

## **Interracial books for children bulletin.**

### **Volume 14, No. 5 1983**

New York, NY: The Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.,  
1983

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/MXXKMT2BKLFTB84>

This material may be protected by copyright law (e.g., Title 17, US Code). For information on re-use see: <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Copyright>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.



Cooperative Children's Book Center  
4290 Helen C. White Hall  
600 North Park Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

**INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN**

# BULLETIN

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 5, 1983      ISSN 0146-5562



**Misusing Black Folktales in Picture Books**  
**Behind Textbook Adoption in Texas**  
**Children as Book Critics**



# BULLETIN

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 5

1983

## ARTICLES

The Black Experience through White Eyes—The Same Old Story Once Again

4

*Two award-winning picture books raise serious issues about the presentation of the Black experience in new children's books.*

The Textbook Selection Process in Texas

Part I: Group Works to Improve Selection Process

14

*Texas is the most important—and influential—textbook market in the U.S. An account of one group's successful efforts to improve that process.*

Part II: Far Right Works to Turn Back the Clock

15

*The influence of Mel and Norma Gabler on school texts is well-known. How did it start? When? How strong is it today?*

Helping Young Readers Become Book Critics: Here's How

22

*Even very young readers can learn to turn a critical eye on their reading material. A class of five- and six-year-olds learns how to do it.*

## DEPARTMENTS

Editorial

3

Bulletin Board

24

Bookshelf

25

Letters

28

Hits & Misses

29

Information Exchange

30

## COVER

A depiction of heaven by Black artist/folklorist/author/teacher Ashley Bryan appears on the cover. (The illustration is taken from *I'm Going to Sing: Black American Spirituals, Volume Two* by Ashley Bryan, Atheneum, 1982; © 1982 by Ashley Bryan.) An article about not-so-authentic depictions of the Black experience by non-Black authors begins on page 4.

Indexed in

*Alternative Press Index*

*Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)*

*Education Index*

INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN BULLETIN is published eight times a year by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. © 1983 by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc. Institutional and contributing subscriptions are \$18 a year; individual subscriptions are \$12 a year; single copies are \$2.25 each for regular issues, \$3 each for special double issues plus 50¢ handling; bulk rates available upon request. A subscription form appears on the back cover.

## COUNCIL ON INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND BULLETIN STAFFS

**Bradford Chambers**  
Editor

**Ruth Charnes**  
Managing Editor

**Sonia Chin**  
Proofreader

**Leonidas Guzman**  
Secretary

**Lyla Hoffman**  
Director, CIBC Racism and Sexism  
Resource Center for Educators

**Tom Bigornia**  
Subscriptions

**Walteen Grady Truely**  
Workshop Coordinator

## EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

**Rodolfo Acuña**  
Chicano Studies Department  
California State University, Northridge

**Beryle Banfield**  
Curriculum Specialist

**James Banks**  
College of Education  
University of Washington, Seattle

**Sanford Berman**  
Hennepin County Library  
Edina, Minn.

**Mary Lou Byler**  
Association on American Indian Affairs

**Luis Nieves Falcón**  
Sociology Department  
University of Puerto Rico

**June Jordan**  
Poet-Author  
Department of English  
S.U.N.Y. at Stony Brook

**Donnarae MacCann**  
Columnist, *Wilson Library Bulletin*

**Ruth S. Meyers**  
Educational Psychologist

**Franklin Odo**  
Ethnic Studies Program  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Alvin Poussaint**  
Harvard Medical School

