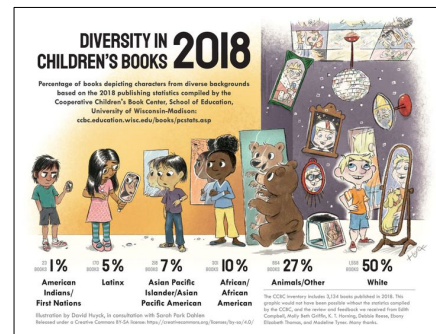


RACISM AND SEXISM IN ILLUSTRATION notes

1. DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION STATISTICS

It's based on some troubling, new U.S. publishing statistics that in 2018 there were more children's books featuring animals and other non-human characters (27 per cent) than all types of visible minorities combined (23 per cent). Meanwhile, half of all the children's books reviewed featured white kids. "The positive 'mirror' experience is exactly why representation matters. Actually seeing someone who looks like you, doing something you never thought of, it can give you the idea that 'this could be me someday,'" U.S. children's book illustrator David Huyck, who drew the image, told HuffPost Canada. Huyck created the image along with Sarah Park Dahlen who explains how the cracks in the mirrors represent how many of the books that do have diverse characters get it wrong.



2. DR SEUSS - 'IF I RAN THE ZOO'

Narrator declares his intention to put a "chieftain" (illustrated as a man in a turban) on display in the zoo; a pair of African characters are portrayed as monkeys; and a group of Asian characters, described as "helpers who all wear their eyes at a slant" from "countries no one can spell" carry a caged animal on their heads. The other books contain similar Orientalist caricatures.

There aren't that many racial caricatures in Dr. Seuss's children's books, mostly because there aren't that many non-white characters in Dr. Seuss's children's books. In their study, Ishizuka and Stephens counted 45 characters of colour among the 2,240 human characters who appear in Dr. Seuss's 50 books, which works out to just 2 percent. Notably, all those characters are male. There are no girls or women of colour in the Dr. Seuss canon. And when characters of colour do appear in these books, they appear as racial caricatures. In their study, Ishizuka and Stephens found that all 45 characters of colour were either subservient, exotified, dehumanized, or some combination of the three. Dr. Seuss's characters of colour drive carriages for whip-wielding white characters, dress in turbans and "rice paddy hats," and never speak out loud. Most of them are Orientalist caricatures, and the two that aren't are those African characters drawn as monkeys in *If I Ran the Zoo*.

3. WAYS TO ANALYSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Look for Tokenism. Do all minority faces look stereotypically alike, or are they depicted as genuine individuals with distinctive features?

Who's Doing What? Do the illustrations depict minorities in subservient and passive roles or in leadership and action roles? Are males the active "doers" and females the inactive observers?

Look At the Lifestyles. Are third world persons and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavourably with the unstated norm of white, middle-class suburbia? If the illustrations and text attempt to depict another culture, do they go beyond over-simplifications and offer genuine insights into another lifestyle?

4. RACISM IN ROALD DAHL'S OOMPA-LOOMPA'S

In the 1973 edition of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the Oompa-Loompas are no longer African Pygmies – they're from Loompaland. Illustrator Joseph Schindelman changes their colours from black to white, and current illustrator Quentin Blake keeps them white in his 1998 edition. Willy Wonka's workers are human beings imported from another country, the whitened Oompa-Loompas remove the original book's implication that a person of European descent had enslaved people of African descent, and that the latter group had gladly accepted their new lot as his slaves. They still happily acquiesce to being shipped to England "in large packing cases with holes in them," and find life in a factory preferable to life in their native land. The 1973 and 1998 versions of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* do not fundamentally ease concerns about "Willy Wonka's unfeeling attitude toward the Oompa-Loompas, their role as conveniences and devices to be used for Wonka's purposes, their being brought over from Africa for enforced servitude, and the fact that their situation is all a part of the fun and games."

5. BESTSELLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN THE UK

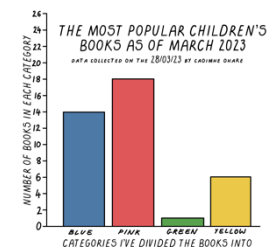
Red: animal or non-human

Yellow: white characters only or mainly white characters

Green: Diverse representation

Blue: controversial because of racism, sexism or other.

(changed colours in graph for colour blind accessibility)



RELEVANT QUOTES

1. We must ask, "What if something we loved as children might cause harm today?" Indeed, "What if it caused harm then?" What would it mean to acknowledge pain? When you grow up in a racist culture, you won't see all the racism — it's just part of the world in which you live. If you have only ever seen a polluted ocean, then that's what an ocean looks like. Only when someone points out the pollution in the ocean or the racism in the culture, do you notice. And begin to ask questions. – *Strauss, V.*
2. Reflecting on a memorable moment encountering diversity in media, Shabazz Larkin says, "When I was in college, I came across an image by Kehinde Wiley, who's my favourite artist, and... what he does is he goes around, and he takes pictures of Black people, and he has them pose like these Renaissance kingly [figures], and I remember seeing this as the moment where I went from liking making art to becoming an artist. Because when I saw this, I saw myself, I saw my hero, I saw the guy that I wanted to be when I was in high school... When I saw this, I wept – I cried for hours because he looked like me, and he looked like a king." – *Shabazz Larkin*
3. As they grow up, children will gain experience and knowledge. Some of those experiences will hurt; some of that knowledge will make them sad. If we exclude troubling works from the discussion, then children are more likely to face sadness and pain on their own. It is, I think, better that we give them the tools with which to face prejudice-bearing literature. In doing so, we can help them learn to cope with a world that can be neither just or fair. With this knowledge, perhaps we may also give them a source of power. – *Philip Nel.*

