



Getting out of the Cupboard:

A selected annotated bibliography of works regarding
The Indian in the Cupboard by Lynn Reid Banks

In May of 2005, as part of promoting their Classic Children's Book Collection the *Vancouver Sun* offered a coupon for the purchase of *The Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynn Reid Banks for \$5.99. The accompanying review of the novel acknowledged that the book had been controversial due to "sensitivities" over the stereotypical portrayal of Aboriginals, but then went on to enthusiastically defend the choice of the novel as a popular and exciting adventure. The review concluded with a nod of approval by well known children's literature commentator Michele Landsberg who called the book "exciting and thought provoking." (*The Vancouver Sun*, May 7, 2005)

A different opinion was expressed in a letter to the *Vancouver Sun* editor, by Laura Rudland the President of the First Nations Education Association of the BCTF, who wrote that "to promote a dated book, filled with stereotypical language and images under the guise of creative writing, is socially irresponsible." (<http://www.turtleisland.org>)

Thus began a renewal of interest in this book. The following annotated bibliography is intended to inspire and inform your own thoughts and discussions with colleagues and the broader community regarding not only *The Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynn Reid Banks, but also any other children's literature that includes a portrayal of Aboriginal peoples.

Carithers, E. R. (1999). Native American Stories Enhancing Multicultural Education in Elementary Schools. California Lutheran University. (Full text available through ERIC database)

This report presents a strong argument for educators to understand the importance of story selection in presenting Native American life and culture to students, as well as an overview of selection criteria.

Caldwell-Wood, N. and L. Mitten. (1992). "I" Is "Not" for Indian: The Portrayal of Native Americans in Books for Young People. *Multicultural Review*, 1 (2), 26-33. (Available online at <<http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/ailabib.htm>>)

This paper offers a selective annotated bibliography and a critical look at the hesitancy of educators and librarians to engage in content criticism



LaBonty, J (1995). A Demand for Excellence in Books for Children. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 34 (2), 1-9. (Available online at <<http://jaie.asu.edu/>> or in print at the Education Library, UBC)

A discussion of why the historical and linguistic inaccuracies and the negative stereotypes of the Iroquoian characters in Lynn Reid Bank's trilogy make them unacceptable for the classroom.

Lindsay, N. (Nov, 2003). "I" Still Isn't for Indian. *School Library Journal*, 49 (11), 42-3. (Available through UBC Library Literature and Information Full Text database and in print at the Education Library, UBC)

A critical look at more recent children's books for their portrayal of Aboriginal peoples

Seale, D & Slapin B. (Eds.). (1998). *Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children*. Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center. (Available through UBC library and many public libraries such as VPL)

An excerpt from this book regarding *Indian in the Cupboard* is available from Oyate at <<http://www.oyate.org/books-to-avoid/indianCupboard.html>>

Taylor, R.H. and L. Patterson. (Dec, 2000). Getting the "Indian" Out of the Cupboard: Using Information Literacy to Promote Critical Thinking. *Teacher Librarian*, 28 (2), 9-14. (Available online at <http://www.teacherlibrarian.com/tlmag/v_28/v_28_2_feature.html> or in print at the Education Library, UBC)

A discussion, from two Native American librarians, on the role of literature in the classroom for combating stereotypes and developing information literacy skills.

For a listing of publishing houses specializing in Aboriginal literature for children please visit the Xwi7xwa library at <<http://www.library.ubc.ca/xwi7xwa/>> Browse the table of contents for *Children's Literature* as well as *Publishing*

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