
By: vschneider46, on 10/10/2016

Blog: The Open Book (Login to Add to MyJacketFlap)


Lee & Low Books celebrates its 25th anniversary this year and to recognize how far the company has come, we are featuring one title a week to see how it is being used in classrooms today as well as, hear from the authors and illustrators.

Featured Title: Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story

Author: Paula Yoo

Illustrator: Lin Wang

Synopsis: Born in 1905, Anna May Wong spent her childhood working in her family’s laundry in Los Angeles’s Chinatown. Whenever she could afford it, Anna May slipped off to the movies, escaping to a world of adventure, glamour, and excitement. After seeing a movie being filmed in her neighborhood, young Anna May was hooked. She decided she would become a movie star! Anna May struggled to pursue an acting career in Hollywood in the 1930s. There were very few roles for Asian Americans, and many were demeaning and stereotypical. Anna May made the most of each limited part. She worked hard and always gave her best performance. Finally, after years of unfulfilling roles, Anna May began crusading for more meaningful roles for herself and other Asian American actors.

Anna May Wong—the first Chinese American movie star—was a pioneer of the cinema. Her spirited determination in the face of discrimination is an inspiration to all who must overcome obstacles so that their dreams may come true.

Awards and Honors:

Carter G. Woodson Award, NCSS

Children’s Books of the Year, Bank Street College of Education Choices, Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC)
Resources for teaching with Shining Star:

Video: Paula Yoo Interview
Video: Anna May Wong In Her Own Words from Women Make Movies
Shining Star Reading and Craft Tips from Reading to Kids
Asian Pacific American Heritage Teaching Resources from the Smithsonian

“Anna May Wong Did it Right” from Time Magazine

Check out these Book Collections featuring Shining Star:
Asian Pacific American Heritage Collection
Asian/Asian American Collection Grades 3-5
Women's History Collection
Biography and Memoir Grades 3-6 Collection
Art and The Arts Collection
California Books Collection

Book Activity: Create your own Hollywood Movie Star from Reading to Kids.

from LA Times

Have you used Shining Star? Let us know in the comments!

Celebrate with us! Check out the Lee & Low 25 Years Anniversary Collection.

Veronica has a degree from Mount Saint Mary College and joined LEE & LOW in the fall of 2014. She has a background in education and holds a New York State childhood education (1-6) and students with disabilities (1-6) certification. When she’s not wondering around New York City, you can find her hiking with her dog Milo in her hometown in the Hudson Valley, NY.
Several months ago I saw the cover of Lane Smith's *There Is a Tribe of Kids* and wondered about his use of the word tribe. Most people see the word "tribe" and think of a group of people who they view as primitive, or exotic, or primal, or... you get the picture, right? If not, open another browser window and do an image search of the word tribe. Did you do it? If yes, you saw a lot of photographs of people of color and of Native peoples, too.

In the last few weeks, I got an email from someone asking me if I'd written about that word. The person writing didn't mention Smith's *There Is a Tribe of Kids* but may have been asking themselves the same question Sam Bloom did when he read the book. I haven't yet had a chance to look for Smith's book.

Yesterday, Sam's review of *There Is a Tribe of Kids* went up at Reading While White. I highly recommend you head over there and see what he has to say. On one page of the book, the kids are shown playing in a forest... and they've got leaves stuck into their hair in ways that suggest they're playing Indian. Here's that page:

![Image of children playing with leaves in their hair](image)

Sam isn't the only one to notice that problem. He pointed to the review in the *New York Times Book Review*, where the reviewer wrote that this kind of play signifies wildness. And, Sam notes that the book has gotten several starred reviews from the major children's literature review journals--journals that librarians use to purchase books. Those starred reviews will mean it is likely to be in your local library. That image, however, means *There Is a Tribe of Kids* is going into AICL's Foul Among the Good gallery.

Do read Sam's review, and the comment thread, too. I am especially taken with Pat's comment. She used a phrase (I'll put it in bold font) that appeals to me: "An informed reading means giving up the position of innocence that White readers enjoy when other cultures' are represented in service of an engaging story."

Sam's post and the comment thread give us a peek at what goes on behind the scenes in book reviewing. In his review, Sam wondered if the book is getting starred reviews because people like Lane Smith's work overall. Roger Sutton replied that Horn Book didn't give it a starred review, but that their discussion of the book itself included the playing Indian part that Sam's review is about, but that "the reviewer and the editors differed" with Sam's assessment, so, Horn Book recommended the book.

Roger and I have disagreed on playing Indian over and over again. Horn Book gives that activity a pass because Horn Book views it as an "extra literary" concern. Intrigued? You can read one of the more recent
Pat's comment is perfect. Far too many people don't want to give up their position of innocence. Playing Indian is just too much fun (they say) and it isn't racist (they insist), or inappropriate (they argue)... Indeed, some say that sort of thing honors Native peoples.

It doesn't honor anyone. It is inappropriate.

My guess is that Lane Smith didn't know it is a problem. His editor, Simon Boughton, apparently didn't know, either. If you know Smith or Boughton, I hope you ask them to think critically about playing Indian. There Is a Tribe of Kids, published by Macmillan, came out in May of 2016.

The words in the image she tweeted are a 2016 article by Eric Jennings, titled "The librarian stereotype: How librarians are damaging their image and profession." People on twitter were, appropriately, angry that Jennings used that excerpt in the way that he did. Here's the excerpt Jennings used (shown in the image):

When I was at the 2009 Association of College and Research Libraries conference, I saw Sherman Alexie speak, and one of the things that stuck with me is that there's always some truth to a stereotype. He was talking specifically about how the stereotype for many Native Americans is that they are alcoholics. And, in fact, most of his family members are alcoholics. He even went on record as saying that the whole race is filled with alcoholics and that pretending that alcoholism is a stereotype among Native Americans is a form of denial (Alexie, 2009).

I took a look at the source for that quote. It is a video. I watched it. Alexie did, in fact, say what Jennings says he did.

Was it wise for Jennings to use that excerpt in his article about stereotypes of librarians? I think not. Here's why.

Most people know a librarian. Most people probably know a lot of librarians, and know that the stereotypes of librarians don't apply.

Most people, however, do not know a Native person. So, there's no way for them--in the course of their everyday life--to know that most of us are not, in fact, alcoholics.
Let's think about that a minute.

Alexie said it is a stereotype that Native people are alcoholics.

The truth? Alcoholism is a widespread disease.

Alcoholism is a social disease. It does not exist in higher incidences amongst Native communities. Alexie tells us about his specific family. What he says is not true for my own family. We're not exceptional, either. I'm not saying "Not us" out of a holier-than-thou space.

A research study released earlier this year says it isn't true for most Native people in the US either. Holding that view, however, has costs to Native people. The news report about the article included this:

"Of course, debunking a stereotype doesn't mean that alcohol problems don't exist," Cunningham said. "All major U.S. racial and ethnic groups face problems due to alcohol abuse, and alcohol use within those groups can vary with geographic location, age and gender.

"But falsely stereotyping a group regarding alcohol can have its own unique consequences. For example, some employers might be reluctant to hire individuals from a group that has been stereotyped regarding alcohol. Patients from such a group, possibly wanting to avoid embarrassment, may be reluctant to discuss alcohol-related problems with their doctors."

And here's another paragraph:

"Negative stereotyping of groups of people who have less access to health care creates even more health disparities," Muramoto said. "Based on a false negative stereotype, some health care providers may inaccurately attribute a presenting health problem to alcohol use and fail to appropriately diagnose and treat the problem."

Several years ago, a dear elder in my tribal nation dealt with that very thing. He wasn't well. He had tests done. Doctors assumed he was alcoholic, and that alcohol abuse was the cause of what they saw in tests. He told them he didn't drink, but, they wouldn't probe further. Now, he's finally been diagnosed with a fatal disease. Just writing those words brings tears to my eyes.

Words. As I said on Twitter, words matter. They shape what people think and what people do. Words shaped those doctors who didn't believe this elder.

In a recent article in Booklist, Cynthia Leitich Smith wrote this: I've had allied non-Indian librarians tell me, one way or another, that they're committed to telling stories about "real Indians" and go on to clarify that they mean alcoholics living in reservation communities. As if, say, my tribal town and urban characters were somehow less "real."

I cringed reading her words because what she's encountering is a belief in that stereotype. They think it is real. I'm seeing it in books I've read in the last year. Writers seem to have an idea that, if they're writing a story about Native people or our communities, they better make sure to have an alcoholic in it.

Writers who do that are damaging us, and they're damaging non-Native readers, too. They are taking a social illness and making it a NATIVE social illness. My guess is that they have read Alexie's The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian. That story has alcoholism in it. Because he's got it in his book, I think writers are thinking that they should make sure to include it in their stories, too.

Writers: Don't do that.

Editors: Don't let your writers do that.
Book reviewers and bloggers: Your reviews/posts influence purchasing decisions. Pay attention. See what I see, which is the overrepresentation of alcoholism as a part of Native life.

Everyone: Read the study. See for yourself.

