



Illustration by Kathryn Senior

## "MAN THE HUNTER": BIAS IN CHILDREN'S ARCHAEOLOGY BOOKS

Fiona Burtt

### Introduction

Children are interested in history because they are interested in stories (Plowden Report 1967, quoted in Steedman 1984, 105).

Archaeology and prehistory, partly by virtue of the fact that they represent the most distant past, attract an aura of enigma and excitement which encourages children to want to find out. What they discover, in many cases, is the information outlined in books. Children are told that "archaeologists are really detectives, hunting out the clues which help them find out what happened in the past" (Corbishley 1986, 2), and once all the clues are found the archaeologist will be able to deduce the 'truth', in the style of Sherlock Holmes. This serves to reinforce children's basic faith in the past which is presented to them as 'fact'. Book titles such as Living in Prehistoric Times (Chisholm 1982), Prehistoric Life (Gale 1973) and The Prehistoric World (Mitchell 1984) boldly and unequivocally impress upon children that their contents will be telling the true and undisputed story of life as it was, not as it possibly was, or has been interpreted as being. A text entitled The Usborne Book of Prehistoric Facts (Craig 1986), moreover, leaves no doubt that after reading it the young reader will have effectively come face to face with prehistoric times and people. In reality, however:

There is no direct route to the past and we must remember that archaeology is something done in the present....We shall find that the past 'as it was' is not what comes at the end of the trip; we are on a return ticket (Shanks and Tilley 1987, 15).

Children are more likely to come face to face with contemporary values and attitudes: the books will engender in children rigid ideas of society's norms, by presenting a past which reaffirms the present, and protecting them from anything which deviates from, or contradicts, these norms. In recent years, children's literature has been focused upon as a potent source of messages about norms concerning gender, race and social status. Certain areas of children's literature have attracted interest and criticism, resulting in the withdrawal from schools and libraries of books such as the infamous Janet and John series and Little Black Sambo, in the belief that they contain sexist and racist images which will adversely affect the formative cognitive systems of young children. Although little critical attention has been paid to books

dealing with the past, they, too, are important in the formation of the child's world view.

Many of these books are geared towards 7-12 year olds, an age when children are learning to classify and relate information from different sources. Thus, presented with a picture of, for instance, the place of men and women in prehistory, they will associate it with other information about men and women to create an underlying impression of how either sex does fit, and ought to fit, into the world around them (see Watts 1972). The same applies to ideas of race and colour.

Bias permeates children's archaeology books which continue to use established but old-fashioned interpretations of the past and are full of stereotypical images: male-designated activities such as hunting, farming and 'warring' are of paramount importance and movement from black Africa to white Britain defines progress. The past is thus presented in such a way as to undermine the importance of non-male, non-white, non-western humans in the creation of society and culture. Such androcentric and ethnocentric bias will inevitably result in a firm belief in the status of the white male throughout time, whereas women and people of other ethnic origins are seen by children to be considerably less important.

Children's archaeology books are, in effect, performing the classic ideological role of denying contradictions, naturalising the social order and representing sectional interests as universal. It has often been argued that "it is no good demanding that history should be unbiased. The writer cannot help being influenced by the interests and prejudices of the society to which he (sic) belongs" (Childe 1947, 22). Yet, written bias is not neutral; the selectivity of children's archaeology books, in writing about one type of past in exclusion of others, is an obvious form of bias which can be recognised. It must be remembered that such books are providing an education, whether used in schools or read at home, for children remember and learn from their contents. Children should not be given an education based on unsound, subjective ideas. The bias evident in children's archaeology books could justifiably cause them to be educationally invalid, so, in recognising the books' educational potential, it will be necessary to reassess their contents. Archaeology, by its very nature, is prone to a certain degree of subjectivity, but unless this is able to be recognised by children, an aura of objective truth will be falsely achieved.

In this paper I intend to isolate and highlight one particularly important area, in order to exemplify the way in which archaeology texts for children relay neither neutral, objective nor complete interpretations of the past of human beings.

