

## Claims to Native Identity in Children's Literature [Abstract]

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This commentary essay examines several individuals who wrote books for children and made claims to Native identity that are fraudulent, or otherwise problematic. Asa Carter, for example, posed as a Cherokee named "Forrest Carter" and published *The Education of Little Tree*, put forth as the autobiography of someone who had been on the Trail of Tears. So popular that it was published in Korean, Turkish, Czech, Slovenian, and Spanish, in 1997 *Little Tree* became a feature film. Although the author's fraud was exposed in *The New York Times*, the book continues to be published. Jamake Highwater, posing as a Blackfoot/Cherokee, won the most prestigious children's literature award, the Newbery Honor given by the American Library Association, for *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey*, in 1978. Paul Goble is a British writer who loved American Indian stories so much that he moved to the United States to live near Plains tribes, where he was given a Native name. Both that name and the ways he spoke of the gift led people to believe that he had been adopted into the Lakota tribe. Like Carter and Highwater, but more prolific, Goble's books sell well in a market that retains narrow and stereotypical views of Native peoples. The essay concludes by discussing the ways that the works of Carter, Highwater, and Goble impact publishing today.

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