See the news article: Study Debunks Notions about Native Americans, Alcohol
Read the study: Alcohol use among Native Americans compared to whites: Examining the veracity of the 'Native American elevated alcohol consumption' belief

![Illustration](https://example.com)

Enid Blyton's SECRET SEVEN series

According to The Telegraph, the images of golliwogs and references to them have been "doctored" in books in which they appear. I doubt if the same is true for the playing Indian parts of her books. I ordered The Boy Next Door and will see if any changes have been made. Course, I won't know till it arrives just which edition I'll get!

For now, check out these three illustrations (credit for these images is to the Enid Blyton Society website).

Here's the cover of the 1944 edition. Illustrations for it are by A. E. Bestall:

![Cover](https://example.com)

From what I've gleaned about The Boy Next Door, Blyton's characters peer over the fence and see the kid next door dancing like a Red Indian. Since they play Red Indian, too, they decide to put on their Red Indian costumes and sneak up on that neighbor kid and scare him. So... here they are, sneaking up on him:
But something goes wrong:

When the book arrives, I'll share what I read. Old books, yes, but Blyton is a key figure in children's literature. As such, her work remains influential. In the meantime, head over to the page about this book. There's a lot more illustrations there, and some comments about the story, too. No mention, however, of the problems in a play Indian theme.

5. Ladybug Girl in Headdress? Gone!

By: Debbie Reese, on 11/11/2015
Blog: American Indians in Children's Literature (Login to Add to MyJacketFlap)
JacketFlap tags: stereotypes, revised, Ladybug Girl, war paint

Yesterday, Betsy Bird at School Library Journal wrote about a significant change to the
picture book, *Lady Bug Girl*, written by David Soman and illustrated by Jacky Davis. First published in 2008, it came to my attention when a reader wrote to me about the endpapers, which showed Lady Bug Girl in a headdress. At the time, I wrote a [Dear Parents of Ladybug Girl](http://jacketflap.com/2008/01/23/parents-of-ladybug-girl/) post (writing to the author and illustrator as her parents).

Looking at the image now, I'm drawn to what she's doing: she's got what looks like a lipstick in her hand and is, presumably putting "war paint" on her cheeks. See? David Arnold's character did that in *Mosquitoland*. Remember [that](http://jacketflap.com/2016/08/08/mosquitoland/)? (My apologies for the poor quality of the images I'm using today.)

Well, a new edition of *Lady Bug Girl* is out, and, as Betsy noted, Lady Bug Girl in a headdress is gone from the endpapers. I was pleased as can be about that change! Below are the covers for the 2015 "Super Fan Edition" and beneath it is the original 2008 cover.

And here's the changed endpapers:
It is the second book I’m writing about this year, that has been changed--for the better--and as such, something all of us can celebrate! Thank you, Soman, Davis, and Dial (the publisher) for deciding to remove it. It is a step in the right direction. Betsy and I agree--if there was a note in the book about the change, it would help people take a step in the right direction with you, Soman and Davis. For now, though, thank you!

0 Comments on Ladybug Girl in Headdress? Gone! as of 1/1/1900

Well, I did my annual visit to Barnes and Noble to see what they had on the Thanksgiving shelf. Never a pleasant outing, I hasten to add, but one that I do each year, hoping that there won’t be any new books where characters do a Thanksgiving reenactment or play of some kind.

Out this year is Just a Special Thanksgiving by Mercer Mayer. I’ll say up front that I do not recommend it. Here’s the synopsis:

Little Critter® has charmed readers for over forty years.

Now he is going to have a Thanksgiving he’ll never forget! From the school play to a surprise dinner for all of Critterville, celebrate along with Little Critter and his family as they give thanks this holiday. Starring Mercer Mayer’s classic, loveable character, this brand-new 8x8 storybook is perfect for story time and includes a sheet of stickers!
If you just look at the cover, you don't see anybody in feathers. You might think they're doing a "just be thankful" kind of story, but nope.

One of the first pages shows Critter and his buddies at school, getting ready for the play.

When it is time for the play, Critter (playing the part of a turkey), freezes and the others look on, worried:
Later, everyone goes to the parade, where Critter ends up on a float:

Pretty awful, start to finish, and I gotta say, too, that I'm disappointed. Though I haven't read a Critter book in a long long time, I do have fond memories of them. I dove into research spaces and see that a colleague, Michelle Abate, has an article about Critter in a 2015 issue of Bookbird. I'm going to see if I can get a copy of it. Course, her article won't have anything about Just a Special Thanksgiving in it, but I'm interested in a researcher’s perspective on the series.

Oh, and here's a photo of the display:
Dear Teachers,

Each day when young children get home from school, parents ask how their day went and if they have any homework. For some parents, the homework their child brings home can be daunting because it has material on it that they haven't thought about in years. They have to "brush up" on it in order to help their children understand the concepts the child's homework is intended to reinforce. Some parents find homework annoying because it is so repetitive and their children could be doing something more engaging.

Last month on social media, Native parents circulated photos of worksheets and books their children were bringing home. Some of these photos were of cartoon-like images of Indians who greeted Columbus.

November is Native American month. Thanksgiving happens this month, too, so, some of the worksheets parents are sharing on social media are about Indians greeting the Pilgrims. Some just have random images of Indians on them because it is Native American month.

If I asked you, teachers, to look through your file of worksheets, some of you will see what I'm talking about. Smiling Indians handing corn to Pilgrims. Cute Indians sitting cross legged on the ground, tending a fire, next to a tipi. Color-by-number worksheets of Indians... We could go on and on, right?

For Native parents--and for non-Native parents who know these images are stereotypical--the homework itself is more than daunting or annoying. They know those worksheets carry messages of who or what Indians are supposed to be. They know those images are misinforming the children the worksheets are meant to educate. For them, these worksheets put them in a what-do-I-do about this moment. Some will point out the stereotypical image and, if needed, tell their child why it is stereotypical and not ok. Some will arrange to meet with the teacher. Some will express their frustration, with family and friends, in person and on social media. And some will keep silent because they fear that speaking to you, their child’s teacher, will put their child in an awkward position.

For Native children, those images are one more silent assault on Native culture. These silent assaults, however, are ones their teachers are handing to them. My guess is that some of you, teachers, don’t even notice those images on those worksheets.

I have empathy and respect for teachers. I taught elementary school in the 1980s. I know how hard it was, then, to work with the limited resources I had from the school itself, and from my own pocket. Teaching is even harder, today, than it was then. So I’m not writing this to make you feel bad.

I’m writing to ask you to take a few seconds to look--really look--at the worksheets you’re going to use today, or tomorrow, or the next day, or any day. Do they have those images of Indians on them? If they do, set them aside.

A lot of you assume these worksheets and biased children’s books don’t matter because you believe there aren’t any Native kids in your classroom. If you’re basing that belief on an idea that Native people have dark skin, dark hair, high cheekbones, and personal names that sound Indian in some way, you’re reflecting a stereotype.

I don’t say any of this to shame you, or to embarrass you.

We all have a lot of ignorance about people who are unlike ourselves. I have had many moments of being embarrassed! I, for example, loved Five Chinese Brothers. I have very warm memories of reading it--memories that go all the way back to my early childhood years. I carried that book in my heart for decades. Then, in a graduate school course about children's literature, that book was one we looked at, and I realized how racist its depictions...
are... and I let it go.

I hope you'll read this letter as a virtual hug, of sorts, from a fellow educator who--like you--cares about teaching and what we teach to children. We're all learning, every day, how to do it better. I welcome any questions you have--about worksheets, or books. My entire website is for you. It's all free. For you.

Sincerely,
Debbie Reese
American Indians in Children's Literature

P.S. (added an hour after I hit upload on my letter):

My husband suggested I say a bit more about what teachers can do instead of the usual Thanksgiving activities. So! If you're working with very young children, remember your training. Early childhood education is centered on teaching children in a here-and-now framework. For them, the long-ago (when colonization began) is not best practice. For children at that age, if you want to do something about the holiday, take the what-I'm-thankful approach instead of a usual Pilgrims and Indians ones. Because you're working on their fine motor skills and use craft projects for that purpose, you can do arts activities about turkeys. For older children (3rd grade and up), check out American Indian Perspectives on Thanksgiving. If you want to take some time to unlearn what you've learned about Thanksgiving, you can start with a fellow teacher's post about Thanksgiving books: Kara Stewart's "Children's Books about Thanksgiving."

8. Migrants and medicine in modern Britain

In the late 1960s, an ugly little rhyme circulated in Britain’s declining industrial towns. At the time, seemingly unstoppable mass migration from Britain’s former colonies had triggered a succession of new laws aimed at restricting entry to Britain, followed by a new political emphasis on ‘race relations’ intended to quell international dismay and reduce internal racial tensions.

The post Migrants and medicine in modern Britain appeared first on OUPblog.

9. Cover of Parent Magazine’s December 2015 issue

On Thursday, December 10, I learned about the cover of the new Parents magazine (h/t Heid and Allicia). Both are Native women and mothers.
Like them, I found the depiction of a little girl, in that toy headdress, screaming in an out-of-control way, as a play on the "wild Indian" stereotype. You know the phrase, I'm sure: "stop running around like a wild Indian." In 2006, AARP's magazine had a full-page Tylenol ad showing a kid, similarly clad, with a grandparent holding the child's hand and glad that she had Tylenol on hand.