#### An Example of Bias: Women in Children's Books about Prehistory

One of the clearest examples of bias in children's archaeology books is the situation of men and women as highlighted in books about prehistory. Two ideological messages emerge: firstly, that the

interpretations of prehistory presented are about both sexes; and secondly, that men have always been the more important members of society whilst women play a secondary role. These characterise not only the versions of prehistory presented to children, but virtually all interpretations of prehistory, academic or popular. Women suffer from relative invisibility and most archaeologists remain oblivious to the bias of the "gender asymmetry" (Conkey and Spector 1984, 2) evident in their work. The idea of sex equality is taking a long time to reach archaeological thought, but recently a few writers have begun to criticise and attempt to reinterpret the traditional androcentric view of prehistory (Braithwaite 1982; Conkey and Spector 1984; Tanner and Zihlman 1976; Zihlman 1978; see also Hodder 1986). Children's books about prehistory reflect this androcentrism implicitly. The criticism that "most children's books are about boys and male animals, and most deal exclusively with male events...Even when women can be found in the books, they often play insignificant roles, remaining inconspicuous" (Children's Rights Workshop 1976, 8) is particularly applicable to books about prehistory -- males predominate, females rarely appear, but children are led to believe that such is the natural order and they are reading the complete prehistory of human beings.

Books are frequently titled Prehistoric Man (eg. Gilbert 1979; Hart 1983; Leutscher 1979; Oliver 1983) or Early Man (eg. Lowther 1977; Millard 1981), the term "man" in this case commonly accepted as meaning "people" -- males and females. There has been much criticism of this usage (see Braithwaite 1982; Crawford and Moore 1982; Spender 1980): in Old English the term "man" was used only generically (Smith 1985, 49), but since then it has also come to signify "male", with the consequence that its polysemic nature can be used to the advantage of society's dominant power group (Spender 1980). Language is both man-made and "male-defined and this inevitably...reinforces male realities and male truths" (Franklin 1985, 2): women's contributions to society are subsumed under this so-called generic term, so that women are made invisible or, at best, secondary (cf. Spender 1980).

Language also leads to confusion about whether the specific man = male or the generic man = people is in use. In the case of children's books, the words in the titles do not exist in isolation, but initially appear on front covers, linked to illustrations, which could be seen as confirmation of the titles' true meanings. When the title includes the term "man" and the cover picture is solely of males, therefore, it could be seen as an indication that the reader is expected to associate illustration with words in order to understand that the book's contents will be concerned with male members of society. The front covers of Prehistoric Man (Hart 1983) and Early Man (Millard 1981) depict only men, aggressively involved in hunting, and both have a man at the forefront of the cover illustration, clearly linked to the title. The fact that women are relatively invisible in these books re-emphasises this idea. Yet, despite the fact that books are packaged to indicate the overriding importance of males and do indeed clearly express the biased view that males are the sole propagators of, and major participants in, society, masking this -- however transparently -- is the assertion that

"he/man language" (Spender 1980, 145) is used generically to describe the equal participation of both sexes in past society.

An example of the pellucidity of this ideological mask is that even books with non-gender related titles such as Prehistory to Roman Britain (Mitchell and Middleton 1979), Prehistory (Branigan 1984), the Children's Encyclopedia of Prehistoric Life (McCord 1977), The Celts (Place 1977) or Living in Prehistoric Times (Chisholm 1982) have covers which either show only men or portray women as few and insignificant. If this ideology is accepted, passages such as:

Like all other animals on Earth today, man has evolved from prehistoric animals which lived millions of years ago (McCord 1977, 64);

man and apes can be considered only as cousins. They both descend from a common ancestor (Mitchell 1981, 18);

