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The Lion and the Unicorn, Volume 28, Number 1, January 2004, pp. 131-156 (Article)



Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/uni.2004.0013

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Little Brown Sanjay and *Little Black Sambo*: Childhood Reading, Adult Rereading; Colonial Text and Postcolonial Reception

Sanjay Sircar

“After all, they say, generations of children are supposed to have enjoyed *The Five Chinese Brothers* or *Little Black Sambo*. However, those children were probably not black, Indian, Chinese or Vietnamese; if they were, they most decidedly did not enjoy those books!”

Philip Harber, “Stereotyping? Moi?”

Little Brown Sanjay liked Helen Bannerman’s *The Story of Little Black Sambo*. I don’t know what sort of “Indian” Philip Harber means, but I was one of the South Asian sort, and I most decidedly did! I have been trying to say so since 1977, but the world did want to listen.¹

National cultures are usually defined by ethnicity, location and language; but cultures are neither static nor hermetically sealed. Their boundaries are fluid: people and texts cross them. As an ethnic South Asian Indian, now living in Australia, whose first language is English, I want to share my experiences of receiving literature from an alien culture. My choice is neither innocent nor random: Helen Bannerman’s *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899), a short picture book. Its setting, characters’ ethnicity, and putative racism have been the subject of much controversy. While defenders celebrate Sambo’s positive personal qualities and his family’s values, the putative racism of the work and the hurt and offence it has occasioned black people of various races has attracted most of the critical attention. There still seems to be little critical analysis of this text or any extended positive reader-response criticism dealing with it.

Though *Sambo*'s centenary was passed over in relative silence, the picture book was never contentious in the East. The sole cultural claim by a South Asian to the text is that of Shakuntala Bhatwadekar in her 1956 inclusion of *Sambo* in a list of suitable *Books for Asian Children*, even though that inclusion does not necessarily mean she thought *Sambo* was Indian (Yuill 18). I speak only for myself, and not as a representative Indian voice. I responded to *Sambo* positively both as a child and as an adult, and have an emotional, aesthetic, and ultimately, a cultural/political investment in the text. Assumptions about the universal, transcendent appeal of art are undercut by such ultimately political matters as Donald Haase's question, "who owns fairy tales?" (383). This can be modified to "who owns a literature?" Every country or linguistic group has literature, an instrument through which it validates itself.

Issues relating to colonial relations complicate *Sambo*. When does a colonizer's language become accepted as part of the ambiguous birth-right of the colonized? Do colonizer and colonized share a text set in the colonies? Does everybody accept that colonial literature produced by the British in India is part of "Indian literature in English"?

Indians are not one race; dark (black/brown) pigmentation covers more than one race. I feel that Bannerman's *Sambo* is South Asian. Whether Bannerman's *Sambo* is a representative of an African Negro or an Indian from South Asia, the vagueness/uncertainty of what kind of black was, and is, meant by black in relation to Bannerman's *Sambo* is compounded by current nervousness about using the taboo race-word "negro." Using "African" and "African-American" as substitutes for it obscures the fact that it has been entirely possible to be both Negro (originally from Africa) by "race" and South Asian by location for at least 800 years. Whether Bannerman's *Sambo* is or is not an African, he is not an American, nor moves in any setting which reflects or refracts the United States. Neither appropriation into a primarily African-Americanness nor a gracious American "sharing" of Bannerman's *Sambo* between African-Americanness and Indianness *without* choosing between the two may be regarded by non-Americans as unequivocally a kindness.

I agree with the statement, "Although it is never stated in Bannerman's original version, the story seems to be set in India" and thus, depicts Indians (Yuill 15). The primary point is not whether the figure of Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* is Indian or African or African-American. The point that is missed in many discussions relates to *international*, rather than *intranational*, power differentials within the sociology of literature. Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* is not American literature. It is English literature and colonial-period Indian literature in

the English language. Its transmogrification into Americanness is the sign of a transatlantic cultural imperialism, rather than an acceptance by the United States.

Though the text is one of a few internationally known classic representatives of English-language children's literature from India, it may now be impossible to divest *Sambo* of the Americanness with which he has been historically imbued, and from which Elizabeth Hay attempted, but failed, to rescue him. The impulses behind and the nature of the various U.S. images of African or African-American negritude and Indianness in relation to this work deserve interrogation and scrutiny. Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) can survive refraction through American lenses because of the text's canonized status. But for all the continued availability of Bannerman's text and illustrations, *Little Black Sambo* and its author have a more precarious existence, as *infant* children's literature by a writer who is only unjustly remembered by one book. This work is more susceptible to being erased or elbowed out by more relevant or less offensive works. Because of her reputation, few of Bannerman's other children's books are in print or discussed.

Phyllis Yuill's pioneering *Little Black Sambo: A Closer Look* (1976) provided a valuable bibliography. Elizabeth Hay's *Sambo Sahib* (1981) is a biographical defense of Bannerman. Since the 1980s, at least twenty-one lists have included *Sambo* as recommended reading; thirty-one editions, eight reprints in anthologies, more than fifty illustrators, seven plays and records, and six additional stories have featured the character. Yuill and Hay were followed by Bill Yoffee's *Black Sambo's Saga* (1997), and Phyllis Barton's monumental *The Pictus Orbis Sambo* (1998), listing 600 Sambo-related items.

This essay was first drafted in the late 1970s as a defense of *Sambo* in the context of the fervor of the 1960s. Yuill had argued "the still unsettled status [of the work] in schools and libraries must be resolved" (32); this was a thinly disguised call to do away with it. My response now sees print in a period of reaction when *Sambo* needs no such defense, and is now being said to be acceptable by at least some members of the professions and racial groups that once were offended by it.

Since the 1990s, *Sambo*-related texts have included continual publication of Bannerman's original in the United States and the United Kingdom. Other versions include Julius Lester and Jerry Pinkney's *Sam and the Tigers* (1996), Fred Marcellino's *The Story of Little Babaji* (1996), and Phyllis Pollema-Cahill's *Tigers for Supper* (1998) retold as a rebus book. In 1976 Buccaneer Books reprinted *The Little Black Sambo Story Book* (1923) comprising six stories, with a cover illustration by

Eulalie of a non-Indian Sambo; inside only one set of illustrations was by Bannerman, but the others were by Frank ver Beck, featuring an Indian-style Sambo. In our current globalized world with an Indian Diaspora and Diasporic pool of artists, none of the illustrators of the nominally South Asian Sambos from the United States seems to have any direct connection with South Asia.