I shared the image on Twitter, questioning editors at Parents directly, and asked others to ask, too. Their Twitter account was inundated. A few hours later, Parents issued an apology.

Here's the apology on Twitter:

And here's the apology on Facebook:

There are a lot of comments to their Facebook apology that suggest that readers are as ignorant of the problem as the editors and designers who put the cover together. Those comments indicate the tremendous need for the editors at Parents to do some follow up articles to help their
readers understand the issues at play in their depiction of that child in that toy headdress.

In short: a headdress is not a toy. It holds tremendous spiritual significance to those who have them and to their families and tribal nations. That kind of headdress is specific to some tribes but not all of them, but the general public believes it to be something all tribes use, as if we are a single, monolithic entity.

In comments on Facebook and Twitter, I saw some people making comparisons between the "Bored No More" caption for that photo and the "Idle No More" movement of First Nations people. I think that is a valid point.

I hope the editors at Parents read all the comments and respond in an educational way. In my comment to them on Facebook I invited them to share books with their readers, books drawn from my list of Best Books.

In many places, I saw people appalled that Parents would do that cover in 2015, but we can point to many places in which similar imagery is used, uncritically. Mascots for sports teams is one example. A lot of this imagery is in children's books that I write about here, in the illustrations or in the text. I hate cliched expressions but they do have their place. There is much work to do.

10. WHERE'S WALDO being added to The Foul Among the Good

Last week, Sharon H. Chang tweeted a couple of images from a 1987 copy of Where's Waldo that I am adding to AICL's page, The Foul Among the Good. Here they are:
May 29, 2014

Dear Waldo,

Yes, in fact, I've seen that a lot in children's picture books and in dog photos created by people who apparently don't know much about Native peoples. For us, feathers are not playthings. They are sacred. I am guessing you know that eagles are protected in the United States. I'm guessing that you do not know that there are also laws that recognize that eagle feathers have religious significance to Native people. If you want to know a bit more about it, the New York Times ran a story about this in 2011.

I'd also like to note, Waldo, that your depiction of "Indian" people is stereotypical. You drew a tipi, the fringed clothing, and what I think you meant to be a "peace pipe." There are over 500 federally recognized Native Nations in the U.S. Rather than anything meaningful, you're giving your readers monolithic imagery that doesn't do anyone any good.

I'm hoping that line in your post card, the dog, and the tipi are gone from later editions of your book.

Sincerely,
Debbie Reese
American Indians in Children's Literature

You may have remembered a few months ago, I begged for responses to a long thing about gender and stereotypes and then a few weeks later I begged for responses to a shorter one. HUGE THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR GIVING ME RECS OF WHAT TO READ AND THINK ABOUT AND/OR DATA TO QUOTE HERE!
This was for a level two project, also known as a higher project qualification or HPQ. We got to choose anything to research and come up with a 2000 word essay on it. It was finished in February 2014, and came back with an A* :)

Anyway, I chose to write about YA and how heavily gender stereotypes feature in it. A googledoc of this essay can be found here; the essay is uncut here, but there you can find the whole bibliography, and results of the shorter surveys.

What do you think? Does YA challenge or reinforce gendered stereotypes, or is it changing? Share your thoughts in the comments.

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**Does Young Adult Fiction challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes?**

**Introduction**

Gender stereotypes invade every aspect of life. From the moment a child is born and pronounced a boy or a girl, they will have the trappings of gender thrust upon them. However, by the time they are teenagers, they will have started questioning these, and many other things about the world around them. Literature written for teenagers, also known as Young Adult literature (YA), addresses many issues such as grief, bullying, drugs, suicide and rape. However, in my years reading a wide range of books on the market, I have not found many books that prominently challenge gender stereotypes, unless it is one of the few with a main character on the transgender spectrum. I have also often thought about the more general representation of gender throughout YA-the characteristics, traits and ideas attached to characters of different genders. In my time as a book blogger, I have also grown to know the methods of marketing YA literature, and I am going to analyse these, and if and how gender plays a part in these. Gender stereotypes are rife throughout all forms of media, not just young adult literature. But as teens question and explore life, and are influenced by the media they consume, the books they read challenging or reinforcing gender stereotypes will help form their ideas that will stick with them throughout their lives.

**My Research**

The majority of my research involved reading and rereading many books on the YA market. As the selection is much too large for me to read in its entirety, I selected major books and book series in the YA category, and books with protagonists that challenge gender stereotypes. I have also drawn on books I have read previously and have stood out to me as reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes. To gain an idea of other peoples’ opinions on gender in YA, and the gender distribution of those involved with it, I conducted an online survey, read blogs and articles by readers and authors, and directly asked authors, both in person and over the internet.

**Do major YA books feature characters that conform to gender stereotypes?**

Stereotypes placed on women in everyday life include being emotional, passive, flirtatious, and dependant. Examples of passive and dependent women in YA include Bella (Meyer, S., 2005) and Nora (Fitzpatrick, 2009). Girls challenging this view a major feature in YA, as seen with Katniss (Collins, 2008) Celaena (Maas, 2012) and Tris (Roth 2011). However, as these girls are, in-universe, challenging the norm of women being submissive and obedient, it could also be said that these books reinforce the idea of most girls being weak. Even in these worlds, reinforcing the passive, romantic female adds value to their character; in The
Hunger Games, Katniss’s worth increases when she has a boy-kissing Peeta earns her gifts to survive in the arena, and when presenting her as victor, she is made to look “like a girl. A young one. Fourteen at the most. Innocent, harmless” (Collins, 2009, p431), compared to the independent, fierce fighter she was in the arena. Katniss’ conformity to traditional feminine stereotypes is further reinforced when her story ends not with the end of the revolution, but her marriage to Peeta and her raising children (Collins 2010). Another common idea attached to female characters in YA literature is the idea that they need to have a romantic relationship with a boy, or possibly two, being in the centre of a love triangle. Not only is this heteronormative, it reinforces the idea that a woman must be dependent on someone, often a man, an idea that feminists have spent years trying to combat.

Boys also fit into one of a few major stereotypes. There are ones such as Four (Roth, 2011), Jace (Clare, 2008), and Gale (Collins, 2009), heroic and adventurous, who are providers, and independent when they are not tied in to romantic relationships. There's the dark brooding immortal supernatural creature such as Edward (Meyer, S., 2005) and Patch (Fitzpatrick, 2009), who conform the idea that men do not share their emotions very well. There are also emotional and non-aggressive boys such as Peeta (Collins, 2008), who also challenges stereotypes by being skilled at “feminine”, creative activities such as painting and cake decorating, and Simon (Clare, 2007), Charlie (Chbosky 1999), Dash (Cohn and Levithan, 2011), and all of John Green's protagonists. These have become so common in young adult literature that they are becoming a stereotype in themselves. However, as these boys do not conform to traditional views of men, they can be said to challenge stereotypes.

Some stereotypes grow in popularity due to high sales of a book that features it. Twilight (Meyer, 2005) is responsible for the popularity of vampires, paranormal romance and, unemotional boys with ordinary but special girls, selling one million copies in two and a half years in the UK (Alexander, 2009), and the series selling over 100 million copies worldwide (Sellers, 2010). Strong girls fighting against a dystopian system have exploded in the wake of The Hunger Games, which has sold over 65million copies across the trilogy (Scholastic, n.d.) in the US alone. Books with such a large audience will majorly reinforce any gendered stereotypes, as examined above, contained within them.

How are characters challenging gender stereotypes presented?

For a category of literature with such a wide appeal, the amount of characters challenging the stereotypes in their everyday life is surprisingly small. Within the small, slowly growing, selection of queer fiction, trans* and intersex representation is negligible, with only two books featuring trans or intersex main characters published by mainstream publishers being published in 2013 (Lo, 2013a), and 7 (4% of 167 books featuring queer characters) featuring trans characters in a decade by “the big six” and three other major US publishers (Lo, 2013b). Agender and nonbinary-gender characters are practically non-existent, unless mentioned in passing. The erasure of characters who, with their gender expression, challenge cisgender norms, aids in the reinforcement of the gender binary and attached stereotypes.

Cisgender characters challenging their gender stereotypes have often been girls attempting to pass as boys, for example Deryn from Leviathan (Westerfeld, 2009), Polly from Monstrous Regiment (Pratchett, 2003) and Jacky from Bloody Jack (Meyer, L., 2002) to gain freedom, owing to the repression of women in their respective worlds. Rare are characters challenging gender stereotypes in
contemporary settings, although over the past few years, the selection has been slowly growing; for example Jesse from The S Word (Pitcher, 2013) and Eleanor and Park (Rowell, Eleanor and Park, 2012) who challenge gender stereotypes by the way they dress, and Ben, who takes up knitting, a conventionally feminine hobby, and ends up enjoying it, becoming the “only male knitter to have ever attended” the English Knitting Championship (Easton, 2014, p227). These help to challenge perceptions, both in-universe characters’ and readers’. What also helps challenge stereotypes is characters being supportive of these characters, for example Megan Hooper (Easton, 2014) and Angie (Pitcher, 2013). However, as the characters challenging stereotypes for them to support are few and far between, their effectiveness at challenging stereotypes is limited.

