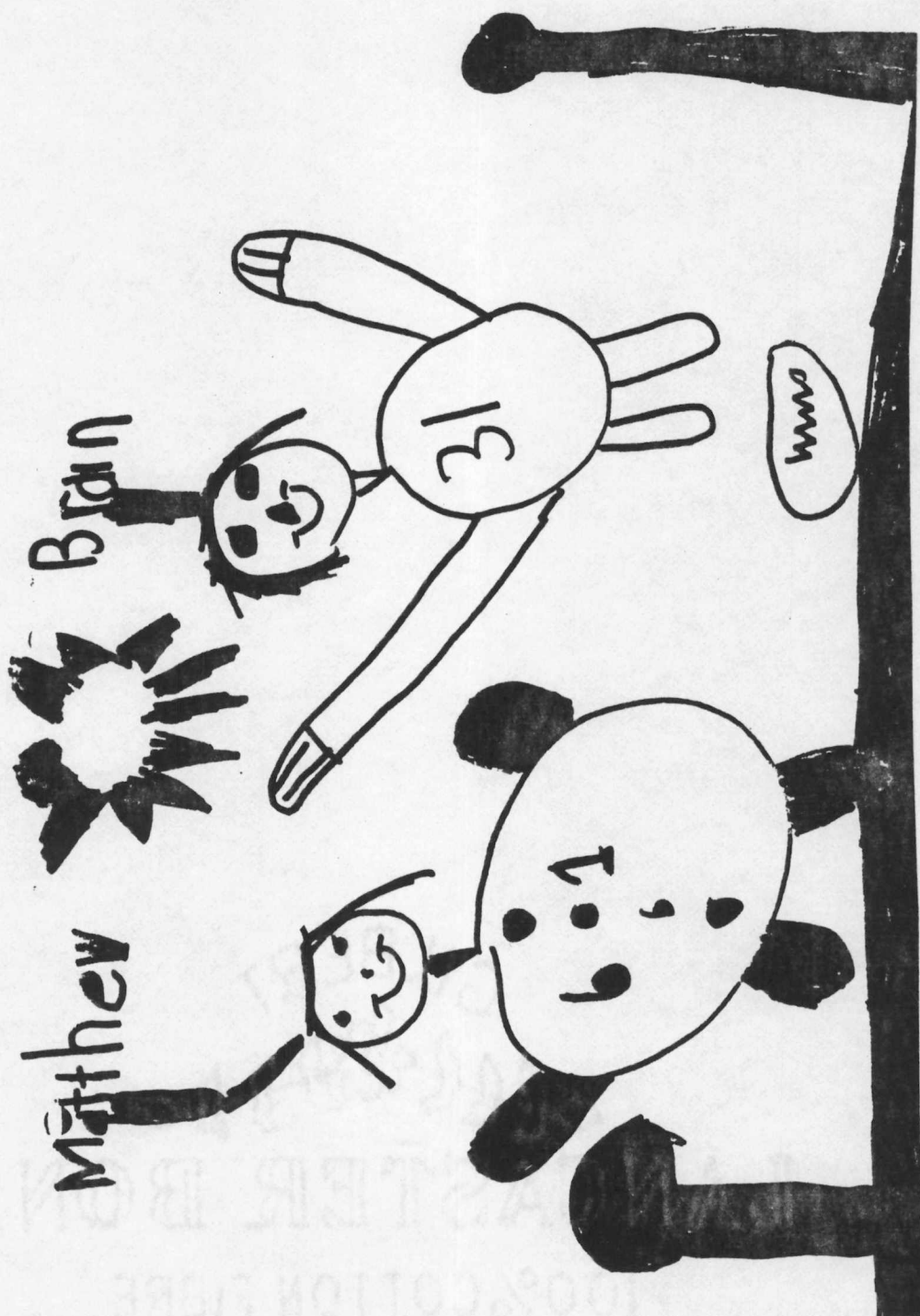


FIGURE 2. Drawing by a 5-year-old which shows the child and his "Cabbage Patch" doll playing football together.