By about 500,000 years ago, man had evolved a good deal further (Hyndman 1974a, 8);

can be understood to be referring to the development of all humans. Paradoxically, however, illustrations of the stages of human evolution depict only males. Time after time Handy Man, Upright Man, Neanderthal Man -- all male -- lead up to the end result of hundreds of thousands of years of hominid development: the strong, upright, handsome, bearded Homo Sapiens -- the perfect male specimen. Morgan refers to the way that man "sees himself quite consciously as the main line of evolution with a female satellite revolving around him as the moon revolves around the earth..." (1972, 9); not one evolutionary table uses just females, mixed females and males, or even non-gender-specific people. A further evolutionary example is shown in Figure 1: under the broad title "The first people" (Hart 1983, 10), Homo Habilis and a modern 'person' are compared; words declare "our ancestor was not very tall" and the picture belies the general emphasis of the title to quantify the comparison in male terms only. The idea of "male as norm and female as deviant" (Spender 1980, 142), traditional in evolutionary interpretations, is effectively pronounced here. Texts declare "Man appears" (Gale 1973, 24), "when man first evolved" (Green and Sorrell 1986, 7), "The Rise of Modern Man" (Millard 1981, 35), and -- since although the word "man" is an ambiguous term, pictures of male "men" are obviously not -- it seems certain that males, not females, are being referred to. The only conclusions to be drawn, therefore, are either that women did not "evolve" or that they had a separate, unrelated, evolution, which for some reason is never mentioned.

Women are rarely mentioned in the text and, as Table 1 shows, are unequally portrayed in illustrations: 50% of pictures are exclusively of males, whilst only 15% illustrate solely females. If anything, the results of this sample of seven books gives a fairer impression of the portrayal of the sexes than is generally the case. In pictures

## The first people



△ *Homo habilis* (right) compared with modern man. As you can see, our ancestor was not very tall.

Figure 1: Prehistoric Man (Hart 1983, 10).

featuring both males and females, women often appear either in the background, as part of the backdrop to the main (male) subject or kneeling or sitting in apparent deference to dominant men (see Figure 2).

Prehistoric women seem, in fact, to have spent the majority of their lives in stooped positions; thus this is symbolic of women's subordination and men's ideal that they should remain in such a situation. The appearance of women in the books is strictly monitored to concord with this situation and consequently men and women are compartmentalised in terms of activities and characteristics: "men are generally portrayed as stronger, more aggressive, more dominant, more

## NUMBER OF ILLUSTRATIONS SHOWING:

## NUMBER OF MALES AND FEMALES

TITLE	PEOPLE	MALES	FEMALES	MALES > FEMALES	FEMALES > MALES	MALES = FEMALES	NON-SPECIFIC
A	24	15	2	4	1	1	1
B	30	12	8	9	/	/	/
C	30	11	5	7	/	7	/
D	30	18	1	4	1	1	5
E	27	18	6	1	/	1	/
F	14	5	2	3	/	2	2
G	16	7	2	4	1	1	/
TOTALS	171	86	26	32	3	13	8
%AGE		50%	15%	19%	2%	8%	5%

Book Titles: A: Stone Age Man in Britain; B: The Celts; C: Living in Prehistoric Times; D: Prehistoric Man; E: The First Civilisations; F: Prehistory; G: An Ice Age Hunter.

Table 1: Relative proportion of illustrations portraying males and females.

active and more important than women, who often appear as weak, passive and dependent" (Hodder 1986, 159; cf. Braithwaite 1982; Conkey and Spector 1984; Crawford and Moore 1982). Men's activity is expressed in terms of hunting, fighting, innovating, thinking, travelling and manufacture. Sometimes the exclusion of women from these affairs is obviously indicated. This can be seen, for example, in the following:

Hawk and the other boys go hunting with the men  
(Chisholm 1982, 5).

The men of the tribe got together and decided to make  
a strong fortress where they could be safe from  
attack (du Garde Peach 1961, 38).

Usually, however, the language used implies the total inclusion of all group members. Texts state that "These people were hunters" (Mitchell and Middleton 1979, 3), "the Neanderthal people...hunted most animals from mammoth downwards (Hyndman 1974b, 27) or "The Celts were a

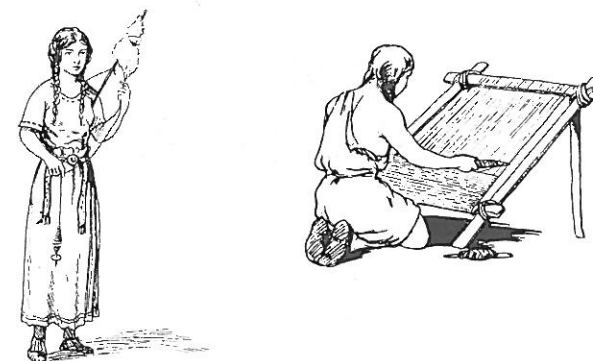


Figure 2: From Cavemen to Vikings (Unstead 1953, 14).