Do covers reinforce gender stereotypes?
The marketing of a book is based mainly around a cover. Books aimed at boys often feature darker colours used in a more aggressive way, explosions, weaponry and technology, reinforcing the stereotype of boys being violent, active and dominant. Covers on books targeted at girls often feature a girl in a long flowing, especially in paranormal romance, even if the dress is not relevant to the plot at all, for example Gena Showalter’s Alice in Zombieland (2012), possibly because the stereotypical girl has through her life, in the words of Stacey Whitman, been “romanticizing…the fairy tale, including all the pretty things to wear.” (Wan, 2013). All these tactics used by publishers’ art departments reinforce gender stereotypes to do with the perceived audience of the book, and have the added effect of unnecessarily gendering genres and stories. The colour pink will also mark a book as girly, regardless of the content. An example of this is What’s Up with Jody Barton (Long, 2012), which features a bright pink cover, off-putting to boys, despite the fact that the main character is a teenage boy. Over time, book covers that are more gender neutral than others have emerged. Examples include the US first editions of The Hunger Games series, the Divergent series, and certain editions of John Green’s novels, particularly Penguin’s 2012 editions. Features of these covers include block colours, symbols, a lack of cover models, whose gender will assumedly influence the gender of readers, and no suggestion of romance.

Gender stereotypes in book covers may also be influenced by the author. In May 2013, prolific author Maureen Johnson (2013a) tweeted “I do wish I had a dime for every email I get that says, “Please put a non-girly cover on your book so I can read it. – signed, A Guy”, then challenged her 77000 followers to take any novel, imagine that the author was a different gender to what they are, and redesign the cover accordingly (2013b). This activity was performed on books from all genres, but you can see stark cover design differences by author gender. Books with female authors were given symbols in place of people, and books with male authors were given people in place of symbols. The altered cover designs reinforce the lack of emotion often associated with men, and the gentility often associated with women. Johnson (2010) also suggests that “female stories are consistently undervalued, labelled “commercial,” “light,” “fluffy,” and “breezy,” even if they are about the very same topics that a man might write about”. While books will be marketed on merits such as content and tone as well as the author’s gender, this labelling of women’s work and the Coverflip exercise shows that gender stereotyping is still, to some extent, present in the publishers’ marketing departments.

Are reading and writing gendered activities?
Genres are heavily gendered. Romance is seen as a feminine genre, due to the idea that women are emotional. Contemporary is also seen as a feminine genre, with the exception of John Green novels, as many contemporary books heavily feature romance, even though they also deal with harder issues. Thrillers, action and science fiction are seen as male genres, due to the stereotype of men being intellectual, active, and technical, which can lead to women using initials when publishing in these genres, which reinforces these stereotypes. Dystopia is a gender neutral genre; however many dystopian novels with female authors have a stronger romantic subplot, while dystopian novels written by male, or initialled, authors emphasise the control and destruction of the regime.

Women are often said to dominate the YA market. At first glance in a teen section of a bookstore, you would think so, and in my survey, 75.3% of the writers were female, but when it comes to bestsellers, it's the men who win. In 47 weeks, two women topped the New York Times YA list for five weeks total (Jensen, 2013a), and at no point, women have had more than 4 books in the top 10. This seems strange considering that 75% of the authors on a selection of “Best of” lists in 2013 were female (Jensen, 2013b). The reason why more male-authored books have higher sales figures despite critics believing female-authored books are better are unknown; but it could be partially due to the idea that women are less likely to produce quality product.

The use of gender concealment reinforces gender stereotypes. Louisa May Alcott, Marian Evans and the Bronte sisters all used pennames to conceal their gender, (Anderson, 2011) in a time when women had strict restrictions on control over their rights, property, and money. The author who is often credited with kick-starting YA as a genre, Joanne Rowling, used initials J.K. to avoid a negative impact on marketing to male readers. Women who take on initials in modern YA include J.R. Johansson, S.J Kincaid, D. J McCune, and S. D. Crockett. They may use initials because they are all writing from male perspectives, and may not be taken as seriously as a woman, or because their books are not heavily romantic, as would be expected from a woman, and these two facts would impact the sales of the book based on the preconceptions about the book based on the gender of the author. Men taking on initials was common in classical literature, for example J.R.R Tolkien, T.H. White and J.M. Barrie, however I can only find two modern male authors using initials- M.T. Andersen, who wrote Feed, a science fiction novel, and T.S. Easton, who wrote Boys Don’t Knit. Easton, who uses pseudonyms, also wrote My Year in Agony and My Summer on the Shelf, two books about a girl who becomes the school’s anonymous Agony Aunt, under Lara Fox, a female pseudonym, (Easton, n.d.), and Haven, a thriller, under his full male name, which reinforces the gendering of genres.

A Canadian survey (Katz & Sokal, 2003) found that 24% grade 2 boys found reading feminine. A recent survey conducted by the National Literacy Trust found that 56.8% girls like reading “quite a lot” or “very much”, compared to 43.9% of boys (Clark 2013), and a survey carried out by the Canadian Council of Learning (2009) found girls outperform boys by 23 points in reading tests. That reading is feminine activity is reflected in the fact that, of the 149 people I sampled, 84.6% of the readers were female, 84.7% of the book bloggers, people publishing book reviews to the internet, were female, and 80% of the workers in publishing were female (see appendix).

There are many possible explanations for this. One is the fact that reading is not seen as a “masculine” activity—it does not require physical exertion, is not technically challenging, and often invokes emotion. Another reason may be that
“as the majority of the teen publishing industry is female, boys see reading as a female activity, and are put off by it”, as suggested by Darren Hartwell (personal communication, 31 January 2014). I believe that a major factor is the androcentricism in society, combined with marketing. Jacqueline Wilson, writer of books for children that cover topics that affect many children, such as abuse, divorce, grief and mental illness, said that she had been told in the past that the books had to be pink because “it would sell “twice” as many copies among girls even if it put boys off.” (Bingham, 2013) This attitude is effective at upholding the stereotype of pink for girls, blue for boys. In the same interview, Wilson then “I do think that with books a boy is going to have to feel really quite confident if he is going to be seen in front of his mates with a book that is bright pink because it is immediately code for this being ‘girlie’.” Bluemle (2012) says “We steer kids—no, we steer boys—away from stories they might respond to from a very early age.” Wilson and Bluemle are referring to the stigma that society places on boys who do “girly” things, even while accepting girls who do “boyish” things. Due to the majority of books being believed to have “girly” covers, as 88.5% respondents believed most books have covers aimed at girls, covers not only unnecessarily gender a book, they also gender reading as a whole.

**Does YA challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes?**

The aim of every author is to tell a good story, with an intriguing plot and fully developed characters. Many authors don’t go out of their way to include or avoid stereotypes. However, being ways of quickly conveying information about a character or situation, it is inevitable that stereotypes will appear in any form of fiction. The aim of this report was to examine whether or not gender stereotypes are reinforced by young adult literature as a whole. The extent of this research is limited by the fact that I am unable to analyse every book on the YA market, and that people have different ideas of stereotypes relating to genders; however, I believe my research has given me a good overview of the market. My findings have led me to believe that gendered stereotypes have grown in popularity due to high sales of books featuring these idea, and waves of similar books riding on their success perpetuates them, as seen in the dystopian and paranormal romance genres, which are full of romantically dependent girls and protective boys. Gender stereotypes are also reinforced by the marketing of a book, which is influenced by both the content and the author’s gender, and is expressed in a book’s cover and words used to promote it. As the selection of YA increases week by week, characters that challenge gender stereotypes are slowly gaining visibility, and as attitudes towards queer people change and we see more and more, gay characters, in time, maybe we will have a full range of characters, both trans* and cisgender, challenging stereotypes. However, as the market stands, I believe that YA fiction as a whole does reinforce gender stereotypes.

**Reference list**


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Please Ignore Vera Dietz, by A. S. King, was named as an Honor Book in YALSA's Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Fiction in 2011. I started reading it a couple of hours ago. I paused when I read this:

I drive over the bridge into town. The whitest town on earth—or, more accurately, once the whitest town on Earth until the Mexicans moved in. Once you get through the crowded old suburbs where the large Victorian homes sit on the hill and past the rows of cupola-topped row houses, it's an ugly town—a mishmash of 1940s asphalt shingles, multicolored bricks, and gray concrete. There's too much litter, and too many people look angry. Dad says it wasn't always like this. He says it's not the Mexicans' fault that the city council would rather spend the city's money on new arts initiatives and a big flashy baseball stadium than more police on the streets. So now, while there's wine, cheese, and doubleheaders downtown, poverty has taken over and crime is at an all time high uptown. I lock my doors.

So—Mexicans live in the ugly part of town, but if the city spent more money on police, that part of town wouldn't be dirty, ugly, and filled with people who look angry? Really?! Just how would more police help with that?

I kept on reading. Vera's home is on Overlook Road, near the top of a hill. So is Charlie's. They're next door neighbors, but their houses are a hundred yards apart, in a wooded area where, I gather, the wealthy people of the city live. Vera's neighbor on the other side is the Ungers. The Ungers have a boat, two Cadillacs, and a lawn with ornaments that includes lawn jockeys (the black kind), and three cement deer—a doe and two fawns.