FIGURE 3. Construction paper "Cabbage Patch" doll as a football player.

I Love you

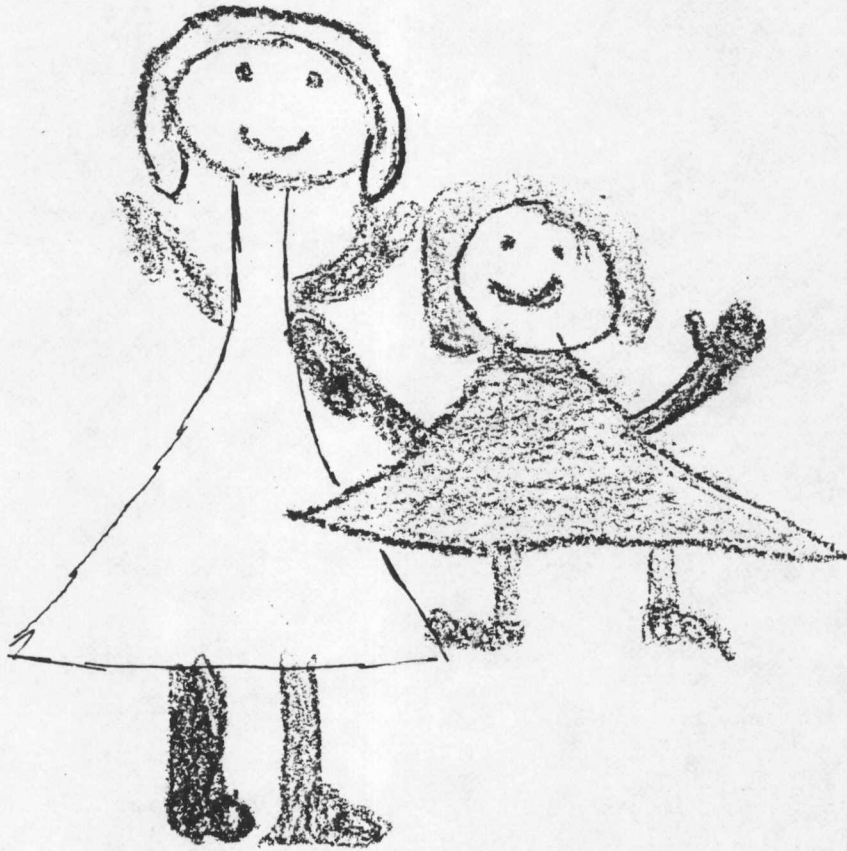


FIGURE 4. Crayon drawing by an 8-year-old child showing the girl and her "Cabbage Patch" doll.

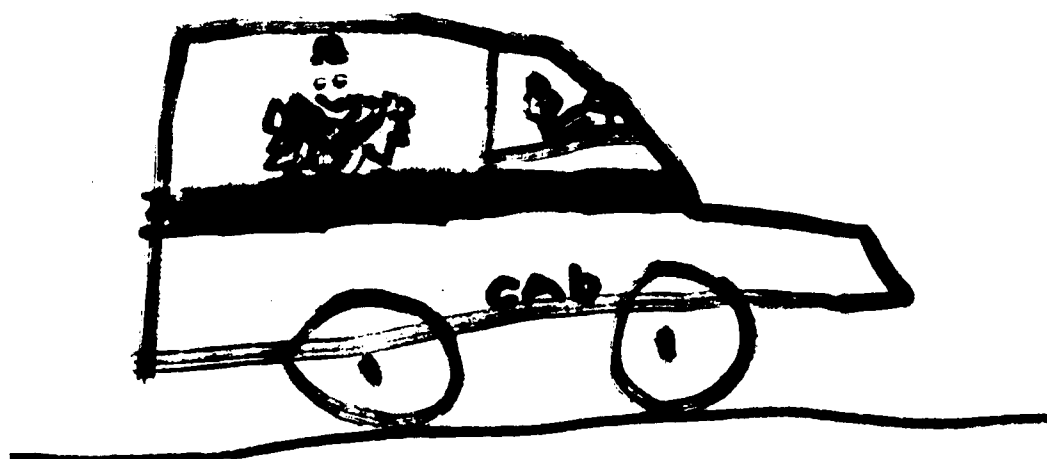


FIGURE 5. Drawing of a "Cabbage Patch" cab being driven by a "Cabbage Patch" doll. (In the back seat a premie is being born out of a cabbage.)