**Porfirio Sanchez**  
Department of Mexican American Studies  
California State College, Dominguez Hills

**Barbara A. Schram**  
School of Education  
Northeastern University

**Albert V. Schwartz**  
Division of Educational Studies  
College of Staten Island, C.U.N.Y.

**Geraldine L. Wilson**  
Early Childhood Specialist and Consultant

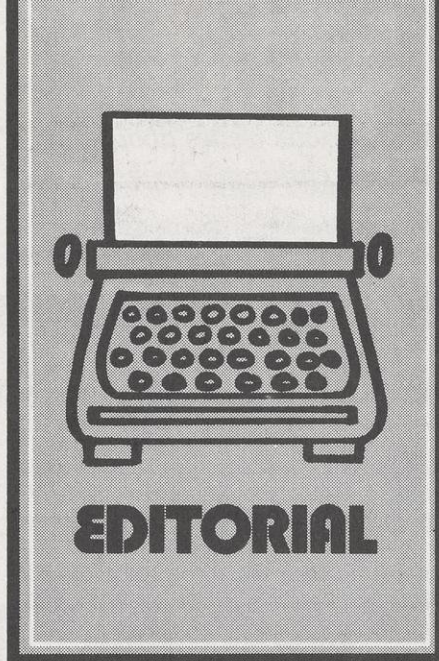


## Jake—And Library Issues of Selection

*Jake and Honeybunch* has been the center of much controversy lately because public library systems in Chicago, Milwaukee and San Francisco, finding the work racist and stereotypic, decided either to limit purchase or not buy it at all. These decisions sparked the classic responses to charges of racism (see the article beginning on page 4). The publisher—Farrar, Straus & Giroux—labelled the claims “bizarre,” counter-charging that the libraries committed censorship by not purchasing the book. Or not purchasing it in suitable quantities. (Presumably, any public library not selecting at least one copy—and any large system not buying multiples—of each of the 40,000 English-language trade titles published yearly in the U.S. has “censored” the un- or under-bought books!) Farrar, after enunciating that quaint theory of book selection, released its correspondence with the objecting librarians to *The New York Times*, which caused some to wonder if publicity (rather than indignation over “censorship”) wasn’t the real “name of the game.” (The *Times* report did, however, provide some merriment. When Farrar’s editor-in-chief of children’s books asked San Francisco why it decided not to buy *Jake*, City Librarian John C. Frantz replied, “If he really doesn’t know . . . he is in the wrong line of work and should be selling banjos to minstrel troupes.”)

Elsewhere—for instance, at a Minneapolis censorship conference in January—ALA’s Judy Krug similarly denounced her erstwhile Chicago and San Francisco colleagues for *not* selecting *Jake*. And for saying *why* they rejected it. Krug had bought a copy for herself, liked the pretty pictures, couldn’t imagine how anyone would judge it “racist,” and in any event doesn’t regard “racism” as a valid selection factor. (Parenthetically, she directed far more fury at those benighted children’s librarians than at the KKK, which in Indiana had just joined the campaign to remove pro-gay material from a public library. She was also enraged that the Farrar-librarian exchange *appeared in the press*. And this, remember, is the Director of ALA’s *Intellectual Freedom Office*!)

Well, what does it all mean? In a way, Krug’s right, for the official ALA statement “regulating” book selection, *Diversity in Collection Development*, which supplanted its earlier *Racism, Sexism, and Other -Isms in Library Materials*



policy, does appear to exclude considerations of “cultural authenticity” and “defamatory stereotyping” from the selection process. In other words, it seems to declare that being inauthentic or stereotypic is not sufficient reason to weed or reject a work.

If nothing else, the *Jake* furor **should** pinpoint two key issues:

1. Whether authenticity and stereotyping should be selection criteria;
2. Whether children’s materials should be selected according to somewhat different standards than adult.

While ALA’s “Diversity” and “Free Access to Minors” statements ostensibly resolved these issues, in fact they have not.

At the premier, Los Angeles meeting of the Ethnic Materials Information Exchange (EMIE) Round Table in June, I personally proposed amendment of the “Diversity” statement during a small group discussion. Opinion within that group proved largely favorable, particularly since one speaker after another—including Spencer Shaw, Lotsee Smith and Suzine Har Nicolescu—had previously blasted the wretched quality of available material dealing with Blacks, Native Americans, Asian Americans and other groups. I want to repeat my proposal here, recommending amendment of the “Diversity” policy and/or adoption of a statement—perhaps via the EMIE Round Table, various caucuses and the American Association of School Librarians—that specifically addresses juvenile materials selection and PERMITS considerations of cultural authenticity and derogatory stereotyping as bona fide selection criteria. For starters, here’s a draft addition to the “Diversity”

document that might be inserted immediately following “This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority and sexual issues”:

. . . , but does not preclude the non-selection of children’s materials that are culturally inauthentic or that contain inaccurate, defamatory stereotypes of whole ethnic, racial, sexual, or other groups.