Reader-response Criticism and One Reader's Response

In this account of my experience with *Sambo*, I will provide in a different order the ethnographic contextual details recommended by Peggy Whalen-Levitt (1980). This essay is based on the model proposed in Hugo Crago's "Childhood Reading Revisited." J. A. Appleyard avoids using first-person accounts of childhood reading experiences, such as writers' memoirs, because they are likely to reflect the attitudes of a specialized group of readers (197). In the case of *Sambo*, my older sister and I constituted one such specialized group of reading children, whose reactions might be of interest due to our ethnicity. The linchpin of empirical studies is trustworthiness. The generalizations I derive might be wrong or incomplete, but they are as I remember them. It is dangerous to work with a sample of one person, especially when that one person is oneself. Since I cannot provide a group of similarly situated Indian children in the 1950s and 1960s, I will rely on introspection, reminiscence, and self-reflection.

The Book

The Story of Little Black Sambo was not one that my family especially knew about. In Madras in the 1940s, my mother was virtually the adopted niece of Helen Bannerman's daughter, Janet Kibble, and she never mentioned that Mrs. Kibble's mother was the author of *Sambo*. Today, I am a friend of Helen Bannerman's grandson, Rev. Douglas Bannerman of Canberra, Australia. I was born in 1955 and met *Little Black Sambo*, subtitled "A Tale of India," in a twelve-volume U.S. anthology, *My Book House*, sometime between 1958 and 1959 in Calcutta, India, where I was born.² This edition has illustrations of Indian figures which are not by Bannerman. Its paragraph divisions are different from hers; it replaces the brackets around the phrase "ghi" with commas. It omits one puzzling phrase from her text—"the tigers were very wee and very far away" (*Sambo* 42).

My Book House was never available in bookshops, and was sold door-to-door by representatives of the Standard Literature Book Co., who also

sold the *Children's Encyclopaedia* and the *Grolier Classics*. There is no holding listed for the *My Book House* books in Australia; and I suspect there would be very few in Britain. Postcolonial India was not as important as Australia, and so had the advantage of access to “dumped” material from both the United States and England. *My Book House* would have been sold at a price that was cheap by U.S. standards, but expensive by Indian ones. People in receiving cultures had to be literate, interested in reading, and their children’s reading, and relatively well off if their children were to receive any foreign literature.

Wayne Booth also remembers a salesman, so *My Book House* must have been sold door-to-door in the U.S., in the 1920s. Booth remembers with affection the “vaguely Pre-Raphaelite illustrations.” He tells how they moved him to his own imaginings as he reread, memorized, and lingered over the stories (33–35). Booth wonders about the enduring influence of those “lovely books” (57). My reaction to his essay was pure delight in finding someone whose experience of the same nonprivileged text was similar to mine. Common knowledge of a beloved book can engender an enduring sense of camaraderie among readers across cultures.

Circumstances of Reception

Reception of a text can occur over time and in different situations. I met Sambo at home at age three and continued an acquaintance with him until age thirteen. I renewed his acquaintance between the ages of seventeen and twenty-four. We did not meet again until 1993.

My older sister referred to *My Book House* as the “book-house books.” An Anglo-Indian nun at the nursery school at Loreto House, Calcutta, suggested that we donate the set in 1959. My fierce reaction was “mine!” I went on to Trivia Hall and was alerted to the idea that entertainment in one place was instruction in another. There, I listened to students in the next room being quizzed on comprehension. I distinctly remember that *Sambo* was one of the stories they were given, along with “Aladdin,” “Cinderella,” and “Snow White.” Their teacher was a darkish white Anglo-Indian with black hair, who constantly fed them hints on the answers. To a question on a character with friends in the forest, she once got the answer “Little Black Sambo,” at which she wagged her head in a very Indian way and mockingly intoned, “Yes, Little Black Sambo!” which then elicited the right answer, “Snow White.”

Eilie MacNicol introduced me to the notion of racism in literature in 1966–67. She was a Volunteer Abroad, a third-generation representative of Scots educators in India, and in the same circle that included the

Kibbles. She told us of Bannerman's newly discovered *Little White Squibba*, to our delight, and promised to send us a copy on her return. She earnestly told us of the racism in Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* (1922) and of *Sambo*, both of which she disapproved of in her liberal way. Hay tells of how the United States controversy over racism in *Sambo* had been building up from the 1950s as a result of efforts against literary representations of racism by librarians, and that it culminated in an attack in 1977 on the name of a chain of restaurants (163–64). Hay also writes that the wholesale British attack came later (164). It started in 1972 when Teachers Against Racism wrote to *Sambo*'s publishers Chatto and Windus, who stridently replied in a letter, followed by an article by Brian Alderson, and correspondence in the *London Times* involving Oxford dons and other luminaries (165–68). The Bannerman family defended the author in April–May 1972 when Mr. J. Khalique, a *Pakistani* immigrant in London, said that the book got him hurtfully called a “Sambo” at school (Hay 169). In India, we knew of the temper of the times, but none of these particulars.

Between 1969 and 1972, the *My Book House* and all our children's books were locked away, while we moved to Bombay. In 1974 as an undergraduate, I finally saw a reprint of *Sambo*. It had been flown in from England for the Siasp Kothavalas, very Westernized Zoroastrian (Parsee) Squires at Bamboo Banks Estate in the Mudumalai jungles. They too had known *Sambo* from *My Book House*; none of us much cared for Bannerman's original illustrations, thinking them grotesque. The set of *My Book House* books belonged to my sister; my mother later brought them to her in the United States. I miss them deeply.

I came to Australia as a postgraduate student in 1977. I borrowed *Little White Squibba* (1966), *Little Degchie-head* (1903), and *Little Black Mingo* (1901). In India, I had heard there were other Bannerman stories, but never saw them. Paucity and unavailability is a condition of some cultures.

We often do not read things in the order in which they were written. Between 1979 and 1993, I was convinced by Selma Lanes's argument in *Down the Rabbit Hole* (1971) that Bannerman could not distinguish between Negro facial features in Madeira and Indian ones, so that she meant no harm in confusing them in *Sambo* (159–60). I read Bob Dixon's attack on Bannerman in *Catching Them Young I* (1979); thought Phyllis Rose's 1981 review of Hay's biography of Bannerman was condescension to a memsahib of the past; and later convinced by Hay's refutation of Lanes (28–29).

Reception of the same book between cultures cannot help being different because of ideological and economic differences. I can say with

some confidence that *Sambo* is received almost not at all in India; it is not as a result of accepting Western attacks against its perceived racism. It is because foreign books are expensive and cannot be bought as they were in the 1950s; and the old Anglicized Indian milieu that automatically and unreflectively received the English children's classics is dead.

The Reading Context

Reception of children's literature in any culture depends on the attitudes and practices of the adult mediator. My family context of receiving *Sambo* included a respect for books, and the expectation of being able to read them again on one's own. My parents gave their children *My Book House* and books from other cultures. I do not know that we were a particularly Westernized family, but we had the English classics and whatever middle-class children in England would have had in the 1950s and 1960s until books became too expensive. After age six, I was neither supervised nor quizzed about my reading. I discussed *Sambo* with my sister; as with most of our childhood reading, I remembered it and liked it.