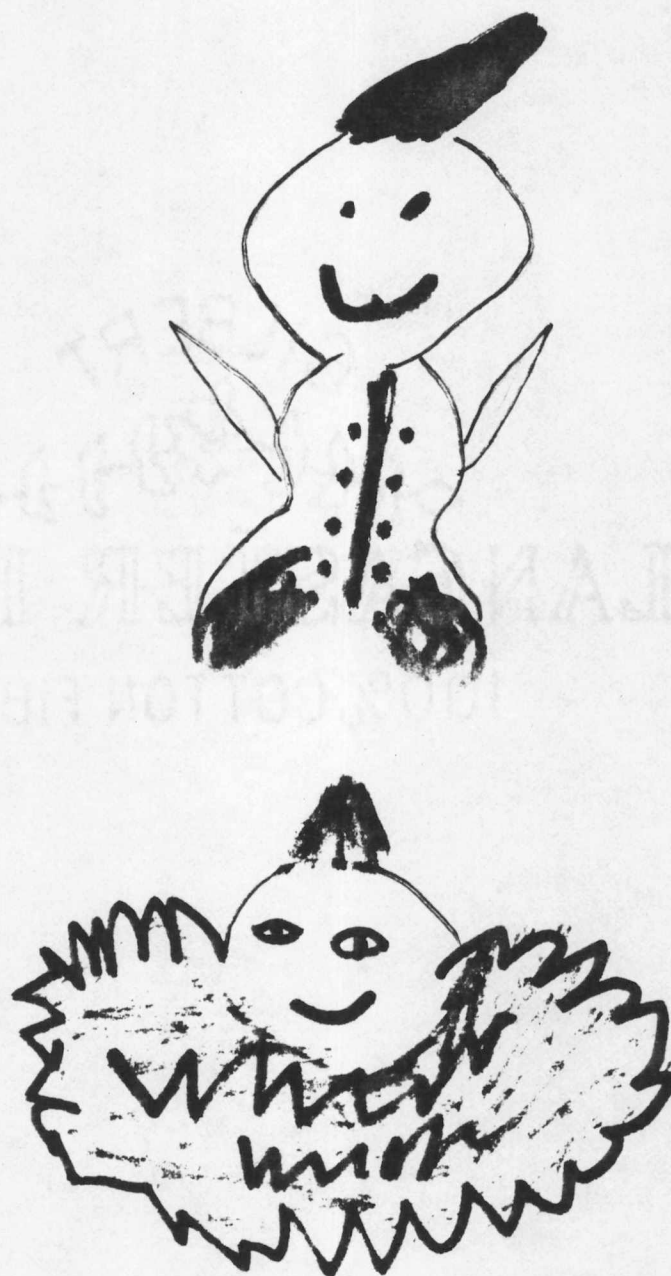


FIGURE 6. One child's drawing of a premie and the premie being born.

