

Doctors study America's 'male chauvinist Yule'

By TRUDY MORRISON
Copley News Service

The double standard is alive and thriving in toys made for children over 2 years old. Until 2, boys and girls generally have "neutral" toys such as stuffed animals, rattles, blocks and various "educational" toys.

However, paths diverge at around 2. In 1972 two Yale University psychologists explored the sex-typing of children's toys and how society uses toys to condition children to sex roles.

Childhood is a period of experimentation and "let's pretend." While gender identity is essential for a healthy child, it should be entirely flexible and subject to personal choice.

The psychologists made three major findings: 1) "Masculine" toys are more varied and expensive, and are viewed as relatively complex, active and social;

2) "Neutral" toys are viewed as most creative and educational, with this group of toys including the most intricate items;

3) "Feminine" toys are seen as most simple, passive and solitary.

They also found that most adults define "traditional toys" according to the social norms for each sex. And while children are encouraged to share their toys, if a little boy wants to play with his sister's doll mother is more likely to

hand him a truck than to ask sister to share.

Adults spend more time selecting toys for boys (there's a wider range to choose from) and they give boys more toys. In a survey of 42 boys and girls, 73 per cent of the boys' gifts were toys while only 57 per cent of the girls' gifts were toys. (Girls receive clothes, jewelry, money and furniture more often than boys).

Three out of every four chemistry sets the researchers saw advertised pictured only boys on the box. The remaining 25 per cent pictured boys and girls. None pictured girls alone.

In 30 hours of Christmas-time observation in a toy department, no field worker reported a single scientific toy bought for a girl.

Craft kits and art supplies are advertised with pictures of both sexes or with girls only, but rarely with boys alone (with the exception of a few like metal craft sets).

Building blocks show both sexes, but complex Erector-set toys, which "teach a wide range of engineering principles" were exclusively marked for boys.

In catalogue pictures illustrating the use of toys and games, the father is often seen in the role of "instructor" or "play companion" while the mother is placed in the role of "spectator."

Most toys are sexually

anonymous. It's only the way they are presented to the child that reflects stereotypes and causes them to be perpetuated.

Children should be exposed to many variations of sex roles, psychiatrists say. A little girl shouldn't be made to feel guilty about aspiring to become a fashion model — if that's what she dreams of — but she should know that it's just as possible for her to grow up to become a chemist — if she wants to.

Role-playing for boys must be equally experimental and anxiety-free. If a boy is ashamed because he wants to play with a doll, the boy will learn not manliness — but fear of being considered unmanly.

Toys shouldn't insult, offend or exclude one sex by inference or omission. Toys shouldn't be bought "for girls" that teach hypocrisy, narcissism and limited aspirations. Toys for boys shouldn't promote militaristic values and a must-win attitude.

When selecting toys for children, run through a checklist: is it safe, made to last, respectful of the child's intellect and creativity, non-racist, moral in terms of the values it engenders, and non-sexist?

If it passes on these criteria, keep in mind one final factor: toys are most prized and best-loved if they have one simple quality: fun.

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because.....

Gary B. Macchioni

Growing

by ken silverstein

Like the warmth of the winter sun,
She came into my cold world
Making things warmer.
And as never before, Spring floated to us
And time began speeding up.
Spinning and spinning,
We opened our eyes,
And I cried
To the summer half over.
A glass through damp fingers,
I reached, but too late
To postpone the fall.
Into carpets of colors
The leaves are now fallen,
Leading me back to winter.

Now things have stopped spinning
Stopped floating,
They're leaves on the ground.
But to see my own breath again,
To have opened my eyes again,
To have loved
And have been loved is
Making things warmer.



Holly is red, yellow is beer;
Have a Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year ---RT



Sitting, breathing

Sitting in the land of the midnight sun
Breathing in the air breathed by every-
one
Thinking of my life in the shadow of the
gun
Knowing that I live just to have some fun

But, listen, I hear the sound never heard,
Look, I see events never stirred
And still, I believe this life has
occurred

Running in this place of the endless
night
Looking for ways to see a little light
Finding that I may just have to fight
Fearing to lose is my deepest plight

But, listen, I hear the sound never
heard,
Look, I see, events never stirred,
And I still believe our lives have
occurred.

-Romeo Trajanus

Festive Fare: Eggnog, Hot Toddy

Classic Eggnog

Beat separately yolks and whites of 6 eggs. Add 1/2 cup sugar to yolks. Beat whites very stiff, add 1/2 cup sugar. Mix whites with yolks. Stir in pint cream, pint milk. Add pint Four Roses, 1 oz. Myers Jamaica Rum. Stir thoroughly. Serve cold with grated nutmeg. Makes five pints, or 20 4 oz. servings.

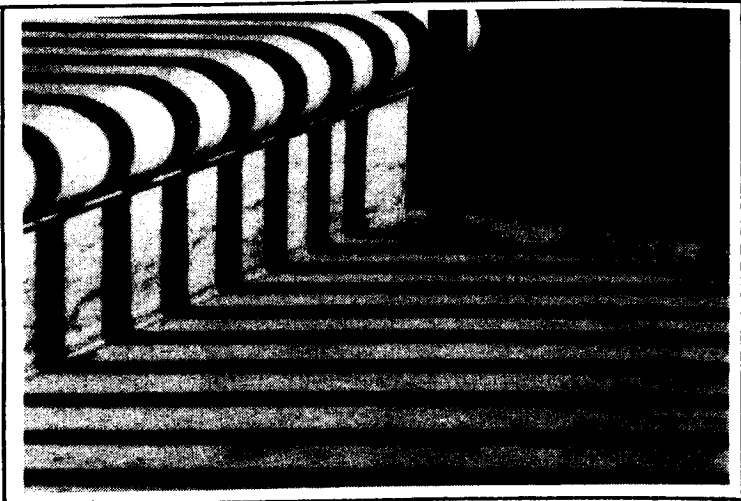
Hot Toddy

Dissolve a lump of sugar with a splash of hot water in a 6 oz. mug. Add lemon slice studded with 2 cloves, cinnamon stick, 2 oz. 7 Crown. Fill with steaming hot water.

Hot Buttered Rum Jamaica
Into a mug or thick tall glass, pour:
1 1/2 oz. Myers' Jamaica Rum
dash of Angostura bitters

tsp. of sugar, or maple syrup
tsp. of butter
3 or 4 cloves

Leaving spoon in mug, or glass, fill with boiling water. Stir with spoon, and allow to steep for a few moments.



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photo- f.s.p.