Impact and Reception:

What the Text Did to the Reader and the Reader Did with the Text

Sambo was directed at middle-class children of the British Empire. Another Bannerman book, *Little Degchie-head*, explicitly addresses "bad babas," a loan word for children in India in colonial English. The narratee of *Sambo* is an English or colonial child who knows the folktale and is hearing a narrative read aloud. The implied reader is middle-class, liberal, naively wondering, and interested in the outside world.

The readerly "horizon of expectation" which I brought to *Sambo* as an Indian child in the late 1950s was constituted by a knowledge of ordinary English, and a familiarity with the classic European and Indian folk fairy tales, their patterns, motifs and conventions. I knew that *Sambo* was not a folktale, and if asked at age six I think I would have said it was more like "Peter and the Wolf" or Enid Blyton's *Noddy* books than "The Three Little Pigs." As far as I remember, *Sambo* did not change or expand my literary or generic horizons, but fit into them.

What I notice as a scholar who specializes in *Kunstmaerchen* is that *Sambo* is a *particularly* naive *Kunstmaerchen* with affinities to the beast fable. Perhaps either as a way of assimilating *Sambo* to mutating and traveling folklore, or of accusing Bannerman of plagiarism as well as a syncretic racism, it has been claimed that it resembles or is derived from a Swedish folktale, "Little Lisa" (Dixon 101–3).

The pattern of *Sambo* is that of an initial lowness, then a crowning (the fine clothes), a decrowning in a series of threats and an increased weakness, an overcoming by politeness and a simple taking advantage of circumstances, and a recrowning feast. Part of the charm of the child-protagonist is the direct delight in bright clothes and an appetite for large quantities of rich food. There are two spheres of Sambo's stylized world and both are exaggerated. One is the cozily domestic home, the bazaar, and the clothes. The other sphere is the frightening, naked, open-air animal world, a sphere of fantasy as well. The sphere of what is literally the raw, of animals consuming prey, threatens what is literally the sphere of the cooked, the pancakes. Clever human civilization tempts the forceful animal jungle into bartering cooperation, and then economically uses up what the latter produces. In satisfying formal, psychological, and moral symmetry, oral aggression is cancelled out twice. First, the biting tigers counter each other and end up joined together in angry violence. They move from being threatening to utilitarian in a metamorphosis into an almost vegetable matter—which ghee is regarded as in India, despite being a milk product. The Sambo family, another conjoined group, symbolically eats a miniaturized cooked form of that which threatened to eat the boy. The comic etiological ending and its explanation of "Why [these, so all] Pancakes are Striped Yellow and Brown" is like a miniature parody of a Kipling "Just So Story." The moral of the tale lies in the exemplary way its protagonist copes with threat through politeness and barter. He maintains a discreet distance when he can. The story provides reassurance that a cumulative misfortune may result in good fortune and strong adversaries may destroy themselves.

A familiar critique is that in *Sambo* the formulaic exact repetition of phrases, the varying stock phrases, and the incremental parallelisms of plot, recall the mnemonic features of the folktale (Moore 367, Arbuthnot 336, Rose 53). Neither folktales nor literary fairy tales usually present a bourgeois-style family as *Sambo* does, although it is not a middle-class one. The presentation of parents' love makes a nice change from "Hansel and Gretel" and cruel stepmothers. This love is revealed in the mother's homemade clothes and the father's bought finery for the child, and a husbandly love in concern for the wife's cooking. Both parents contribute to the child's joy at the beginning and end of the story. Nevertheless, *Sambo* recalls the burlesque *Kunstmaerchen* in its comedy, pace, and modern touches (while the hero's clothes may be "timeless," his parents' clothes are "modern"); the allegorical *Kunstmaerchen* in its flat figures incarnating a fairly clear moral on vanity and competition; and the romantic *Kuntsmaerchen* in its nonurban setting and temporal "once upon a time."

Delightful and unfolktale-like ambiguities appear in the protagonist, who is polite, weak, unprotected, defenseless and less than bold, who gives up a lesser advantage under threat, rather than a greater one. Sambo balances resourcefulness and spunk with vulnerability. He is not too heroic. His drama has two distinct parts: to extricate himself from the immediate threat he negotiates, and to regain what is rightfully his. He may be either simpleminded or instinctive or clever in bartering (not bribing) in an exchange to which both parties agree for a time. Does Sambo truly believe his clothes are as valuable to the tigers as they are to him, and his own salesmanship, or not? Certainly Sambo shows good sense in hiding and later moving to a safe vantage point when the tigers quarrel. The tigers' vanity, along with their stupidity, makes them look ridiculous and works to Sambo's advantage. Chance and the mental and moral nature of his adversaries save him. The tigers are angry with each other and with Sambo, but cannot eat him first or take back his clothes, so they resume fighting.

In the second part, to regain what is rightfully his Sambo lets vanity and the force expressed by the animals' mutual oral aggression cancel each other out. Sambo uses a trickster-like ploy, but Sambo is not a modern imitation of a traditional Trickster. A true Trickster is said to be intrinsically ambiguous, while the related Cultural Hero completes a trick, moving between this world and the other world with a personal integrity (Hastrup & Ovesen 13), as Sambo does.

Why do the tigers take their clothes off before they start to fight—to protect the clothes or fight better? Does the tigers' nakedness symbolize their reversion to savagery? I heightened Sambo's wit in adulthood, as I mistakenly remembered that he suggested that the tigers take each others' tails in their mouths, and in some way encouraged them to fight, that *he* indeed did something clever to get his clothes back. A rereading showed me that it was not so.

Sambo does *not* make the tigers quarrel, and he does *not* steal his clothes back. He asks the tigers if they still want their clothes; he gives *notice* to the tigers that if not, he will take them away. How knowing or ironic is Sambo? It is unclear whether Sambo understands why they are locked together and that they cannot let go, or whether he is being honest, naïve, or knowing. His last words to the tigers could be naïve or concealed sarcasm. Is it a polite legal agreement or is it a taunt?

Sambo does not want to destroy the tigers or see them destroyed. He escapes with nonchalant grace. The illustration shows his satisfaction at being reclothed, but is delightfully ambiguous. Is Sambo triumphant as he walks away or simply in regained naïve equanimity after he has regained what is his? Sambo seems largely unaware of his adversaries'

fates and the likely fate that he has narrowly avoided. Does he know tigers melt? Does Sambo tell his parents of his adventures, or take his lucky escape uneaten and undenuded for granted? Do his smiling parents know what has happened? Are they proud of him or take it for granted? Do they wonder about the origins of the ghee or know that the pancakes look like tigers? We know, but do they? Neither the illustrations nor the text tell us.

