ANNA LEE STENSLAND, *LITERATURE BY AND ABOUT THE AMERICAN INDIAN*. Second Edition. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1979, 382 pp. $6.75 paper ($6.00 NCTE Members).

This annotated bibliography, an expanded version of Stensland's 1973 publication of the same title, broadens the scope of works included considerably. The earlier edition was intended as a guide for teachers of secondary students; the present edition also includes annotations by Aune Fadum of some 200 books for pupils in the elementary grades. Some of the 1973 annotations of important secondary level books have been retained, but the emphasis is on books published since that date. Books about Indians from Mexico and Canada are included. All together nearly 800 titles are mentioned.

The introduction discusses what Stensland calls "important themes in Indian literature"; by "Indian literature" Stensland means both books by and about Indians, and she discusses themes such as betrayal by whites, spirituality of life, loyalty to tribe, bravery of women, sacredness of nature, search for self-identity, and the white child in captivity. Obviously these are not really parallel "themes," since some of them refer to Indian values and others to plot type. What Stensland does is to give an overview and mention briefly books which deal with these "themes."

The introduction also includes a valuable discussion of Indian stereotypes: the noble red man, the heathen savage, the murderous thief, the idler/drunkard, the beautiful Indian maiden, the vanishing race, and the faithful friend/servant. It is somewhat misleading to categorize "the vanishing race" as a stereotype. What it is really is a misconception about Indian population. The "sentimentalized picture" of the Indian that Stensland discusses in this category is in actuality part of the noble red man stereotype. To confuse matters further, Stensland also discusses here the "silent, humorless, granite-faced cigar store Indian," which is a totally different stereotype. Since stereotyping seriously affects both the literary value of a book and the work's potential as an instrument for promoting cultural understanding, what Stensland says about stereotypes is vitally important; she just doesn't go quite far enough. A systematic study of Indian stereotypes reveals several other images that should have been exposed. For example, another aspect of the heathen savage, the "child of the devil" stereotype, is that the Indian is endowed with fearful supernatural powers, a concept that is still with us, as evidenced by a 1970's missionary newsletter, which refers to a Hopi village "steeped in witchcraft," at whose dances "you can feel the very presence of evil forces as they actually worship the devil."[1] Another stereotype is the personality-less, beast-of-burden-like squaw, the dreary drudge or animalistic prostitute. Still another stereotype, much more recent in origin but probably more influential on the Indian himself, sees the Indian as a sociological victim, put upon by society, powerless to do anything on his own behalf, utterly dependent and passive.

The final section of the introduction prudently focuses on Indian literature of the mid-seventies and mentions some poor books that attempt to capitalize on the current interest in Indians. Unfortunately, Stensland seems reluctant to be very specific about these; she makes statements such as "Because they may perpetuate the misconceptions of their time or because they may be lacking in value, some of these earlier writings probably should have remained unpublished," without making clear which specific books she means. Stensland's apparent desire to avoid most negative criticism or to soften it causes her here as well as throughout the book to make ambiguous statements about the worth of certain books.

The useful second chapter, "Aids for the Teacher," lists guides to curriculum planning, suggested basic libraries of Indian literature for various grade levels, and sources of additional materials.

The third chapter, "Biographies of Selected American Indian Authors," has paragraph-long entries on over fifty authors, many contemporary. While the list is by no means exhaustive, it is helpful to have this much hard-to-come-by information in capsulated form. It would also have been helpful to have either a separate index to works written by Indian authors or to have asterisks or some distinguishing mark beside the names of Indian authors in the mixed index that Stensland does provide.