4. “Minimizing, erasing or not acknowledging Seuss’ racial transgressions across his entire publishing career deny the very real historical impact they had on people of color and the way that they continue to influence culture, education, and children’s views of people of color,” – The Guardian
5. “The ‘man of his time’ narrative isn’t a great argument because to make that claim is profoundly ahistorical,” “All people in every moment don’t think the same. There were plenty of white Americans during that time who were not spreading the rhetoric that he was.” – Phillip Nel

PRESENTATION SPEAKER NOTES

I wanted to show this infographic by **David Huyck**. It represents the diversity in children’s books based off a 2018 study. As you can see, the representation is very unequal, with books on animals or non-human characters making up 4% more than the COMBINED total of books with Black, Indigenous, or other people of colour. This racial disparity is very cleverly illustrated by using mirrors to show how much representation children from these communities get to see of themselves, whilst white children make up half of the statistics, and are surrounded by mirrors everywhere they look. The artist has very cleverly used cracks in the mirrors to represent the fact that even though there may be representation, it can be tokenistic or do more harm than good due to e.g perpetuating inaccurate stereotypes.

Notably, in *If I Ran the Zoo*, the narrator declares his intention to put a “chieftain” (illustrated as a man in a turban) on display in the zoo; a pair of African characters are portrayed as monkeys (this is also shown in his cartoon here); and a group of Asian characters, described as “helpers who all wear their eyes at a slant”. And outside of his children’s books, in his career as a political cartoonist and advertiser, Dr. Seuss frequently drew racist caricatures and used racial slurs in his captions. “The ‘man of his time’ narrative isn’t a great argument because to make that claim is profoundly ahistorical,” Nel said. “All people in every moment don’t think the same. There were plenty of white Americans during that time who were not spreading the rhetoric that he was.” “Minimizing, erasing or not acknowledging Seuss’ racial transgressions across his entire publishing career deny the very real historical impact they had on people of color and the way that they continue to influence culture, education, and children’s views of people of color,”

The idea of oompa loompa’s may seem harmless at first glance; little mischievous characters who sing and dance whilst the characters get sucked up a chocolate pipe or turn into a massive blueberry. In revisiting, the historical reality of the racism is apparent. In the original released version of the book, oompa-loompa’s were described as African Pygmies, who were very happy about being shipped to England in “in large packing cases with holes in them,” and find life in a factory preferable to life in their native land. Which is really quite a horrific depiction with the implication of real people being happy and grateful about treated that way in such bad conditions. The 1973 and 1998 versions are not much better “Willy Wonka’s unfeeling attitude toward the Oompa-Loompas, their role as conveniences and devices to be used for Wonka’s purposes, their being brought over from Africa for enforced servitude, and the fact that their situation is all a part of the fun and games.” You can see the changes from the texts as the oompa loompa’s are later described as being from ‘loompaland’ and how

the corresponding illustrations change after revisions of the text with the whitened Oompa-Loompas remove the original book's implication that a person of European descent had enslaved people of African descent, and that this was something they should be happy about.

But these are older books, these statistics are from 2018, surely we've made progress since then on representation at least? To be blunt, no we haven't. this is a graph that I made based on the 30 most popular children's books in the UK as of march 2023, and only one had any kind of racial diversity and I believe that was a book on how to change children's nappies, which isn't exactly the kind of solid positive representation that white children are flooded with. There were also six books on there that have been controversial due to racism, sexism antisemitism, or in some cases, all of the above!

But surely children don't notice that sort of thing, they're too young! NO! children are aware of the differences between them and their peers, I'm sure you have memories of you as a child (or now) about being being hurt by something someone has said or done, whether it was done as an intentional cruel act or unintentionally. What happens when the books that a child is reading only contains harmful or innacurate stereotypes or depictions, and that's all they are told about themselves? Why are the books that white children have all about how they can be smart scientists or creative artists, but only for white children? What if you didn't see yourself represented to even a quarter of what your potential is, and the 2% of representation that you do get is tokenistic or stereotypical? That's a reality of many people, it's not theoretical, and what little progress is being made is an increase of representation of 1% since 2018? We have to be aware of what the problems are in order to change them and spread awareness, so next time you're looking at a children's book or a favourite from your childhood, try and see what message its portraying. Understand and learn so that you can help change it, as the next generation of artists and illustrators and people, we have a responsibility to change that.