It’s about time to make it an explicit, professional policy that works which misrepresent cultures or stereotype entire human groups have no more place in a children’s collection than inaccurate chemistry and physics texts.—Sanford Berman, Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, Minnesota.

## And Now—Lettergate

When you last tuned in, the CIBC had just been attacked by the Heritage Foundation and Al Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers (see Vol. 14, Nos. 1 & 2). Ronald Reagan has now joined in. Speaking at this summer’s AFT convention in Los Angeles, Reagan described two curriculums as “frightening” and “brain-washing”—and one of them was the NEA-CIBC curriculum on the Ku Klux Klan, “*Violence, the Ku Klux Klan and the Struggle for Equality*.” (The other was the NEA’s curriculum on the nuclear threat; see *The New York Times*, July 6, 1983.)

We like to think that being on the Heritage/Shanker/Reagan hit list is a badge of honor. We are seriously concerned, however, that when the President of the U.S. labels an anti-Klan school curriculum as brain-washing, the stage is thereby set for similar attacks on all instructional materials that encourage student awareness of social injustice.

But the attack has its ironic side. We have in our files a letter from the Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, saying this about the same curriculum:

I hope that concerned teachers will familiarize themselves with the contents of this kit in order to prepare them to deal with situations in which they suspect that students might be exposed to elements which espouse ideas that are contrary to the American tradition of tolerance and the advancement of human equality. We cannot allow our children to be the victims of those who preach hate, violence and racism.

That letter was dated March 8, 1982—more than a year before Reagan attacked the curriculum; after Reagan’s attack, the Secretary of Education disowned the letter.

When next you tune in. . . .



*Two award-winning picture books raise serious issues about the presentation of the Black experience in new children's books*

# The Black Experience through White Eyes— The Same Old Story Once Again

By Beryle Banfield and Geraldine L. Wilson

Children's literature provides an almost unflinching gauge of the level of racism and sexism in a society. It must be recognized that the racism in children's materials is not a personal aberration on the part of an individual author but rather a reflection of societal attitudes and practices. In this connection, a look at children's literature during two critical periods of U.S. history proves instructive.

One hundred years ago, African Americans were at risk in every aspect of their lives—political, social and economic; the period 1877-1901 has been described by historian Rayford Logan as the Nadir of the Black Experience in the U.S. The period saw the betrayal of African American hopes for complete democracy and the destruction of the gains of Reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

Following the end of Reconstruction, legal stratagems forced Blacks to work for little or no wages. The Ku Klux Klan and similar terrorist organizations came into being to prevent African Americans from exercising their democratic rights. In 1883, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 unconstitutional; it also effectively blunted the Fourteenth Amendment by applying a specious and devious interpretation which held that the Amendment forbade states—not individuals—from discriminating. This interpretation paved the way for the enactment of a spate of Jim Crow laws which reinforced the separate and unequal status of African Americans. Influential academics proclaimed the virtues of the Anglo-Saxon race. Prominent professors flatly proclaimed Reconstruction to be a failure and asserted that Thomas Jefferson would have stated that he did not mean Negroes when he wrote "all men are created equal." A leading member of the clergy, much in demand as a lecturer,

## Alarming Parallels

A study of history reveals "unmistakable and alarming parallels between the 1880s and the 1980s," testified Arthur Fleming, chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, to a Congressional Committee in 1981. "We cannot but wonder whether the Nation has started down a path of civil rights retrenchment similar to that of the post-Reconstruction period."

saw the Anglo-Saxon race "moving down upon Mexico, up Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea, over upon Africa, and beyond." (The more things change the more they stay the same!) The leading literary magazines employed racially offensive terminology with impunity; words such as "darker" and "coon" appeared regularly, and African Americans were routinely portrayed as thieves, drunkards and immoral characters.

The children's literature of that period reflected societal racism; it extended the plantation tradition of literature which began in the early 1800s and depicted an idyllic plantation life with happy, "picturesque" slaves. This type of literature increased after the Post-Reconstruction period. Among its myths was the notion that African Americans in slavery had been happy, protected and well-cared for,

## Yet Another Example!

As this *Bulletin* goes to press, another book that raises the issues discussed in this article has just been published; see the review of *Big Sixteen* "retold" by Mary Calhoun (Morrow) on page 26.

and that they were ill-fitted for the responsibilities of freedom. Offensive racial stereotypes—the "comic Negro," the "contented slave," the "wretched freeman," among others identified in literature by Black poet Sterling Brown—were rounded out and solidified.