people full of contradictions. They spent much of their time fighting, often amongst themselves" (Place 1977, 6). It is clear that this is an attempt to conceal the concentration on sectional interests by presenting them as ecumenical (see Shanks and Tilley 1987). From all relevant illustrations (see Figure 3) and the fact that the only gender ever specifically referred to in connection with such activities is male, it is evident that men, not women, were hunters and fishers, men, not women, were warriors and chiefs, men, not women, were builders, tool makers and smiths. Any suggestion that "man" is in generic use is undermined by association. For example, in Prehistoric Man (Hart 1983, 13), "Cro-magnon man" is depicted with examples of stone tools made by him. The text non-committally states that "knives like this were used about 40 thousand years ago", but the fact that the featured individual is male and is shown using such a tool leads to the assumption that this is a typical situation -- men were the toolmakers, and will be categorised as such in children's minds. Of all the children's books analysed, only one deviated from the norm to illustrate a female manufacturing a stone tool (Craig 1986, 38): it is significant that the picture is only 2cm<sup>2</sup> and appears under the title "Upright Man".

Women are rarely allowed an existence of their own, being consistently referred to in terms of their relationships to men:

Early man made a home in a cave...He made scrapers and bones....His wife used the scraper to clean the underside of animal skins...(Unstead 1953, 7).

The farmer and his family lived in part of the house  
(Mitchell and Middleton 1979, 29).



## THE CHIEFTAIN



Figure 3: Prehistoric Britain (Nichol 1983, 48).

Quick Foot was not satisfied to live in a cave...He wanted to live on the dry, chalky soil of the South Downs, so he had to set about making a home for himself and his family (du Garde Peach 1961, 18).

The ultimate demonstration of women seemingly existing purely as men's chattels appears in The Open Book of the Prehistoric World (Mitchell 1981, 31) in a section about prehistoric art, under the title "Women and animals":



Figure 4: From Cavemen to Vikings (Unstead 1953, 20).

The favourite subjects of prehistoric artists seem to have been animals and women. This is quite logical as both were indispensable to primitive man (just as they are both indispensable to twentieth century man). Animals guaranteed that he survived from day to day and women that he survived from generation to generation.

Such explicit comment is rare, but nonetheless will survive in print to be passively assimilated and added to children's mental store of 'facts'. Moreover, in linking past to present, the passage serves to heavily underline the relevance to today's society of underlying assumptions in all such children's books. When specifically indicated, women do appear, however infrequently, in roles which are as equally clear-cut as those in which men are presented. These roles are defined by domesticity, with women consistently illustrated in evident proximity to the home-base (a term loaded with meaning in itself), performing domestic tasks such as sewing, cooking, scraping skins, tending fires or weaving (see Figure 4). In the Palaeolithic:

the women probably collected shellfish from the beach and did not go far from the camp (McCord 1977, 76);

whilst by the Iron Age, little appears to have changed:

Most women spent their time cooking and preserving food, spinning and weaving cloth, and bringing up children (Place 1977, 24).

The emphasis on servility being the reason for women's domestic confinement is expressed clearly by Mitchell (1981, 35):

Women were more than simple child bearers. They worked in fields and in the home, cooking and cleaning and also making the family's simple clothing, preparing animal skins and serving them.

The major difference between the roles of men and women as portrayed in these books is that "a man's major activities are outward-directed and a woman's are inner-directed. He goes out to confront and capture the outside world while she constructs a cosy inside shelter for them both" (Sharpe 1976, 68). When compared with men's activities, therefore, those of women can seem very unadventurous and unimportant:

Perhaps the girls helped mother...The boys would be taught to hunt and fish and to make tools and weapons (Hoare 1963, 16).

The early men were learning all the time. They became very clever at making flint tools and even polished them...The women made clay pots and bowls to hold milk (Unstead 1953, 13).