Stylistically, the words and fixed phrases which the narrator initiates are repeated back and forth between Sambo and the tigers regarding the clothes, just like the repeated fixed epithets and formulas of folktale. The marker nursery-word “little,” which is nonfolk but a characteristic of children’s literature and discourse about children (Sircar, “Victorian” 16, 22), is repeated in referring to the protagonist, and his beautiful/lovely “little” clothes. The umbrella mediates between the protagonist and the nursery exaggeration of the rest of his world. It goes with the emphatic Use of Capital Letters for Nouns, a charmingly eighteenth-century anachronism. The same emphasis is found in the simulated orality of narratorial sentences which rank in between exclamations and rhetorical questions: “And then wasn’t Little Black Sambo grand?” (*Sambo* 14), “wasn’t she [Black Mumbo] pleased!” (*Sambo* 52), which work for narratee involvement. The word “disputing” (*Sambo* 28) indicates a Beatrix Potter-like lack of condescension (“soporific”) and balance to the simplicity of nursery diction. The plot parallelisms correspond to the parallelism and exaggeration of “rolling and tumbling,” “wrangled and scrambled” (*Sambo* 40), which indicate they are not serious.

I still find in *Sambo* a positive model of love, control, ingenuity, politeness, reassurance, sweetness, a satisfying ending, and a pleasing use of language. I also discover ambiguities that I did not perceive before. These features constitute the appeal of the story and its durability in the face of the reservations about its real or perceived racism, which has dominated discussion.

Once demonizing a work starts, it accretes evidence, and will not be answered until it wears itself out. I could point to Bannerman’s unmistakable affection for “my little black books” and for India in her reference to “our Indian white plum” (Hay 110, 115), but could be answered that affection for one’s own literary work is natural and colonialist affection for a place and/or its people often goes with the paternalistic condescension of “ownership.” Even the repetition of “little” could be seen to be condescending and disempowering. I could say that Bannerman could and did draw Indians in different styles elsewhere, but others would object that she chose stiff, stereotyping, racist caricature in her children’s

books. I could defend stylized faux-naive artwork, but would be answered that a member of a master race thus representing a subject race is different in kind from caricaturing her own. I could point to Jumbo returning from work economically gathering up the melted tigers as responsible, but might be answered that he was stereotyped as dirty.

I could point to Sambo's parents not eating as much as he as suggesting they are not greedy, but be answered that Mumbo eating less than Jumbo shows stereotyped sexism. I could say that Sambo crying shows him as not a happy little boy, but be answered that he is a stereotyped sniveling weak one and emotionally volatile. I could note that Maerchen decorum often has heroes going through similar fearsome situations until they end happily, but be answered that Sambo is not a folktale. His parents could be seen as irresponsible in letting a child walk in a tiger-infested jungle in the first place, yet reward him for putting himself in danger.

Images of India

Besides folktale collections, *My Book House* provided me with most of my childhood literary images of India in English, including two translated nursery rhymes from Hindi, and an extract from R. C. Dutt's Victorian-versified *Ramayana*. Dhan Gopal Mukherji's *Gay Neck: The Story of a Pigeon* (1925), regardless of his Newbery Award, is not generally known in India. I knew but did not much care for Mowgli of Kipling's *The Jungle Books*, but liked *Kim* (1904) and *The Just So Stories* (1902), but not the Indian ones in particular. *Sambo* was one of the three original narratives about Indian boys that I knew in English. It did not trouble me that there were not more.

My sister and I responded positively to the *My Book House* images of India. We were pleased at seeing things that related to us. We knew that a Rabinranath Tagore poem about a little boy floating lamps down the river was from Bengal even though its illustration incongruously made him look like a Muslim servant, with a turban and a form of long shirt and cummerbund. We knew that foreigners got things wrong, but read the poem quite happily.

I could never have taken Little Black Sambo to be anything other than an Indian of some indeterminate region. The "Little Black" in his name was neutral (as with Little Red Riding-Hood); his name was stylized. Indians were brown, and some of us in the South were black, but we were not Africans, and this story was not about them nor about the people we then still called "Negroes," who were also represented in *My Book*

House. In various degrees, I admired and sympathized with Little Black Sambo, had a cathartic reaction to his adventures, and responded to his tale approximately as I did to folktales. I did not closely associate myself with Sambo or view him as a peer. I see no reflection of myself in Sambo; he is neither urban, middle-class, bilingual nor schooled. We had neither jungles nor tigers (except facing extinction in the zoo) nor clothes like his, nor pancakes. We did not think of ourselves like him, although we *liked* him. A fictive depiction of a child, whether positively or negatively, does not necessarily affect the view taken by real children in the depicted culture. It might be considered patronizing that it should.

A Puzzle of Interpretation

There are three interlinked questions of interpretation and reception. What geographical setting and/or race of the characters do the words, names, clothes, things, and illustrations suggest? Is the work racist? What did an actual child reader make of them, and what does he make of them as an adult?

I remember that my sister and I repeated to each other in laughing tones the phrase “ghi (as it is called in India),” and noting the older spelling of the word with an “i” (rather than two “e”s in the modern fashion). For non-Indians, it evokes the frisson of the exotic; but for Indians it evokes the familiar. It validates our own experience, with the added ironic inflection that non-Indians need this explanation in English. My sister and I particularly relished that Indian word. We enjoyed the older spelling and the juxtaposition of two inter-illuminating frames of reference.

Barbara Bader suggests Bannerman “also knew how to draw Indians, had she wanted to” which is a claim that argues Sambo does not look like a person from South Asia and so cannot be one. She follows with an observation that Bannerman knew pancakes were made from “ ‘flour and eggs and milk and sugar’ . . . [and] were neither Indian nor African” (543). If pancakes are not typically African or African-American food, invoking the Britishness of the pancakes serves an image of syncretism and “imaginariness” that then justifies the insertion of further syncretism in African-Americanization. There are comestibles in India, particularly in the north and east, made out of these ingredients, which could quite reasonably be called “pancakes,” using the closest familiar English word for such things.

I do not know whether Bannerman knew of these foods or what the relation of her particular class and society at the time was to Indian foods. The eating of Indian foods often followed specific conventions

among the British, for fear of “going native.” Bannerman’s “pancakes” fried in ghee do not in and of themselves vitiate the potential “Indianness” of the comestibles mentioned in her text. As children, we did not know of any Indian comestibles that would fit the description in *Sambo*. We knew of sweet Bengali *patisaptas* with grated coconut, though these do not have eggs in them, and North Indian savory *parathas*, in which eggs are optional. Just as we accepted the names, and felt superiority to the text’s need to explain ghee inaccurately as melted butter, we accepted the pancakes as another one of those non-Indian mistakes; we were neither bothered nor offended by them as out of place, nor tried to explain them in terms of the Indian food.

