

# 'Boys' and 'girls' are people

non-sexist childraising, Carrie Carmichael, Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, Toronto, Ontario. 162 pp.

"To free the child to be whomever or whatever he or she wants to be, not squelching the variations because they do not conform to some arbitrary definition of what a man or woman is. Encouraging children to define themselves according to personality instead of sex; a commitment to create an open, a commitment for a child and to avoid falling into the stereotype . . .". That is what non-sexist or open-options childraising is all about, according to Carrie Carmichael.

Carmichael's report on the progress of parents attempting to raise their children in a non-sexist manner is both educational and encouraging. It is satisfying to hear about parents who realize the dangers of sexism in society and their role in its elimination. These are people who are trying to make their children avoid the stereotype and to be whatever they want to be.

Non-sexist childraising does not mean to put dresses on a boy or to try to make girls and boys exactly alike, but rather it means to raise children as people. Boys don't have to hold back tears in order to be "tough", and girls can play baseball without worrying about being a "tomboy". These children should be individuals who are not obliged to follow a certain model.

Carmichael realizes parents must first break their own traditional living patterns before they can bring their children up in a non-sexist manner. Children can hardly be expected to understand the im-

portance of changing the roles society has defined for people when they see their father going off to work while their mother stays at

home, takes care of the house and family, and prepares for the father's arrival.

Carmichael attributes the

women's movement of the sixties as the cause of changes in people's consciousness. Both men and women have realized the inequality in society and have recognized women's need and right to be and do whatever they desire. These same people realize their children's need for an upbringing different from their own—an upbringing that will hopefully lead towards the creation of a non-sexist world. Their children will be educated about the women's movement and the history of both female and male oppression. Options in terms of toys, books, and learning materials will be provided for them.

Carmichael stresses the importance of the father's participation in his child's birth as well as actual involvement in the child's upbringing. She deals with the "male bias of the mother tongue", and the sexist atmosphere in schools and books that must be combatted.

non-sexist childraising is an optimistic appraisal of concerned individuals who are working towards an improved society, a society which provides fair opportunities for both men and women. For parents, the book is a guideline with ideas on how to both improve yourselves and your child's upbringing.

For the rest of us, non-sexist childraising is a strengthening review of people working towards a society based on equality and respect for individuals. It's a book worth reading.

by Valerie Mansour



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as a work of artistic inspiration, because she sees revolution as final, rather than as evolution. Brodie proudly wears the distinction of bombing some lockers in Euston Station although it is abruptly forgotten by a London accustomed to violence. The family of anarchists finally disintegrates when the vision held by all of an organized IRA-led violent upheaval is lost, and significantly the home disappears in a huge bomb blast.


Theroux shows in this novel that anyone can play at terrorism; there is no distinct stereotyping. Perhaps the most characteristic violence is Hood's, who tries to create goodness through violence. But even he

finds that violence is not an end in itself; it leads to repercussions which have to be coped with if the violence is to be meaningful. It is something many of the characters never do find. Theroux's novel is more complicated than this and the strains of thought emerging throughout *The Family Arsenal* are numerous and varied. This is a book which will appeal to both the scholarly reader and to those who love the thrill of good writing, an exciting plot, and superb characterization. His next, which sounds suspiciously like Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, will, like this one, demand to be read by those interested in the modern development of the novel.

by Judith Pratt

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