That "different values are placed on the different female and male sex-linked activities, so that there is a prevailing over-emphasis on those activities or roles presumed to be male associated" (Conkey and Spector 1984, 6) is reflected further in the way that chapters are titled, as in "The Earliest Toolmakers"... "The Ice Age Hunters"... "The Fisher-Hunters" (Caselli 1983) or "Hunters and Fishers"... "The First Farmers"... "The First Metalworkers"... "The Warrior Society" (Green and Sorrell 1986).

The idea of a "Man the Hunter" model for early prehistory, as can be seen, stresses the overriding importance of male the hunter and provider, to the extent that in the event of no animals being killed it is suggested that people "will go hungry for the next few days until they find and track another animal" (Branigan 1984, 10). Female participation in providing food is sometimes mentioned:

The women of the clan are in charge of collecting wild plants to eat (Chisholm 1982, 5).

In comparison with hunting, however, either relatively little space is devoted to its illustration or description (in the above case eight pages are filled with pictures of hunting, but there is only one small illustration of women gathering), or it is dismissed after such comments as:

There were other men and women who were indispensable to the hunters; tool-makers and vegetable gatherers (Mitchell 1981, 33);

in favour of discussion of male activities. Often, in fact, although gathering is mentioned, women are given no credit for their involvement:

When Man first evolved...He lived by hunting wild animals and by collecting fruits and berries and small creatures (Green and Sorrell 1986, 7).

Similarly, in the Mesolithic period:

Man...became a fisherman and food-gatherer (Bowood 1966, 29).

Feminist archaeologists have begun to criticise the use of the "Man the Hunter" model in academic interpretations of prehistory on the grounds that it is permeated with gender bias (Conkey and Spector 1984; Tanner and Zihlman 1976; Zihlman 1978). Children's books about prehistory are in this way a direct reflection of traditional archaeological thought. A major problem of, and reason for, the traditional model is that "due to the relative durability of bone as opposed to plant refuse, the archaeological record may exaggerate the amount of meat in the early hominid diet" (Zihlman 1978, 7), but it cannot be assumed, however, that the remaining material evidence denotes use by males. The model formulated by Tanner and Zihlman (1976; Zihlman 1978), whereby women were crucial in providing a vast amount of (gathered) food and inventing the initial tools for use in such activity, is predated by the only passage in any of the children's books analysed to stress the possibility of women's work being important during the Palaeolithic:

Unfortunately most people have a mistaken idea about man, the hunter. The hunters all too frequently came home empty handed. This meant that the woman, the food gatherer, was the main provider for the family. It is estimated that women provided 60-80% of the food eaten by the family (Gale 1973, 27).

That such an enlightened anomaly is not repeated in later children's books must be seen as indicative of our society's prevalent attitude towards protecting children from socially 'abnormal' viewpoints, as suggested above. Thus, men's superiority cannot be undermined by the use of titles such as "Hunters and Gatherers", which involves a suggestion of gender equality. Service is probably unknowingly representative of the overt motives of the authors of archaeology and anthropology books, both for adults and children, when he declares that "The Hunters was suggested as a title...simply because it sounds more interesting than Woman's Work (which is)...usually boring" (1966, 10).

In a few cases, however, women are surprisingly attributed with innovation later in prehistory and in the 'discovery' of agriculture:

Most probably woman was a gardener before man became a farmer (Quennell 1971, 41).

Perhaps Quick Foot's wife, or some other woman, threw away some grass seeds beside the hut and noticed that they grew. Then she may have planted some more, and when these grew, cooked them (du Garde Peach 1961, 30).

If a tribe regularly stayed at a place with plenty of water, some of the women may have deliberately sown seeds to grow crops to gather when they came that way again the next year. Thus the idea of farming was born (Millard 1981, 58).

Yet, although no mention is made of agriculture's invention by males, generally any specificity is glossed over and origins remain a mystery. Either farming simply appeared or was diffused across Europe. Alternatively:

People discovered that they could sow the seeds of wild plants and grow the crops they needed (McCord 1977, 92).