The Ungers also have gnomes, which Charlie and Vera move around for kicks. There is no further mention of the lawn jockeys. What are we readers to make of that?! Thinking that I'd come across something that tells me the Ungers are racist, I kept on reading. The chapter titled "History—Age Seven" opens with Charlie telling her about "the spirit of the Great Hunter." Of course, that passage gave me pause. Again. Here's that excerpt:

As far as Charlie was concerned, the Great Hunter was an Indian spirit who lived in our woods. He drank from the lake. He watched the stars from the ridge. He protected hikers and hunters and tree-climbing little urchins like us, and he created the most sacred tree of all, the Master Oak, for us to grow up in.
How nice (not)! An Indian spirit who looks after white kids.

Not all Mexicans, or all African Americans, or all Native people, will pause at King's references to them/their culture, but I noted all three instances, and frankly, I'm more than a bit annoyed. Each of these three passages yanked me out of the story King is telling.

I looked through reviews, and not once have I found a review from a reviewer at a journal, or from a blogger, that noted these references. Didn't anyone notice them? Or did they get noticed but were then deemed unimportant? Are such things so much a part of white culture that they are unremarkable?!

Needless to say, I am setting aside King's Please Ignore Vera Dietz. Did you notice the passages?

Update—5:03 PM, August 31, 2014: In my post (above), I should have provided a synopsis of what the book is about. Here's what you'll find at Amazon:

Vera's spent her whole life secretly in love with her best friend, Charlie Kahn. And over the years she's kept a lot of his secrets. Even after he betrayed her. Even after he ruined everything. So when Charlie dies in dark circumstances, Vera knows a lot more than anyone—the kids at school, his family, even the police. But will she emerge to clear his name? Does she even want to?

Update: 5:44 PM, August 31, 2014:

Well, I kept on reading...

I came across a "Nazi skinhead" named Mick who is boyfriend to one of Vera's coworkers (Vera works at a pizza place). One evening, Vera gives Jill a ride home. They've got Sly and the Family Stone cranking. When they get to Jill's apartment, Jill reaches over and turns the volume way down so Mick can't hear it. She turns to Vera and says "What can I do?" With Jill's action and question, we understand that King wants us to know that Mick is racist towards blacks. Why couldn't she give us something like that about the Ungers, too?

Later, Vera is remembering being on the bus when she was in 8th grade. She was listening to Al Green on her headphones. A senior guy sits with her and asks her what she's listening to. His name is Tim Miller. Vera doesn't want to tell him what she's listening to because he uses the n-word and she's sure he won't like the music she listens to. There's also a Confederate flag in his yard. He lives at the bottom of the hill. He tells Vera she's a rich kid. Given the location of his house, his family is low on the SES scale. He's obviously meant to be racist. Again—why don't we have anything to mark the Ungers as racist? Why couldn't Vera have said "the racist black kind" rather than just "the black kind" when she noted them on the Ungers lawn?

I'm trying to figure out who Vera is... She is well-off, doesn't like the n-word, and is aware of white supremacist racism towards African Americans. Is that a plus for Vera? For King?

Over the weekend, Heather (a reader of AICL) wrote to ask if I'd seen a Salon article about changes made to music and lyrics in the version of Peter Pan that NBC is going to air in
In a nutshell, NBC hired Jerod Tate, artistic director of the Chickasaw Chamber Music Festival. He's Chickasaw but I don't know anything else about him other than what his bio (linked with his name) says.

With his assistance, the song “Ugg-a-Wugg” was changed.

Ugg-a-Wugg is a duet sung by Peter Pan and Tiger Lily. If either one is in trouble, they'll call on the other for help. The code word they'll use as a signal is ugg-a-wugg. If Tiger Lily needs help, she'll use that code word and Peter will come to save “the brave noble redskin.” And if Peter Pan needs help, Tiger Lily will help him. They will be “blood brothers to the end.” I think it was/is ludicrous but people love it. Do you remember it? Here. Take a look:

Enter Jerod Tate. Here's what he said, in the Salon article, about that song:
And then the really big thing that we worked on was the replacement of [the lyrics] “ugg-a-wugg.” Just a little background: In general, what we all know is that the Indian tribe that's represented in Peter Pan was influenced by knowledge of Northeast Indians of the United States. So we're talking Iroquois, Huron, Wyandotte, Algonquin, these kinds of cultural regions. So what I did was I set out to find a replacement word for “ugg-a-wugg” that was literally a Wyandotte word.

Tate won't say what the word is, but he does say it means "come here." The interviewer asked him if he also worked on the costumes, but he said he only worked on the music and lyrics for the songs. He thinks the change is great, because the phrase is accurate. I disagree. The show and story will always be one in which the point of view is of Indians as exotic and detribalized. In chapter ten of Barrie's book, the Indians prostrate themselves in front of Peter Pan, calling him “the Great White Father.” That point of view is the foundation for Barrie's story.

Now let's look at the new film from Warner Brothers.

The trailer for the new movie due out next year has a scene where Pan is on the floor, spears aimed at him. It looks like he's about to be killed, but an older man (which I imagine the script says is an elder or maybe Tiger Lily's dad) stops them. In his hand is a necklace of some sort that Peter was wearing. The man says:
"The little one. He wears the pan."
Here's a screen capture of that scene in the trailer:

The trailer cuts to Tiger Lily, played by Rooney Mara, who says:
"The Pan is our tribe's bravest warrior."
Here she is in that moment:
Her line (Pan is our tribe's greatest warrior) points right at the foundation for Barrie's film. Indians who worship whites. That's not ok. It wasn't ok then, and it isn't ok to give that racist garbage to kids today. Right?

Some of you know that there was a lot of discussion when Rooney was selected as the actress for the part. Many people said that a Native actress ought to be cast instead of Rooney. I disagree with that idea, too.

Fixing the words in the song, and/or casting a Native person in that role does not change the point of view(s) on which the story rests. These are, through and through, “the white man's Indian.” There is no fixing this story or any production of it so that the Native content is authentic.

Attempts to do so remind me of the many schools that sought seek to make their Indian mascots more "authentic" so that they could keep objectifying Native people, using their ideas of who Native people are for their own purposes.

Can we just let that stuff go?

Wouldn't we all be better off with a major studio production of a story written by a Native person? One that shows us as-we-are (or were if it is in the past), as human beings who do not say things about how we worship a “great white father” or a white guy who is our “greatest warrior”?

By remaking this story, and/or by staging it in schools and theaters, we're just recycling problematic, stereotypic, racist images. Why do it?!

Here's an irony. NBC released a promo featuring Allison Williams talking about the production. There's a part near the end where Williams is singing “it never never ends” as Tiger Lily drops to the stage:

I want it to end. Don't you?

0 Comments on How 'bout we all pan NBC's PETER PAN and Warner Bros PAN, too. as of 11/26/2014 1:54:00 PM

14. "True Blood Brothers" in NBC's production of Peter Pan

By: Debbie Reese, on 12/5/2014

Blog: American Indians in Children's Literature (Login to Add to MyJacketFlap)

JacketFlap tags: stereotypes, not recommended, Tiger Lily, NBC's Peter Pan.

In an earlier post, I wrote about how NBC had hired a Chickasaw man to rework the "Ugg-A-Wugg" song, replacing that phrase with a word used by the Wyandott people. Other musical changes were made, too, he said. That song was replaced with a new one, called True Blood Brothers. NBC's live production of Peter Pan aired last night (December 4, 2014).
So how did it turn out?

As Tiger Lily stands before Peter Pan for this song, she says something like "O a hay" instead of Ugg a wugg. The music that plays during this song? Classic Hollywood fakery. Below are some screen captures from the video available on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com). At the very bottom is the video itself.

Tiger Lily steps back from Peter and crosses her arms in front of her:

![Tiger Lily crossing her arms](image1)

Tiger Lily and her tribe begin to dance. Note their attire:

![Tiger Lily and her tribe](image2)

Here, they sing "Beat on a drum!" And I will come and save our brave noble warrior." With their hands, Tiger Lily and Peter Pan 'play' the drum (the backs of the men on whom they stand). Because they're both singing, I guess Tiger Lily is saying Peter is a brave noble warrior, and he is saying it of her, too:

![Tiger Lily and Peter Pan dancing](image3)
Everyone dances to that Hollywood Indian music, and then John and Michael start singing "Hickory Dickory Dock" (rather than O-a-hay o-a-hay o-a-hay). They're pretending to be Indians at that point. See that blue feather? And that loin-cloth-thingy?

More Hollywood Indian music, more dancing, a dummy meant to be Captain Hook, and the number ends with Tiger Lily and Peter Pan singing they'll be blood brothers to the end.

As I watched the clip, I didn't see any Indian women. Just Tiger Lily. All the rest of her "tribe" are men.

The take away? Lot of stereotyping:

Indians with crossed arms: check
Scantily clad Indians: check
Playing drum with hands: check
Kids playing Indian: check
Hollywood Indian music: check
Overrepresentation of men: check

So—a question.

"O-a-hey" is supposed to be a Wyandotte word. Does that make this all better? No. Not at all.

I wonder how many kids are at school today singing "o-a-hey o-a-hey o-a-hey" as they prance about with their arms crossed? I wonder about the Native kids at school today. Are they looking at their peers doing this silly song and dance?

