thus instilling fear into a previously happy experience. Such confusion of purposes suggests that the book is probably not doing what it set out to do, whatever that may be.

Throughout the series, values seem confused. One book teaches children to be tidy. Why should you be tidy? Because then you can find things when you want them. Well, we have all met the untidy person who can put his or her hand on anything he or she wants in the stack. Worse, the deeper value of tidiness — the sense of order which brings a secure feeling which then overflows into the person's relationships and approach to studies or work-all of this is missed.

The *In my world* texts are backed by expensive, full colour and full-page renderings which carefully fulfill all of today's requirements with regard to avoiding sexual and racial bias. They are rather nice, with the sort of detail which very small children enjoy pointing out when they can't read.

Simple-minded, formulaic books like these result from a management style currently out of favour in large corporations and industry, but apparently still with us in the arts. According to Tom Peter's and Mary Austin's *A passion for excellence* (Random House, 1985), the latest bible of the world of big business, there is nothing like good old impossible-to-predict human inspiration for producing successful new products suited to customer needs. Translated to the publishing of educational books, this means publishers, instead of telling writers what and how to write, should turn to the unsolicited manuscript pile, looking for books which fit the requirements and which have that certain something we all love but cannot adequately describe. Under this philosophy, books would be published quickly, on modest budgets, and publishers would take chances on manuscripts that appealed to them. Hardly innovative, but very soon authors who are now channeling their creativity into baking bread would again write. The resulting books would help us teach, would be topical, and would pass on our deeply held values and our strongest convictions.

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UNFAMILIAR WORLDS

A boy called Nam: the true story of how one little boy came to Canada, Leo Heaps. Macmillan, 1984. 95 pp. $14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-7715-9799-1; ***An enduring heritage: Black contribution to early Ontario***, Roger Riendeau. Dundurn Press, 1984. 48 pp. $2.95 paper. ISBN 0-919670-

83-0; ***Laugh and tell***, Odo Waldstein. Simon and Pierre, 1983. 120 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 0-88924-118-X; ***Stories from grandpa's rocking chair***, Sarah Kaetler. Illus. Neil Klassen. Kindred Press, 1984. Sibling Series. 64 pp. $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-919797-11-3.

To an infant, everything is foreign, strange and exciting. A pair of new shoes offers a world of stimulation. Yet long before the first birthday, the child demonstrates its recognition of the difference between home and abroad, the familiar and the strange. The foreign becomes a separate category of experience. To teach the child about unfamiliar worlds has long been one of the functions of children's literature, and it is the common theme of the four books under review. Each book offers a different approach to the foreign, not all equally successful.

An enduring heritage: Black contributions to early Ontario relies upon straight information. Prepared and financially supported by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, the slim block resembles a catalogue as it rapidly recounts the history of the early Black community in Ontario. The foreword by Susan Fish, former Minister of Citizenship and Culture, implies the reason for publication: 1984 was "the 150th anniversary of the implementation of the Emancipation Act which abolished slavery in the British Empire." Photographs dominate the text, particularly the second part, for after a quick history, the authors turn to monuments, historic buildings and sites. They claim this may be an "effective way of appreciating and promoting one's heritage" but the catalogue style offers far too much for the child reader to absorb.

The next two books approach unfamiliar worlds through comparison of past and present. In *Stories from grampa's rocking chair*,Sarah Kaetler offers six stories about pioneer life, all prompted by the naive questions of ten-year-old Janie. Obviously Janie has never seen *Little house on the prairie*. She asks if grandpa stayed in a motel when he moved, if he ran away when he left home at fifteen, if a barnraising means that a barn is lifted up. These questions provide plenty of opportunity for explanation (the story about breadmaking even includes a recipe), but the stories themselves fall flat. Despite a style full of exclamations, there is no excitement and often little plot. The stories seem contrived to provide the most general of conclusions: "You see Janie, moving brings both sad and happy experiences. That was the case when I was your age, and I'm sure that is the case today." There are lessons about thrift, responsibility, charity, optimism, and Christianity. The story about Uncle Henry's store provides a reminder of the importance of studying arithmetic, but concludes with a more characteristic lesson for Janie: "Remember to obey God, and obey your parents." Such vaguely Christian precepts colour the whole book, but on their own they do not make for exciting reading.

In *Laugh and tell*, the perspective is almost too insistently humorous. A series of tales about the author's childhood in an Austrian village, the book is clearly addressed to adults to remind them of their own childhoods. Kaetler's grandpa and Janie may seem flat stereotypes (the very title implies this), but Waldstein's persona is just as much a type, the mischievous curious boy who did not realize at the time that sex is the funniest thing in the world. The themes of sexual ignorance and romantic longing dominate the stories. The boy does not know the difference between a cow and a bull; he naively observes his teacher making love and thinks that she is wrestling; he wishes the bride and groom a peaceful night and the villagers laugh and blush. Such humour demands an adult perspective as do the comments on woman's fickle nature. When the narrator falls in love with so many different women, an adult reader may suspect that it is the boy who is fickle, but will a child reader?

Strangely, the most tragic story, *A boy called Nam*, is far more suitable for children and is the only book under review that works as children's fiction. Based on a true story of a ten-year-old Vietnamese boy's terrifying ordeal as one of the boat people, the book succeeds in conveying foreign experience through its concentration on the particular. There are no stereotypes, only individuals. Readers learn about one particular Vietnamese boy, his family, sister, and cousin. His experiences are not generalized. Even the pirates who attack the boat are not caricatures, but individuals acting according to particular circumstances. Leo Heaps is not just the author but a participant responsible for bringing Nam to Canada. He has written a gripping and moving tribute to a child's survival, successfully avoiding the sentimental and clichéed. It is a story of suspense and surprise that will return all readers, not just children, to the infant's state of wonder.

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LE ROMAN DE LA TOLÉRANCE

Un monde hors du temps, Barbara Smucker. Montréal, Pierre Tisseyre, 1985. 224pp. 9,95$ broché. ISBN 2-89051-283-5.

En ce tricentenaire de la révocation de l'Édit de Nantes, le protestantisme ou la R.P.R. (Religion prétendue réformée, dénomination officielle du pro-