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The art of the picture book: An interpretation of Indian cultures

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The Ohio State University, 1994
THE ART OF THE PICTURE BOOK:
AN INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN CULTURES

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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To My Parents
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

THE ART OF THE PICTURE BOOK:
AN INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN CULTURES

"Picture books are as individual as people, and each book must elicit from the artist a unique set of feelings if it is to be a unique experience for the child looking at it."

Marcia Brown Lotus Seeds, 1986

My interest in children’s literature and illustrations for young readers began many years ago when I was a third year art student in India. Encouragement received for an assignment I had done on educational aids for the junior classroom sparked my interest in illustrations for the child audience. But, art for children was not part of the college’s curriculum and I had to pursue this interest on my own. Because my options were limited in India, I enrolled in a correspondence course on writing for children’s literature in Connecticut, U.S.A., and participated in a UNESCO sponsored Noma Concours for children’s picture book illustrations in Japan. These experiences did not turn me
into a writer or illustrator of children's literature, but did introduce me to the vast field of literature available to children in the U.S.A and other countries.

I was able to pursue my interest in children's literature when I enrolled for graduate studies in art education at Ohio State. In this academic setting, I discovered a variety of literature for children which illustrated different cultures and countries in picture books I had never come across in India. I was excited with this diversity in literature and styles of illustrations that were used to present the stories. Coming from a country that has primarily folk literature for children in the illustrated book format, I was in awe of the variety and volumes I found in libraries and book stores in the U.S.A. The range of subject matter, ethnic descriptions and art styles fascinated me, and I was pleased to be able to explore this diversity in the illustrations of children's literature about India and her cultures for my graduate research.

I was curious how India had been represented by American artists in picture books published in the U.S.A. I began to look for these books in libraries and book stores in Columbus and cities I visited in the U.S.A. and found over fifty books written about India that were illustrated by artists living in the U.S.A. It was
difficult at first to grasp the impact this discovery had on me. I had no idea that these books existed until I came to the U.S.A. Even though the printing dates covered a span of over thirty years, these books had never made their way to India. And as most of these books are no longer in print, their circulation has been limited to the libraries that have them.

Because I wanted to examine these picture books for the kinds of images that had been created about India, in my masters thesis (1991) I focused on the works of ten illustrators of children's picture books about India that had been published in the U.S.A. My objective was to do an analytical study to observe how these artists had portrayed India, a country of perplexing diversity in the picture book format. What kinds of stories had been chosen to represent India: fictional, non-fictional or folklore? Did the illustrations play on any stereotypes of the Indian people and cultures? What kinds of geographical regions, historical periods and art mediums had been used in these illustrations and how did they enhance the quality of the story? Had any of the artists visited India and if so, did it influence the quality of their presentation? Was it possible for these artists to create a successful representation of the Indian cultures that was alien to theirs?
Based on my observations in this thesis, only ten of the twelve picture books I reviewed provided an acceptable representation of India and her people. The picture books I chose covered a broad range of art styles. The subject matter most of these picture books dealt with were the ancient folk literature of India, with a couple of stories possibly invented by the author. Many artists had explored both traditional Indian and contemporary art styles as their mediums, ranging from water colours to woodcuts and batiks. A few books had noticeable geographical and historical errors that gave a very confused impression of the country. Some of these books incorporated stereotypes of the people and cultures of India and were illustrated in a grandiose style, wrapped up in the mystic opulence that the western world still likes to associate with India, giving us a wide range of excellent and poor representations of India. I was surprised to discover that even though a few artists had visited India and some had even lived there for a couple of years, their personal experiences did not necessarily mean that their representation of India was superior to that of the artist who had not visited India. Marcia Brown proved it was possible to capture the spirit of India without visiting the country in her Caldecott award winning woodcuts of Once a Mouse.
Based on my evaluation in this thesis, a few artists did achieve a fair and sensitive characterization of the people and the country. While it was apparent to me that it is possible for illustrators to create successful images of a culture that was alien to theirs, I was acutely aware of the fact that publishers and illustrators of children's literature still need to establish criteria for judging picture book illustrations to be a successful depiction of the country and the cultures that have been represented. My study unearthed a number of issues pertaining to children's literature, some of them being authenticity in illustrations and, stereotypes and misrepresentations of cultures, which makes clear the need for more research on the cultural content of literature for children.

Among scholars of children's literature, multiculturalism has only just begun to generate serious studies involving the representations of various cultures in children's books and what impact those portrayals appear to have on child readers. Most of these analyses have been based on the literary representations of individual ethnic groups in the U.S.A. Scholars of children's literature like Harris (1984), MacCann and Richards (1973), MacCann and Woodard (1972, 1977), Nieto (1985), Sims (1982), Slapin and Seale (1992), and
Stensland (1973) have discussed at length the literary characteristics of the African American, Native American, and Hispanic American cultures. However, art bears a complex relation to cultural representation in picture books and the relation between the two is scarcely examined in the review of children's literature (Marantz, 1994; Vandergrift, 1980). A study of the illustrations in children's literature would help us understand the ways in which a picture book may be judged to be an acceptable representation of the culture or cultures it represents. Illustrations are a major component of picture books and these illustrations help convey a sense of the culture being depicted.

In picture book discourse, the illustrations are a mode of cultural exchange that communicate a number of meanings (Hatcher, 1985; Hall, 1980; McFee, 1977). These meanings are derived from the lines, textures, shapes, colours, spaces and forms used in the illustrations to create messages that have an emotional impact on the viewer (McFee, 1977). In picture books, the organization of these images draws out the visual feeling of the story. From this perspective the illustrations depict many attributes of culture: customs, beliefs, living habits, historical and geographical settings, and the physical characteristics of the people. For picture book readers,
this is a fundamental way to learn about their own and other cultures.

People shape social structures and meanings through the continuous interpreting of forms (Hannerz, 1992). Picture books are chosen by children on the basis of personal reaction to art styles that are realistic or abstract, colorful or emphasized with black outlines (MacCann and Richards, 1973). The illustrations create visuals that may or may not appeal immediately to the reader and may be accepted or rejected by her or his aesthetic judgement. Each reader becomes a critic, developing sensitivity to the perception of the art form. These perspectives are unique for each individual, and generate meanings influenced by external and internal responses (Hannerz, 1992; Hall, 1980). The ability of art to communicate in picture books depends on the responses of the young reader and the dynamics of cultural ideology and individual perceptions. Vandergrift (1980) maintains that because children are culturally less involved in art, their authentic responses to art works makes them better critics than adults.

The complexity of cultural ownership also intercepts the decoding of messages when the illustrations are judged from criteria derived from the western fine arts. Ecker (1991) has argued that when an artist goes beyond the
formal aesthetic qualities of western art to understand the arts of other cultures, the artist must attend to the similarities and differences between that culture and the artist's own, and make explicit the basis for such differences. This is especially relevant in picture book discourse about India when the illustrations have been done by American artists. What issues do we bring to cultural interpretation when we evaluate a picture book about India with formal western values in art? How does this affect the decoding of messages in picture books when the stories are illustrated by artists from other cultures? Should books about India be illustrated only by Indians, evaluated by Indians and read only by Indians?

My research has sought to identify the ways in which the cultures of a nation may be represented in the illustrations of a picture book, making this study an important complement to discourse on children's literature and the interdependence of picture book illustrations to cultural education, specifically the application for long term effects on international understanding and cultural tolerance. My study is concerned not with the initial formation of cultural information but with the social reception of these meanings in picture book illustrations (Lechner, 1993; Wolansky, 1993; Hatcher, 1985). This is because children pay great attention to the subject, the
emotions, descriptive details and values described in the pictures. The viewer questions which culture is being represented, who is being represented in the culture, what else is represented that has meaning to the culture and how it conveys a meaning of the culture (McFee, 1977). This research addresses the shortcomings of the decoding of messages in an original cultural content analysis of picture books about India published in India and the U.S.A. This cross-cultural research focused on the artistic and cultural characteristics of picture book illustrations to serve as a comprehensive study about an Asian nation, a focus that is lacking in research on multicultural children's literature.

At the broadest level, this project is a theoretical examination of hegemonic ideologies within a social structure such as the evaluation of art based on the western fine arts, stereotypes in cultural and physical structures, and cultural ownership in the arts. Cultural Theorists have been influenced by the revisions of Althusser and Gramsci who claimed that ideology creates a system of representations, usually images and concepts that are imposed on people, which determines the character of cultures within a society (Hall, 1980; Heck, 1980). I examined ad hominem debates within Cultural Studies literature to provide contemporary evidence that tests
attitudes such as visual stereotypes, discrimination, artistic freedom and authenticity in picture book engagement because no two artists or readers bring identical sets of emotions, attitudes, and experiences to the interpretation of the picture (Maccann and Richards, 1985; Vandergrift, 1980; Hall, 1980).

Methodology:

In order to deal specifically with the ways in which a picture book is considered as a vehicle for cross cultural communication, the picture book was the starting point for the study and the basic referent to which it returned. There is a variety and extensive quantity of discourse about the differences among "picture books", "picture story books" and "illustrated books". To understand the differences and to come to a working concept of "what is a picture book?", picture books are described in chapter two for their characteristics in illustration and book design, and for their meanings to art and culture. I also focus on the art and cultural connection in picture book illustration and discuss the nature of culture and the meanings of its representation in picture books.

Chapter three looks at the representation of India in picture books through character, theme, and point of
view. In this chapter the data collection is divided into two sectors: a) library work on qualitative studies about India and discussions with academic and other specialists in picture book production, and b) picture books on India published in India and the U.S. over the past three decades i.e. since 1960, which represents an India fully independent from foreign rule.

The book selection was determined in two ways. First, by the intent of the author and illustrator in regards to the representation of India as a country and her cultures. Secondly, by identifying the book as a picture book, based on the criteria set by Stewig (1988) where the pictures carry the entire message of the events of the story. The library work includes books I found in public libraries and private collections that were written specifically about multicultural children’s literature and personal travel experiences in India. The discussions were with librarians and publishers of children’s literature which I include in chapter three, and is supplemented by interviews/conversations with artists and publishers handling picture book production about India and her cultures in three cities: Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore. I asked the following questions: What kinds of children’s literature are being produced in India? Who are the publishers? Who are the illustrators? What kinds of
problems did they experience that were unique to the Indian children’s literature market?

The second major source of data in this research are the picture books on India. There are a couple of ways to identify a picture book that represents India and her cultures. In American publications the dedication page usually carries a Library of Congress Cataloging-in Publication Data. As an example, I cite the data for Brown’s *Once a Mouse*, (which most folktales about India read):

Brown, Marcia
*Once a mouse*. Originaly published in 1961 by Scribner.
Summary: As it changes from mouse to cat to dog to tiger, a hermit’s pet becomes increasingly vain.
1. Fables. 2. Folklore-India I.Title

The text and/or visual narrative was another way to identify the origin of the culture/country. Descriptions of a country and its people in the illustrations and text of a picture book are valuable sources of information that give us clues to the derivation of representation. Of course, this method is open to speculation and cannot be considered as a reliable means to determine the cultural identity of a book.

Because picture books are at least half images in narrative, a crucial part of this project for me was examining the visual narratives for ways in which the
Images convey the social, psychological and cultural significance of the story. This involved a close scrutiny of judgements of cultural conformity in picture books for children pertaining to Abrams's four coordinates of art criticism as used by Vandergrift (1980): the artist as the creator, the audience as the receiver, the outside universe as the cultural environment, and the artwork itself as the object of cultural transmission. Because of the complexity of copyright laws I have not been able to reproduce in this project any art works from the picture books discussed in this study.

"What are we to expect of the artist who illustrates this book?" Schwarcz (1982) suggested that an artist should be very careful and sensitive to the perception he or she brings to the visual narrative. Visual arts communicate a number of meanings (Hatcher, 1985) and there have been many attempts to describe them. Schwarcz's concern with how the images convey the social and cultural significance of the story helped me establish basic criteria for judging these picture books.

