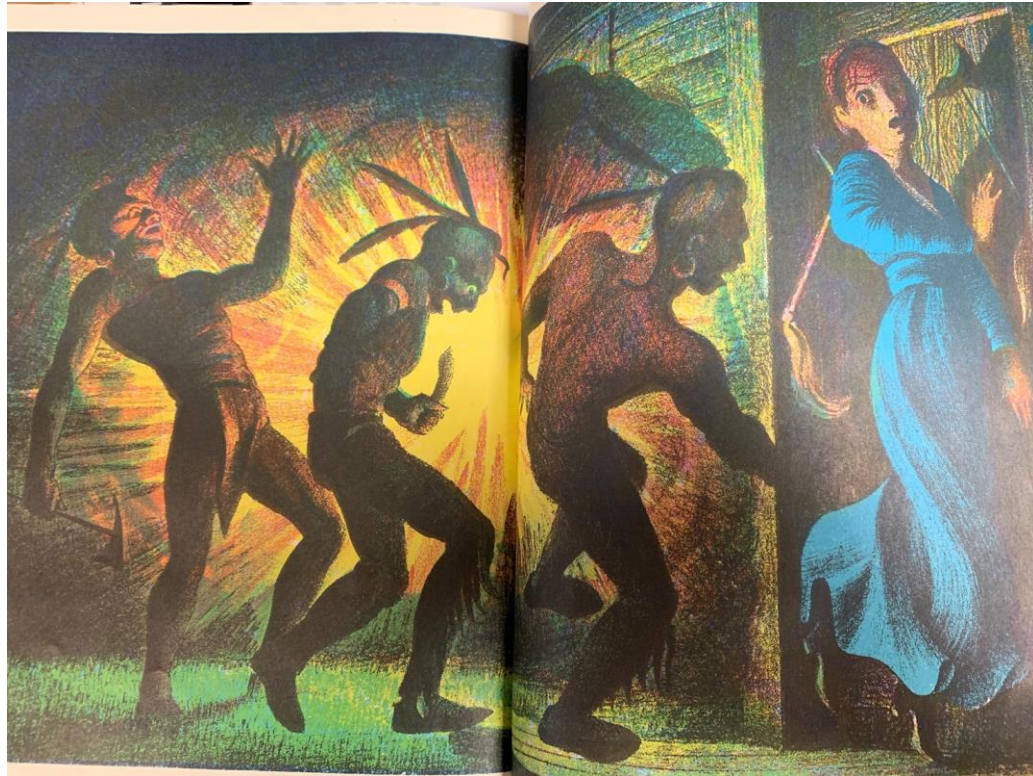


What would you do?



Racism in Children's Literature

Presentation by
Angela Critics, Children's Services Manager,
Jefferson-Madison Regional Library
and **Hayley Tompkins**, Crozet Branch Manager,
Jefferson-Madison Regional Library
& VLA Intellectual Freedom Committee Chair

Introduction

- Fine line between diversity & inclusion and intellectual freedom
- Public awareness
- Challenges are not one-sided
 - “A truly great library contains something in it to offend everyone.” -Jo Godwin (<https://www.ifla.org/node/9373>)
- Polarizing subject within the library community
- Invokes a knee jerk reaction for many

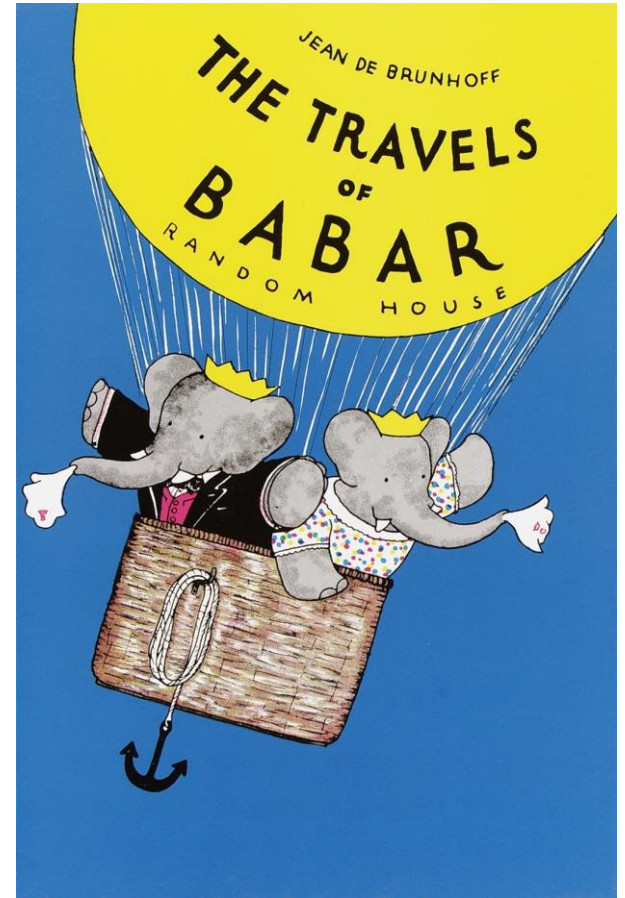


Case Study: *The Travels of Babar*

- Classic status
- Well-circulated

Complaints:

