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As authors, we are grateful for opportunities to bring our stories directly to children with public readings in conjunction with organizations that encourage a love of stories for all. It was in that spirit that each of us accepted an invitation to join the inaugural Springfield Children's Literature Festival being held at the newly opened "The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum" in Springfield, MA, on October 14, 2017.

However, we recently learned that a key component of this institution honoring Dr. Seuss features a mural depicting a scene from his first book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, and within the selected art is a jarring racial stereotype of a Chinese man, who is depicted with chopsticks, a pointed hat, and slanted slit eyes. We find this caricature of "the Chinaman" deeply hurtful, and have concerns about children's exposure to it.

While this image may have been considered amusing to some when it was published 80 years ago, it is obviously offensive in 2017 (the year the mural was painted). For some children who visit the museum, their only interaction with Asian representation might be that painting. For others, seeing themselves represented in such a stereotypical way may feed into internalized, even subconscious shame and humiliation. It is incumbent on our public institutions to present all races in a fair manner. Displaying imagery this offensive damages not only Asian American children, but also non-Asian kids who absorb this caricature and could associate it with all Asians or their Asian neighbors and classmates.

The career of Ted Geisel, writing as Dr. Seuss, is a story of growth, from accepting the baser racial stereotypes of the times in his early career, to challenging those divisive impulses with work that delighted his readers and changed the times. It was our hope that the administration of the new Seuss-ian institution would be able to take inspiration from Mr. Geisel's journey and find creative ways to allow children of all backgrounds to feel welcomed (or, at the very least, provide context for this hurtful painting).

It was in that spirit that we contacted the Seuss Museum and expressed our concerns. Unfortunately, the administration replied that it was the responsibility of visitors to contextualize the oversized painting of the "Chinaman" for their younger wards, not theirs. It is hard to fathom this institution's contention that it has no obligation to the myriad of children (not to mention future authors and illustrators) who might be led to think that this form of racism is acceptable by featuring it in the main hall of their museum without comment.

Two of us are Asian American (one is Chinese American), and two of us are the children of immigrants. We celebrate our ethnic differences and artistic commonalities as authors called to provide and represent the best for all our readers. We will not endorse racism in any form. Therefore, we have informed the museum that none of us will be appearing at the October 14th event.

We apologize to the families that had hoped, as we did, to have a nice day celebrating all that children's books can offer and will try to find a suitable venue to visit Springfield, MA, in the future.

Until then we will read a story about Sneetches on beaches, and hope for a day when we no longer ridicule anyone for their ethnicity or star-bereft bellies.



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