In the in-depth cultural content analysis, I examine the contents and the interpretation of the artwork; art styles and media vehicles used; geography and history described, and stereotypes identified, that are positive or negative representations of India.
1. Art styles and mediums used:

According to Hatcher (1985), the first category of meaning lies in representation regardless of the degree of exactness of realism. Considering the set of forms used in the Indian cultures, how does the art style contribute to the representation of the story? Do the mediums used enhance the atmosphere of India created by the artist? Are the illustrations based on a traditional Indian artstyle or an improvisation of one? Did the artist choose to be unconventional or try to capture the spirit of India through certain traditional colours, symbols or stereotypes? How did these factors communicate the cultures of India in the picture book?

2. Geography:

Seeing one thing as resembling another in some way is important to the context and meaning of culture (Hatcher, 1985). In a picture book, the scenery gives us the clues we need to identify the country illustrated. Questions like what kind of geographical setting has the artist chosen to represent India, and how has this geographical setting created an image of India, address the resemblance of the country in the picture. If the mountains have snow, are they the Himalayas? What details does one need to look for that will, for example, indicate if the desert is in India or Saudia Arabia? Does the illustration depict an
urban, village or jungle setting, or a hotch-potch of different parts of India? How does this effect the treatment of India as a culture? When people are added in the illustration are there any symbolic associations as opposed to formal structures of composition? (Hatcher, 1985). How do all these geographical factors contribute to the depiction of India as a composite of cultures in the illustration?

3. History:

Cultures emerge and cohere as the result of the social structures people shape in their contacts with one another (Hannerz, 1992). Where India is concerned, this has made a significant difference to the historical development of her cultures. With the rise and fall of each empire came different dress codes, customs, religions and life styles. To question the historical accuracy of the illustrations in a picture book one must ask many questions. What period of Indian history has been shown? What has the artist imitated or portrayed as the subjects? (Hatcher, 1985) Are the places, objects and the people drawn normally associated with the historical time and region depicted? Did the people wear that type of clothing and use the kinds of objects and transportation during the historical period illustrated? Historically, do these
illustrations tell us anything about India that is relevant to the cultural context of the time?

4. Stereotypes:

Hatcher (1985) cautions that some qualities of visual forms are analogous to some relationship in human experience. In regard to picture books, the illustrations may have a variety of interpretations and symbolisms, creating stereotypes that may be negative or positive (Francis, 1991). In view of depicting cultures of India in a picture book, what kind of people did the artist choose to represent India? Do the illustrations play on any stereotypes of Indians, on the mystery and exoticness so often associated with India? Are there any misrepresentations of the people of India and their cultures, dress, religions and life styles? If stereotypes have been identified were they negative or positive representations of the Indian cultures? How does this effect the representation of India and her cultures?

5. My personal evaluation:

When the primary purpose of a visual form is to communicate information on the cognitive level, clarity is the essence of understanding the meanings of cultural context (Hatcher, 1985). Considering art as communication means looking at the picture book as a dynamic, ongoing process, a creative process which is part of oneself too.
Hannerz (1992) argues that through the interaction of perspectives culture is produced. Marantz (1988, 1994) cautions us that evaluating picture books on formal rules can "sap the vital juices of personal response" and that "taste remains one of the most personal rights we have."

The final chapter describes the role picture books play in global education. I examined the works of those scholars who have looked at the representations of ethnic and world cultures in children's books. I considered their findings and their criteria of evaluation about the representation of African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic American cultures. The range of cultural representations provides patterns of criteria for judging books involving other ethnicities.

As I probed more deeply into the tightly woven and complex layers of cultural meanings, and reflected on the large area of my analysis of picture books about India, I realized that the issues I discuss are part of the never ending process of self discovery. Having lived in India for a quarter of a century, I brought to this study a perspective that was both personal and meaningful because I felt that it was important to share my own reflections about these picture books. As I embarked upon this inquiry, I became increasingly aware that the cultural exploration in children's book illustration that I present
in this dissertation is as much a personal journey as an academic experience. Through my personal observations of the picture books and based on the above criteria, I have addressed the ways in which the picture books were a successful depiction of India in cultural and visual details.

**Significance of this Project:**

My doctoral research complements much of the literature on cultural representation in children's literature to provide a new perspective on cultural ownership and representation in the visual arts. The greater the scrutiny, the closer I came to understanding the multifaceted and complex components of children's book illustration. The Marantz's (1994) have argued that because picture books are art objects they have responsibilities of production inherent in the art world and books which represent characteristics of a specific culture bear an added burden. In a world of enhanced sensitivity to symbolic insult, picture book artists have been given the responsibility to deal "honestly" with the visual attributes of the cultural groups depicted. How are we to protect artistic imagination/license if we are driven by a goal of authentic representation in picture book illustration?
This research aids in developing better strategies for artistic license not only for picture books on India, but for other countries and cultures. This will benefit librarians in their book selection, teachers in their dealings with such picture books in the classrooms and scholars in their examinations of the visual representations of other cultures. This could also help existing efforts of educators in improving the quality of multicultural literature and enhancing the promotion of cultural tolerance in global education.
CHAPTER II
CENTERING ON THE ART AND CULTURAL CONNECTION
IN PICTURE BOOK ILLUSTRATION

WHAT IS A PICTURE BOOK?

Research on the evolution of children's literature in Europe and the U.S.A. includes some speculation about what might have existed in other countries. Without any dispute, it has been acknowledged by researchers of children's literature like Austin, Jenkins, Klein and Stewig that folktales were the origin of all children's literature, told orally to children to entertain and instruct them on moral issues. These stories were memorized and elaborated or improved upon as they were passed down generation to generation, the imaginative gestures and expressions of the storyteller taking the place of the illustrations in the bound books we know today. With the invention of printing, the provocative art of storytelling was dramatized in a two dimensional space and made available to much larger audiences all over the world. It is now a well established industry of books that come in different sizes, shapes and formats.
Research on children's literature has many descriptions and definitions about the precise makeup of a picture book. Opinions vary and have given us further classifications of picture books, story picture books and illustrated books (Stewig, 1988). The consensus is that the illustrations in a picture book are more than just a description of the text; they add to the story and communicate obvious and subtle details of the culture being represented (Marantz, 1994). Picture books may be considered as "twice-told tales" where the story may be comprehended in either the visual or literary form. The illustrations are an integral part of the story. They form a pictorial literature that complements, but is not totally limited by the narrative elements of the story (Vandergrift, 1980). A young reader who has not learned to read is able to create the story through the sequence of illustrations. Although each illustration may stand alone as a work of art, collectively they are bound together in sequence within a picture book. In a picture book, the artist is responsible for creating the characters, settings, and action in a manner that relates to and advances the plot of the story (Stewig, 1988). Each illustration contributes to the text, unfolding each page with a new visual development of the story. When there is limited text, the pictures tell the whole story. Either
way, with or without text, picture books are works of art, not just for their overall design but for the individual illustrations within them (Marantz, 1994).

ILLUSTRATION AND BOOK DESIGN

In order to appreciate the importance of illustrations in picture books, one profits from understanding the physical elements of a book and how they are combined to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the book as a complete art object. The overall quality of a picture book depends on the careful balance of intricate details that support and enhance the totality of the book as a work of art. It is not sufficient to concentrate on the traditional values of line, form and colour. A picture book has other features that add to the appearance and must be considered in evaluation (Marantz, 1994).

A hard-bound picture book normally consists of a dust jacket to protect the book; a cover; end papers; a title page; and the story. Each element carries its own weight about the visual success of the picture book. The dust jacket usually serves as an "advertisement" for the book and is designed to catch the attention of the reader. The illustrations and total design may be elaborate in colour and form, unique in their presentation because they are also designed to convey information about the book, the
author, the illustrator, and a summary of the story. This design is usually repeated on the title page of the book. In paperback editions, the cover serves as the absent dust jacket. Roy's collage of colourful kites on the cover of Red Kite artfully brings out the delicacy of the fine tissue paper used to make fighter kites in India. Not even the poor printing distracts the eye from the gracefulness and action created in this simple arrangement of squares, semi circles and triangles. The end papers, primarily used to reinforce binding, are found inside the front and back cover pages. Because of publishing costs the types of paper and colours used vary; but whenever possible artists have creatively used this space to introduce the reader to the mood of the story. The hard, black pencil lines of Sandin's end papers in It all began with a Drip. Drip. Drip... draws us into the violence, and power of the Indian monsoons. Angry, white jagged lines give a menacing appearance to the lightening, a befitting prelude to the lurking danger of the tiger on the prowl. The even, deep blue coloured end papers of Paper Boats invite us to feel the peaceful, soothing tranquility of a running stream. The title page serves to present the reader with the story, and may be a repeat or simplified version of the cover page. The Story of Wali Dali has the main object of the story, a golden bracelet, highlighted in a simple
square, the lines gently broken by the curves of the bracelet and the white space surrounding it. The story begins after the title page and the illustrations and text may appear on the same page or separately. What is critical to the evaluation of a picture book are the ways in which the typography, colour, medium and style of illustration add to the appearance of the book. These arrangements must complement the design of the book and enhance the visual experience for the reader. Instead of using the popular black ink favoured by most publishers, Once a Mouse has the text in the same moss green colour used for depth and the hermit's skin in the art works. The white text over the stark blackness of each page in Seven Blind Mice gives us a startling perception into a blind person's colourless world.

From the very beginning of the book to its very end, a picture book is a series of separate pictures that create a sequence that enhance the story's action and artistic interpretation. They are a rich repository for visual art works; a picture book becomes a work of art because of the unity of individual illustrations (Marantz, 1994). Bang's illustration of the old woman riding in a rickshaw driven by a man on a bicycle over a precariously thin wooden bridge in The Old Woman and the Rice Thief gets to the heart of the Indian spirit. In her unique
blend of art styles and artistic interpretation Bang meticulously presents the simplicity of a villager's life in a refreshingly delightful manner. Narayan's *The Elephant and the Dog* is vibrant in earthy colours, each page distinguished by the artist's handsomely designed artworks.

Sylvia Marantz (1991) explains how a picture book is put together, describing in a delightful user friendly tone, the many complex components of a picture book. Mediums, techniques and the elements of art are methodically explained, and are a useful prelude to her analysis of picture books. Lacy (1986) addresses the educational value of art in picture books where the illustrations in a book are permanent and therefore offer constant opportunities for visual exploration; children therefore question the illustrations and accept or reject values or ideas as they see it. This is particularly pertinent to the presentation of cultures in the illustrations of children's picture books. Bang's illustrations in *The Old Woman and the Rice Thief* and *The Old Woman and the Red Pumpkin* are full of little details that describe the rural life of West Bengal. How does this differ from the simplicity of the batik illustrations of Towle's *The Magic Cooking Pot* that portray a more general side of Indian urban life? What visual exploration would
this offer a child about the cultures of India? In this chapter, I examine the meanings of culture so that I may explore how it is represented in the art of children’s picture books.

THE NATURE OF CULTURE AND THE MEANING OF ITS REPRESENTATION IN PICTURE BOOKS

Culture, I discovered after considerable reading, has no set definition. Although most anthropologists subscribe to the general view that culture is the way of life of a people, for the sum of their learned behavior patterns, attitudes and material things, most anthropologists tend to disagree on what is the precise substance of culture. To understand the nature of culture I referred to *Culture, a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* by A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1963) which records one hundred and sixty four definitions of culture, with the earliest definition dating back to 1871. These definitions summarize culture to be a product of many reasonings. Culture may be acquired through a learned behavior, which may be historical, psychological or genetic. Culture is a product of ideas, patterns of behavior, attitudes and values of people. Though a culture is made up of definite patterns of reacting, behaviors and feelings, it is the
differences between cultures that establishes the significance of these characteristics.

With no recognized theory on the precise meaning of culture, culture therefore is referred to in a general manner, be it descriptive or explanatory, emphasizing the general patterns that define each culture in its distinctive characteristics and way of life. Culture is believed to be constantly evolving, produced and changed by individuals in a society and is not necessarily limited to a given time and space. Indian culture, for example, has spread throughout centuries and is still spreading across communities, societies and countries and is in constant change by the individuals of these societies. According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963), although culture does not provide a complete explanation of human behavior, there is a cultural element in human behavior and certain behavioral patterns make most sense when seen through culture. (p. 369)

Culture may be approached in a variety of ways. For this study, I have referred to Hannerz's explanation of the nature of culture in shaping social structure and meanings. I use his thesis to discuss the representations of the cultures of India in children's picture books because his framework of meanings is coherent with the general patterns that define each cultural group in their
distinctive characteristics and ways of the Indian people. Hannerz's (1992) approach to culture is described as interactionist where people shape social structures and meanings in their contacts with one another and societies and cultures emerge and cohere as results of the accumulation and aggregation of these activities (p. 15).