An additional effective masking of women is "that even when female characters are pictured, they are often not mentioned in the text" (Czaplinski 1976, 33) and are thus denied any significance. For instance, a picture depicting men and women working in a cave is supplemented by text which details all the men's activities:

Hawk is building a wall of rocks to keep the wind out. Bison is putting up tents for sleeping in... Uncle Bear digs a pit to store food in... Wolf is starting a new fire (Chisholm 1982, 4).

However, the text ignores completely those activities being performed by women, despite the fact that they are, in pictorial terms, no less obvious. In the case of an illustration from another book (Mitchell and Middleton 1979, 5), showing a group of Palaeolithic people gathered around a fire in a cave, the woman in the foreground is ignored, the principal subject of the text being "the hunters (who) have returned from a hunt". This illustration also signifies woman's role as sexual object: whereas the men are covered in furs, the woman is revealed half-naked, apparently only wearing a pair of animal-skin leggings. The idea that women, even when visible, were a minority in the population, can be seen at its most extreme in two examples. In The Open Book of the Prehistoric World (Mitchell 1981, 24-5), an apparently typical Stone Age human group comprises thirteen men, one woman and one child. In The Celts (Place 1977, 16), women in Celtic society are shown to participate only as servants and queens, whilst men's roles are many, varied and inventive. In addition to being gender-biased, such interpretations are completely irrational.

Inherent in interpretations of prehistory used in these books is the idea of aggression as a major part of society in every period, and it is, of course, men whose activities are to a large extent bound up in aggression. Pages abound with pictures of men wielding weapons and exerting their strength in attacking huge mammoths (Figure 5) or each other, with texts implying violence to be an intrinsic part of human nature:

People have fought and killed each other since human life began (Branigan 1984, 26).

The Ancient Britons were an aggressive people... Unlike the vast majority of the population who were tied to working on the land, the nobles and professional warriors were free to practice their fighting techniques and to rush into battle at the slightest opportunity (Watson 1986b, 50).

Human development, moreover, is said to occur merely to facilitate the ability to perform increasingly brutal acts of violence:

The real point is that two-footed, or bipedal, movement frees the hands for other tasks. It seems, for example, that a man-ape could pick up a lump of wood or bone, run up to an animal, and then club it to death (Hyndman 1974b, 14).

Front covers show men hunting and engaged in warfare, and therefore imply that aggression was one of the principal activities of past peoples (see Hart 1983; Millard 1981; Mitchell and Middleton 1979; Place 1977). However, this machismo ethic serves the unfortunate purpose -- by placing violence in the past -- of 'naturalising' it and condoning it as a positive factor of maleness. Aggression as part of culture is thus a further aspect of the strict division of society into male and female, with emphasis on male activities as primary and on female as performed for the comfort of men. In such a way women are denied a part in the development of society and are grounded in nature, as child-bearers (cf. MacCormack 1980). In addition, male-produced tools and weapons signify not only the transformation of subsistence techniques, but essentially the advance of culture. Specific protagonists are generally male: in Time Traveller (Satchwell 1985), a little boy travels into the past; Stone Age Man in Britain (du Garde Peach 1961) follows the life of the manly Quick Foot; and although Living in Prehistoric Times (Chisholm 1982) presents the story as being "about a 10 year old girl called Willow and her brother Hawk, aged 7" (Chisholm 1982, 3), throughout the book Hawk's involvement in prehistoric life is paid far more attention than that of his sister.

The exception is Boudicca. Interest in her, however, stems from the fact that she plays the male role of aggressive warrior, and is not the result of her gender. Moreover, despite the fact that one book is