Two adept creators of juvenile literature that perpetuated these myths and stereotypes were Thomas Nelson Page and Joel Chandler Harris. In 1888, Page produced *Two Little Confederates*, complete with mangled Black "dialect," superstitious beliefs and contented, loyal, Yankee-hating slaves. Freedom is so abhorrent to Page's slaves that they eagerly cooperate in hiding their Confederate masters. Joel Chandler Harris contributed *Free Joe and the Rest of the World* (1888), which also perpetuates the myths and stereotypes of the wretched freeman and the contented slave. While contented slaves, secure in the knowledge that they would be adequately clothed and fed, sing happily at their work, Free Joe, with no benign master to guarantee his earthly comforts, looks on in wretched envy.

Uncle Remus, immortalized as the repository of the Br'er Rabbit Stories, is portrayed by his creator Joel Chandler Harris as the epitome of the Plantation Negro; Uncle Remus yearns for the security of the slave plantation and looks disdainfully on ex-slaves who prattle about freedom. The hugely successful *Bobbsey Twins* series made its first appearance in 1904, introducing Dinah, the buxom Black cook—a watermelon-eating, eye-rolling, superstitious, thieving Black.<sup>2</sup>

African Americans are now again at risk. There is a systematic and determined effort to wipe out the civil rights advances won in the 60s. Once again, the institutional arrangements that perpetuate racial inequities are being brought into play. Court decisions are se-



verely hampering efforts to secure equal educational and employment opportunities. Agencies established to implement civil rights are being systematically weakened or their goals and purposes challenged. Fifty per cent of Black teenagers are unemployed. A report recently released by the Center for Social Policy reveals that on "measures of income, poverty and unemployment, wide disparities between Blacks and whites have not lessened or have even worsened since 1960." African Americans are keenly aware that in cities like Boston and New York there are places they may not go without fear of bodily harm. The Ku Klux Klan is increasingly and confidently active.

The appearance of books like *Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven and Shadow*—both highly acclaimed—serves to underscore the national mood. Their stereotypes and distortions are no longer subtle but blatant affronts to African American sensibilities, assaults on the cultural traditions and lifestyles of African Americans. The works reflect the increasing tolerance by society at large of the erosion of the civil rights so hard won during the 60s.<sup>3</sup>

Significantly, both books are based on aspects of the Black experience which the authors misunderstand and misrepresent. The damage is compounded by the fact that both authors are extremely gifted artists; the books therefore have a powerful impact and are extremely effective in reinforcing stereotypes of the African American.

It is worth looking more closely at some of the issues that these books raise, particularly given the acclaim that they have received. (For Bookshelf reviews of the titles, see Vol. 14, Nos. 1 & 2.)

In a society that practices colonialism,<sup>4</sup> the manipulation and control of symbols play an important role. Symbols relating to those groups excluded from power get particular attention. Although this practice affects all oppressed groups—women of all colors, disabled people, older people among them—we will focus here only on those having to do with the Black experience.

Two sets of symbols specifically related to the African American community are at issue. One set consists of the distorted symbols (stereotypes, if you will) created by whites and intended to control, demean and dehumanize African Americans; these symbols also serve to create or reinforce a sense of superiority in white people. These stereotypes

## The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same

The issues raised in the accompanying article are hardly new. In 1969 Dorothy Sterling, author of *The Troubles They Seen, Black Foremothers* and other works, wrote "What's Black and White and Read All Over?" (*The English Journal*, September, 1969). The excerpt below shows how far we *haven't* come in the past decade. (Readers will note that the exclusively male references in this piece reflect the attitudes and practices prevalent in the late 1960s.)

William Styron's *Confessions of Nat Turner* . . . was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, a National Book Award winner, a best seller for many weeks. Large amounts of space were devoted to it in newspaper book columns and literary journals. Almost without exception the men who praised Styron's book were white. Almost without exception Black intellectuals disliked the book. And "disliked" is too mild a word. They detested it. They were infuriated by it.