The North Indian Muslim rich fried flatbread, the *bakarkhani*, is a large, thin, *sweet paratha*, which is composed of just the ingredients in Bannerman’s text. When the *bakarkhani* is mentioned, it is often referred to as *sheer-mal/shir-mal*. Anand Mittal writes that *sheer-mal* is “made using plain flour, yeast, eggs, khowa, cream, ghee, saffron, raisins, and kewra. ‘Baqarkhani naan’ is an elaborate variation of *sheer-mal* which is shallow fried on a griddle.” Peddlers apparently sell it. Sources evoke Kashmir, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Persia, as points of origin. Flour and eggs seem to be essential. Similar recipes call for ingredients such as sugar, rosewater, and *kewra* essence (pandanus, screwpine) as sweeteners (hence Bannerman’s sugar seems right). Some milk derivatives including *khoa* (milk rendered down) or cream are added (hence Bannerman’s milk fits, as does her butter as a shortening). Salt, saffron, raisins, poppyseeds, cardamom, and cloves appear in various recipes as optional extras.

My first hypothesis is that India, as a setting, would unify all Bannerman’s structurally similar picturebook oeuvre with both black and white protagonists. I also think that the Sambo family are relatively poor non-Hindu Indian Christians; this is a suggestion which would iron out all inconsistencies (color, features, clothes, lack of footwear, dining table with cutlery, and food). Bannerman’s cook in *Degchie-head* is patently a member of an Indian Christian community and has a name that is not linguistically Indian but of foreign origin, and moves in a setting that is specifically Indian. The cook looks like a member of the Sambo family. If the Sambo family are members of this grouping, one underrepresented in literature, depending on where in India, their pancakes may have been *bakarkhanis*, or something like them.

Despite the original publisher’s note stressing that the author was in India, “where black children abound and tigers are everyday affairs” (*Sambo* 3), Hay seizes on an 1899 *Spectator* review which said that the story combined the “African type of black with tigers in an Indian

jungle” in a “realm of make-believe” (Hay 2, 28). Hay claims that an Indian setting was “too humdrum and familiar” for Bannerman’s daughters, so she set *Sambo* in a mixed “imaginary jungle land” with “aspects of both Africa and India” and a “far-away kind of people” (28). Had Bannerman set it in India rather than the “vaguely African world of her imagination” the reputation of the book would have been saved (36). Despite the term “imaginary” land, Hay’s tilt is toward the African negritude of its inhabitants. As proof of Bannerman’s mixture of elements, Hay points to the Indian words and animals, along with what she sees as African characters in *Little Black Mingo*; and to the mixture of brambles and bamboo in *Pat and the Spider* (1904) (37, 69). Hay disapproves of the illustrations and bowdlerized revisions of *Sambo* from the 1940s onward which for her “altered [sic] the setting to India.” She also objects to a 1972 edition which alters Jumbo’s name to Simbu, and Mumbo’s to Mama Sari while keeping the original “African” or slave-name for Sambo, and older African-American physiognomies for the family (161).

Hay also suggests that Malcolm X’s reference to African tigers is probably influenced by a memory of this text, which it may well have been (159). *Sambo* may also have influenced a much-quoted tag from Anglophone Africa, Wole Soyinka’s line: “A tiger does not shout its tigritude, it acts” (Liukkonen). But Hay’s formulation of an “imaginary” world can only too easily lend itself to becoming an imaginary African-American jungle world. So we might ask about *Sambo*: which is more important, to whom, and why—the blackness of the people or the Indianness of the tigers? Why should its blackness signify a particular place and its tigritude be nonlocalizing? Why is it important that the blackness either be or not be an Indian blackness, or that its precise referent be irrelevant? What is the significance of the parents’ clothes being neither Indian nor African ones, and of Sambo’s curved-toed slippers? Would U.S. critics ever accept a unifying explanation of elements, or any account of *Sambo* that did not lead to a blackness which could easily become a black Americanness?

Despite the publisher’s preface, perceptions of the stylization of *Sambo* as a stylized syncretism involving India and Africa equally start with the laudatory *Spectator* review. Dixon wrote more negatively that the characters are similar to African stereotypes, but the setting is vaguely Indian (101). The Indianness shrinks intensely when Hay assimilates the setting to ethnicity, a non-Indian jungle/vaguely African world to a non-Indian/vague African race, objecting when Little Black Sambo “loses his racial heritage” (that is, African heritage) and is “turned white” (149). The Indianness now resides only in the language.

Americans associate “black” primarily with negritude. Bannerman depicts her characters as very dark and with exaggeratedly nonwhite features. Sambo’s initial garment looks something like a grass skirt, and possibly because of the African association with the phrase “mumbo-jumbo,” the second step of a complete transposition to Africa is possible if the language only is ignored or explained away (Yuill 15).

The third step draws on the same features and builds on them, extending the transposition further, to the American Southern plantation, because “Sambo” is predominantly, though not exclusively, an American term for an African-American of slave descent (though understood elsewhere). Because the costumes are not depicted as purely native to India, they lend themselves to being confused with Aunt Jemima’s headkerchief and utensils and the attire of Uncles Tom or Remus. Bannerman drew the Sambo family eating off a table rather than on the floor. From the 1900s, the work of American re-illustrators did draw upon images of plantation Negroes and black and white minstrels. A sense that white racism ascribes a vulgar taste for bright colors, greed, and happy laughing irresponsibility to all primitive “others” readily confirmed both Sambo’s African-Americanness and the text’s racism.

Today the imaginary setting of Sambo continues to be, for some, a syncretic world with both tigers and ghee from India and African Negroes. The imaginary world segues for others into a fantasy setting of nowhere. This leaves open a complete reclaiming-with-pride of a re-named Sambo. This subsequently distances past American protests and erases the figure of the British writer in a British Empire. Paradoxically, this re-evaluation reflects another tradition of American repudiations of Americanness in returning Sambo to India, in stating Indianness, in renaming, and reillustrating. However, new Indianization can also arouse a new protest from a Diasporic South Asia, to a South Asian in America. They find offense in both Bannerman’s original and at the Indianizing of the revision (Khorana 3).

I am the second Diasporic Indian to write of *Sambo*, and I speak positively. As a South Asian, I long to know what happened to Mr. J. H. Seak’s proposal to buy the rights of translation into Singalese in 1904 and whether *Sambo* was ever published in Sinhala (Barton Appendix 2, 408). I think that my interpretation of *Sambo*—of its stylization, words, things, complexions, the names, and characters’ appearance in Bannerman as Indian—can be objectively justified.

