

That's Racist Folks...

OPINION



Laura Daniel

Children's cartoons reflect America's biased view of history and reinforce negative stereotypes of non-whites

For years I spent Saturday morning glued to the spot of carpet directly in front of the family television. Now, years later, I have the pleasure of viewing cartoons on the much-revered Cartoon Network on my own TV.

Excited to see the old Warner Brothers cartoons, I sat wide-eyed in front of the television, eager to see which Porky Pig short was coming on next. By the end of the cartoon, my eyes had bulged even further, and my mouth had dropped wide open.

A small "hillbilly" character had sadistically tickled a large, dopey-looking Native American until the American Indian backed off a cliff, fell hundreds of feet, crashed through the ground and took the surrounding environment with him.

The map of the continental United States, which read "Injun Territory," was pulled down the hole the Native American had fallen through, and a new map reading "The United States" appeared.

I was horrified. But when I searched my memory, I realized that this cartoon was not uncommon and that it was not some anomaly. No. This cartoon was just like dozens of others. How many times did a Looney Tunes character finagle his way out of a boiling pot just as "The Natives" were getting ready to season him along with the carrots and potatoes?

And it was usually a little after Bugs Bunny said "How" to the Indian chief, that the chief sent the other savages to scalp Bugs. My memory banks are loaded with lessons on how stupid non-whites are, and not just Native Americans. All Asians looked the same — slanted eyes, bucked-teeth and a ringing gong accompaniment. And who could forget the Little Black Sambo-type character? A little slow but "cute" nevertheless.

Why all this racism? What was the point in degrading Native Americans? Could it be that many white Americans were (are) afraid to acknowledge their mistakes?

If we portray Native Americans as savage



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buffoons, then maybe nobody will notice that when Columbus and subsequent explorers invaded the Americas, they slaughtered thousands and thousands of native peoples. Maybe people won't notice that Native Americans have something to offer this world because it might not include destroying the environment in order to save or make money.

Surely the Looney Tunes writers didn't purposefully try to disguise history. They were probably taught the same "stick with your own" type of drivel. But that doesn't excuse this derogative racism. To combat these bigoted cartoons, we must show that what they represent is not acceptable.

We must ask how so many parents could let their children grow up watching these cartoons. When we do, we realize it's because they grew up watching them, too.

And now, evidently, the children of the '90s are watching the same racist cartoons. And what will they teach their children? Will they continue the American tradition of purposely telling half-truths and giving embellished accounts of history?

They will. They will until someone finally teaches our children that America has made mistakes. That we should learn from them and that even though some groups of people don't hold the same beliefs, have the same skin color or speak the same language as we might have, they are still equal, intelligent and have something to offer.

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Constitutional Court's ruling sets wrong precedent

Due to the recent events involving the ASUO Multicultural Center, I feel it is my turn to express my opinion on this fiasco.

This case should never have come before the ASUO Constitution Court, nor should impeachment have even been an issue. I made a mistake involving procedure, apologized for it immediately and then had my name dragged through the mud because the MCC was being petty.

The opinion of the Constitution Court sets a wrongful precedent and is against national law. There have been U.S. Supreme Court cases involving the issue of impeachment and prohibiting an elected official from voting. The Constitution Court's decision prohibited me from voting on the MCC budget and from serving as an elected official.

The Emerald editorial (Feb. 24, ODE) said I have a conflict of interest with the MCC. I do not have a conflict of interest with the MCC. I just do not agree with the MCC's mission statement. Having a conflict of interest and not liking a group's mission statement are two different issues.

As for the non-fulfillment of duties for which I was charged, the MCC had no ba-

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sis for this argument. In the ASUO Programs Finance Committee bylaws, as well as the ASUO Student Senate bylaws, the only condition for this charge would have been missing office hours or a designated number of meetings and not checking messages. I feel as if I have fulfilled my duties above and beyond the minimum requirements. I offered my services as a PFC senator to the MCC on many occasions, and my help was refused. I had questions about its budget and mission statement, and my questions were left unanswered because the MCC failed to communicate.

In my letter to the MCC, I stated that its budget hearing would be tabled if the group did not take appropriate action to have its mission statement approved by the Student Senate. By pushing back its budget hearing, I was giving the MCC time to follow what I thought was proper procedure. Immediately after learning of my mistake, I wrote an apology letter to the MCC and apologized

to MCC director Dee Eason directly.

In terms of going later in the budget process, some group has to go last. The MCC was acting in its own "best interest" by wanting to have an earlier hearing date. The PFC rotates groups with larger budgets and then smaller budgets by hearing; this allows for the PFC to see where it is spending money. According to the University Clark Document, the only condition for the MCC not receiving what it has requested is if it is not spending money on programs that benefit "the cultural and physical aspect of the University." The allocations have been fairly justified depending on groups' needs and their requests for funds.

The ODE also used the court's statement that "the only acceptable reason for the injunction was that I am an 'active' member of the Jewish Student Union, a group that falls under the MCC umbrella." As a senator, I was elected to serve the MCC as well as the whole student body. As a member of the JSU and a student, the MCC exists to serve me. Because I think the MCC's mission statement is exclusive, the MCC will not serve in my best interests as a member of the JSU or a student on this campus. It will also not serve in the best interests of

students if its mission statement is exclusive.

The PFC has no set rules describing scheduling for budgets nor does it have written law describing activities that are "unethical." Many feel I have acted unethically. I feel I was helping the student body so that all students will be included in all ASUO programs.

The court's decision was highly political. The justices made their decision based on the fact that cases of this caliber have probably not come before the court. The decision was based on the fact that if the court made a decision, the pettiness and the frustrations of both parties would end. Wrong! I am frustrated the court violated national law. With three law students required to serve on the court, you would think the justices would know what they are doing. Wrong again. Get a clue. If the court needs to "fix the PFC's problems," it should play a more integral role in student government and learn more about the budget process.

Sari Wisch is a member of the ASUO Programs Finance Committee. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.