Some of these feelings were expressed in a book that appeared last summer [i.e., in 1968]: *William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond*. Although their response never became a Book-of-the-Month selection, it received considerable attention in book review sections. Again, almost without exception, the reviewers were white. And they disliked the Black writers' response, detested it, were infuriated by it.

Two questions trouble me. Why were only white men asked to review both books? Out of the scores of Black novelists, poets, and playwrights, surely one could have been found whose opinion was worth reading. And perhaps more important, why is there so great an area of disagreement between white and Black intellectuals? How is it that none of the critics of *Ten Black Writers Respond* said, "I don't agree with these men but if they feel so strongly perhaps there's a point I'm missing. Maybe I'd better look again and see if I can understand their reactions instead of trying to put them down with all the strength I can muster"?

. . . The critics who have closed ranks to defend William Styron reveal, in their way, a serious racist bias. Their way is that of the white liberal who, since the days of the abolitionist movement, has been saying, "Let me show you how to do it. I'll be your spokesman. Papa knows best."

Papa doesn't always know best. Sometimes children grow up to find that Papa never knew best—only papa always hates like the dickens to admit this. One hundred and twenty years ago when Frederick Douglass wanted to start his own newspaper, William Lloyd Garrison did his best to dissuade him. Douglass went ahead anyway, explaining in the first issue of his *North Star*, "We must be our own. . . advocates. . . not distinct from, but in connection with our white friends." Twenty years earlier the editors of *Freedom's Journal*, the nation's first [Black] newspaper, said the same thing: "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."

This is what Black intellectuals are still saying today. . . .

often represent how whites *wish* "those people" would be; eventually, many whites come to believe that such "symbols" do, in fact, represent reality.

The second set of symbols are those actually based on the collective cultural experience of African Americans. They represent the important, valued characteristics and beliefs of the group. Many of these symbols have been passed down from generation to generation; others, more recent, are no less valued. There is little opportunity for these symbols to appear in "public," meaning outside of the group itself; they are generally excluded from the media (books, TV, film, art, etc.) because African American behaviors and concepts are not generally acceptable unless controlled or exploited

by whites. The African American world view can most freely be expressed within the Black community, but even there it may be monitored, repressed and/or punished by those in power—whites and sometimes Blacks who have internalized racism.

In practice, whites often assume, incorrectly, that everyone shares *their* set of European American symbols, or they deny the validity of the symbols of people of color by maintaining that they have no culture and therefore no valued symbols. Because African Americans—like other people of color—lack power, their cultural symbols are almost never reinforced in positive ways in the media (including children's literature) or by societal institutions. One result of cul-



tural repression is that the very meanings of African American symbols become lost, unknown even to members of the Black community. This complicates the fact that people in many societies tend not to articulate certain aspects of their culture, though they respond to—and defend—those cultural practices and symbols they value.

There are at least two general responses by African Americans to the repression of valued symbols and the attempt to substitute distorted versions. First there are those who are knowledgeable about their culture, its values and symbols, and they move (and raise their children to move) to correct the distortions. Second, there are other members of the Black community who lack this

level of awareness. This may be due to (a) a lack of information about their own cultural history, (b) the influence of white institutions, particularly the educational system and the media, and/or (c) an internalized poor self-image.

Recently one of the authors of this piece asked some Black parents if they told Br'er Rabbit stories to their children. "Oh, those stories by Walt Disney?" asked one mother. When the consultant replied, "They are not Walt Disney's stories," the woman answered, "Oh, yes, they are. Otherwise Disney wouldn't have put his name on the book. You can't put somebody else's name on a book. That's against the law, you know." The process of cultural repression had done its job. The questioner knew only

the *appropriated* stories, stories in which the original symbols were transformed by European concepts, stories which do not give credit to the African and African American sources. She was *convinced* that falsehood was truth. (Her lack of information was, at least, not shared by the entire group. Another woman did say, "Girl, they ain't Walt Disney's stories; my grandmother knew them.")

Culture and how it is both expressed and repressed in a colonialist society has not received the kind of attention it needs. Nonetheless, much is known—and what we know gives added dimensions to the issues being addressed.

