



Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester

By Joseph Boskin

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Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester By Joseph Boskin

Before the tumultuous events of the 1960's ended his long life, "Sambo" prevailed in American culture as the cheerful and comical entertainer. This stereotypical image of the black male, which developed during the Colonial period, extended into all regions and classes, pervading all levels of popular culture for over two centuries. It stands as an outstanding example of how American society has used humor oppressively.

Joseph Boskin's *Sambo* provides a comprehensive history of this American icon's rise and decline, tracing the image of "Sambo" in circuses and minstrel shows, in comic strips and novels, in children's stories, in advertisements and illustrations, in films and slides, in magazines and newspapers, and in knick-knacks found throughout the house. He demonstrates how the stereotype began to unravel in the 1930s with several radio series, specifically the *Jack Benny* show, which undercut and altered the "Sambo" image. Finally, the democratic thrust of World War II, coupled with the advent of the Civil Rights movement and growing national recognition of prominent black comedians in the 1950's and '60's, laid Sambo to rest.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Deftly revealing Sambo's roots in the jester of feudal tradition and focusing on five visagesplantation darky, minstrel man, joke butt, postcard buffoon, and movie chauffeurBoskin explores the old stereotype of the bug-eyed, dancing, dumb, grinning, shuffling darky who once entertained all America. Every era and region knew the image: it filled the material culture from bric-a-brac to whisky pourers from the 1660s to the 1960s and made Sambo "the first truly indigenous American humor character," Boskin argues. His sharp portraits of the visages show how Sambo was used to imprison blacks and their resistance to it. His sometimes brilliant analysis deserves a reading by everyone interested in race and American popular culture. Highly recommended. Thomas J. Davis, African American Studies Dept., SUNY at Buffalo

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Review

"One of those rare works whose appearance must provoke astonishment that no previous author has ever tackled it."--*American Quarterly*

"A major contribution to an important topic in Afro-American history. Boskin has written a book that is both readable and informative and will add substantially to the scholarship in the field."--*Journal of Southern History*

"Intriguing, witty, and often insightful social history."--*The New York Times Book Review*

"A major contribution to the study of stereotypes, the history of theatricals and other entertainments in America, and the analysis of material culture in the United States."--*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"A model of American studies methodology and a premier popular culture study of a troublesome, yet fascinating American icon....A signal contribution to the study of the influence of popular culture upon American race relations."--*Choice*

"Deserves a reading by everyone interested in race and American popular culture. Highly recommended."--*Library Journal*

"A good investment for readers who want to know how it really was."--*West Coast Review of Books*

"This is very good--I will probably assign it the next time I teach my American humor course."--Dr. Thomas Altherr, *Metropolitan State College*

"An excellent book."--L. Cassuto, *Fordham University, Lincoln Center*

"A first-rate addition to cultural history."--*Booklist*

About the Author

Joseph Boskin is Professor of History and Afro-American Studies and Director of the Urban Studies and Public Policy Program at Boston University. He is the author of *Into Slavery* and *Humor and Social Change in the Twentieth Century*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Luba Jacobs:

Here thing why that Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester are different and reliable to be yours. First of all looking at a book is good however it depends in the content than it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no reserve that similar with Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester. It gives you thrill looking at journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing in which happened in the world which is probably can be happened around you. You can easily bring everywhere like in playground, café, or even in your approach home by train. Should you be having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester in e-book can be your option.

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A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity that is look different you can read a book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day every day to reading a book. The book Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book features high quality.

David Kane:

Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to get every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester but doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource data that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information may drawn you into brand new stage of crucial contemplating.

Harold Felix:

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