Here's the video:

Did you tune in? It is getting slammed by reviewers this morning. What do you think about it?
A colleague in children's literature, Perry Nodelman, has been sharing his collection of images of Indians in Peter Pan books illustrated by various authors over the last 100 years. If you want to see them, search twitter using #EthnographicInaccuracy.

Among them is Oliver Herford's *The Peter Pan Alphabet*, published in 1907. Here's the cover:

![The Peter Pan Alphabet cover](image)

Here's the title page:

![The Peter Pan Alphabet title page](image)

You can read the whole thing if you want to: [The Peter Pan Alphabet](#).

I'm interested in two pages. Here's the page for the letter I:
And here's the page for the letter R:

**I's for the Indian Girl**

Peter Pan was too coy for the Indian Miss;
She sighed for his scalp—all she got was a kiss.

Some of you might be sighing with relief, thinking that the 1907 publication year of this book means that such things are of-the-past. They aren't.

In the ever-popular *Caddie Woodlawn* a "scalp belt" figures prominently. The townspeople fear being scalped. And I trust readers of AICL are well aware of a professional football team in Washington DC that is named "Redskins." Setting aside that word, note Herbert's "What a Treat to see "Injuns" sit up and Behave!" Why did he put Injuns in quotation marks? The "sit up and behave" indicates he thought that Native people were... Lazy? Wild? Out of control? Naughty?!

Interestingly, that "wild Indian" appears in *Caddie Woodlawn!* Caddie is a tomboy. People ask her mom when she's going to make a "young lady" out of this "wild Indian."

My point in sharing these two pages from Herford's 1907 book? To note that those sentiments are still very much a part of today's society.
When American Sniper opened in theaters last week, I started to see reviews that pointed out Kyle's use of the word savage to describe Iraqis. That word has been used to describe American Indians. I wondered if Kyle made any connections between "savage" and American Indians in his book. The answer? Yes.

In his autobiography, Kyle uses "Injun" in two places. Here's what he said on page 267:
Or we would bump out 500 yards, six or eight hundred yards, going deep into Injun territory to look and wait for the bad guys.

And here's what he said on page 291:
Our missions would last for an overnight or two in Injun country.

See? He made connections between "savage" Iraqis and "savage" Indians. In his book, he used the word "savage" several times. Here's page 4 (the book uses caps as shown):
SAVAGE, DESPICABLE EVIL. THAT'S WHAT WE WERE FIGHTING in Iraq. That's why a lot of people, myself included, called the enemy "savages."

Later on that same page, he says that when people asked him how many he's killed:
The number is not important to me. I only wish I had killed more. Not for bragging rights, but because I believe the world is a better place without savages out there taking American lives.

On page 147:
THE BAD GUYS THE ENEMIES WE WERE FIGHTING WERE SAVAGE AND WELL-armed

On page 173:
It was near a hospital the insurgents had converted into a headquarters before our assault, and even now the area seemed to be a magnet for savages.

On page 219:
I hated the damn savages I'd been fighting.

On page 228:
They turned around and saw a savage with a rocket launcher lying dead on the ground.

On page 244:
They had heard we were out there slaying a huge number of savages.

On page 284:
There was a savage on the roof of the house next door, looking down at the window from the roof there.

On page 316:
"...after we killed enough of the savages out there," I told him.

On page 338:
I'd have to wait until the savage who put him up to it appeared on the street.

Of course, Kyle is not the first person to equate American Indians with Iraqis. In 2008, Professor Steven Silliman of the University of Massachusetts did a study of the use of "Indian Country." His article, The "Old West" in the Middle East: U.S. Military Metaphors in Real and Imagined Indian Country includes a chart of how it was used in the Middle East, by media and soldiers.

And, anyone who has paid attention to the use of "savage" or "Injun" in children's literature will be able to list several books that use either word to dehumanize American Indians. Here's a few examples:

Laura Ingalls Wilder used "savages" in her Little House on the Prairie.
Carol Ryrie Brink used "savages" in Caddie Woodlawn.
Lois Lenski used "savage" in Indian Captive.
Elizabeth George Speare used "savages" in Calico Captive and "savage" in Sign of the Beaver.
Eoin Colfer used "savage Injun" in The Reluctant Assassin.

When we share books with the dehumanization of American Indians, do we inadvertently put people on that road to being able to dehumanize...
“other” in conflicts, be the conflict that takes place in war or on the streets of any country?

I participated in the "Are we doing it white?” conversation at Read Roger (Roger Sutton's blog at Horn Book; Sutton is the executive editor at Horn Book; The Horn Book is highly regarded in children's literature). His 'we' is white people and the 'it' is reviewing. He references a conversation he had with librarian Nina Lindsay in which she asked if it is time to "shake up our standards" in reviewing.

At one point in the 'Are we doing it white' conversation, Roger said he would love to have more reviewers at Horn Book that aren't white, and that he is "intensely devoted" to "getting out information about cultural diversity--who's out there, what's out there, and what's NOT out there" (see his comment at 12:28). I reviewed for Horn Book in the 1990s.

I responded (at 1:56) with this:

Question for Roger:

Remember when you decided it was inappropriate for me to use the word stereotype to characterize a kid playing Indian? You decided to give the review to someone else. Later, in a review of a nonfiction book about California missions, I said the author was ignoring new research on the missions, and that review got reassigned, too.

Those were terse moments for me. I was furious. All the power was yours, and it dictated what I could or could not say as a HB reviewer. Because of those two experiences, it was not hard for me to decide to move on and focus on my dissertation. I think if you hadn't done that, I wouldn't have left.

Would it be different if I submitted those reviews today?

His reply (at 2:29):

Debbie, how could I forget? 😊 Actually, I *do* forget what happened with the book about the missions but remember the playing-Indian question very well. In this book, THE BIRTHDAY BEAR, two contemporary white children and their grandfather, among other activities, put on fake headdresses and pretend to be Indians.

In regard to your review of this book, nothing would be different today. You criticized it not for inaccuracy or stereotyping but because the characters in the book engaged in an activity you found objectionable. We can't knock a book because we morally disapprove of its fictional characters' actions. What I said then I'll say now: I take the ALA's Library Bill of Rights very seriously, and I believe "materials should not be proscribed because of doctrinal or partisan disapproval" with all my heart.

I haven't been able to find the review I submitted (it was written and submitted in the 1990s). I'll keep looking. Perhaps there is one in Horn Book's files. I probably gave it a 6 in my overall rating, which is "unacceptable in style, content, and/or illustration."

I wrote an article based on the rejection of that review. It includes some of the emails that were exchanged by me and Roger.

If you'd like to get a more in-depth look, I'm sharing the article as a pdf: Contesting Ideology in Children's Book Reviewing. It was published in 2000 in a Studies in American Indian Literatures, the journal of the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures.

As readers of AICL know, I don't recommend books where kids are playing Indian. They invariably do that in a stereotypical way. During the time I was reviewing for Horn Book, they were sending me books with Native content because they believed I had the expertise to review those
books. In the case of The Birthday Bear, Roger also felt that it should not have been sent to me because the kids playing Indian was "peripheral" to the story. It may have been to him, but it wasn't peripheral to me.

As the article and the on-going [discussion at Read Roger](http://www.readroger.com) show, neither Roger or myself have shifted in our views on this particular incident.

Roger titled his post "Are we doing it white?"

My answer to Roger?

Yes, you are. Indeed, you do it with glee, as evident in your reply to Sarah Park Dahlen (see his comment at 3:37) where you say that you "happily recommended" a book in which kids are playing Indian.

Please read the conversation at [Are we doing it white](http://www.readroger.com). I appreciate the personal notes of support I've received, and I especially appreciate the work we're all doing to push back on the power structures that use that power to affirm the status quo. We're all doing it for young people who read. What they read matters.

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**0 Comments on Some context for "Are we doing it white" at Read Roger as of 2/20/2015 9:17:00 AM**

Add a Comment

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18. A BOOK OF AMERICANS by Rosemary Benet and Stephen Vincent Benet

By: Debbie Reese, on 2/22/2015

Blog: American Indians in Children's Literature ([Login to Add to MyJacketFlap](http://www.jacketflap.com/))

JacketFlap tags: A Book of Americans, Rosemary Benet and Stephen Vincent Benet, stereotypes, not recommended, Henry Holt, [Add a tag](http://www.jacketflap.com)

Woah!

That is my thought as I sat down to share some photos of pages from Rosemary Benet and Stephen Vincent Benet's A Book of Americans. I have no memory of how it came to be in my house. I probably got it at a yard sale or used book store.

Anyway--it came out in 1933 from Farrar and Rinehart. As I flipped through it, I thought it'd be an interesting blog post, so I took some photos. You'll understand why I wanted to share them. They are not the reason for the "Woah!" at the top of this post.

Here's the end papers as you open the book:

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Here's the first page of the table of contents:
Here's the page on Crazy Horse:

Here's some of that text from the Crazy Horse page:

The Indians of the Wild West
We found were hard to tame,
For they seemed really quite possessed
To keep their ways the same.
They liked to hunt, they liked to fight,
And (this I grieve to say)
They could not see the white man's right
To take their land away.

Now. Why did I start this post with "Woah!"?


