Synopsis

美國兒童教育學者 Herbert Kohl 在這篇文章中以經典童書《大象巴巴的故事》(The Story of Babar) 爲例，引領讀者深思兒童讀物對兒童閱讀的影響。Kohl 以自身經驗以及和孩童互動(包括自己的兒女)的真實經歷，具體舉出童書對兒童認知自我(身分)以及周遭世界的影响，直接 Babar 此類行銷全世界，看似「純真」、「可愛」、或「正向」的經典童書(或謂優良讀物)，其實(難免)承載了諸多偏差或偏頗的觀念或意識。最明顯的問題莫過於書中所呈現的性別刻板印象、種族歧視、以及鮮明的殖民意識。究竟，這樣的童書該不該禁?我們又該如何(幫助兒童)閱讀這樣的童書?

Outline for Discussion

1. childhood memory and the question of dear Babar (p. 1-3)
2. the issue of power in the story—the hunter vs the Old Lady (p. 4-9)
3. the concept of nakedness & the issue of colonialism (p. 9-11)
4. male domination vs. female roles (p. 11-13)
5. the issue of censorship (p. 13-32)

For Pondering…

1. “Babar, [the author’s] token for what is objectionable in children’s literature, is a cultural phenomenon, an established children’s classic that most children are likely to encounter. Often the question is not whether they encounter Babar, but how” (18, original emphasis).

2. “In all these cases, reading becomes dialogue. The text can be remained and invested with multiple meanings. … Therefore the question of reading Babar, …can be reduced to the question of whether uncritical reading of the book is so potentially damaging that it should be withheld from children when possible”
3. *Babar* can be used “as a text to be studied in a class on the instruments of colonialism, or on critical thinking and the development of child intelligence” so as to help children build up an “ability to develop critical sensitivity unaided” (31, 34).

4. Any similar reading experience in Taiwan—that a book is so dear (charming) to children but the messages embedded in the book could be so dangerous or disturbing?

Further Reading