Consider the red head-wrap worn by African American women, a custom that crested in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although no accurate record has been kept of the extent to which women of African descent resisted the repression of their dress by whites and/or continue to express African elements of their dress, we do know several things about the red head-wrap: (a) women in certain African societies, especially those who were married and/or over certain ages, wrapped their heads in a variety of kinds and colors of cloth, (b) the method and style of wrapping varied from society to society, (c) the wrapping of the head was a mark of status and a woman with her head wrapped commanded respect, (d) during the height of the slave trade, women of African descent in the Caribbean, South and Central America continued to wrap (and still do wrap) their heads in ways similar to that of African women (women in Martinique tie their head-wraps in almost the same fashion as do women in Senegal), (e) enslaved African American women in the U.S. wrapped their heads, (f) women of African descent in the U.S. and elsewhere still wrap and cover their heads.

Some interesting facts emerge. One is that Black women in the U.S. bought enough red head cloths to support a factory in Texas at the end of the 19th century (at the same time, cowboys began to use that red cloth around their necks). Africans consider red to be positive and associated with life, blood, women; these connections are also expressed in African American literature and music. (European Americans value white as the color of virginity, purity and femininity—virginal brides wear white; "loose" women wear red.)

An interesting thing happened to the red head-wrap. In the late 19th century, during the intense campaign against

### On Separating Art and Content

Those seeking to defend a racist book often attempt to make a distinction between art and content. For example, when Black people said that the original *Little Black Sambo* was ugly, whites countered that even if the illustrations were ugly, what was important about *Little Black Sambo* was the story. Although the illustrations have never been staunchly defended, a great many whites apparently see little wrong with Blacks being portrayed as ugly or giving their children the idea that Blacks are ugly. In spite of its problems, the story has been deemed a classic because of its structure, its form, its repetition, its "humor"—as though these qualities exist in isolation from the illustrations.

In this society, dichotomy and polarization are valued. (This viewpoint is reflected in such concepts as the "opposite" sex, the emphasis on adversarial relationships, the notion that choice is limited to two alternatives as opposed to a range of possibilities, etc.) It thus seems feasible to separate the art from its content, to ignore the fact that technically well-done artwork can convey negative images and messages. Many are thus quick to praise artwork in children's books that is seductive, colorful, attractive, arresting, involving the reader on more than a superficial level—no matter how negative its content. (A saying I used to hear still holds true—"Pretty is as pretty does," meaning what does it matter that the package is pretty if the content is harmful.)

Other societies, particularly those of people of color, do not value dichotomy and polarization. They stress cooperation and a holistic view of life—and their art is closely connected to their beliefs and value systems. African "sculptures," for example, reflect the belief systems of their creators; as religious and/or ceremonial objects, they were not intended to be merely attractive decorations. (The art created in earlier, less secular periods of European history grew out of a similar world view. Gothic cathedrals, church frescoes and liturgical music, for instance, speak of a time when the secular and profane were not seen as separate, polarized spheres of expression.)

Art is, after all, a medium of communication, and all art (whatever its form) communicates something about a society's values.\* The elements of any work of art cannot be separated when considering the messages that work conveys: separating illustrations from text is like only listening to the alto section of a gospel choir. Eloise Greenfield has spoken eloquently on this topic in a previous *Bulletin* (Vol. 10, No. 3):

There is a viewpoint which . . . holds art to be sacrosanct, subject to scrutiny only as to its esthetic value. This viewpoint is in keeping with the popular myth that genuine art is not political. It is true that politics is not art, but art is political. . . .