To study culture is to study ideas, experiences, feelings as well as the external forms that convey these meanings of culture. The visual arts are a means of communicating, teaching, and transmitting these cultural ideas, and values, thus maintaining the behaviors, ideas, and values shared by a group of people (McFee, 1977).

In picture books, the illustrations are the principal means of communicating ideas and emotional meanings to each reader. In Brown's *Once a Mouse* the title page shows a humble man bent over in his quest for ultimate knowledge, quietly contemplating his problem, when he sees a mouse about to be snatched away by a crow. The incomplete sentences in this story help carry the suspense to the next page. The terror and action is momentarily suspended in this illustration where the ground becomes the threatening beak of the crow, ready to swallow up the mouse, the terror reinforced by the looming figure of the attacking bird. The desperate long strides of the hermit as he rushes to save the mouse is a contrast to the
sympathetic, kind and gentle feeling the next illustration brings as the hermit pushes the crow aside and carefully holds the small mouse. But then, danger threatens again. A cat eyes the mouse. The eyes so perfectly done amaze me. These expressions are very difficult to achieve, but Brown has shown her mastery of this medium. To me, this is a cat with life. I can literally feel it take its next step and find myself holding my breath, just waiting to see what it would do. Instead it turns into a frightened ball of fur, threatened by the magic powers of the hermit. The eyes are so expressive in the illustrations of these cats that there is no need for words to tell this story. Inquisitive, threatening, frightened and scared in just three pages, Brown is able to create four different feline emotions very convincingly.

When we observe these illustrations, we not only get information about the situation and events of the story, but we are also affected emotionally by the meaning the information has for us, and by the qualities of the artwork in its elements of design, colour, and aesthetic and cultural values (McFee, 1977).

Because there are over a hundred definitions about the concept of culture, and anthropologists have not been able to agree on a theory that explains the precise meaning of culture, cultural representation is as complex
to define. Whose concept, definition, or truth is best applicable in representing a culture? What cultural guidelines should we be following when writing and illustrating picture books for children? Whose truth becomes more valid: the illustrators, the people being represented, or the readers?

MacCann and Richard (1973) point out that a picture book illustrator has a different function than other artists. Producing art works that are mechanically representational does not give a complete aesthetic experience to the reader of a book. The illustrator must make a special effort to produce illustrations where the meanings of the picture comes from the arrangement of colors, line, shape and texture and are a visual interpretation of the text of the book. In the next sections I concentrate on the challenge illustrators face with cultural representation in illustrating picture books, using India as an example for discussion whenever appropriate.

THE ART AND CULTURAL CONNECTION IN PICTURE BOOKS

Illustrated books can serve as an introduction to other cultures for their readers, irrespective of the age group. When a culture is represented in a picture format, the illustrations introduce the culture through the values
associated with it. They visualize the physical characteristics of the people, geographical settings, historical periods and the beliefs of the people. The culture is visually described and attention to detail and character are important factors in the portrayal of the culture.

The nature of culture and its representation is significant to multicultural children's literature, a result of the present awareness that such literature might offer an excellent way to introduce children to the various cultures in a country (Austin and Jenkin, 1983). Authors writing about multicultural literature in the U.S.A. have discussed the representation of minority cultures like the African American and Native American in children's literature. These cultural representations were studied from the historical perspectives of contemporary U.S.A. Violet Harris (1984) challenged the selective traditions in children's literature that negatively depicted African Americans and African American cultures. Young and adult readers of the Brownie Book, a periodical for African American children were taught to identify these negative stereotypes. Through a collection of articles in which the treatment of Puerto Ricans in published children's textbooks from 1973-1983 were discussed, Sonia Nieto's study showed how challenging the
negative issues improved the quality in cultural representation of future publications.

Stereotypes, negative values, language and cultural generalizations in children's literature have been explored in detail. Each culture had its unique problems with cultural representation, making it impossible to generalize any argument to fit all cultures. Slapin and Seale (1992) analyzed the Native American's experience in books for children and introduced the Native American cultures from historical and personal experiences through essays, conversations and poetry of the Native American people. Sims (1982) explored the African American literary experience in contemporary children's literature. She examined these books for their social and cultural conscience and the assumptions of the melting pot theory as related to children's literature. She discussed racist and white perspectives. To arguments made that cultures should be blended to erase the differences, Sims examined the problems as related to children's literature. While there are some elements of concern that are common among most cultures, each culture must be discussed as a separate entity. For example, the African and Native American have different historical and cultural values. Though they have both lived for over three centuries in the same geographical area, their cultural roots are
primarily from different continents. The characteristics of each culture is also different due to the many subdivisions in each group. The common concerns are stereotypes in representation of culture, people, language, art, customs and life styles. These concerns must be addressed separately for each cultural group.

For books on India, cultural representation has an added concern and the questions I raise are answered in the following chapters. For whom are these books about India written? Are they for the Asian American who has Indian cultural ties, the Indian back in India or the general American young reader? Do these books represent the culture of contemporary India, India before independence under the rule of different world cultures, or ancient India, thousands of years ago? What challenges should the illustrator meet in representing an ancient culture of the world without adhering to negative stereotypes and other derogatory images of the cultures? Should artistic freedom be given limitations in the cultural representation of children’s picture books?

MacCann and Richard (1973) caution artists that personal interpretation in children book illustration should be treated as a kind of editorializing, where an artist has to deliberately emphasize or delete certain cultural values. It is the natural function of the artist
to interpret, but it is a liberty that should be treated with care and responsibility. Picture books as published materials have a permanency that outlives generations.

Cultural transmissions are the result of recurrent encounters principally between adults and children (Gearing, 1973) and children’s picture books are one of these encounters that transmit cultural values. MacCann and Richard (1973) point out the obvious that stories and illustrations in children’s picture books have a strong influence in a child’s early education. Children love having stories read to them; before they can read the text, they learn to appreciate the pictorial expressions of the illustrations. Children are quick in sensing, accepting and differentiating the variety of visual elements. Often such acceptance and rejection is based on familiarity. For example, an illustration may remind a child of a pleasant feeling or associate it with something in the past; illustrations with a lot of colour may be preferred because they give more immediate satisfaction. I believe that the illustrations are more than just a description of the text. They communicate obvious and subtle details of the culture being represented. I believe that a study of the art, history and educational context of picture book illustration in relation to their cultural
Transmission are very important in establishing cultural values to a young reader.

When a picture book is considered to be a means of cultural communication, it is pertinent to examine the issues that relate to a picture book's representation of cross-cultural exchange and understanding. This deals with the content and interpretation of culture and the identification of the problems in cross-cultural understanding in picture books. Illustrated books serve as a visual introduction to other cultures through the values associated with them because we look at the contents and interpretation of the art, history and educational value of the illustrations in children's literature. Adults as illustrators transmit cultural understanding to children through the pictorial representation of the culture. Through the illustrations in the book, an artist makes public the social structures, behavior and cultural patterns of the country and cultures represented. This is a powerful influence in understanding not only local cultures, but also cultures of the world. Nayak (1973) has given considerable importance to cross-cultural understanding in the formation of attitudes, respect and understanding for the cultures of India in children's literature. Cross-cultural understanding helps create a better understanding of the customs and beliefs of
different groups. This dispels any misgivings or stereotypes associated with such ethnic cultures which is further enhanced in multicultural literature for children (Austin & Jenkins, 1983). The values of cross-cultural understanding are specially relevant to my study on how India and her cultures have been represented in children's picture books.

THE MEANINGS OF ART AND CULTURE IN PICTURE BOOKS

Hannerz (1992) states that culture in the anthropological sense is the meanings that people give it. Culture is created by people and exists because of societies. Culture consists of meanings created by people which varies from individuals to individual cultures depending on their interpretations of the subject. These meanings created by people are relevant to art when it is studied for its cultural context (Hatcher, 1985).

MacCann and Richard (1973) point out that a picture book illustrator has a different function from other artists; producing art works in a picture book that are mechanically representational of the culture and devoid of personality does not give a complete aesthetic experience to the reader. The illustrator must make a special effort to produce illustrations that are visually parallel to the text of the book and where the cultural meanings of the
picture are also created from the arrangement of colours, line, shape and texture. The illustrations build a mood that are the artist's response to the essential qualities of the story. The artist's personal vision should be stimulated by a consideration of the cultural elements which contribute to the picture's effectiveness.

MacCann and Richard acknowledge that it is easier to find examples of the academic and traditional illustrator in children's picture books than examples of the artist who is searching for the "pungency" of the object and culture being interpreted. Bochak's deceptively simple two-dimensional paper cutouts in *Paper Boats* are rich in suspended action, artfully created with subtle suggestions for depth. In *Once a Mouse*, Brown's grainy woodcuts and liberal use of olive green colour give a rich, earthy feeling to the rustic atmosphere of the jungle. Artists have also been influenced by historical art forms to illustrate children's literature. The artist can distort the perspective and create as realistic or abstract a picture as allowed by the relating text and story. In *The Bird who was an Elephant*, Lessac emulates traditional Indian art forms to create buildings with non-Renaissance perspectives. Aruego's and Dewey's simplistic drawings of Persian miniatures in *Rum Pum Pum* add an imaginative twist to an already creative story. Some artists have improvised
on the styles of artists from other countries. The French Impressionists were frequently emulated for their experiments in light and color in art works (MacCann and Richard, 1973). Brown’s cover design for The Blue Jackal done in woodcut, has a rugged, rough effect that add to the scrawny, mongrel look of the jackal. With a predominance of blue colour and a touch of yellow for the moon and the jackal’s eyes, the sweeping black lines create an eerie feeling, as if an echo of the jackal’s howl, very similar to the German artist, Edvard Munch’s expressionist woodcut done in 1895 called The Shriek.

The variety in art styles of picture books may make it difficult to pinpoint the sources of influence, but in many cases it is possible to identify the traditional values represented. Colour is one of these elements that have emotional and symbolic values associated with the hues, that vary from culture to culture. In western traditions, hues are generally described as warm and cold, with Reds, oranges and yellows being visually warm and greens, blues and purples being visually cold. Careful combinations of these colors can manipulate the emotions conveyed by the illustrations. Colours can be deliberately made to clash and shock the eye to create a certain dramatic or jarring effect. In comparison, artfully blended pastels can be peaceful and placid. In the first
page of The Golden Serpent one can almost smell the clean, thin air of the mountains as the light yellow wash spreads across the page like a mist, concealing what promises to be an incredible view of the Himalayan range.

MacCann and Richards remind us that the potential of colours is rarely exploited to the fullest in illustrations. Lacy (1986) argues that artistic style is a matter of personal taste and is largely controlled by the standards reflected by society. Because she discusses American books, she talks about the aesthetics and taste of the American society. In this society, she explains, art has been largely judged as representational and non-representational as valued by 'Western Society'. Based on these criteria, she explains how illustrations of children's literature have followed the characteristic of realism. Lacy describes these artistic elements of art as line, colour, light and dark values, shape, space and texture and explains how these elements are present in the art works of children's picture books. She states that a picture book offers more possibilities for an illustrator in creating works of action than an artist has on one piece of canvas.

When we pick up a picture book, we often recognize the artist by the style used in the illustrations. There are many ways to create these identities: certain artists
are recognized by the art medium used, or by a style of
drawing. The Provensens' art style has remained almost
consistent throughout the many books they have illustrated
over the past two decades on various world cultures. Pale
water colour washes, stylized figures devoid of
personality, and rich, decorative drawings have fitted the
cultures of Greece, India and other countries they have
illustrated in the picture book format. When illustrators
of children's picture books have used traditional art
forms to present the story of the culture, these
presentations create an identity of the art form with the
culture. For example, the artist may choose to create
drawings on India based on the art forms of a North Indian
School of Art. To an untrained eye, the different schools
of art may all look the same. The unique art forms that
create the differences between, for example, the Kangra,
Rajasthani and Mughul periods may have no significance to
the American viewer. But young readers educated about the
art forms of the Impressionist period would be more likely
to distinguish among the art styles of Monet, Cezanne and
VanGogh. For cultures that are not widely publicized, lack
of attention to such details leads to generalizations of
the culture and its values. When a culture or country is
represented in this general way, stereotypes are created.
When a traditional art form is used too often to represent
the culture, young readers learn to identify the culture through these generalizations and stereotypes.