Hay’s claim on the African setting and characters of *Sambo* is undercut by her other claim that “the most Indian aspect of the book is the language” (29). Hay shows Bannerman’s use of other Anglicized, Indian-derived words in her letters and her transliteration of the Hindustani she

spoke to the Bombay servants (43, 72, 148, 118). Mrs. Bond, who sold Bannerman's work for her, offered the publisher footnotes on "words only common to Anglo Indians" (i.e. English in India); he disliked the Indian words and wanted them changed in later work, even though her "little Indian friends" liked them. Bannerman presumably refused and changed publishers (Hay 28, 30, 36). A combination of words referring to Indian things ("bazaar," "jungle," "tiger," "palm tree" and "ghi," not "market," "forest," "lion," "tall tree" and "butter") encourage a reading of the text as a beast-fable in India, not an imaginary landscape in Africa, nor the old plantation, nor anywhere else, but the "here" of the author and her children in India.

If the bazaar, jungle, tigers, palm tree, and ghee are not enough, consider Jumbo's "great big brass pot" (*Sambo* 50). While Africans or American blacks stereotypically do not carry such brass pots, Indians do. Look at "Tiger Ghi," the brand name label in English on the pot in the illustration of Mumbo's kitchen (*Sambo* 53). Look at Sambo's purple shoes with crimson soles and crimson linings: they have *curved* toes, that is, they are *nagaras*, traditional unisex shoes of Muslim origin (*Sambo* 15). Since Sambo is a modern fantasy, not a folktale, the clothing does not need to be traditional Indian draperies. Among some Christian convert communities at the same time, some women would have worn headscarves, skirts, and aprons like Black Mumbo. Some men wore European-style clothes, hats, and trousers and smoked pipes like Black Jumbo. Some wore bright Indian clothing. Poor people did not wear shoes. Some would have eaten at the table with cutlery, if they could. Neither Bannerman's ascription of a taste for combinations of bright primary colors and patterned clothing to the Sambo family, nor her illustrations, do anything conclusive to establish them as African blacks, or make them seem non-Indian to me.

Whatever the word "black" may primarily mean to Americans, as the publisher's original note indicated, the British did and perhaps still do call all dark-skinned people "black." Bannerman quite unmaliciously refers to her Indian servant's "black hand" in a letter, which Hay cites without commenting on its implication (55). If naming a figure "black" was unconsciously racist then, but racist now (that is, unless it is used as a marker of pride), then it should be noted that the masculine name "Shyam" and feminine "Shyama" and "Kali" (both names for the dark goddess), indicates an Indian awareness of dark complexions. Even Indians privilege fairness ("wheaten," "golden," "olive" complexions) over dark skins, and resent being called "black," preferring "brown."

Bannerman's stylized representations of Sambo and his umbrella may well have taken something from Heinrich Hoffmann's black-a-moor in "The Story of the Inky Boys" in *Struwwelpeter* (1845). Yuill writes that Bannerman's Jumbo is "clothed similarly to later-day minstrel costumes" (4, 19, 17). Bannerman's images may have also been taken from previous U.S. images, too, though no commentator provides earlier ones that resemble hers. However, sources do not determine all aspects of results. Some Indians of Negro and other races, especially lowcaste ones in the regions Bannerman lived, have very dark skins, blunt features, broad noses, thick lips, large eyes, frizzy (not "nappy") hair, and thin legs, which is what I think is stylized in Bannerman's illustrations. Bannerman could draw in a primitive manner as well as an illustrationist one. A separate, less stylized portrait by Bannerman of Sambo teaching white children about tigers, which she painted when three of her books were turned into textbook-readers, tends toward the latter style (Hay 110, color reproduction on Hay's cover). This figure lends itself to being seen as a Negro, much more than the ones in the book.

Hay says that the text meets World Council of Churches guidelines for evaluating the racial correctness of texts except for the names (172), though it was probably the racial incorrectness of the illustrations that was at issue. In Australia, at the University of Queensland in 1980, a clerk was spelling out my name: "S for Sambo," he said. I laughed in my recognition of the racial associations of the name. He smilingly followed with, "S for Samuel."

Hay's claim that Bannerman did not know of the generic use of the name "Sambo" is impossible to prove. Bannerman may have appropriated Sambo unintentionally, and participated in period racist homogenization of blackness, which can still leave the putative racism directed at India. "Sambo" is a stylization of Indian names themselves, via either Anglophone mishearing and/or a deliberate playing with them, which is not usually noted. "Shambhu" is a common male Indian name. The British mishearing habitually made the "u" of "-pur" (place) into the "o" of "-pore," so that the phonetic misrendition of "Shambhu" could quite well be "Sambo." There is also the name "Shyam," which indeed means "black" (the dark god Krishna). Since cultural appropriation and return are at issue, there is a Parsee name "Sam," too. Parsees are fair and would very fiercely resent being called "black."

"Mumbo" and "Jumbo" seem to follow the pattern set by "Sambo." In the context of Bannerman's experience of India as being almost exclusively in then Bombay and Madras, it should be noted that common Indian (Tamil) male names are "Jambunathan" and "Jambuvan." "Mumba-

devi” is the goddess after whom Bombay (now “Mumbai”) is named. Further, comic songs in English mocking oriental names were common in the Victorian period. As children, my sister and I recognized the names as obviously artificial, while the bazaar, jungle, tigers, palm tree, and ghee fixed the family’s Indianness for us. The names felt no odder or more exotic to us than Rumpelstiltskin or Dornröschen.

Later, in 1971, the *My Book House* version of *Sambo* retained the Indian illustrations but changed the title to “Rama and the Tigers.” It religiously changed “Sambo” to “Rama Krishna,” “Mumbo” incongruously to the male name “Lakshmana,” and “Jumbo” to “Ishwaran”; these are similar to other American “Indianizing” revisions. They give *Sambo* a specifically Hindu touch, as these are names of its gods.

Hay claims that the *Sambo* family are intentionally caricatures of Africans, defending Bannerman from the charge of racism by saying that she caricatured her own white children in letters and in *Pat and the Spider* (69, 156), that she was untrained (158), and that she painted portraits of Indians sympathetically in her letters (33, 36, 37). However, an intentionally primitive style depicting blacks, and whites may lend itself to being seen as hurtful caricature.

Hay stressed that Bannerman did not set *Sambo* in the American South, and that the illustrations are not the racist stereotypes of African-Americans or Africans that some U.S. illustrators depicted them. Hays points to the great plethora of non-Bannerman illustrated editions in the U.S. (155). However, some of these were transitory; the great volume does not conclusively prove that they blotted out Bannerman’s images in people’s minds. And Hay does not address the fact that Bannerman’s own illustrations are open to charges such as those specified against others. I feel that many of Hay’s other claims about Bannerman can also be contested, though it is good that most of the literary world seems to have accepted Hay’s claim for the purity of Bannerman’s nonracist inventions in naming and illustrating as she did, while still wishing to retell, rename, and reillustrate her work.