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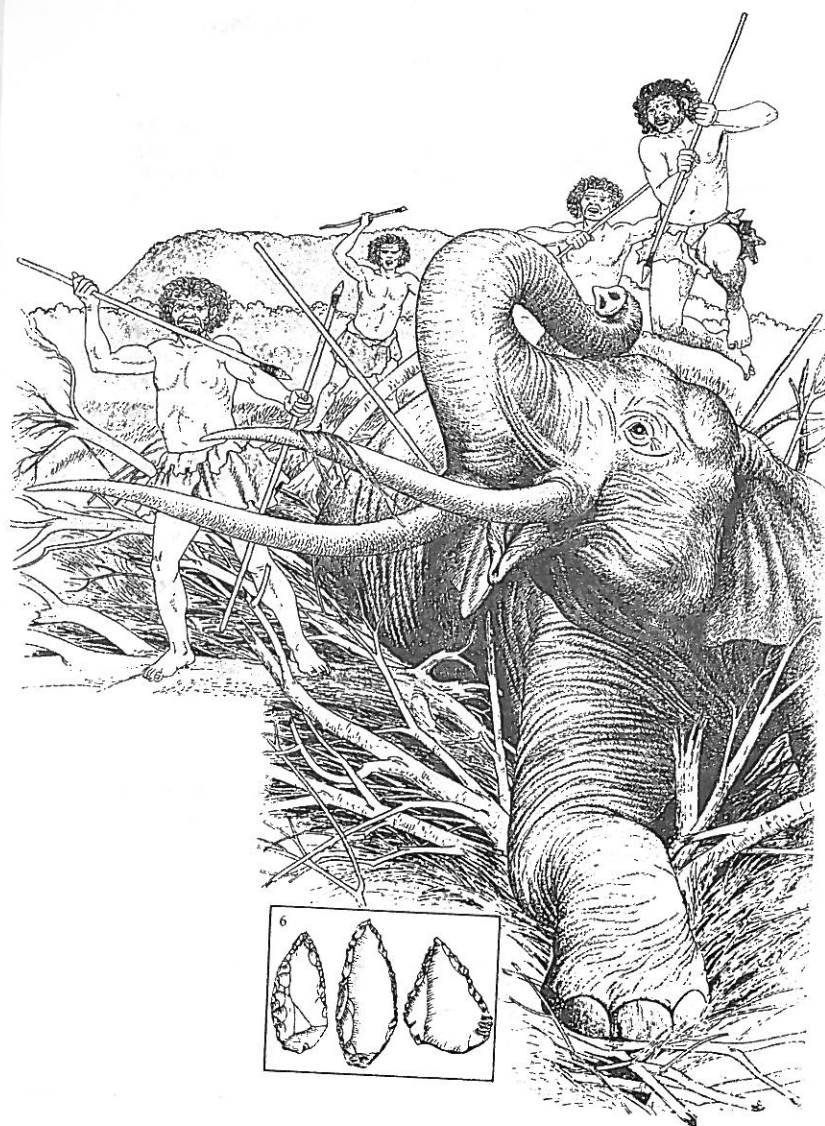


Figure 5: The First Civilisations (Caselli 1983, 6).

entitled Boudicca and the Ancient Britons (Watson 1986b), in it she is defined as the wife of the King of the Iceni, and appears significantly less than anonymous male Ancient Britons. The only book I found to suggest that there was sexual equality at any point in prehistory was, in fact, a work of fiction, not a textbook, called The Cave Twins:

In the earliest times of all, the Woman hunted and trapped the wild creatures, and fished, all by herself, but by and by she began to let the man do the hunting...(Fitch Perkins 1955).

It is ironic that this should be both the earliest book amongst those I studied (it was originally published in 1922) and now out of print: it is no longer available to stimulate the minds of contemporary children.

### Conclusions

Children's archaeology books are more rightly stories set in the past, but based on ideas about the present. By choosing a setting as far away as possible from our lives today, an appearance of detachment is thought to be achieved. Yet underlying ideology and messages are emitted to be received and assimilated by children, to add further to the web of culture being wrapped around them. The ideologies presented to children in books about the past are necessarily simple in order to fit into children's clear-cut categorisation systems.

In this paper I have demonstrated that books about prehistory are clearly biased in terms of gender representation. Women are either invisible or minor, subordinate figures, and this is justified by the assertion that women had little or nothing to do with culture, being intrinsically part of nature. In the exemplification of this idea, men are defined in terms of themselves and their activities, whereas women are usually defined in terms of men, a situation enhanced by the use of androcentric, but so-called "generic", language. In 1974 the McGraw-Hill Book Company in the USA drew up guidelines for the use of non-sexist language and the equal treatment of both sexes in (primarily non-fiction) children's books (Children's Rights Workshop 1976). Unfortunately, however, such recognition of inequality in textbooks has yet to be officially realised by British publishers.