Wet pant

Wet pant

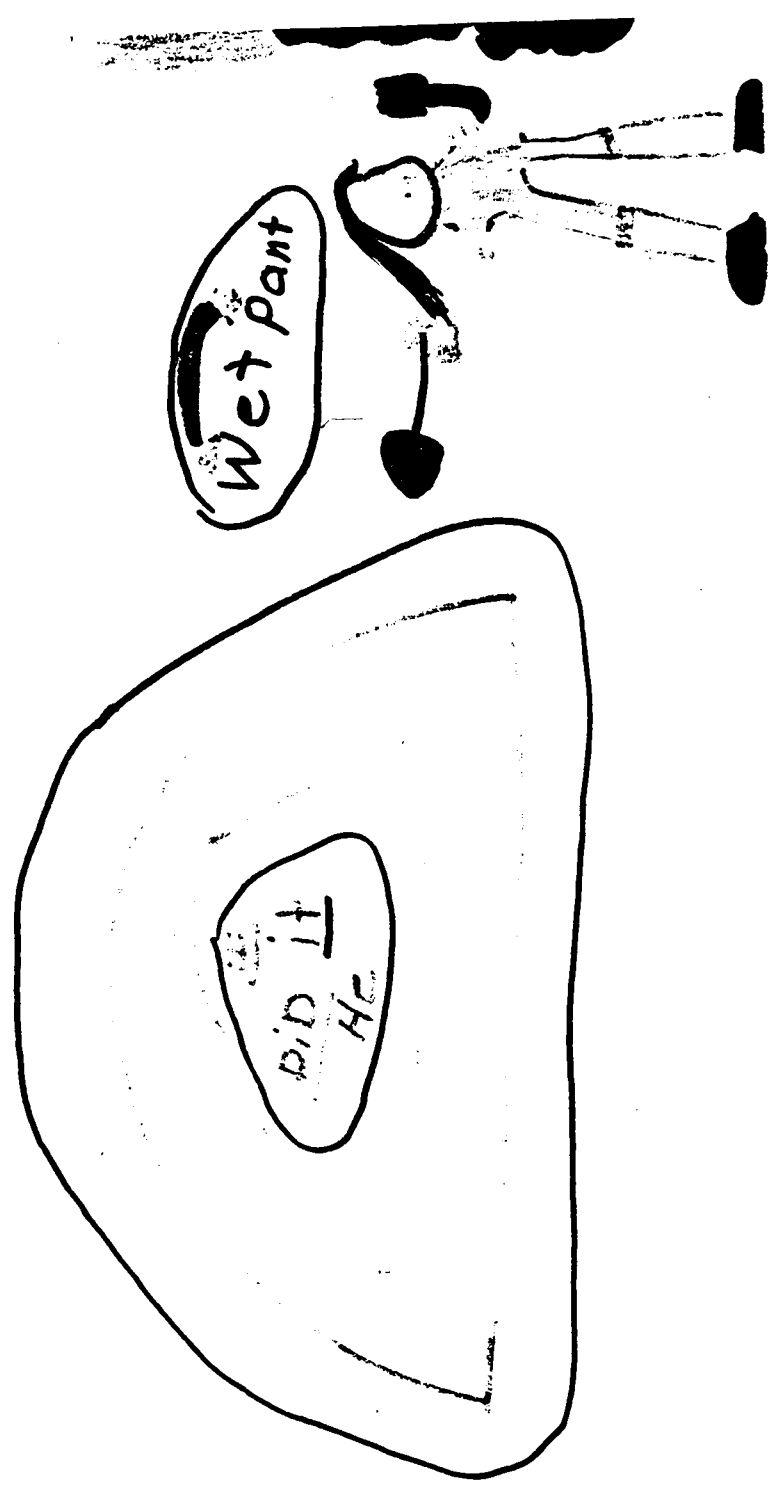


FIGURE 7. A picture done in magic markers showing the "Cabbage Patch" kid painting.