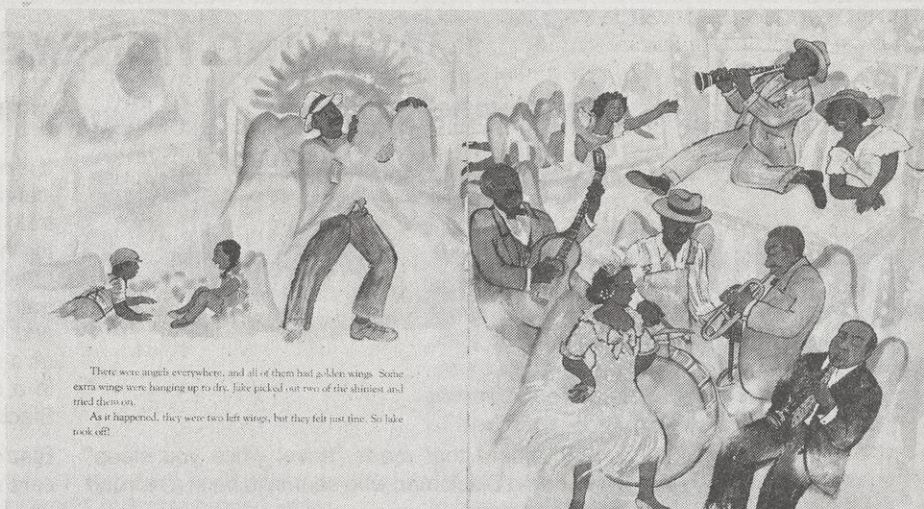
. . . A book that has been chosen as worthy of a child's emotional investment must have been judged on the basis of what it is—not a collection of words arranged in some unintelligible but artistic design, but a statement powerfully made and communicated. . . .

\*A fuller discussion of this topic appears in "Art and Reality: A Meeting of the Ways in Children's Books" by Jean Carey Bond (Vol. 7, No. 8).



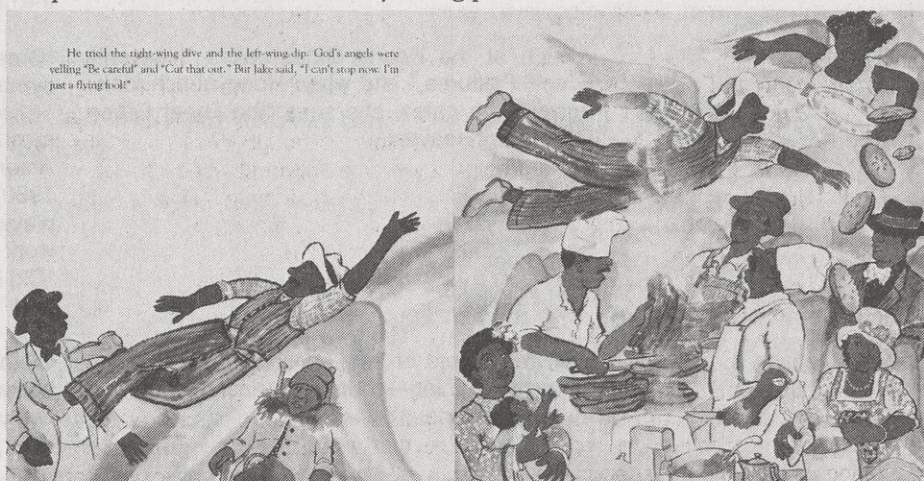
Black people,<sup>5</sup> African American women were a major target. The red head-wrap became a symbol of derided Black womanhood, a mark of low status, a mark of servitude. In addition, in some areas of the South, Black women were not permitted to wear hats; hats were for "ladies," who, by definition, could only be white. Black women hated the restriction and grew to hate the head-wrap, the symbol of the personal and collective stylistic freedom denied them. As a result, many though not all Black women stopped wearing an important cultural symbol, a symbol that expressed the spiritual beliefs, the world view and the decorative, stylistic dress that continues to distinguish African people. (It is interesting to note that large numbers of Black American women still wear hats even when they are not in vogue, and these hats have been distinguished by their style and decoration.)

The anti-Black campaign did not only derogate women's use of red and head-wraps. The big gold earrings, the practice of piercing the ear, the word "mammy"—all these and other cultural behaviors and practices were caricatured, misrepresented, ridiculed. Piercing ears was considered "pagan," "savage," "un-Christian"—even though Ethiopians, Egyptians and other Africans who were among the first Christians pierced their ears. The word mammy was ridiculed as a mispronunciation of the English words "mommy" or "nanny," although mammy has long been a respected word in West Africa. (In Ghana and other countries, the economi-