I'm gonna say that again. Louder.


I can (mostly) ignore the customer reviews at Amazon ("Delightful." and "Excellent.") and of course, there's a lot to say about the illustrations and the poems, too...

But the idea that Henry Holt reissued it in 1987 floors me. Why did Henry Holt do that?! Why?
Dear Mr. Arnold,

Thank you for responding to my critique of the "Cherokee" content in Mosquitoland. No doubt, many people in children's literature are thinking well of you for what you said, but the conversation cannot end there.

With Mim and her "war paint," you--inadvertently--are doing what generations of Native people have fought against for hundreds of years.

Misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples are of such magnitude that, in 2008, the United Nations issued its Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. There are studies of the harm that misrepresentations do to Native and non-Native youth. In 2005, the American Psychological Association issued a statement about stereotyping. Last year, the National Congress of American Indians issued a report on this matter (NCAI's first national campaign took place in 1968).

Yesterday (March 12 2015), I read the USA Today review of Mosquitoland. I trust you did, too. I hope you cringed at the lead. For those who didn't see the review, here's a screen capture of the opening lines:

See "slap on some war paint" in the first line of the review? That is what a major newspaper honed in on: "war paint' and how it can get you through the day. Let's look at what Mim does when she puts on her "war paint."
I start with the left cheek, always. This habit is king, and it must be exactly the same, line for line. The first stroke is a two-sided arrow, the point of which touches the bridge of my nose. Then, a broad horizontal line across the forehead. The third stroke is an arrow on my right cheek, mirroring the first one. Next, a thick line down the middle of my face, from the top of my forehead to the bottom of my chin. And lastly, a dot inside both arrows.

Now let's look at the finished image, from the trailer for the book:

As you know, Mr. Arnold, people are praising *Mosquitoland* for its look at mental illness, medications, and Mim's perseverance.

Few people (in reviews or on social media), however, are talking about the stereotypical imagery you deployed for Mim's perseverance. That "war paint" gets her "through the day" (as the *USA Today* reporter said). Let's look at some of that "war paint" and how it is used to get fans through a game.

This is the mascot at Florida State:

This was the mascot at the University of Illinois. Though it is officially retired, fans continue to paint their faces in the ways that the mascot did:
Here's fans of the Cleveland baseball team:

Here's a fan of the Washington pro football team:

Those four individuals--and thousands of others--stood in front of a mirror, just like Mim did, and picked up the items they used for their "war paint" as they got ready to rally their team against a foe.

I suspect you had none of this in mind as you wrote those words above, describing how Mim puts on her "war paint" or when you and your fellow author (the woman portraying Mim) worked on the trailer. I watched that trailer on your website. It is gone from there, now. I hope you took it down in response to my review. If that is why you took it down, I think I'm right in saying (above) that I hope you cringed as you read what the USA Today reviewer said about war paint.

The question is: what to do now?

In my response to your comment, I suggested that you talk with editors and other writers about stereotyping. Looks like you ought to add others to that list, too. I realize this is awkward. How does an author say "this was probably not a good idea" without hurting the sales of your book? I'm well aware that my criticism leads people to buy the book to see what you did for themselves, thereby elevating its sales, which suggests to the industry that people want MORE books like it.

We definitely need more books about the mental health of young people, but not ones like Mosquitoland that add to the problems of Native people, who--like those with mental health--are misunderstood and denigrated in
far too many places.

Given the widespread praise of your book and the fact that you've sold your second book already, I think you actually have a secure platform from which to educate others about the problems in using tribal peoples as you did. You're getting requests for interviews; please use those interviews to educate your readers. I read that there is a possibility for Mosquitoland to become a movie. Please use whatever power you have to keep that stereotyping out of the script.

This, Mr. Arnold, is an opportunity to educate others.

Sincerely,
Debbie
Elsewhere, her mother said that she (the mother) lived in a tipi in Montana for awhile, but wasn't living in it when Rachel was born. In an article at the Spokesman Review, her mother said they have “faint traces” of Native heritage. When she lived in that tipi, was she (like her daughter) performing an identity?

As I noted above, this post is less about Dolezal and more about what people believe about American Indians. As many have said, Dolezal is likely mentally ill. That may excuse what she did regarding claims to a Black identity.

The lack of questioning of that born-in-a-tipi story, however, points to the need for children's books and media that accurately portray our lives in the past and the present so that people don’t put forth stories like the one Dolezal did, and so that those who hear that kind of thing question such stories.

Dolezal's story about living in a tipi is plausible but not probable. The power of stereotyping is in her story, and in those who accepted it, too. That is not ok. Look at the images of Native people you are giving to children in your home, in your school, and in your library. Do some weeding. Make some better choices. Contribute to a more educated citizenry.

*Native media is addressing the story. My use of “nobody” is specific to non-Native media. Some Native stories on it include:

- Fake Black Folks, Fake Indians, and Allies, by Gyasi Ross of Indian Country Today
- Rachel Dolezal, Blackface, and Pretendians, by Ruth Hopkins of Last Real Indians

Update: June 14th, 2015 at 1:50 PM

People in children's literature with questionable claims to Native identity include John Smelcer, Paul Goble, Jamake Highwater, and Forrest Carter.

On May 31 of last year (2013), Education Week pointed to a new study of high school graduation rates that reported that the graduation rates of American Indian students had declined in three out of the five years the study examined. In 2010, Susan C. Faircloth and John W. Tippeconnic published a paper in UCLA Civil Rights Project that had similar findings. In their full report, they cite work by previous studies that tries to make sense of why this happens. Some factors are lack of empathy among teachers, irrelevant curriculum, lack of interest in school.

Anyone who follows Native news or political dimensions of sports news knows that for the last year, there has been an increase in the media coverage of the use of Native imagery by sports teams. Some news outlets have decided to stop using some team names in their reporting, and many are critical of Dan Snyder's misguided efforts to garner support from Native people for his entrenched use of "Redskins" as the name of his team.
In 2008, Stephanie Fryberg's research provided empirical data on the damage mascot imagery does to the self efficacy of Native students. Her research was of such import that the American Psychological Association issued statements calling for an end to their use. If her study was replicated with younger children, using images they see in picture books and fiction they read or are asked to read in school, I think the results would be the same.

I am hopeful that increased attention to mascots like the one used by the Washington DC pro football team, or the one used by the Cleveland pro baseball team will bring an end to their use of that imagery. With that increased awareness, I hope that Native and non-Native parents look with informed eyes at images of Native peoples in the books their children read for pleasure or study. The images that adults embrace are images they've seen since they were children. Some of those images were in movies, some on items in the grocery store, and many were in children's books.

On October 19, 2013, I wrote about the Washington DC pro football team and shared images from children's books that are similar to its mascot. Today, I'm showing images that resemble those of Cleveland's mascot.

Here is the "Chief Wahoo" currently in use alongside the image used from 1946 to 1950.

Source: Indian Country Today, June 29, 2013

Here's a page from the 1952 Little Golden Book of Disney's Peter Pan. Is the book on your shelf? Is the CD or DVD amongst your collection?

Syd Hoff's Little Chief came out in 1961. It is an easy reader published by Harper & Row in its "I Can Read" series.
In 1970, Random House published *The Nose Book* by Al Perkins in its "Bright and Early" books for Beginning Readers. With its image of the Cat In The Hat in the corner, you'd recognize the series right away. In the line-up of animals shown below, Perkins included an Indian. No doubt it seemed clever. But it was racist and wrong. In the 2003 edition with new illustrations, that image was not included.

Those are older books, but I urge you to look on your shelves. If you held on to books from your childhood, the titles I pointed to above (or others with similar imagery) may be among them. You can do one of two things with them. Put them away and use them later with your child when you teach him or her about stereotyping, or, if you're not attached to the book for sentimental reasons, throw it out.

Here's some images from more recent books. You'll find a lot of them if you look in books about Thanksgiving.

This image is from *More Snacks! A Thanksgiving Play*. It is in the Ant Hill series of Ready-To-Read books published by Aladdin. Written by Joan Holub, illustrated by Will Terry, it came out in 2006.
Here's a character from the popular Amelia Bedelia books. This image is from *Amelia Bedelia Talks Turkey* by Herman Parish, illustrations by Lynn Sweat. It was published in 2008 by HarperCollins.

Such imagery is also in newer movies made for children, like last year's *Free Birds*. Here's turkey Indians from it:

The images I'm sharing in this post are a sample. You will find others. Too many others. They are not harmless. They reduce American Indians to detribalized caricatures or props in stories that misinform readers. They affirm stereotypical ideas, and are part of what I believe causes Native students to disengage from school.

As I noted above, I hope that the increased awareness of the harm in mascots used by sports teams can be brought to bear on children's books and media.

If you are getting rid of those books, replace them with better materials! At the top right of this page, you'll see links to lists of books that I recommend. Order them for your home library, and ask your library to
get them, too. Give them as end-of-the-year gifts to your child’s teachers!

Let's work together and get rid of stereotypical imagery of American Indians, on and off the playing field.

23. SLJ’s “Diversity” Booklist in May issue includes flawed book about Native people

By: Debbie Reese, on 5/1/2014
Blog: American Indians in Children’s Literature

School Library Journal’s much anticipated special issue on Diversity was uploaded today (May 1, 2014) in the midst of the We Need Diverse Books campaign, much of which focuses on promoting books by writers who are not white able-bodied males.