A second section of the book contains the annotated bibliography itself, divided into the following categories: Myth, Legend, Oratory, and Poetry; Fiction; Biography and Autobiography; History; Traditional Life and Culture (non-fiction works); Modern Life and Problems (non-fiction works); and Music, Arts, and Crafts. Within each category, the entries are divided into those suitable for elementary pupils, (further notated as grades 1-3 and grades 4-6) junior high pupils, and senior high pupils and adults. These grade levels can be taken only as "guides," Stensland writes, since reading levels are hard to assess; it should be added that suitability of subject matter is also difficult to assess, but occasionally Stensland's guides seem misleading. For example, while it is true that Jaime De Angulo's *Indian Tales* almost certainly will be enjoyed by adults and maybe by junior high students (she lists the book in the latter category), the book may well appeal to elementary students more than to junior high students, who often think they are too sophisticated for animals-as-humans stories. On the other hand, Susan Feldmann's *The Storytelling Stone: Myths and Tales of the American Indians*, which is also listed for junior high students, is clearly suitable for older students and adults. The vocabulary and the concepts of the introduction are very sophisticated, and the tales themselves frequently deal with violence, bodily functions, and sexual acts in such a way that junior high youngsters might, through lack of understanding and maturity, form negative impressions of Indians. Moreover, in many school districts, teachers using the book with junior high schoolers could well find themselves in hot water. Since community judgments about what constitutes "obscenity" vary widely, teachers should be forewarned that Stensland's annotations rarely take this matter into account except, perhaps, by an indirect comment that a particular book is best suited for "mature" students. On the whole, however, Stensland's categorization seems judicious.

In the introduction to the bibliography, Stensland briefly discusses her criteria for selection and suggests that she has used "all of the criteria that apply to any good literature," such as interest of plot, complexity of character, and sensitivity of style. But above all, she writes, "the important question is whether the story is true to the Indian way," and in determining this she has rightly relied, wherever possible, on reviews done by Indians. Not every book included is "necessarily recommended as a fine example of Indian life and culture" because Stensland thought, and wisely so, that including some not wholly desirable books that teachers ask about and mentioning their weakness would be more helpful than ignoring the books. The problem is that when negative evaluations ought to be made in terms of literary quality or in terms of accurate presentation of Indians both Stensland and Aune seldom point out the deficiencies (unless they quote another source for the negative judgment), or they are not sufficiently direct and specific about what is objectionable. For the most part, their annotations are plot summaries or non-evaluative descriptions of the books. Consequently, teachers and librarians depending upon Stensland's and Aune's annotations may sometimes recommend to unsuspecting readers books that are of questionable quality in one way or another.

For example, there is no mention of stereotyping in such books as Glenn Balch's *Indian Paint*, wherein both Little Falcon and his father, Chief War Cloud, are typecast Noble Red Men or in Wayne Dyre Doughty's *Crimson Moccasins*, wherein there are several stereotypical characters both in the white and in the Indian worlds that Quick Eagle tries unsuccessfully to live in. Often non-Indian reviewers (and sometimes Indian commentators as well) think that so long as the Indians are not portrayed as negative stereotypes, the characterization is acceptable, but as Rupert Costo has pointed out, the noble red man approach is "just as bad as the degradation published by others" because it makes no distinction from one Indian group to another, and it does not make clear that Indians "are human--with human faults and difficulties."[2] Moreover, the noble red man or Indian-as-helpless-victim stereotype detracts from literary quality as much as any other stereotype because such a character is a pre-conceived type, one-dimensional and unrealistic.

The annotation of *Pocahontas* by Grace Steele Woodward refers to it as a "scholarly work" but makes no mention of its racial slurs and emphases that are conducive to the formation, or continuation, of stereotypes and bias. For example, the early pages treat the hostility of the Powhatan Indians toward the Jamestown settlers as if it were entirely unprovoked, but state that Pocahontas rose "above the ignorance and savagery of her people . . . a culture of dark superstitions and devil worship . . . of easy cruelty and primitive social accomplishments, . . . the most revealing of whose celebrations was the ritualistic torture of captives" (pp. 6-15).

Stensland's annotations fail to take into account some of the more subtle kinds of prejudice against Indians conveyed in a book like Evelyn S. Lampman's *The Year of Small Shadow*. Lampman reveals the

"bad" white bigots for what they are but seems to accept the value system of the "good" whites who treat Small Shadow well. Mrs. Hicks, for example, judges the boy's worth by his table manners and cleanliness. Daniel Foster, out-standingly wise and humane, is kindly toward Indians and accepts some of their practices and values, but he is exceedingly paternalistic and treats all Indians as children. Stensland seldom warns the reader about books that are well-intentioned but subtly biased.