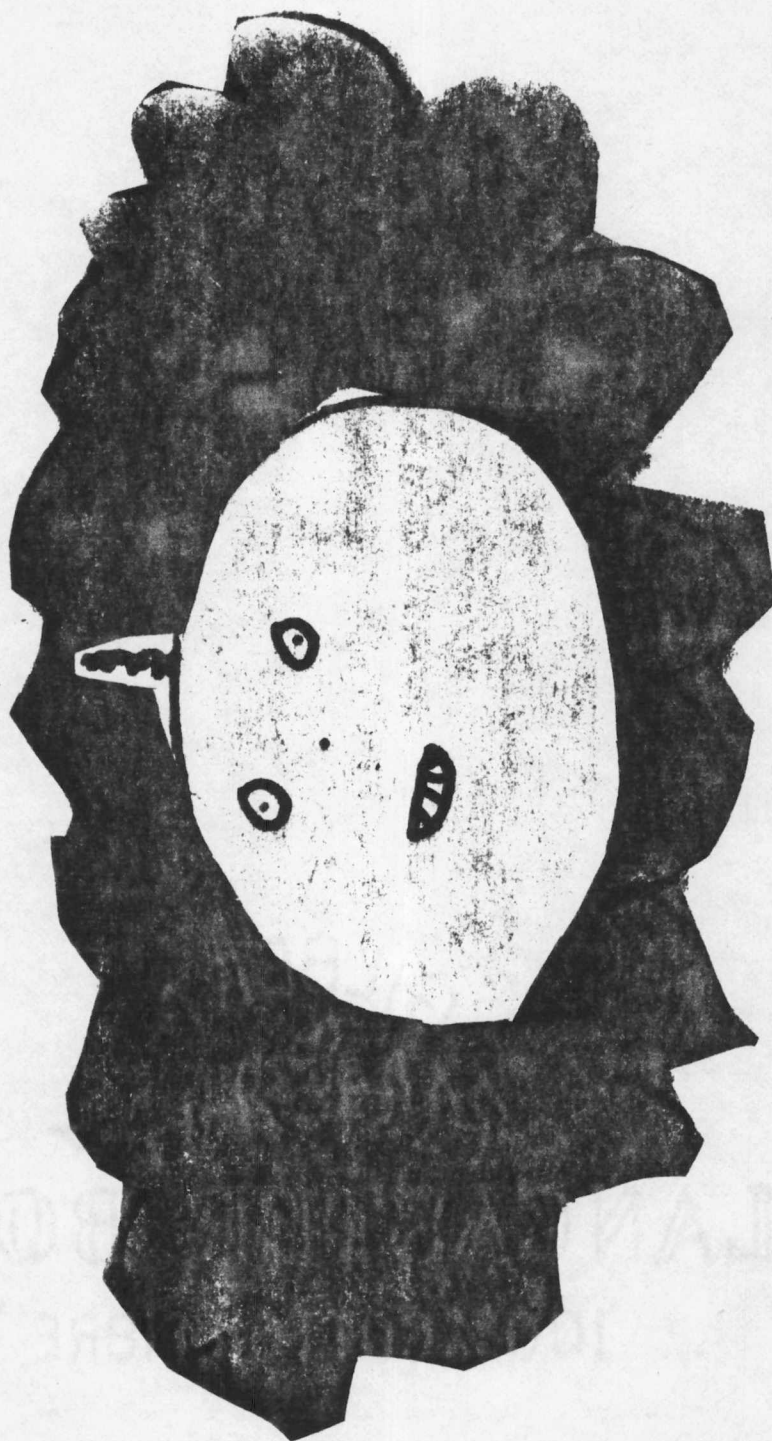


FIGURE 8. A construction paper representation of a premie being born out of a cabbage.

VITA

Deborah J. Hicks is a native of East Tennessee. She was reared in Madisonville, Tennessee, where she graduated from high school in 1968.

She attended Hiwassee Junior College in Madisonville and subsequently graduated from Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee with a B. S. in Music Education in 1973.

Ms. Hicks moved to Nashville, Tennessee where she was involved in the entertainment industry for several years. She played piano and sang in several restaurants and private clubs in and around Nashville.

In 1981, Ms. Hicks moved to Gatlinburg, Tennessee to provide entertainment during the World's Fair.

Subsequently, Ms. Hicks started attending courses at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. During an internship through the Department of Advertising, she discovered a strong interest in advertising and marketing research. She has since concentrated her study in this area and plans to pursue a career in advertising and marketing research.