To be postcolonial does not mean automatically to sneer or protest at everything colonial or see racism everywhere. I do not like the original images, but see them as potentially ambiguous. At the same time, I have reservations about the intentions and function of U.S. Indianizings. Although I love the inauthentic Indianizing presentation of my childhood, I could follow protests about both Bannerman’s illustrations and my childhood ones in relation to India, but could not subscribe to them myself. Perhaps Bannerman’s illustrations, seen through increasingly inflamed American eyes, contributed to *Sambo*’s image in the United

States first as an African/African-American and then as a racist depiction. I can understand various Negro and South Asian protests about them, though cannot subscribe to these myself. I do not think these illustrations should be erased or made inaccessible. However, I do not like them, which is not because they are caricatures or racist, but only because they are crude (intentionally or otherwise) and are not the beloved ones from my childhood.

I never knew Bannerman's own illustrations as a child. Would I have disliked the story or the pictures if I had? As a child, I rejected the news of U.S./U.K. protests at the putative racism of *Sambo* and I still do not see racism in, or take offense, at any part of it. But if I had seen Bannerman's illustrations early on, would I have been insulted or hurt? Would I have felt them strange or ingested negative images to later realize that I had been deluded or culturally imperialized without knowing it? Is my later lack of umbrage the result of meeting Bannerman's story without her original images? Was my positive response to *Sambo*, as to all the *My Book House* images of India, the result of the beautiful, noncaricature although inaccurate and inauthentic illustrations, which determine and influence my images of the text and contribute to a readerly cocreation of the work? I recognize the tension between my solicitude that Bannerman's text and illustrations not be erased with my preference for her text with inauthentic and ideologically motivated Indianizing American illustrations of my childhood, and with my simultaneous reservations about the intentions and function of U.S. Indianizing in general, particularly the more recent versions.

Sambo was not included in *My Book House* until 1937, with illustrations of non-Indian Negroes by Nellie H. Farnam. Bill Yoffee, who reprints a few of the 1937 illustrations in his 1997 *Black Sambo's Saga*, writes they are "clearly African-American or West Indian, depending on your perspective" (Yoffee Correspondence 2003). The anonymous illustrations I knew in the 1950s, which I now find were by Keith Ward, follow both Bannerman and Farnam; they were part of a sanitizing, Indianizing U.S. project. This sequence of illustrations certainly suggests a purely commercial and ideological motive. Maybe Wayne Booth did not know *Sambo* from *My Book House*, or just the 1937 version. It partially parallels folktale mutation in the transmission of a basic narrative. *My Book House* omitted *Sambo* altogether after 1971, so the text and illustrations I loved are not in current editions, I am told. Maybe with the current swing in opinion, the 1950s Indian Sambo may yet reappear.

Like many others, Ward's *My Book House* illustrations are better drawn and in a different style, but partially deliberately modeled on

Bannerman's. They illustrate the same things as Bannerman does, the postures of the figures coated, and tree-circling tigers. The two versions of Sambo hiding behind the umbrella correspond, *and* they have the features of the original that I particularly like: nagaras, Jumbo's brass pot. The parents are now lighter-skinned. There are fewer illustrations. They omit the first and subsequent illustration of Sambo in his ambiguously skirt-like shorts, his fearful meetings with the tigers, his tears, his watching the tigers' discussion behind the tree, three illustrations with the tigers in a circle, Jumbo and the pot, the pool of ghee, Mumbo and the frying pan, and the separate pile of pancakes. They retain the brimming pot from Mumbo's kitchen, but label it "ghi" rather than "Tiger Ghi." They give the parents Indian-looking clothes, replacing Jumbo's completely and giving him nagaras, a turban, and a beard. Still barefooted, Mumbo now wears a long shawl garment over her head and midriff and has new jewelry, all influenced by Farnam. They relocate the pancake-eating family to an outdoor picnic; the dining table is a Western import. The picnic allows them to eat with their hands (in traditional Indian style) rather than with Bannerman's original table implements.

A militant Indian might see these illustrations as inaccurate, inconsistent, Orientalizing, and thus racist. Sambo's now baggy pants are too short to be an authentic set of *shalwars*. Mumbo's new gold earrings and coin-chain head-ornament can be seen as Mammy-like or gypsy-like. Sambo's plain, skirt-like undershorts are now a draped red-patterned loincloth (*gamchha, langothi*); he could not have had these on underneath his fine clothes without great discomfort. His new bib is not traditionally Indian. The turbaned Jumbo, the look of whose *dhoti* indicates the illustrator's vagueness about how it is worn, holds a piece of pancake inauthentically and *very offensively* in his left hand, which is the traditionally polluted and unused hand. The costumes suggest an unspecified North Indian setting, untrue to Bannerman's home. Sambo does not wear a turban, as he does in other editions. In view of the time of the drawings, I forgive it all.

Class, Cultural, and Identity Themes

Norman Holland claims that we read to defend ourselves against anxiety—using form to sublimate our impulses; our identity themes ground subsequent formal "interpretations" (Tabbert 148–49). Valid interpretations become a chimera; there are only realizations of texts. Reinbert Tabbert cites findings that middle-class children refer to literary experience, and lower-class children to life experiences (144–45).

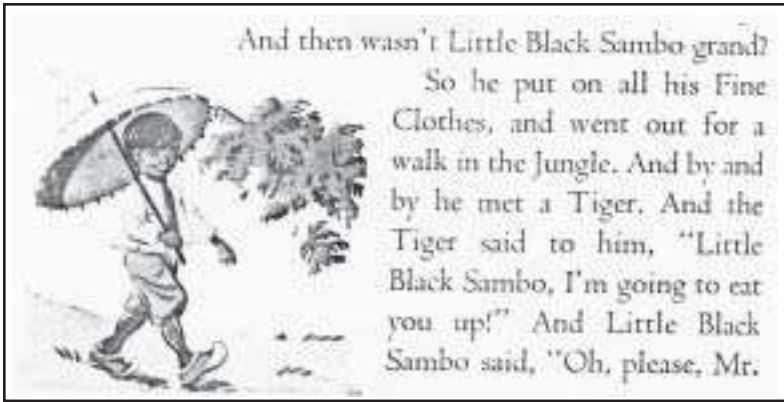


Figure 1. The illustration of Sambo, by Keith Ward, from Helen Bannerman's "Little Black Sambo: A Tale of India" that appeared in the 1950 edition of Olive Beaupré Miller's *My Book House*. ©The United Educators, Inc., and reprinted with its permission.