Looking over the list of books they recommend, I am astonished to see Rosanne Parry’s deeply flawed Written in Stone on the list. Her outsider perspective is all through that book, and she made up several things (which, she says, is “what fiction writers do”), thereby adding to the already-too-high-pile of misinformation that circulates as information about Native peoples.

Why did SLJ choose here, simultaneously contributing to the invisibility of Native writers?

Why did they go with Parry over any of the 30+ authors of the books on the Focus On list that I wrote for them in November, several of which were singled out for distinction by the American Indian Library Association? Presumably they invited me to write that column (in 2008 and 2013) because they trust my work.

What gives, SLJ?

24. Rethinking domestic violence: learning to see past the stereotypes

By Sherry Hamby

The common stereotypes about battered women are wrong and not based on up-to-date science. Here are five common myths about battered women and the real truths about the realities and complexities of domestic violence.

Myth #1
Battered women keep domestic violence a secret.

Reality: Countless research studies show that most battered women disclose their partner’s violence to at least one person—about 80% to 90% of victims in many studies. Victims not only tell, they often tell multiple people and agencies. The problem is not that women don’t tell, it is that they do not receive useful help when they do disclose.

Myth #2
Victims just need to call the police.

Reality: Police officers cannot offer a cure-all for domestic violence. Police arrest perpetrators less than half the time when they are called to the scene of domestic violence incidents, according to the most recently available national data. Worse, arrested perpetrators seldom go to jail—approximately five out of six perpetrators arrested for domestic violence never serve any jail time.
Myth #3
Battered women don’t seek professional help.

Reality: Despite the limitations of police and victim services in many communities, battered women seek help at rates that are similar to people facing other problems. Battered women report to the police at rates that are similar to many other crime victims, and also similar to the helpseeking of people with psychological problems such as depression and anxiety.

Myth #4
Battered women just need to leave.

Reality: All sorts of dangers can increase when women try to leave, including separation violence, stalking, and increased homicide risk. Further, custody battles and other risks can, in some ways, pose even greater threats to women’s well-being and that of their children. We all wish that there was a simple solution like walking out, but the reality is far more complex.

Myth #5
Most women need professional help to cope with domestic violence.

Reality: Most women cope with the problem of domestic violence with informal helpseeking. In nationally representative data, it was ten times more common for women to go to a friend or family’s house than to a domestic violence shelter.

If you want to help women who have been victims of domestic violence, listen to their assessments of what is important, respect their values, and help them come up with a plan or seek resources that address all of the complexities and realities of domestic violence.

Sherry Hamby, Ph.D., is Research Professor of Psychology and Director of the Life Paths Program at the University of the South. She is author of *Battered Women’s Protective Strategies: Stronger Than You Know*.

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The post Rethinking domestic violence: learning to see past the stereotypes appeared first on OUPblog.

0 Comments on Rethinking domestic violence: learning to see past the stereotypes as of 5/12/2014 8:10:00 AM

In *Copper Magic*, twelve-year-old Violet Blake is digging by a stream near her house in Michigan and finds a “talisman” -- a copper hand that she comes to call “the Hand.” Violet feels that this hand has some kind of power. She thinks she can use it to make wishes come true. Course, her first wish (for a new dress) does come true (actually she gets TWO new dresses), so she’s thinking about how she’ll use it to get her mom and little brother back home. Her mother is half Odawa.

Well, it turns out there was more than just that copper hand in the spot where Violet was digging. There’s also a skeleton there that is dug up (another kid finds it), reassembled, and displayed as a curiosity in a local hotel.
Cue some fake Hollywood Indian music...

Can't be messing around in them Indian burial grounds, right?! We've seen THAT enough times in movies and TV shows to know that messing with bones and artifacts means bad things are gonna happen. And of course, bad things happen to the people in Copper Magic. Lots of bad things. A wicked storm. Lake water behaving in odd ways. Death. Before all that happens, Mercy (Violet's new friend) talks about how there might be a curse on the grave... Violet and her mother (remember--her mom is half Odawa) have special powers, too. They can see things other people can't.

"Cut!"

Cut that fake Hollywood Indian music, that is, and an emphatic "Cut it out!" as my parents would say when I was doing something wrong.

Cut it out, Julia Mary Gibson!
Cut it out, Susan Cooper!
Cut it out, Rosanne Parry!

"Cut what?" you may wonder... Quit writing about Native spirituality! You mean well, but you don't know what you're doing. From a place of ignorance, you're adding to an already-too-tall pile of garbage that gets circulated as information about Native people.

A good many writers have a moment in their life that touched them in such a way that they feel they must write about Native people. Gibson's moment is described in her Afterword. When she was eleven years old, she and her family found some bones near their summer cottage in Michigan. "[A]n expert" said they were "most likely American Indian but not old enough to be archeologically significant" (p. 329), so her grandfather "pieced together a skeleton and mounted it on plywood." Her "superstitious" grandma didn't like it and insisted the bones be reburied. This took place in the late 1960s or early 1970s (my guess, based on Gibson's bio at Macmillan that says she was born "in the time of Freedom Rides and the Vietnam War").

Gibson goes on to say that her grandfather didn't know better.

In Copper Magic, Violet is Gibson. The person who puts the skeleton on display is Mr. Dell, a hotel owner intent on increasing his business. The superstitious person who wants the bones reburied? Well, that is Mrs. Agosa, an Odawa woman who tells Violet to "Watch out for ghosts out by you" because "mad ghosts can throw out curses" (p. 134).

Gibson, Cooper, Parry and many other writers poke around a bit and pack their stories with bits of info that make it sound like they know a lot about American Indians. Gibson does that in Copper Magic when she has some of her characters talk about grave robbing and why it is wrong. She also does that when she has Mrs. Agosa talk about the hotel owner burning her people's village and orchards because he wanted their land. In the Afterword, Gibson tells us that part of the story is true (p. 330): "The real people of the Chaboiganing Band were yanked from their houses by a crooked land grabber and the local sheriff, who flung kerosene over homes and orchards and burned down the whole village, just as Mrs. Agosa tells it."

The burning of that village is important information. It is what major publishers like Macmillan (publisher of Copper Magic) ought to make known. I wish Gibson had made it the heart of her story. Instead, she chose to tell a story about grave robbing, curses, and mystical Indians. There's more to the "mystical Indians" theme... Interspersed throughout Copper Magic are pages about two ancient women: Crooked Woman and Greenstone. Those parts of Gibson's novel are presented in italics. They feed the mainstream monster of stereotypical expectations--where people love to read about "mystical Indians" and our tragic history.

In Copper Magic, Violet's dad is a steady voice saying that Indian graves deserve respect and ought to be left alone. Violet parrots some of what he says but doesn't really understand. Ironically, Gibson is more like Violet than she realizes. Her understanding is superficial. Violet wants to
use the hand to get what she wants. Gibson uses the childhood story to do what she wants.

As you may have guessed by now, I don't like what Gibson has done in Copper Magic. And of course, I do not recommend it. Copper Magic is another FAIL from a major publisher.

0 Comments on COPPER MAGIC by Julia Mary Gibson, or, an emphatic "Cut it out!" from AICL as of 5/27/2014 11:10:00 AM

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© 2017 Jacketflap.com on orders over $25—or get FREE Two-Day Shipping with Amazon Prime. In Stock. Ships from and sold by Amazon.com. Gift-wrap available. WildStorm: A Celebration has been added to your Cart. Add to Cart. The only thing I wish it had more of is art by J. Scott Campbell, who truly shined during his years at the company. The book has a lot of great art, new illustrations and a perfect variety of all the famous titles. A must for any 90s comic fan! Read more. 6 people found this helpful. Helpful. Comment Report abuse. Jake Plott. Brought back memories of my teenage years anyone who grew up in the nineties and read anything wildstorm should read this. Read more. Helpful. Comment Report abuse. Gold Goa Boman. 4.0 out of 5 stars Nostalgia got the best of me. November 17, 2017. Saturday at Comic-Con International: San Diego at a panel celebrating the 25th anniversary of WildStorm Studios, attendes got a preview of new art from the upcoming WildStorm: A Celebration of 25 Years oversize hardcover from artists Jim Lee, Carlos D'Anda, Scott Williams, Adam Archer, Ryan Benjamin, Lee Bermejo, J. Scott Campbell, Sandra Hope, Dustin Nguyen and Alex Sinclair. The book will include new stories from some of the imprint's signature creative teams, including a Wildcats story from Jim Lee and Brandon Choi, a Gen13 story from J. Scott Campbell, an The Authority story from Warren In the early days of specialty programming, YTV, celebrating 25 years on the air this weekend, was the first Canadian station devoted entirely to children's programming. "It just made sense to have John Candy host our launch party. Kids loved him," recalls YTV co-founder Kevin Shea, a former child actor who rose up the corporate broadcasting ranks and is now chairman of the Ontario Media Development Corp. The fledgling station’s flagship program, You Can't Do That on Television, where kids always had the upper hand over parents and teachers, set the tone at YTV. You might be interested in. You might be interested in.