Travers (1975) illustrated the literary issues in translating cultures in fairytales through a comparison of five traditional versions of the Sleeping Beauty that have come down to us from different cultures. As she discussed the similarities and differences between these themes, she questioned the personal meanings we give to these stories. Luthi (1984) further examined these meanings by stating that fairytales have different effects on audiences depending on the moods, personalities, and situations presented in the stories.

How should we translate culture in the illustrations of picture books? When culture is important in creating the details in the story, we must be careful about how we illustrate these details in the pictures. The artist has greater liberties in expanding on cultural descriptions in the illustrations than the author has in writing the text for a picture book. The interpretation and values the artist associates with cultural facts is what makes the translation of the culture a success or failure in the book especially when children read the illustrations for cultural details they cannot get from the text. What issues must an artist be aware of in order to present sensitive and authentic details of the culture? As an
example, I will use the popular story of Red Riding Hood, a favorite in international children’s literature, to illustrate these cultural meanings. Normally shown as a white Caucasian, the story of Red Riding has been used to represent the cultural values of a Eurocentric culture. What would the cultural implications be if Red Riding Hood was illustrated in an Indian cultural setting? What would the wolf symbolize in this Indian setting and how different would the human relationship be between the grandmother, red riding hood and the wolf? In trying to be culturally correct, this simple story can stretch an illustrator’s imagination and skills in order to be true to historical cultural facts.

In order to look Indian, Red Riding Hood would have to have the physical features of a defined region of India and wear an Indian red cloak, that is, if it is customary for Indian girls to wear hooded cloaks. Otherwise, the hood would have to be supplemented with a traditional Indian head shroud, which would then alter the title and association of this story completely. The artist would have to decide what historical period in Indian history to represent in the story. The dress, cultural details and behavior of people, geographical setting and colours used would have to represent the historical period depicted. Would it be appropriate to show a wolf in such a setting?
Were wolves found in India during that historical time, and if so, in which region of India? This would effect the geographical setting of the story and the representation of the wolf as characteristic of the region. If wolves are not naturally found in India, should the wolf be substituted with an another animal or human being? What difference would this make to the story? Did grandmothers live alone in jungles in India? What kind of Indian would play the role of the woodcutter? And finally, would such a scenario be popular in this Indian cultural setting?

To explore the cultural representation of a picture book, a discussion of the cultural content, and the interpretation and meanings of the illustrations is necessary. Cultural meanings are based on many elements and perceptions. In order to clarify the categories of meanings, criteria must be established to evaluate the cultural content and its meanings in books.

How does art transmit culture? Hatcher (1985) explains through an anthropological analysis the contents and comparisons of art as culture. She states that people are not content to just look at a piece of art and accept it for what it is. Most people want to know what the work is all about, its meaning to society, who made it and how it was made. These are the questions anthropologists and art historians use to get specific information about a
particular object and its relationship to society and human life. Art is a visual form of communication and we are especially concerned with how the visual form conveys some meanings in itself. When it comes to the cultural context, distinctions are made by the viewer between the use of a work of art and its functions.

The categories Hatcher (1985) created to help one understand art forms, especially from a culture that is unfamiliar, provide a way of formulating questions that lead to greater understanding of the visual art.

Her first category of meaning lies in the representation of the subject, the image or the form of nature, regardless of the degree of exactness of realism. In picture book illustration, this questions which culture is being represented, who is being represented in the culture, what else is represented that has meaning to the culture and how this conveys a meaning of the culture.

When I applied this category of meaning to The Tiger, the Brahmin and the Jackal I found this picture book to be a gross misrepresentation of India, her people and her cultures. Covered with a wash of orange colour, the tiger in these art works does not have the grace and strength associated with its species. Surrounded by bright blues and greens it looks very cartoon-like with its small round eyes, round ears and rectangle shaped body. Funai also
presented his other animals in a similar comic style. The buffalo has a strange, long and heavy body, balanced by four unnaturally thin legs. The fox too has an elongated body and an unusually long tail with very thin legs. The suggestions of a village in the distance do not have enough details to represent a village in India. The white snow, the leafless trees and the muted, softly blended colours seem more comfortable with a story depicting Russia than India. In fact, the Brahmin’s bare feet and his open umbrella look ridiculous in the winter atmosphere. Moreover, an Indian wearing that kind of a turban is a Sikh and not a Hindu Brahmin.

People; gender and racial stereotypes; geographical settings; art forms and historical data are important representational forms to be evaluated for the meanings of the culture being described. For picture books about India these representations were evaluated by asking the following questions:

1. People: Gender and racial stereotypes:

What kind of people did the artist choose to represent India? Do they play on any stereotypes of Indians or on the mystery and exoticness so often associated with India? Are there any misrepresentations of the people of India and their cultures, dress, religions and life styles? How are girls and boys, men and
women portrayed in India? Are females given traditional roles and/or empowered in the pictures?

2. Geography:

Did the background scenery of the illustrations show a particular geographical setting in India, depict an urban, village or jungle setting or a hotch-potch of the different parts of India?

3. Art style and mediums used:

How has the art style contributed to the representation of India in this story? Were the art works based on a traditional Indian art style, or an imitation of one? Did the artist choose to be unconventional or try to capture the spirit of India through certain traditional colours, symbols or stereotypes? Do the mediums used in any way enhance the atmosphere of India being created by the artist?

4. History:

What period of Indian history has been shown and are the places, objects and the people drawn normally associated with the time and region depicted?

Illustrators work within the boundaries of the visual arts and depend on the art elements that they see (MacCann and Richards, 1973). The ability of their art to communicate depends on the responses of the young reader.
Hatcher's second category of meaning lies in symbolism, with symbols specific to the culture. Hatcher states that representation on these two levels is also referred to as the content of the work. The subject and symbolic associations are important meanings to the context of culture as opposed to traditional elements like formal structure or composition in the illustrations. The Magic Cooking Pot has 18 illustrations done in Batik, in an art style very similar to the art works of the children I taught in India. Outlined in black, the figures are simple and stare out of the pages at the viewer as if frozen for the moment. The eyes, startling white, stand out among the popular colour combinations for batik in India of black, red, orange and yellow. The shapes are so childlike, the compositions so uncomplicated that it is difficult to see why anyone would not relate to these art works. The complexity and hard work that goes with the batik process adds to the reader's appreciation of these simple drawings. In The Cucumber Stem, Chen has attractively blended traditional styles of Rajasthani miniature painting art styles with his own. He has taken designs that are common in wrapping paper and used them to fill in the garment or the other objects. Mere suggestions of depth transform this flat surface into something realistic, cleverly creating a three dimensional effect.
Picture books are often chosen by children on the basis of their personal reaction to the illustrations. The illustrations build a mood that may or may not appeal immediately to the reader and may be accepted or rejected by this aesthetic judgement. Art styles that are realistic or abstract, colourful or emphasized with a black outline; the texture of the picture and the kind of shapes used have different meanings and symbols for each culture.

The third category of interpretation is considered to be a theoretical level because meanings are interpreted in terms of a particular theoretical symbolic system. This system is different for each culture and applies to a set of forms used in a particular culture. There are various ways of infusing one’s own style with the traditional art style of a country. Some illustrators have been successful and some have not. In *Seventh Daughter of the Sun*, the people are represented in stylized and recognizable cultural art styles of the east and west as if to prove the theory wrong that "never the twain shall meet". Unfortunately, the attempt to mix two art cultures did not flow too well in this picture book because the sketchy, incomplete backgrounds do not bind the two distinctive art styles together.

MacCann and Richards (1973) caution that in the U.S.A., illustrations are interpreted and judged from
criteria derived from the western fine arts. Personal interpretation of the visual arts differs from individual to individual. It is the natural function of the audience to interpret the artwork, especially when it is an illustration in a children’s picture book. No two readers bring identical sets of emotions, attitudes, and experiences to the interpretation of the picture.

The fourth category of meaning is clarity in metaphor, where some relationship or quality of the visual form is analogous to some relationship or quality in human experience. Ambiguity is avoided when the primary purpose of the visual form is to communicate information on the cognitive level. When we recognize the illustration as a visual documentation of an artist’s feeling or experience with something, we add another dimension to our appreciation of the artwork (MacCann and Richards, 1973).

In Brown’s *The Blue Jackal*, the story opens up to a charming abstract illustration of the jackal shaking its fur to get rid of the excess dye liquid. It was incredible what a few curved blue lines did here to suggest the action of the animal shaking itself off the extra blue liquid. Brown successfully used the rugged and rough effect of the woodcuts to enhance the scrawny mongrel look of the jackal.
In the following chapter, I apply these categories of meanings to the representation of India in picture books through the application of character, theme and point of view.
CHAPTER III
INDIA IN PICTURE BOOKS:
CHARACTER, THEME AND POINT OF VIEW

THE CULTURES OF INDIA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

India, now the second largest populated country in the world, is also one of the oldest nations in the world dating back to around 2300 B.C. India is a complex mixture of many diverse races, religions, values, foods, languages and subcultures, that make it very difficult for her to merge into a single, cohesive nation. India is geographically divided into twenty-five States and seven Union Territories; and political upheavals always threaten to create new ones. These divisions have created superficial boundaries to the complex and intriguing lifestyles, languages and religions of the people that comprise this sub-continent. Known for her rigid caste system and social customs, India has around sixteen major languages and over a thousand minor languages and it is difficult for Westerners to understand how people do communicate through these barriers. The birth place of several religions, modern India incorporates practically all world faiths. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism trace
their origins to ancient India, while the modern Middle Eastern countries brought Islam and Zoroastrianism many centuries ago, and Christianity can be traced back to the death of Saint Thomas in South India. In a country where people of different faiths, values and social customs live next to each other, little pockets of cultures and subcultures exist, some which may appear to have gone through very little change through all these years.

Assaulted throughout history by foreign invaders, India has been subjected to a number of international powers that have left an unforgettable impression on her people. The Aryans and Persians came, as did others like the Greeks, Huns, Afghans, Moguls, Portuguese, Dutch, Spaniards, French and the English. They brought with them their cultures that infected the indigenous Indian cultures. What we are left with today in present India is an intriguing mix of cultures created from religious beliefs, alien and local traditions and ancient and modern values.

