

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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What Is a Stereotype?

By REGINALD A. SOOLOOK

Archie Bunker, the main character of this year's most popular television series "All in the Family", each week expresses a lot of biased feeling about people and things. This article is not about Archie Bunker, but rather about stereotypes — no, a particular kind of stereotype! A stereotype that set men apart and that makes the beholder a notch above his stereotypes. But first, what is a stereotype?

A stereotype is prejudice: a prejudgment of human character that is generally simple rather than complex of differentiated; erroneous rather than accurate; acquired secondhand rather than through direct experience with the reality it is supposed to represent; and it is usually resistant to modification by new experience.

Because of its simplicity, a stereotype is learned easily. From an early age, children hear adjectives attached to certain racial groups: shiftless Mexicans; sneaky and ever-bowing Japanese; crude and loud Negroes; and drunken, dirty, and lazy Indians (the same is true in Alaska about the natives). The concept of "less intelligent" is also believed inherent in all of these racial groups. The racial prejudice is reinforced when the child sees a character fitting this description on either the television or a movie. For a child, this schooling requires no conscious effort.

In addition, the simplicity of a prejudice comes from it being memorized easily. A simple stereotype is easy to remember. This saves the person a great deal of mental effort in recalling and categorizing his stereotype.

The stereotypes of the racial groups are generally erroneous (although some are true) in that they generally reflect only the negative view about the people. Not every individual in that minority group behaves like the movie character neither do all the people have the same character. No stereotype can accurately describe a racial group.

The over-simplified descriptions of certain racial groups that a child has learned are second-hand information acquired largely from the parents either through verbal direction or by inheritance of attitudes (does the good little child ever disbelieve his parents?) The information he receives from the movies and television is also second-hand. The child perceives what the director wanted him to experience. Later when he is older and able to read, he is influenced by the printed word — themselves the opinion of the author. Most, if not all, stereotypes are, in fact, acquired through other sources.

Because a stereotype is a prejudiced attitude, it is resistant to modification. The possessor of these simple and erroneous images is convinced that they are true and apply to every individual in that group.

Mr. Stephen Steinberg, a research sociologist for the Survey Research Center of the Berkeley campus of the University of California, sums it up beautifully when he states . . . "once these images are adopted, they operate as filters on the individual's perception and understanding of the world around him. Should he encounter a black who appears lazy, he interprets this as confirming the stereotype. At the same time, he filters out all those cases that contradict the stereotype (or interprets him as an exception). Since our (white dominant) society has no images of whites as lazy, the unambitious white, like the industrious black, receives little notice. The self-confirming mechanism is part of the reason people cling to their prejudices with so much conviction."

Who do you think the television series "All in the Family" is so popular with? The series' main character, Archie Bunker, is the mouthpiece of the "silent majority" — he voices the unexpressed prejudices of the dominant society. Secluded in their homes, they converse with Archie.

Although there are many types of stereotypes, e.g. age-groups, professions, trades, nationalities, races, politics, religious, and family-relations, I have directed my attention to the one that is most prevalent in the American society — the racial stereotype. The indicative social, economic, and educational reality, plus the exploitive nature of racial stereotypes of the white race, makes it the worst kind, the most damaging, and the most damnable.

In conclusion, I quote directly the words of Mr. Steinberg again because he articulates what I've felt but have been unable to write (as distinctly):

"One of the lesser inequities of prejudice is that the dominant group is rarely subjected to the same abusive characterization. It is not difficult to understand why this is so. The dominant group is able to set the standards of what is worthy and respectable in physical appearance, cultural values, and social behavior. Unsur-

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McGovern Position Paper on Indians-

Senator Initiated Policy of Indian Self-Determination

By RICHARD La COURSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — (AIPA) — Sen. George McGovern, D-S.D., who has just released a position paper on how he would administer Indian affairs if he wins the presidency in November, is from one of the high population areas of Indian country.

South Dakota is Sioux country, with a constituency of nine tribes with a combined enrolled population of 36,000. When McGovern was elected to the House of Representatives in 1956, Indian voters were solidly in his camp.

McGovern served two terms in the House till 1960, lost his bid for the Senate and was appointed to a special hunger and nutrition committee by the late President John F. Kennedy. McGovern won the Senate race in 1964 by a slight margin, and is now serving his second term in the Senate.

In the Senate, McGovern

holds the position of chairman of the Senate Sub-committee on Indian Affairs. Both his Indian supporters and his Indian critics form their opinions of him on how he has performed in that crucial position.

His supporters point first of all to a 1966 resolution introduced by him into the Senate calling for a new national Indian policy based on self-determination and self-help. A key theme in the McGovern resolution, which surfaced in the highly respected Nixon Doctrine in 1970, was the Indians' right to manage and control Indian affairs.