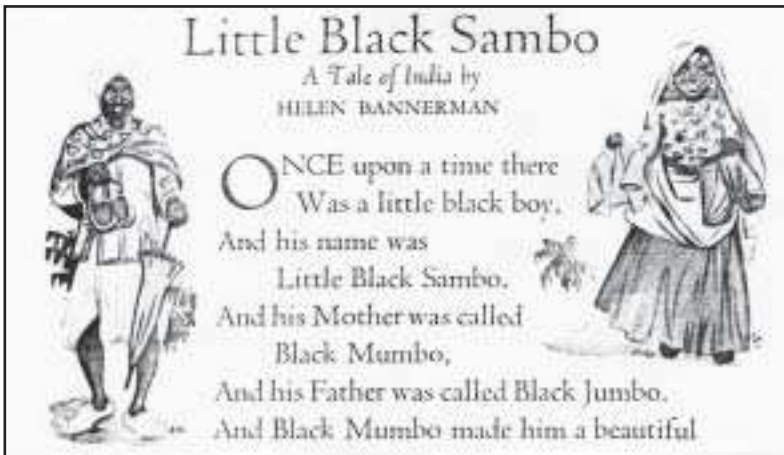


Figure 2. The illustration of Sambo's mother and father, by Keith Ward, from Helen Bannerman's "Little Black Sambo: A Tale of India," which appeared in the 1950 edition of Olive Beaupré Miller's *My Book House*. ©The United Educators, Inc., and reprinted with its permission.

As a middle-class child, I tended to link books to other books, not to life. I do not know to what degree I used or use this text to play out either my class, cultural, or own identity themes, or how to separate these. I can only hazard that I am anxious, find life threatening and avoid confrontation, privilege negotiation, set great store by politeness and stick to agreements, and set great store by food as reward. All of these accord with *Sambo*. I am loyal to my own past, for the illustrations to *Sambo* that I knew first are the ones I like best.

I also bear out Holland's conclusion that one reader will read different things similarly (131), rather than that the same thing will be read similarly by different readers. From Holland's conclusion, the same reader will read the same sort of thing, and individual critics will tend to look for similar things in different works. I read for comfort, stick to the simple forms, and am uncomfortable with complicated books in which anxiety is allayed. I like talking animals (Aesop, *Doctor Dolittle*, C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*), tricksters (Brer Rabbit, Jack the Giant Killer, Reynard), and naive stories about a "flat" India when I can get them (Flora Annie Steel, Rumer Godden, Elizabeth Cadell). *Sambo* is one of many similar works to which I have been drawn. With everything I read, I make the same sort of detailed consideration with other works that I have made here.

In the early postcolonial context, some children in a relatively economically disadvantaged culture, like myself, had access to foreign work that was subsequently seen as condescendingly racist and imperialist, and did not respond adversely to it. My affection for, and loyalty to, the middle-class canon of English children's literature, which is often neglected, extends to persistent studying and defending of it along with other similarly marginalized middlebrow or popular literature in a university English department, when these literatures were not thought viable areas of study.

Perhaps it can thus be hazarded about reception, that in all cultures some readers continue to respond positively to that which they responded positively as children, and move from admiration to a more articulated, informed, and reflective analysis. A degree of adult nostalgia for childhood is responsible for not only the sale of older work, but analysis of it. Responses do change over time; they sometimes reverse themselves, but sometimes become only more intense, like my positive response to *Sambo*.

I have given an account of *Little Black Sambo* and myself. I wish I could give you a more exotic account of how I received an American children's book in India—perhaps an object in a cargo cult—how I leapt

in joy to see myself in the brown, South Asian child-protagonist, how my interpretation of its form and function were, and are, totally different from non-Indians, how childish innocence made me accept it and how now postcolonial ire makes me repudiate it. But I cannot. I must emphasize that we should not homogenize cultures. Instead, we need to consider differing individuals' responses within them and constantly bear in mind that class position, education, ideology, the degree of receptivity to reading in a family, accessibility, and personality type all combine within the reception of a work which takes place over time and in many situations.

The canon of mainstream English literature, which is naturalized in a colonial and later a postcolonial situation, is mediated by colonized structures, a common language, and the educated classes. If *Sambo* is a valuable work, then to whose culture does it belong? If shared, which culture, nation, and/or country has primary claim? It is written in India about an Indian setting with Indian objects in it. It was created for particular children, the white children of a Scottish woman living in India, then part of the British Empire, and was made accessible to all English-speaking children. The author is a woman whose family had connections in India over generations, who knew about the place, and liked at least some of the people. When I read *Sambo* as a child, it was a work that went from one English-speaking elite minority within a culture (Bannerman's) to another (mine) with an American intermediary in the context of the 1950s. Then, or now, was I, or am I, receiving work from another culture or my own? If I do not feel alien to the book or separated off from it, am I not primarily conscious of myself as an Indian in relation to a "foreign" text? Does this automatically make my response less interestingly "authentic" and more "culturally imperialism/assimilated" than those who do?

Critics are tempted to fall into a great trap when using the term "culture" unreflectively and forget that cultures are unequally positioned in relation to each other. It is easy to forget that the modes of interaction and points of intersection depend on structures of access and economic and educational status within the receiving culture—that is, they depend on money to buy printed materials, literacy, and leisure time to read. Foreign books are often still too expensive to buy in India. I see the bookshops of my childhood, which were once crammed with books, now with many bare shelves. Finally, many, if not most, Indian children did not and do not read *Sambo* or anything else, even in an Indian vernacular language—for they could not and cannot read.

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Notes

¹ Knowledge production occurs in a changing academic market, which determines which texts are worth writing about and what sort of writing is considered appropriate. This article was written in 1977–1978 and thought by the editor of *Children's Literature in Education* to be more suitable as a "Letter to the Editor" since so much had been written on *Sambo*. A revision was presented as a paper at the International Research Society in Children's Literature 1993 conference and accepted for publication in a volume that was never published.

² No Australian library contains *My Book House* and no U.S. library owning it was willing to loan it. A photocopy of Helen Bannerman's "Little Black Sambo: A Tale of India" was obtained for me by Dr. Linda Conrad. But the "Sambo"-related notes in the supplementary volume for parents/teachers have remained unseen by me since the 1960s. Mr. Bill Yoffee provided copies of what are, historically, the second set of illustrations from *My Book House*. The illustrations are copyrighted by The United Educators, Inc., and reprinted with their permission. I am indebted to Mr. Bill Tully, Australian National Library, and Ms. Helen Schinske for bibliographical help; to Rev. Douglas and Mrs. Anne Bannerman for texts; to Richard Reublin; to Mr. Douglas Augier for information on the bakarkhani; and to Hugh Crago for critical scrutiny.

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