A further point to consider is that children's archaeology books will not be read only by children. Parents and teachers will glean information from books which are seen to contain 'facts' about the past and the 'cult of the expert' prevails to convince uninformed adults and children that what is written in 'informed' books must be correct. The past, however, is not 'absolute': "The 'truth' of the past can never be known for certain; objects are locked into their time, archaeologists into theirs" (Shanks and Tilley 1987, 12). There is no reason to suppose that women have always been subjugated, and they are certainly becoming increasingly visible in contemporary Western society, as are ethnic minorities: yet both groups continue to remain virtually invisible in interpretations of the past.

Archaeologists are now aware of the importance of studying their discipline in a social context and are becoming more concerned with the way in which the past is both presented to the general public and used educationally. They do, however, need to examine more thoroughly the presentation of the past to children, particularly through the medium of books. Many archaeologists do not seem to think children's books academically worthwhile enough to warrant diverting time from writing academic texts, so that most archaeology books for children tend to be written by non-archaeologist lay-people. These books should not, however, be considered in isolation from so-called 'real' archaeology: they are valid archaeological texts and should be considered as such.

I have stated that bias exists in children's archaeology books, but that does not mean that when the biases are located and eliminated a neutral, educationally sound past will be able to be written. It would be possible to attempt to write a feminist past (equally biased) or a past without highlighting social relations. The most unbiased way of presenting the past to children, however, would be to write a series of different interpretations, rather than looking for a unilinear past. At present children are not taught to discern bias and therefore accept the ideas in archaeology books uncritically. Yet children do have critical faculties and, if given books about different pasts, could both choose their own and remain aware of the fact that there need not necessarily be one, 'right', past -- everyone has their own, equally valid, past and it is only by acknowledging this that we can begin to present archaeology as real education.

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#### Children's Books Referred to in the Text

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# TEACHING ARCHAEOLOGY AS PERPETUAL REVOLUTION

Richard Reece

Archaeology is the attempt to make sense of the litter left by the past. This fulfils the first requirement, that if we are going to talk about teaching archaeology we need first to say what archaeology is. There is only one qualification to be made, and that concerns some of the material litter which has been covered in graffiti. The object and the graffiti as material manifestations are the proper study of archaeology, but the meaning of the graffiti, if that can be deduced, comes into the utterly separate discipline of history. Together they might be used to try to understand 'The Past', but as they are two different subjects, with different subject matter, different methods, different aims, and different philosophies, they should be pursued by different people who might then join in an attempt at synthesis. It may be that there are a few great minds who are equally at home in the two fields: I doubt it because I have never met them or read their works: everyone I know, including myself, is mainly one or the other, basically a dealer in material, or pre-eminently a student of what happened in the realm of motives and ideas, and a bloody nuisance if he or she does not recognise where his or her expertise lies. This point is essential to any discussion of teaching archaeology because such an action must start from a recognition of what the subject is and what its practitioners, as such, do.

So, at the university level we are concerned to think about a three year course at the end of which any student will know what the subject is, how it works, and how it relates to the rest of the world, practical and academic. The entrant who wishes to become a practising convert should be equipped for this course: the civil-servant-to-be should derive something useful from the course, likewise the rising executive, manager, or consultant. Here we meet a blank wall of academic snobbery. There is no point in entering into any discussion or argument with snobs in retreat: they should simply be slapped down and forgotten. It has been held that a knowledge of the graffiti on the litter from the past, the Classics, is an end in itself: that life runs down from the moment that the talented student reads his or her last scribble and gets a job. At a dinner party a discussion of sources of inspiration in Virgil is uplifting, while a discussion of the mode of action of an anti-histamine drug is not. This is simply because the Virgilian knows nothing about anti-histamines and cannot join the discussion, whereas the medic or biochemist can often listen receptively to a discussion of Virgil and ask intelligent questions. On this unpleasant but highly effective level (effective because it is the superficial level at which politicians, administrators and whizz-kids work) the possessor of a degree in archaeology should be able to survive. He or she can bluff about the historical past, flummox about the actual past, and have in reserve