That resolution called for the end of termination and relocation, for tribal contracting, for additional services for Indians from other agencies besides the Interior Department and the Indian bureau, for resource protection and respect for Indian identity and culture. The re-

solution, which passed the Senate but not the House, was reintroduced in 1969 — before President Richard M. Nixon's special Indian Message to Congress in July 1970.

"It is not enough to call for a reorganization or transfer of of functions in Indian affairs — though this may be needed," said McGovern in 1969. "A careful, well-conceived plan... without new direction and a firm commitment to action will only result in a continued inadequate performance. A hasty ill-conceived plan could well mean disaster for the Indians on a monumental scale."

His supporters also point to McGovern's activity in behalf of Taos Pueblo for Blue Lake in 1970, active participation in the debate to settle the Alaska Native land claims in 1971, and his visit to the Pine Ridge Res-

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Letters from Here and There

Cites TT's Important Role

ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS, INC.
432 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10016

May 30, 1972

Dear Howard:

Thanks so very much for your letter of May 10 with news of exciting new TUNDRA TIMES projects in the works.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my great admiration for your work as editor and publisher of the TUNDRA TIMES. Without the TUNDRA TIMES, there would have been no just settlement of Alaska Native land claims and perhaps no settlement at all. It was the TUNDRA TIMES that made possible the whole State-wide Native movement. When you started, there was simply no effective Native movement in the state. Even neighboring villages have very little contact with each other. By creating an informed constituency, the TUNDRA TIMES made possible the rapid growth and development of first a regional and then a statewide Native movement — a movement unparalleled in the history of the nation. At the same time, the TUNDRA TIMES was a powerful force to overcome the ancient isolation and sometime hostility between the Native peoples.

I well remember the first Statewide Native Conference that was organized by the TUNDRA TIMES and held in Fairbanks in 1964, which was the forerunner to the Alaska Federation of Natives.

In addition to the importance of the TUNDRA TIMES in shaping the Native movement, it also helped break down communications barriers between the Natives and the Alaska population as a whole. Particularly important, it made the State government, the Alaska Congressional delegation and the Department of the Interior far more responsive to Native needs and hopes.

One of the most dramatic moments in the whole history of the struggle over the land

was the TUNDRA TIMES survey of Native leaders and related editorials immediately following the passage of S. 1830 (which would have provided title to only 10 million acres of land). Without this coverage, it would have been virtually impossible to turn the whole situation in Washington around and mount a successful campaign in the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs for 40 million acres. This led ultimately to the support of the White House for 40 million acres and a reversal of the position in the Senate.

Of course, the contributions of the TUNDRA TIMES extends far beyond the land issue alone.

We will certainly follow the developments of the TUNDRA TIMES with great interest, and I look forward from time to time to getting up your way for some of those grand TUNDRA TIMES banquets.

Sincerely yours,

William Byler
Executive Director

Whaling Feast At Pt. Hope

Kivalina, Alaska 99750
June 5, 1972

Tundra Times
Fairbanks, Alaska

Starting tomorrow June 6, 1972 the people of Kivalina will be leaving for Pt. Hope about 90 miles west of Kivalina for the whaling feast starting June 9, 1972.

About 14 whales were caught at Pt. Hope and one at Kivalina. The whale feast that started June 1st at Kivalina was a short one because of the bad weather. Every boy, or girl, or an adult received a good sized piece of the whale's flippers.

After the whale feast or when the ice breaks up, the men will be hunting oogrugs which is the bearded seal. The bearded seals meat which is dried up and put in seal oil. The fish is also dried up and put in seal oil and stored up for the winter.

Warren Hawley, age 13

Shares Frederick Paul's Defense Of Don Wright

May 25, 1972

Tundra Times
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Mr. Rock:

As a free abiding native citizen from our vast state of Alaska I fully share Mr. Frederick Paul's concern for the defense of Don Wright, president of AFN (date April 26, 1972).

I live out in the bush as a member of our native regional corporation. I am not about to be blindfolded about what goes on in our region. Don Wright has done more for our natives than a dozen representatives has done for the whole state. I know some of our native leaders, and I'm ashamed to admit that they are already showing deceitfulness. Where is the heritage that they are supposed to be representing.

Our native society needs educated leaders, lets use the diplomas as shining crowns that will reflect on others.

I have been a servant to my native people for over 33 years as an interpreter for the language barrier. Times are changing, my people are getting more curious all the time, and now with the land claims settlement they want to know how things are doing. Above all they want good leadership, as they know that there are very few, if any dishonest chiefs among our forebearers.

I would like to advise each regional village to know their village and regional officers.

Lets remember that any mistakes we make now our future generations are the ones that will inherit these mistakes.

Remember the old Indian saying "Lets put our minds together and see what life we will make for our children."

May God Bless all our native leaders.

Sincerely yours,

Lena Andree
Dillingham, Alaska