India as a single culture is a nonsensical subject to write about. To illustrate it in the few pages of a picture book is an impossible task. Yet, some artists have risen to this challenge to create visual symbols that embody honest representations of aspects of this country which are discussed later in this chapter.
CHILDREN’S PICTURE BOOKS ON INDIA IN THE U.S.A

Based on the Marantz’s Multicultural Picture Books: Art for Understanding Others (1994), Lima’s A to Zoo (1993) and my own research, I have compiled the following list of 53 picture books that were written about India and published in the U.S.A. to serve as a brief source of reference. A more extensive bibliography at the end of this study includes the picture books cited in this project. Because a large number are no longer being reprinted, many of these books may be found only in special collections or public libraries. Many of the stories are based on Indian folklore of India, presented in styles that are as different as the selection of stories. No two books are alike in their art styles, mediums and representation of India. Some of the authors had travelled to India while a few had written about this country because of their personal interest in it. The artistic accomplishments of these illustrators has not gone unnoticed. Marcia Brown’s Once a Mouse, a folktale from India, was awarded a Caldecott medal in the early sixties. Even though some of these picture books were published over three decades ago, none are readily available in India.
PICTURE BOOKS—INDIA

Alan, Sandy. The Plaid Peacock
Albuquerque, Vera. The Hidden Gift
Ambrus, Victor G. The Sultan’s Bath
Axworthy, Anni. Anni’s Indian Diary
Bang, Betsy. The Cucumber Stem
   The Old Woman and the Red Pumpkin
   The Old Woman and the Rice Thief
   Tuntuni the Tailor Bird
Bond, Ruskin. Cherry Tree
   Flames in the Forest
Boncici, Peter. The Festival
Brown, Marcia. Once a Mouse
   The Blue Jackal
Cassedy, Sylvia. Moon-Uncle, Moon-Uncle
Cathon, Laura E. Tot Botot and his Little Flute
Chase, Catherine. The Nightingale and the Fool
Cleveland, Milo. Adventures of Rama
Demi. The Hallowed Horse
Domanska, Janina. Why so Much Noise?
Duff, Margaret. Rum-Pum-Pum
Ganly, Helen. Jyoti’s Journey
Gleeson, Brian. The Tiger and the Brahmin
Gobhai, Mehlli. The Blue Jackal
   Lakshmi, the Water Buffalo who wouldn’t
   Veha, the Mouse-Maiden
Hirsh, Marilyn. Leela and the Watermelon
Hodges, Margaret. The Golden Deer
Kamal, Aleph. The Bird who was an Elephant
Kamen, Gloria. The Ringdoves from the Fables of Bidpai
Kipling, Rudyard. The Miracle of the Mountain
Lexau, Joan M. It all Began with a Drip, Drip, Drip
Mark, David. The Sheep of Lal Bagh
Myers, Walter Dean. The Golden Serpent
Newton, Pam. The Stonecutter
Papas, William. Taresh the Tea Planter
Price, Christine. The Valiant Chatter-Maker
Quigley, Lillian F. The Blind Men and the Elephant
Rockwell, Anne F. The Stolen Necklace
Rodanas, Kristina. The Story of Wall Dali
Shepard, Aaron. Savitri: A Tale of Ancient India
Siberell, Anne. A Journey to Paradise
Singh, Jacquelin. Fat Gopal
Slobodkin, Louis The Polka-Dot Goat
Steel, Flora A. The Tiger, the Brahmin and the Jackal
Tagore, Rabindranath. Paper Boats
Towle, Faith M. The Magic Cooking Pot
Trez, Denise. Mails and the Flying Carpet
RESEARCH ON THESE PICTURE BOOKS ON INDIA

I was surprised to discover that very little work had been done in the U.S.A on children’s literature about India. Lyn Miller-Lachmann’s Our Family. Our Friends. Our World (1992), an annotated guide to significant multicultural books for children and teenagers, had just eight books on her pre-school to grade three section that represented literature from India. Melinda Greenblatt, who authored the section on Southern and Central Asian books, discussed literature on India for children that was mainly historical, biographical and gave general knowledge on India and her political leaders. No mention of books on India were made in Virginia Richey and Katharyn Puckett’s guide to Wordless/ Almost Wordless Picturebooks (1992) or Patricia Cianciolo’s Picturebooks for Children (1990). Austin and Jenkin’s just touched upon the Mahabharata and the Ramayana as literature from India in their book Literature for Children about Asians and Asian Americans (1987) and in Promoting World Understanding through Literature (1983), they did not refer to any of these 52
picture books on India. There was a brief review of Brown's *Once a Mouse* in Bader's *American Picturebooks* (1976), and a few references in Nayak's *Children's Books on India* (1973). The Lima's *A to Zoo* (1993) listed 42 of these picture books, but gave no information about the story, the illustrators or date of production. The Marantz's *Multicultural Picture Books: Art for Understanding Others* (1994) briefly discussed 13 of these picture books that they separated into three categories: original tales and folk tales evoking the past; traditional tales with nontraditional illustrations, and contemporary India. A point they raised which I found particularly important was that these picture books published for the American audience did not portray the "Asian Indian American, but India as a nation.

Even though Indians have immigrated to the U.S.A., the country being discussed in these books is India. When I discuss India in my study, I write for a certain audience so that I do not confuse whose India I am representing. For a resident of India it will be present, progressive India. For an Indian immigrant in America, India may be a faded memory or nothing at all.
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN INDIA

The vast discrepancy between the children's literature industry in the U.S.A and India was very obvious to me, though research shows that India is certainly not lacking in resources. According to Dunhouse's *International Directory of Children's Literature* (1986), India has 337 publishing houses that print books for children while the U.S.A has 88 publishing houses, the Oxford University Press being the only one common in both countries. Yet in 1981, (research on recent figures is not available) India produced only 447 titles for children while the U.S. produced double that. The U.S.A publishes seven children's literature magazines and India has only two, both located in Calcutta. In 1986, India had no known seminars, conferences or fairs for children's literature while the U.S.A had fifteen and had sponsored fifty-five children's literature competitions. While the U.S.A. has sixteen libraries for children distributed around the country, India has four: one in Madras, two in Bombay and one in Calcutta (Dunhouse, 1986).

The children's literature industry in India, in comparison to the U.S.A, has still to be fully developed. Since independence from the British in 1947, the government of India has recognized the need to indianize
the education system to promote nationalism. With this came a growing awareness for educational texts and literature for this curriculum (Biswas, Dutt and Singhal, 1978; Shah, 1967; Shukla, 1984 and Shah, 1968). Out of this movement grew the concern for producing children’s literature that was Indian in spirit and thereby most favorable in molding the minds of the new generation.

Indians pride themselves in belonging to one of the oldest civilizations in the world, dating back to the Indus Valley civilization which Craven in *A Concise History of Indian Art* (1976) estimates existed around 2300 B.C. With such an ancient culture, India is also rich in her traditional literature. Folklore has played an important part in practically every child’s youth, and one is unlikely to come across an Indian who is not familiar with the great epics of the Mahabarata and the Ramayana and stories from the Jatakas (Pellowski, 1980). Created centuries ago, the Jatakas are short stories like Aesop’s Fables, with a moral at the end. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana are very long stories centered around episodes of a group of people and gods, involving drama, violence, love and tragedy. These stories have been retold orally for generations to Indian audiences of all castes and religions, and dramatized in paintings and stone carvings that decorate buildings and temple walls built centuries
ago. In a country so diverse as India, folklore plays an important role as a common and binding force, non-discriminating among the regions and religions that make up this country.

The problems currently being faced by the children's literature industry in India have been addressed for decades and highlight issues unique to a country so vast and densely populated as India. One of the many problems authors, illustrators and publishers face in India is having to reach out to a population that is over two hundred and fifteen million children, in a country that has fifteen officially recognized languages and ten major scripts (English being one of them). Besides this, rising production costs, a high percentage of low-income families and foreign competition have affected the market for India's children's literature. (Panandiker, AWIC 1992)

The children's sections in bookstores are filled with books on Indian folklore, general knowledge, art and craft and literature published in England. The current devaluation of the rupee has made only a slight dent on the sale of these British books as they are still favored over the Indian publications. Reprints of Enid Blyton, a popular British children's writer and illustrator of the 1950s, still dominate the children's section. Criticism about her books as being racist and sexist (Klein, 1985)
has not effected the demand for her books in India. Her
cute drawings that illustrate the adventures of Little
Noddy and Mr. Gollywog carry on into the teen years with
her series about adolescent children like the 'The Secret
Seven'. The effect of this literature on modern day Indian
youth raised some concern among educators even though
research about children's responses to the bias presented
in these books is not available.

In July 1991, I visited Delhi, the capital of India
and the largest repository for children's literature in
the country. India's two main publishing houses: the
Children's Book Trust (CBT) and the National Book Trust
(NBT) are both located in this city.

The Children's Book Trust was established in 1955 by
Mr. Shankar Pillai. Internationally acclaimed for his
promotion of children's art and literature, his
contribution to this field in India has been phenomenal.
When he died in 1989, he left behind an organization that
produced an international art competition, workshops for
illustrators of children's literature, an illustrated
magazine for children called 'Children's World', seminars
on children's literature, competitions for writers and
illustrators of children's books, an international book
fair and an association for writers and illustrators for
children (AWIC) which serves as the Indian section of
International Board on Books for Young People. Shankar was honored nationally with one of India’s highest civilian awards (Padma Vibhushan) for his contribution to the field of children’s literature. (AWIC, 1990)

CBT is now largely run by women who represent this Indian Chapter of The International Board for Books for Young People (IBBY). Located in Switzerland, the primary goal of IBBY is to build an international exchange of information and experience in the field of children’s literature. It offers the highest international distinction for illustrators and authors of children’s books through its Hans Christian Anderson awards, and for recognition of works in its journal Bookbird. (Bookbird, 1992)

The international contact has had a tremendous influence on this organization. AWIC represents India every year at the International Children’s Book Fair in Bologna, Italy, and at international conferences on children’s literature. This exposure to the international market has reflected on the standard of CBT, with the concern being expressed about the quality of India’s children literature (Jafa, AWIC 1989).

From my meeting with the women who run CBT and AWIC, I learned that the final decisions on the selection and presentation of art works for the children’s books right
up to the printing process and distribution throughout the country, is handled by these five women whom I met in Delhi.

The National Book Trust (NBT), a Government of India enterprise, maintains a low profile in comparison to CBT. Heavily subsidized by the government, the books produced aim at reaching out to the Indian population at a more extensive level than CBT. Most of these books are translated into thirteen regional Indian languages. NBT is represented around the country through regional offices in Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Bangalore. The editor, Mrs. M. Dayal, holds the sole responsibility of this organization, working on a one to one basis with both writers and illustrators, and represents India as the contact for the UNESCO sponsored Noma Concours for Children’s Picture Book Illustrations held biannually in Japan.

Even though so many aspects of children’s literature had been covered nationally and internationally between these two organizations, these attempts to improve the quality of children’s literature appears to have hardly created a ripple through the country. (Jafa, AWIC 1989)

Most of the illustrators of these books are artists well established in the Indian art world who illustrate children’s books because of their personal interest in the subject. None of them received any formal training in
illustrating for children’s literature because colleges and universities or art schools did not incorporate this in their curriculum (Pellowski, 1980). CBT and NBT have addressed this concern by holding workshops for illustrators and writers of children’s literature, and prizes won by Indian artists in international competitions like the Noma Concours for illustrators of children’s literature do acknowledge the talent in this field. The educational system is also slowly responding to this need for formal training of children book illustration. In 1991, CBT in collaboration with the Shankar Academy of Art in New Delhi, announced the introduction of a four-year course in art, book illustration and graphics, and a two-year post-graduate course in book publishing.

To learn about an artist’s experience in illustrating picture books for children in India, I met with Badri Narayan and Mario Miranda in Bombay, in August 1991. Both artists are famous nationally for their art and have held exhibitions all over India and in Europe and America. Their illustrations in children’s literature reflect their individual art styles, making these picture books an effective medium for publishing contemporary Indian art. Badri Narayan’s simple drawings outlined in black are rich in earthy brown and yellow tones. Mario Miranda’s etchings and cartoons do equally well in a
children’s picture book, a delight in detail and character settings. Unfortunately, just a couple of Mario Miranda’s illustrated children’s books are still in print, though the picture books of Badri Narayan are still being published by NBT.

Both artists expressed their frustration in illustrating children’s books for Indian publishers. Aware that this information would be printed in my dissertation, they chose to be discreet about what they told me. Neither would commit to any money figures. Both mentioned that the pay is minimal and they earn far more selling one painting than they do illustrating a picture book that would comprise at least twelve pictures. Other than personal satisfaction, they both said that the rewards of illustrating children’s picture books are few. Perhaps one may not be able to make a profitable living writing and illustrating for children’s books in India, but in the past three years, with aggressive advertising, this industry has received a boost in business (Nair, 1994). Publishers have tapped into publicity events like book signing by authors at the recent World Book Fair in New Delhi, giving authors of children’s book’s an exposure never aspired to before.

Nair’s recent discussion about the perils of the children’s literature market: the aggressive marketing
strategies; economic factors unique to the Indian publishing field; and experiences with Indian authors of children's books raised concerns not different from what I learned from my visit with publishers and illustrators in India three years ago. Poor quality of production as in *The Girl who was not Built Right*; preference for foreign productions; inadequate royalties; dominance of western themes and increased costs of production are still the major problems in publishing children's picture books in India. This has brought about an awareness for publishing new literature that questions existing norms in India. Picture books now explore gender issues covering folklore and issues that have a feminist slant, and are illustrated by women artists in India. These refreshing stories are fast taking over the new market because they are related to the Indian child's reality and immediate environment (Chaudhuri, 1994) and mark the spirit of change in positive and progressive art forms.

**PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT INDIA**

The Representation of India in Picture Books Published in India and the U.S.A.:

In picture book illustration about India it is important that the development of character, themes and
points of view are analyzed for unity, variety, and originality in art and language. In the picture book format, the illustrations visualize the character and theme of the story; the story is given imaginative life through the skillful hands of the illustrator. Brown’s hermit and Bang’s old woman are wonderful character studies which present a charming aspect of India’s aged. The styles of dress are authentic in these books representing a good understanding of the life styles and cultures of the regions being depicted. Well researched geographical settings and background sceneries help add to the atmosphere of the setting, as do the choice of mediums and colours.

In literary texts, the stories are open to a wide range of interpretation because readers do not have illustrations to guide their imagination on character and theme creation. In a picture book format, the scope of this visual interpretation is narrowed down to the illustrator’s interpretation of the story. The illustrator is now responsible for the creation of the character and visual mood of this story.

Over the past three decades, there have been many picture books printed in both continents that have reflected with taste and respect, the art and cultures of India. Each decade has brought about a change in the
perception of what is Indianness, reflecting current trends in children's literature in each country. The selections I present were made after a careful consideration of the collection of picture books published about India in the U.S.A. and India. I selected books from each country that met the criteria of having a story specific to the cultures of India. They are divided into traditional literature that reflect folklore, myths and legends, and fictional literature that reflect contemporary India. I chose books that covered a large range of negative and positive qualities to illustrate the many concerns for children's literature. The books are compared for the representation of ideas in characters, themes and points of view created by the illustrator about India.

CHARACTER

In literature we get to know the character of the story through the appearance, action and speech given to the subject by the author and illustrator (Lukens, 1976). In children's literature, the character of the story may be a human being or an animal or even an inanimate object. Each of these things take on human traits that personify the character being created. The story usually evolves around the central character, the action and plot of the
story supplemented by the addition of less defined characters. Because a child experiences literature through the identification of the character (Vandergrift, 1980), the development of character is significant to the success of a story. As the reader becomes familiar with the characters in the story, she or he is able to detect moods, tone and cultural details in the book. In picture books about India the characters not only contribute to the development of the story, but in the illustrations, serve as a visual representation of the people and cultural traits of the Indian cultures. What the characters look like, wear, how they behave and react to situations all give significant details of Indian people.

The development of character in Indian traditional literature and contemporary Indian children’s literature about India has created a variety of images about what could be perceived as Indian.

Traditional literature largely consists of stories intended to instruct the young reader on values about good and evil, describing characters that are wise, foolish, brave, cowardly, frightened, confident, lonely and secure. Traditional literature often tends to have typified characters where most doers are male and the women play traditional roles (Chaudhuri, 1994). Stereotyping of characters is abundant in folklore which relies upon stock
characters like animals, the beautiful daughter, the vain king, the jealous fairy, the wicked stepmother or the foolish son to illustrate the message of the tale (Lukens, 1976). These stock characters have created stereotypes in picture books that give positive and negative values of the culture being portrayed. Do these conventionalized forms lie about the culture? MacCann (1973) points out that aspects of inferior illustrations come from inadequate craftsmanship and the rest from stereotypes in concepts. These stereotypes are easy to find once the basic problems are pointed out. An illustrator who stereotypes by conforming to certain criteria duplicates a formula familiar to the society. This could mean the alteration of objects to suit the prevailing pattern of children's literature. For example, this has led to an abundance of books on Disney-like animals that look sweet, cute and look like stuffed toy animals. Cartoon features are overused to supplement the individualization of characters, be it human or animal; and to create a timeless period, characters are dressed in clothing that is difficult to date to a certain period of history or region.

The stereotypes of human characters has been researched by scholars from different ethnic groups. Nieto's (1983) study about children's literature that were
pervaded by racism, sexism and an ethnocentric colonialism, showed how Puerto Ricans were presented as powerless, ineffectual, dependent and exotic in these books. Negative stereotypes have proved to be harmful to the image of Native American and other minority groups in the U.S.A. This is especially visual in children’s literature produced about these cultures. The Native American has been misrepresented to create incorrect pictures of their lifestyles, values and tribal beliefs. While negative stereotypes must be removed from literature, positive stereotypes must also be carefully evaluated for their messages too. Stensland (1973) discussed the harm Native American women face from positive stereotypes. Stensland cautions that although beauty, loyalty, nobility, whether of birth or of nature, are generally good qualities, more realistic, well-developed pictures of Native American Indian women can be found in a number of biographies. (p.12)

Negative stereotypes create negative emotions. Stereotypes of people are harmful to the people of the culture. The Provensen’s *Golden Serpent* show Indians to be thin, barely clothed and with wide grins on their faces. The Provensens placed their story in the Northern state of Kashmir, but instead of drawing fair, stocky people in the traditional heavy clothing of that region, they had thin,
dark-skinned men in shorts with idiotic expressions, their grinning faces staring out at you as if they had been captured in a group photograph. To generalize a population of over 800 million to be all the same in physical characteristics does not give a true picture of the people. Even though it may be argued that common sense tells us that this generalization is not true, it may well become reality to a young reader when represented in this visual manner.

Well developed characters in illustrations help us identify positively with the culture. In Paper Boats the pensive, calming spirit of the nameless Indian boy in this story erases all cultural and gender barriers as one gets caught up in the gentle flow and ebb of this graceful poem about sailing boats on a stream. With a few basic line strokes, Bochak gives this boy the most introspective of expressions so befitting for a poem about childhood dreams and fantasy. The unusual perspectives of the boy, animals and flowers in each illustration, make the pictures rich in artistic movement as they gently toss us between the boy and the paper boats throughout the book. In its Indian counterpart, Roy’s suggestion of the boy Appu in Red Kite is almost accidental, like a brief apology that he had to introduce a human character in his illustrations. But, kites need a human being to fly them and the two
illustrations of a lithe, muscular village youth, clothed in a lungi are as energetic and realistic as the hermit in Brown's Once a Mouse.

Folktales with humor have given us some delightful characters. Bang's old lady darts from one page to another, swiftly taking us through two charming folktales. Sometimes a blur of white colour, she exits and re-enters to give us brief glimpses of a face intent on its mission. Sandin's characters in It all began with a Drip, Drip, Drip... are so loveable in their humour and expressions that the mishaps of the potter are pure enjoyment. Price's strength in The Valiant Chattee-Maker is not in her people or her imitations of Bundi miniature paintings, but in the animals she creates. Teeming with life and energy, the tiger and horse charge through the story in delicate, yet powerful line drawings. The illustrations alternate in colour, which Price successfully manipulates to show the emotion of the tiger. Magnificent in full colour, the tiger is mean and powerful, angry and snarling. Stripped of its colour, it becomes a weak and stupid animal frightened by the perpetual dripping. Saha's success in creating a defiant and strong willed horse in Kalu's Dream gives us pages of delightful action about a horse who wants to ride a giant ferris wheel. The black and white sketches of the mischievous little children in Chugoo
emphasize the charming expressions and characters of these boys; but when in colour, these humorous expressions get overpowered with the blue hue of the train with the human face. Bright colours are also distracting in Chapni Chapni, giving the black and white art works far more intense expressiveness and character development.

Animals play a major role in Indian folktales and we have been given some wonderful creations of timeless artworks. Brown’s transformation of the mouse, to a cat, to a dog and then a tiger in Once a Mouse are rich in suspended emotion and character. Her artistic abilities are repeated in the Blue Jackal, where she creates a character so engaging that you could almost forgive it for being such a sneak. Unfortunately, one grows to dislike this jackal in Ghobhai’s The Blue Jackal, who is in these decorative illustrations, a weak sketch of a vain, lackluster animal; the stylized rendering of this animal a mockery of its vanity.

Following the popular trend for stylized drawings, the artists of picture books published in India appear not to focus on developing character in their illustrations. Padmanabhan’s animals, more European in appearance in Droopy Dragon have more facial expressions than the stylized animals and people in Narayan’s The Elephant and the Dog. In The Lion who couldn’t Roar, Singh’s lion with
the black and white striped mane looks harmless and more a stuffed toy than the king of the jungle, an odd contrast to the blue African elephant in this story set in India. The lion and elephant in Darpoke appear Disney-like with the huge eyes and flat coloured bodies. The demon in Mohini and the Demon fills the pages with colour and grace, defying all stereotypes about demons being fierce and ugly. Terrifying in its largeness, this demon Chakravarti creates is charming, shy, comical and even loveable, characteristics that do not befit its destruction at the end. Strikingly realistic water colour art works of a crow that is inquisitive, manipulative and greedy in Sonali’s Friend are a disturbing contrast to the stylized, cute drawings of the baby girl and her mother. Mitra succeeds in getting much more expression from his realistic mouse in Chitku. Small and mischievous, this bundle of grey fur peeks at us around doorways and stolen treats, the timidity of this small rodent enhanced by Mitra’s gentle pencil renderings. Inquisitive, in pain or just energetically nibbling at food, this little creature is full of charm but never quite enjoys the brilliance of Brown’s animal world.
**THEME**

Folktales from different countries are popular subjects in children’s picture books and have been used to represent literature from India for over four decades in the U.S.A. Ancient folktales, like the ones that come from India, are usually about animals that take on human behavioral patterns and act in human life situations. These animals serve to entertain the reader in stories that play out problems and solutions, the moral of the lesson serving to instruct the reader about values in life. Negative moral values like vanity, dishonesty and harming others are shown to be the downfall of the subjects in these folktales. These instructional stories are excellent educational material for young readers as they have no cultural barriers and serve to instruct all readers on the basic values of truth.

Most of the picture books published in the U.S.A. about India are based on traditional literature. What effect does this have on its readers in an understanding of India and her cultures? In these folktales Indian society is presented to be fair and recognizing to such individuals who are true to the honor upheld by the society. When animals are used to represent the people, it presents a fantasy and unrealistic portrayal of the country. In voicing her concern about Indian children’s
literature, Panandiker (1992) briefly discussed the representation of India in international children’s literature. According to Panandiker, these books did not give a correct picture of India. Panandiker was particularly lucid in describing these elements and therefore I have to provide this information about the representation of India in children’s picture books.

A consistent portrayal of just a few characteristics of India has given a distorted picture of India. The social and political problems in contemporary India far surpass any myth of peace and tranquility of these folktales created centuries ago. Nor is one likely to come across wild animals in India unless one goes into a jungle or a zoo. In Paper Boats, the boy has a monkey, a rabbit and peacocks as companions, a stereotyped symbol of exotic India. Much as folktales in children’s picture books do publicize the ancient literature of a country, an overabundance of these stories creates a literary stereotype of a country’s identity. India is famous for many things, folktales are just one of them. For authors to take advantage of this rich literature is wonderful; to restrict one’s self to folk literature is limiting one’s avenues of creative presentation.

The need to present a contemporary India has had artists produce some refreshing versions of India.
Eitzen's *Cherry Tree* illustrations make up for the rather uninspiring story line, each picture rich in details as they carry the theme of growth in life. The pen and ink drawings are equally inspiring in the alternative coloured art works of *Max in India*, a fictional story of a cat who travels around the world in search of his tail. Samuel's artworks for *Lali and Bablu's Mango Tree* add delightful details to this warm story of childhood pranks, and the level of visual perspective of a child brings a lively theme to *Bindu Big Shoes*. The paper collage art works with their sheared edges in *The Cloud Mouse and the Cloud Cat* are a dramatic break away in artstyle for an Indian publication. So are the realistic pictures of *Red Kite*, created artfully to present in paint and collage the culture of India's popular sport: flying fighter kites.

**POINT OF VIEW**

A story is important not only for its meaning and the pictures it contains, but also for its total performance in point of view. Point of view is an integral part of storytelling as it determines the view the reader gets from the characters, theme and events created in the story (Lukens, 1976). The influence of the illustrator's point of view on cultural representation is especially relevant to the success of the book. Books that deal with sensitive
issues like the representation of culture, place an extra burden on the artist to deal 'honestly' with the visual attributes of the culture depicted. How then should an artist represent an authentic and artistic representation of a culture in a children's picture book?