- Colonialism
- Racist stereotypes





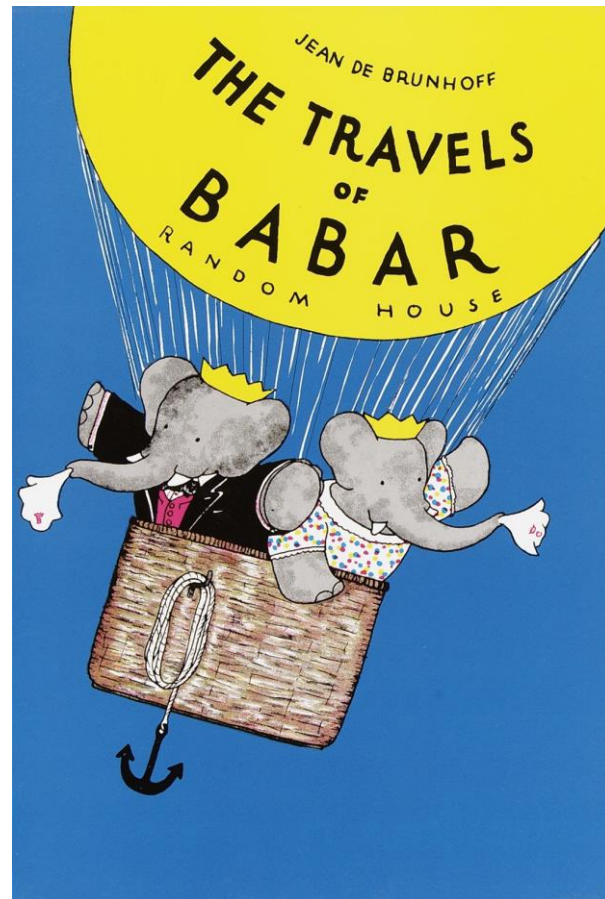
Case Study: *The Travels of Babar*

What we did:

- Research: Reviews, analysis
- Consult VLA Intellectual Freedom Committee
- Consult ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom
- Consult Association of Library Services for Children

The answer?

- Provide context
- Consult procedures in collection development plan
- CREW Manual



Your Best Defense: Collection Development Plan

- Clear collection management policy and procedures in place
 - Selection guidelines
 - Weeding guidelines
 - Guidelines for gifts
- Clear procedure for reconsiderations
- Should reflect library mission statement and values

Evaluating Your Collection: Selection & Maintenance

- Tools for building a diverse collection
 - We Need Diverse Books
 - Own Voices
 - Reading While White
 - And more - see handout!
- Balance - strive for representation
- Books as mirrors AND windows (Emily Style)
- Diversity audit



GRANT SNIDER (AFTER RUDINE SIMS BISHOP)

Evaluating Your Collection: Weeding

- CAN I WEED THAT?
- CREW Guidelines - Is it MUSTIE?
 - Misleading (factually inaccurate)
 - Ugly (poor condition)
 - Superseded (newer edition available)
 - Trivial (of no discernable literary/scientific merit)
 - Irrelevant (to the community you serve)
 - Elsewhere (easily obtainable from another library)
- Classic status?
- Core collection
- Circulation
- Intellectual freedom reminder: We weed books based on ALL our patrons' needs, and not on our own moral principles.

Handling Reconsiderations

- Have a clear procedure.
- Be aware of and *follow* the procedure
 - Staff training for consistency
 - Front line staff should:
 - Listen to the concern - make no promises and don't take a position.
 - Be respectful.
 - Offer official reconsideration form.
 - Inform supervisor or manager.
- Refer to collection management plan!
- Provide context rather than removing content (ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom)


Weed books that reflect racial and gender bias. Consider moving classics that may be used by children's literature classes to the adult 800s.

CREW Method, page 81

Adding Context

- Displays
 - Every space is a chance to display diverse books
 - Displays specific a topic on diversity
- Booklists
- Programming
- Readers' Advisory - promote diverse books
 - Read Diversely Challenge
- Shelf talkers

Diverse Reads
Best for ages 5 and up



JP Alexie Thunder Boy Jr.

JP Ashman Henry Wants More!


JP Averbeck One Word From Sophia

Sp. JP Bertrand Sip, Slurp, Soup, Soup Caldo, Caldo, Caldo

JP Blue Ron's Big Mission

JP Bunting A Day's Work

Pride
Best for ages 4 and up



Austrian: Worm Loves Worm

Baldacchino: Morris Glewwhite and the Gerine Dress

wert: 10,000 Dresses

ang: Families, Families, Families

wman: Donovan's

wman: Heather has Pummies

an: This Day in

Intellectual Freedom Notes

- Ethics and responsibility to the community we serve
- We don't decide based on whether or not we like the content.
- Responsibility of the reader (or the parent)
- Freedom to Read statement:

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

Next Steps

What can we do?

- Create a solid Collection Development Plan
- Increase diversity in our collections, displays, and programs
- Diversity audit
- Be aware and be willing to talk about this issue

What can't we do?

- Remove materials based solely on our views
- Ignore the populations we don't agree with

Reflections

- To paraphrase Dr. Emily Knox, associate professor at the iSchool at the University of Illinois: Freedom of Speech is not a Progressive value. But if we move away from it in an effort to combat hate speech, it will be the marginalized voices that will ultimately be silenced.

Questions and Discussion

What are your experiences with challenges in the library (materials, displays, programs, etc)?

What kind of training have you received on how to handle reconsiderations?

On building diversity in your collections?

Does your library have a collection management policy and procedures on how to deal with reconsiderations?

Contact Us:

Angela Critics

Children's Services Manager

acritics@jmrl.org

Hayley Tompkins

Crozet Branch Manager

htompkins@jmrl.org