

## Dr. Seuss: A Man of His Time

Theodore Geisel, the beloved children's author, Dr. Seuss, who developed a new genre of books that use rhyme and whimsical characters to entice children to read, has recently been accused of not only being a racist himself, but also of writing racist books for children. In September of 2017, a librarian in Massachusetts refused a gift of Dr. Seuss's books citing racist propaganda (Chason). In October of 2017, Mo Willems, Lisa Yeel, and Mike Curato, who are children's authors, refused to attend the 2017 *Children's Literature Festival*. The festival was scheduled to be held at the Dr. Seuss Museum in Massachusetts; however, it was cancelled due to the controversy brought on by the trio of children's authors. Willems, Yeel, and Curato all claimed that a mural from *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* was a racist caricature; however, the authors would have been willing to attend the festival if the mural was removed. The illustration is a Chinese man adorned in Chinese robes with a bowl of rice and chopsticks in his hand. On the contrary, the character is not a caricature which exaggerates the Chinese man's features, but simply a child-like drawing which gives subtle clues to his nationality. Not only did Dr. Seuss's stories promote positive moral character and acceptance of those who are different from oneself, but also his illustrations created characters, who were unique, colorful, and zany. As a children's author, Dr. Seuss's main purpose was to inspire and to entice children to read. A careful study of Dr. Seuss's life and work reveals that his books come not from a man full of racism but from a man of his time who had experienced the pain of prejudices as a child himself and the pain of infertility as a grown man.