Authenticity as described by Webster is to "conform to fact and therefore is worthy of trust, reliance, or belief." Authenticity of cultural representation in children's literature is important for an honest and factual interpretation of the culture. The picture book artist has the responsibility to visually tell the story. As an illustrator, what details should one need to be particular about that would allow one to give an authentic representation of the country? How artistic and creative can one allow oneself to be without being irresponsible about the values and meanings of the culture? In the Seventh Daughter of the Sun, Grenfell presents recognizable artstyles of the East and West and only succeeds in showing that "never the twain shall meet". Rodana achieves an exotic balance between truth and fantasy in her intricate details of the bazaar life in The Story of Wali Dali. The Provensen's exoticness in The Golden Serpent, plays on stereotypes, creating a mesh of Indian cultural details. Realism succeeds as the winner in the dramatic illustrations about nature in Souci's The
Golden Deer, and creative artistry shows the influence of traditional Indian art forms in Kamen's The Ringdove.

MacCann and Richard (1973) caution artists that personal interpretation in children's book illustration should be treated as a kind of editorializing, where an artist has to deliberately emphasize or delete certain cultural values. It is the natural function of the artist to interpret, but it is a liberty that should be treated with care and responsibility. Picture books as published materials have a permanency that outlives generations. The cultural values created and supported in these illustrations communicate in a way that is very influential and powerful to readers of all generations.

MacCann (1973) argues that it is helpful to children and educators to show the relationship between children's literature and history. What history is all about has largely been determined by who has interpreted and written it. These interpretations have altered historical facts, misrepresenting history, geography, language and culture in children's literature (Klein, 1985). Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963) describe history as being a sieve and that there is a general agreement that every culture is a precipitate of history. With historical examples of scholarly works, Kroeber and Kluckhohn show how historians have altered the data on history by being selective in the
evidence they documented. MacCann and Woodward (1972) and Stensland (1973) studied how American historians deliberately altered historical facts on the Native and African American in historical works, sometimes ignoring their existence all together.

Kaestle (1988) states that historians often observe that historical inquiry is both a science and an art. When historical inquiry is considered as a science, it generally means that the historian follows certain common procedures of investigation and argument. This makes historical inquiry a methodology that historians follow based on generalizations about the past even though the individual historian's values and understanding of human nature may differ. When the evidence is ample, historians tend to agree on what the common procedure for investigation and argument should be. When the evidence has its limitations, these common procedures have their disadvantages. Historians then resort to making broader generalizations about the past or make judgements about its relation to the present. These generalizations and judgements involve a common agreement among historians and remain an act of creative interpretation involving the historian's values and training. Writing history has its limitations and remains subjective to a considerable degree (Kaestle, 1988). This part of creating history is
considered by some scholars to be an art; "when the facts are inconclusive, truth is what you declare it to be."
(p.19, Blank, 1992)

The history of India shares the methodological problems of the field of history in general. There is no single, definable method of inquiry, and important generalizations are rarely beyond dispute. For example, history text books in India consider the independence from foreign power to be from the British in 1947. The continuation of the French rule until 1956 and the Portuguese until 1961 is not mentioned in the Indian classroom. I find this very surprising, especially when the history of India is taught to children in areas where the cultural influences of the French and Portuguese still exist.

To ignore such important facts and generalize historical details is considered by Kaestle to be the result of an interaction between fragmentary evidence and the values and experiences of the historians. This I believe, is very harmful to the cultural meanings in history. For example, if I had to illustrate a folktale from the region of Goa in India, a general history book on India will have very little on the history of Goa. The historical data would give detailed accounts of the British rule of two hundred years, ignoring the Portuguese
rule of five centuries. Kaestle's argument that this selective data is due to fragmentary evidence cannot apply here since the Portuguese left just thirty years ago. History in this case, appears to be a based on majority biases as expressed in the unchallenged values of a few historians. History, as Kaestle implies, is a challenging and creative interaction, part science, part art. It can also be unreliable at times, and in this case influence civil unrest. Blank's 1992 engrossing account of his travels through India to retrace the 'Ramayana', a 3,000-year-old epic, questions the creation of historical truth. In this unusual journey, Blank researches the historical truth about Rama's birth place. According to popular belief, and the Encyclopedia Britannica (as he points out) it is believed that the mosque, Babri Masjid, was built over Rama's birth site in Ayodhya. Though there are no written records of the demolition of a shrine to build the mosque, this belief has kept, what Blank describes as "the pot of religious discord quietly simmering" between Hindus and Muslims. This discord finally boiled over in violence in December 1992, when Hindus stormed the mosque and demolished it, causing a ripple of ethnic unrest throughout the country.

How artistic and creative can one allow oneself to be with historical data without being irresponsible about
the values and meanings of the culture? As an example, I shall use the first page of *The Sheep of Lal Bagh* illustrated by Lionel Kalish (1963) to explain how complex the interpretation of history and story text can be for an artist. This story starts with "In a little city in the heart of India there was a park called the Lal Bagh."

What should I be concerned about in order to create an illustration for this text? My first concern would be the subject of representation. Which city in the heart of India is the author talking about? There is no mention of the city throughout the rest of the story’s text. Is there a city in India that has a park called Lal Bagh? Is this city little and by what comparisons? Why is this park referred to in the past tense? What happened to it? What does "Lal Bagh" mean? To illustrate this story, what details of Lal Bagh should I represent in this illustration that would serve as a symbolic reference to this park? What part of history should I represent: British India in the early 1900’s or independent India when the book was written in 1963? What liberties can I take in presenting this "little city in the heart of India?" After all, the author has not identified the city throughout the whole book.

After much research, I learned that this little city is called Bangalore, considered to be 'India without its
scorching sun and Europe without its snow.' Bangalore was the adopted summer quarters of the British and the home to many Anglo-Indians after the British left India (Isser, 1988). As of 1994, Bangalore is one of the faster growing cities in India and is often referred to as the "silicon valley" of India. The 240 acre park is situated in the city and still exists today. I had the opportunity of visiting it in 1991 during the centennial celebrations of the famous majestic glasshouse. Lal Bagh which means red garden for the colour of the roses, was modelled on the Moghul gardens and was built in the early 1700's as a pleasure garden for the king's son, Tippu Sultan. In 1799, after Tippu Sultan's fall, Lal Bagh was taken over by the British. In 1881, it went into the hands of the Maharajah of Mysore and in 1891, the grandiose glasshouse was built that was inspired by the Crystal Palace in London.

When I studied Kalish's illustrations after I visited Lal Bagh in Bangalore, it is obvious to me that he had known where Lal Bagh was in India, that Lal Bagh meant red garden and what Lal Bagh looked like as a park. The opening text is accompanied with a double page spread of an aerial view of the park. The use of red to colour the roof tops of the buildings is overwhelming against the dull green wash used for the ground and sky. The park is circular, the green ground broken by a winding brown
pathway. The park has six adults and two children. The park Kalish created had the following structures: the statue of Shri Chama Raja Wadeyar, ex-ruler of Mysore State riding a horse; the gazebo that was used as a band stand; a small white structure that I assume represents the glasshouse and a pond that has a fountain. Nothing else in this illustration bears any resemblance to the layout or details of the park. Nor do the buildings with their red minarets that surround the park bear any resemblance to the graceful architecture of Bangalore city.

Kalais’s descriptions of Bangalore and the park depict an environment far removed from my experiences of its reality. The opening text assures me that this historic park that I visited two years ago did not exist in 1963. In this illustration, fantasy is mixed with generalizations of the cultures of India; assumptions made that it is okay to belittle the details of the Indian cultures.

Cultural truth is relevant to an understanding of the historical perspective shown in a picture book and its meaning to the culture described. Davar’s Tansen is almost traditional in its miniature layout, each artwork carefully detailed to present the history of that time. The deceptive simplicity in the black and white sketches
in *The Hidden Gift* gives us a humorous depiction of contemporary Indian city life with delightful details. The dramatic illustrations of Biswas' *Tales from Indian Classics* have become timeless in Indian mythology, as have Narayan's earthy richness and simplicity in *Find the Half Circles*. A fair and correct representation of a culture benefits all readers. It educates people about a culture, with positive ideas on its values and people. The people of the culture benefit from this education too. Not only do they learn about their own culture, but are treated with respect and dignity due to a greater understanding and appreciation of their values. (Austin & Jenkins, 1983). Because historical research on India does not address the cultural meanings of life, the people's behavior and the societies' conscious and unconscious designs for living, the illustrator must explore the meanings of cultures as they relate to the historical data given.
CHAPTER IV

GLOBAL EDUCATION THROUGH PICTURE BOOKS:

A CRITICAL PARADOX

"In India, in America, in Europe, all over the world, racial minorities .... are encouraged to assimilate into the mainstream.... but all too often it is their presence that is required rather than their ideas. We should celebrate cultural diversity not because it is Politically Correct and makes us feel fuzzily open minded, but because all people have much to learn and much to teach." (p. 226-7)

J. Blank Arrow of the Blue-Skinned God, 1991

The need to globalize education has evolved from the examination of the meanings and purpose of multiculturalism in our society (Smith, 1994; Robinson, '1994; Wolansky, 1993), that points to a fresh perspective that focuses on issues that affect all of humankind. The benefits of global education as argued by these scholars, help students transcend their own culture to comprehend the diversity, commonality, and interconnectedness of peoples from different political, ideological, cultural and economic systems (Wolansky, 1993). These global concerns have risen from a growing awareness in the American educational system that some socially significant subject areas are not being addressed by the current established curriculum (Robinson, 1994). This has brought
about sharp criticism about the lack of diversity in multicultural education in presenting knowledge in a manner that reflects the cultural and gender perspectives that are relevant to the subject (Diaz, 1994). A global perspective, Wolansky (1993) argues, facilities an understanding of the world and how people affect others and others affect them. This, he states, will be of particular importance in the new century, where our future generation will have to deal with increasingly complex issues. Global education, he states, develops the coping skills needed for the future.

Children’s picture books have the power to create new experiences in global education. Books written about different countries and cultures offer a convenient educational exploration to young readers about the world and its people. The details in the pictures describe the values and ideologies of the cultures represented in a visual format where children can question the illustrations and accept or reject values or ideas as they see it. Because these illustrations are permanent and conveniently available, they offer constant opportunities for visual exploration where readers may reflect on the art work as long as they like or as often as they wish (Lacy, 1986).
There are numerous literature sources that infuse global education in academic and non-academic settings, multicultural picture books being one of them. In chapter two it was argued that picture books representing other cultures help children understand that culture's world view and create an appreciation of their own culture's positive and negative values (Lechner, 1993). From the past children discover folktales, myths and legends that illustrate the values and beliefs of people: the great stories on which cultures have been founded. And from the present these traditions and values that continue to be important to the people are reinforced and continue to shed light on the similarities and differences among people (Lechner, 1993). Through this literature children are able to develop at a young age an awareness of world cultures and recognize and respect the diversity of human values and beliefs.

The difference in the way India has been represented is obvious in a comparative study of the picture books printed in India and the U.S.A. The popular theme for picture books printed in the U.S.A. is the ancient folk literature from India, stories that are meant to instruct children on the moral values of life. The American editions are expensive: the average cost of a handsome
hard bound book is $15.00. The printing quality is excellent which further enhances the illustrations.

In comparison, Indian picture books are poorly presented. Rising printing costs and poor paper have resulted in sub-standard printing quality. To cut production costs, the books have no hard covers and are usually of one size. Short stories that relate to contemporary Indian life are now more popular than folk literature. These stories do not emphasize the moral values that folk tales do. To attract readers, these books are sold cheap, ranging from Rs 5.00 to 10.00 (The current exchange rate: $1.00 = Rs 32.00). These low cost productions are not as aesthetically pleasing as their American counterparts.

I noticed that American illustrators seemed to favor representing India in a traditional Indian art form. Many of the artists have experimented with Indian School of Art styles, woodcuts and even batik. A few choose to study the art form and improvise on it, creating a variety of attempts to have "east meet west".

The way an American approached the cultures of India was different from the way the Indian artist represented the country. Indian artists rarely chose a traditional art form. The illustrations were more "western", usually realistic or humorous in their cartoon features. It seemed
as if the American artists were trying very hard to be "Indian" in their art, while the Indian artists were determined to be progressive by breaking away from traditional Indian art values. There were not many obvious attempts to be creative or experimental with the artworks. To cut printing costs, the illustrations were sometimes limited to two or three colours.