On the other hand, Stensland's comments about *Son of Old Man Hat*, by Left Handed as told to Walter Dyk, give no hint as to its richness not just as anthropological autobiography but as literature. Though it comes through an interpreter and an editor, Left Handed's strength of personality and engaging attitude toward life structure and unify the book; it is written artlessly but with gusto and perceptivity. It not only allays forever, as Dyk hoped it would, "that strange and monstrous apparition, the 'Primitive Mind,'"[3] it also utterly destroys, not by didacticism but by personalized realism, stereotype after stereotype, such as Navajos' improvidence, their total generosity with one another, their impassivity in the face of grief, their never telling a lie, their irresponsibility, their humorlessness. Left Handed's story will convince any reader that Indians differ a great deal from one individual to another, as well as from one culture group to another.

Although Stensland lists sensitivity of style as one of her evaluative criteria, she rarely criticizes a book on that score. She mentions, for example, that Lela and Rufus Waltrip's *Indian Women* includes "some fictionalized detail and conversation," but she doesn't say that the Waltrips combine third person omniscient narrative and research-oriented exposition and citation of sources in such a way that the two modes simply never fuse; the result is a style that is unlikely to hold the interest of young readers despite the importance of the subject. One wishes that Stensland had relied more heavily upon her own literary training and less upon the judgment of the Canadian university students who annotated books for *About Indians*, which Stensland frequently cites. *About Indians* often, as it does in this instance, says something is "well written" when more sophisticated judgment would wish to argue, and younger readers would probably just lay the book aside.

In terms of completeness, the list of books for elementary students is weakest. There are, for example, only four biographies/autobiographies annotated for the primary grades though dozens exist. And while recognizing that lines had to be drawn somewhere, one wishes that some of the earlier but excellent and still widely accessible books had been included. Finally, the bibliography makes no mention whatever of books intended specifically for use with Indian children, such as those produced by the Northern Cheyenne particularly for use in Montana schools and those by the Navajo Curriculum Center. There is a sore need both for these kinds of books and for recognition of those that do exist.

But to give examples of what Stensland's annotations fail to do or fail to include is not to suggest that *Literature By and About the American Indian* is not a highly commendable work. It is certainly meritorious and deserving of high praise, for it goes further toward filling a desperate need than any other book of its kind. Within the limitations imposed by the form of an annotated bibliography, Stensland has accomplished a huge task. The bibliography cannot be exhaustive, and Stensland's decisions about what to include are generally sound. Moreover, the attenuated form of the annotations precludes in-depth analysis and documentation of weaknesses of the books annotated. At best, only brief evaluations can be made, and it is understandable that Stensland would err on the side of generosity toward the books in the absence of space to defend negative comments. What this review is really lamenting is the scarcity of books for young people that are both accurate in their presentation of Indians and excellent as literature and/or the lack of a book of critical criteria that could be applied by teachers, librarians, parents, or anyone interested in making evaluating text books, but there is, to this writer's knowledge, nothing comparable for use in evaluating literature. This need notwithstanding, one should not expect Stensland's bibliography to do a job that is outside its scope; one should be grateful for the enormous job it does. Young people's reading should be the richer for it.

Endnotes

[1]Richard Erdoes, *The Rain Dance People*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976, p. 269.

[2]Rupert Costo, "Books," *The Indian Historian*, 3, No. 1, Winter 1970, 60.

[3]Walter Dyk, *Son of Old Man Hat*, New York: Harcourt, 1938, p. xiv.

--Dona Hoilman
Ball State University

TATO LAVIERA, *LA CARRETA MADE A U-TURN*. PHOTOS BY DOMINIQUE. Gary, Indiana: Arte Publico Press, 1979, 74 pp. $5.00 paper.

The title of this new book of poetry from New York's Latino Lower East Side refers to a drama, *La Carreta*, by one of Puerto Rico's most prestigious authors, René Marqués (1919-1979).[1] It is generally considered one of the supreme artistic expressions of the collective Puerto Rican experience. At the end of the play the emigrants decide to leave New York City in an attempt to maintain their integrity and identity, to till the earth in the hills of Puerto Rico.

Laviera's book may be viewed as both a social and a poetic document of a young Puerto Rican who was raised in New York, who