The only similarity I found between the picture books of the two countries was the use of mediums: water colour, ink and colour pencils.

The problems of children's literature in India are unique to the nation (Panandiker, 1992). In a very generalized way, India as a nation is still struggling after four decades of Independence, to establish an identity. How can one combine so many diverse cultures into one, and how can they still coexist in their differences? Perhaps the basics of American multiculturalism can be applied to India as well. The cultural representation and negative values of racism, sexism, stereotypes, misuse of language, confusing cultures and cultural generalizations are concerns for all cultures and are important points to discuss for my own work on children's literature about India.

When a picture book is considered to be a means of cultural communication it is pertinent to examine the
issues that relate to its potential for cross-cultural exchange and understanding. Gearing (1973) argues that cultural transmission is principally of adults with children and among each other. Such cultural transmissions are possible in the illustrations of children's literature when adults as illustrators transmit cultural understanding to children through the pictorial representation of the culture. Through the illustrations of the book, an artist makes public the social structures, behavior and cultural patterns of the country and cultures represented. This is a powerful influence in understanding not only local cultures, but also cultures of the world. Harris (1984), Sims (1982) and MacCann and Woodard (1972) have challenged the selective traditions in children's literature that negatively depicted African Americans and African American cultures. They discussed books written for children and the impact these books have had in the social and cultural identification and definition of the African American. A similar strong sentiment was expressed by Slaplin and Seale (1992) in their analysis of the Native American's representation in books for children. Through a collection of articles in which the treatment of Puerto Ricans in published children's text books from 1973-1983 were discussed, Neito (1983) showed how books were pervaded with racism, sexism and an ethnocentric
colonialism, and how limited perspectives had confused details within the diverse Hispanic cultures frequently making errors. Her study also illustrated how challenging negative issues can improve the quality in cultural representation of future publications.

In chapter two I discussed how cross-cultural understanding helps create a better understanding of the customs and beliefs of different groups. This dispels any misgivings or stereotypes associated with such ethnic cultures that have been further enhanced in multicultural literature for children (Austin & Jenkins, 1983). Nayak (1973) has given considerable importance to cross-cultural understanding in the formation of attitudes, respect and understanding for the cultures of India in children's literature that is especially relevant to my study about how India, and her cultures have been represented in children's picture books. I remember the delight I experienced going through the illustrations of Molly Bang's picture books. Her attention to details like the kind of chairs used, the eating vessels and other visual details were particular to the ethnic group represented in her Bengali folktales. Had she generalized the characterizations, the regional identification would have been lost to the reader as would the charm of the illustrations, with their details that would not escape
people familiar with this culture. In a picture book the artist has greater liberties in expanding on cultural descriptions in the illustrations than the author has in writing the text. Children "read" these illustrations for cultural information they cannot get from the text. The interpretation and values the artist and reader associate with cultural facts is what makes the book a success or a failure in representing the culture.

The previous chapters have pointed out that picture books cover three major concepts: art, education and culture. Picture books are art objects because the sequence of illustrations in picture books like other forms of picture-making can serve as visual art experiences. Picture books are educational because they are a form of literature that informs the reader through the text and pictures. Picture books may embody cultural values and are then considered to be multicultural literature. Stories and illustrations describe the many cultures and ethnic societies in this world giving a visual description of the lives and customs of the people. The life of a picture book does not end once it is created. It begins to exist when it is being read. The audience is the most important actor in this process but the potentiality of the book's message lies with the creators who are the narrative and visual storytellers.
Scholars of cultural representation in children's literature have acknowledged that unless conscious efforts are made by those who read, review, create and publish, books will continue to be made that are culturally questionable.

Stensland's annotated bibliography for junior and senior high school students was written in 1973 on literature by and about the Native American Indian. Created to address the need for literature on Native American literature, this book is an extensive study of Native American literature up to 20 years ago. In stating her reason for the study of Native American literature, Stensland brings out important points in her introduction. The Native American were the inhabitants of America before the pilgrims arrived and are an essential part of American history. The Native Americans had an oral tradition of storytelling that covered all facets of life. Many writers of American literature have been inspired by the characters and life of the Native Americans but in these representations have created stereotypes and generalizations about the Native American. Her thesis discussed the vast variety of Native American life styles and cultures. She discussed books that misrepresented this diversity by incorrectly depicting life patterns of a certain Native American tribe. She also discussed books
that portrayed a factual representation of that culture. Stensland cautioned that Native Americans may belong to one or a combination of tribes that makes the differences in the ways the people dress, think, and their general attitudes in life. She explained with examples the differences that one should be aware of.

Nieto (1983) has shown through her research how studies on the representation of the Puerto Rican cultures in literature has improved the quality of future books on this culture. Many books about Puerto Ricans published since her study are culturally sensitive and have improved positive values of the culture and its people. Scholars like Harris (1984), Sims (1982) and MacCann and Woodard (1972) have come up with an analytical framework to help teachers, librarians, parents and authors and illustrators understand the problems relating to the specifics of each ethnic group. Comparisons between successful and negative images in text and illustrations were explained, problems of selective cultural information discussed and the harm of cultural generalizations shown. The common issues raised pertained to the visual images that represented harmful racial attitudes, stereotypes, myths, ideas about the ethnic group, and character representation on the ethnic, social, cultural and personal experiences that do
or do not blend into all the complex ways as they do in life.

Books evaluated for African, Hispanic and Native Americans have some concerns that do not apply to the Indian cultures but may be adapted to some extent to answer certain questions on stereotypes, illustrations, characterizations, language, approach to the story, the style of writing and biases of the author and illustrator. Racial discrimination as applied to the American culture does not exist in the same way in India. Discrimination in India exists in ways that are unique to the country and the history, as has been discussed in chapter three. Unlike the U.S.A., discrimination has not been ignored in literature and has been addressed for decades in India with children's literature that is believed to promote national unity in the country.

MacCann (1973) urged picture book critics to try and visualize the unique value of an artist's world. She believes that this level of high appreciation is not easy to achieve because it requires an understanding of another person's personality without letting your own interfere with the process. In a world of enhanced sensitivity to symbolic insult, artists are asked to have the responsibility to deal honestly with the visual attributes of the groups depicted. How are we to protect the creative
imagination (artistic license) if we simultaneously are driven by a goal of authentic representation?

To present an authentic representation of a culture, illustrators of children’s literature must make a special effort to emotionally separate themselves from their personal biases. The artist must see the illustration as something that adds to the text and does not merely describe it (MacCann and Richard, 1973). The artist has more opportunities than the author of a children’s picture book in describing the story, expanding the brief events visually in the artworks. For example, in *The Sheep of Lal Bagh*, I have discussed how the artist had chosen to describe the opening text of the story with images mixed with fantasy and reality.

Marantz (1994) and Klien (1985) have questioned the positive and negative values of stereotypes. Klien illustrated how being positive and friendly in one’s representation of a culture is not necessarily doing the culture and its people a favor because the artist and storyteller are not being true to the spirit of the culture, or to their responsibility of representing the culture in its truest sense. Stensland has shown us the harm Native Americans face from negative and positive stereotypes. Negative stereotypes, like being considered as savages, have proved to be harmful to the image of
Native Americans in the U.S.A. and positive stereotypes about the women are unrealistic. This is especially apparent in children's literature produced about these cultures.

Storytellers, visual and verbal, are responsible for the effect the story and the visuals have on its readers (Stokrocki, 1994). To avoid stereotyping art styles and characteristics of a culture, an artist must give an honest representation of the culture. MacCann and Richards (1973) argue that their search for criteria has revealed certain points. Illustrations must be recognized by scholars and publishers of children's literature as works of art. Although business concerns do prevail in the publishing industry, the importance of cultural representation must not be ignored. They believe that the closer the scrutiny, the closer the results will be. Illustrations must be analyzed for their elements of art and the specific way that they have been used in children's books which I have discussed in chapter two. Lacy (1986) has addressed the value of art in picture books by stating that because these pictures are in a book format, the art works are conveniently available to readers in comparison to the availability of cultural art forms in a museum or in another country.
Many of the authors whose works I read did not believe that everybody has the capacity to bridge two cultures. Sims (1982) debated this issue in relation to whether only Blacks should write about Blacks. Sims points out that the issue is not the background of the author but cultural affinity, sensitivity and, sensibility. From my own research for my masters thesis (1991) I have shown that it is possible for artists to illustrate another culture in the picture book format. Marcia Brown was awarded a Caldecott Medal in 1963 for her representation of India in *Once a Mouse* and showed that careful research on the part of the author and illustrator does give people the opportunity to develop their talents and explore different dimensions in children's literature.

When the artist's responsibility is to illustrate the text of the story, this artist's attention to the limits of the subject matter of the story is what distinguishes it from other artworks. The artist selects from the elements of art that which he or she feels would best assist in the interpretation of the story and the culture. The artist has to use his or her own judgment on what to add and what to screen out that will enhance or detract from the story in the illustrations. The personal interpretations of the artist can be considered as a form of editorializing. The artist has the liberty to
deliberately emphasize or exaggerate the treatment of representation of the elements of art and culture. The same story may be interpreted in different ways by different artists. A large part of the success of the illustrations lies in the artist's own feelings about the object or scenes being portrayed. A mature and educated artist will wisely use the artistic license when illustrating books for children.

Although it may be argued that it would be foolhardy to presume that everything that is published need benefit us and enrich our cultural awareness, it is also important to bear in mind, as Austin, Jenkin, and Schwarcz have cautioned in their writings, that in a country like the U.S.A., with its rich history and growing awareness of multi-ethnic cultures, gross misrepresentations of a given culture may be damaging to the generations of that ethnic group. As a person aware of the shortcomings and potentials of these books, perhaps my study will create within art education an awareness and appreciation for the works that are truly outstanding and deserving of a lot more attention and circulation amongst its readers.

I believe that art educators should employ these picture books as a means of cultural exchange and education amongst children in schools and change the ways educators work in schools with multicultural art and
literature. Art educators need to look at picture books as representations of cultures and not as a means of entertainment. Primary teachers should make a special effort to use picture books in the classroom as a means of imparting visual cultural knowledge. These illustrations are images that establish cultural paradigms in the young mind. These paradigms may be inaccurate and it is up to the teacher to establish the boundaries that will help children understand their limits for cultural interpretation.

How should a teacher choose these books and use these pictures effectively in the classroom? In my frequent visits to public libraries and bookstores in Columbus I was surprised to discover the lack in selection in multicultural literature. Books under ethnic cultures primarily deal with African American stories, whilst stories from other cultures are listed under folklore. This makes the selection limited but also ineffective in using picture books as a means of cultural exploration.

Art educators must start advocating for a larger variety of picture books not only published in the U.S.A. but also from other countries, and for reviews of these picture books that would help educators and readers to evaluate the cultural representation in the illustrations. This will force publishers to create a market for picture
books, producing books that will no longer be considered a source of entertainment but a means of cultural education. A ready resource of picture books from different countries would offer an invaluable comparison of cultural interpretation and representation that may be used effectively in the classroom and in the field of art education.

REFLECTION

In my search for criteria for evaluation I have discussed many points. The greater the scrutiny, the closer I came to understanding the multifaceted and complex components of children's book illustration. In each chapter I have addressed many complex issues that make the representation of cultures a sensitive and significant one to understand in children's literature. In the introduction in chapter one I laid out the basic foundation for this study, describing many issues in cultural representation that I examined in chapters two, three and four. In these chapters I explained that the responsibility for the interpretation of a culture lies with the author, illustrator and the readers. The mediocre artist does not meet these challenges and produces work that is repetitive in stereotypes and style, irrespective of the content and mood required of the story. This
results in books that follow a formula and are dull to the reader. A skilled and mature artist will explore the complex challenges to be met to produce a book that is fresh in spirit and sensitive to perceived cultural values whilst the culturally sensitive art educator would effectively use these images to establish cultural paradigms in young minds.

My research project has been just the beginning of what I see as a future, more comprehensive study of the problems of the cultural representation of India in the illustrations of children’s picture books. The notion of authenticity in visual translation, artistic license, cultural ownership and stereotypes in children’s picture book discourse still needs to be explored in a theoretical examination. These kinds of findings may well apply to other cultures and I do hope to continue this research when I return to India.
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