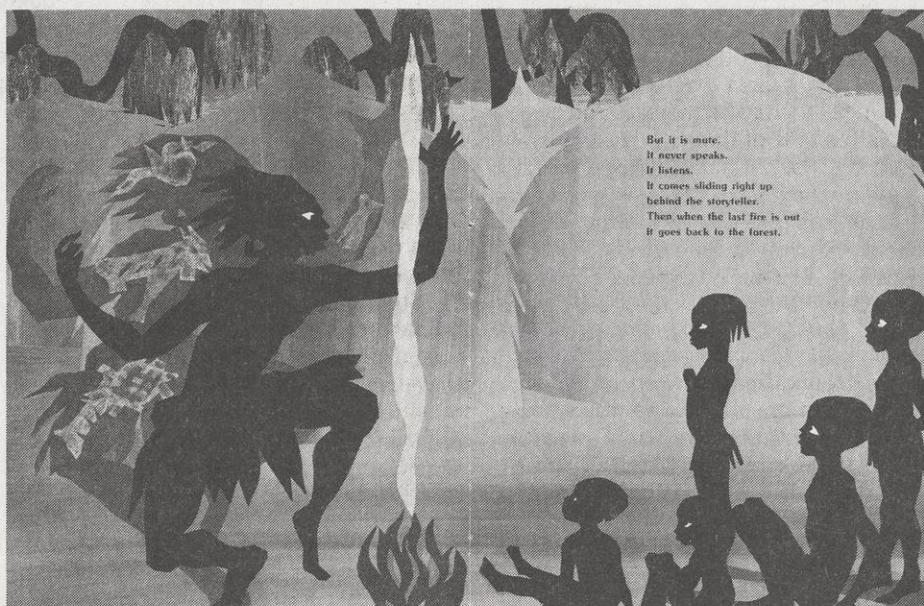
There were angels everywhere, and all of them had golden wings. Some extra wings were hanging up to dry. Jake picked out two of the shiniest and tried them on.  
As it happened, they were two left wings, but they felt just fine. So Jake took off.

*Two spreads from Jake and Honeybunch. Top: Music is provided by a jazz band, instead of the more appropriate heavenly choir; below, preparations for a heavenly feast, complete with barbecued ribs and floating pies.*



He tried the right-wing dive and the left-wing dip. God's angels were yelling "Be careful!" and "Cut that out." But Jake said, "I can't stop now. I'm just a flying fool!"

*Below, illustrations from Shadow. At left, a mask (detail)—inaccurately colored, inaccurately frightening. Below, note stereotypical figures, inaccurate dress.*



But it is mute.  
It never speaks.  
It listens.  
It comes sliding right up  
behind the storyteller.  
Then when the last fire is out  
it goes back to the forest.



# "JAKE AND HONEYBUNCH": AN ANALYSIS

## SYMBOL

## JAKE AND HONEYBUNCH

## AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

### The Train

A train kills Jake and his mule, Honeybunch.

It is not at all likely that a traditional African American author would use a train to *kill* a character. A train is a symbol of transport to glory, to "heaven," to "home" (meaning heaven, the place where family is, the place where God is, Africa). The train was also a symbol of transport to the North and Canada and therefore freedom. Still in use as a major symbol. God drives trains, or the train, in a symbolic way, is driven by the energies of Black people.

A billboard that reads "travel while you sleep" shows a Black man who seems to be in a railroad sleeping car.

Black people were not permitted to use sleeping cars when the story takes place.

A Black man is shown driving the train that kills Jake and Honeybunch.

Black men were not allowed to drive locomotives, although they were permitted to be engineers, the most dangerous job.

### Green Pastures

A sign at the Pearly Gates reads "Heavenly Green Pastures," and when Honeybunch looks through the gates, she sees "the Great Green Pastures of Heaven."

"Green Pastures" is *not* an African American symbol; Blacks consider it a disrespectful portrait of heaven. Green Pastures is a Euro-American symbol that caricatures and ridicules African American spiritual life. It was popularized by the 1930's play, "The Green Pastures," which white playwright Marc Connelly based on an earlier work that was also written by a white author—"Old Man Adam and His Chillun" by Roark Bradford.

### Heavenly Clothing

The inhabitants of heaven are shown wearing everyday clothing—chefs' uniforms, overalls and the like—of various colors.

Clothing has a variety of spiritual meanings based on an African world view that goes back centuries. For example, the type of cloth used, its color, its patterns, the occasion on which it's worn, all have meanings that can be "read." *Standard for heavenly wear is the color white* (see below), with silver or gold shoes, gold wings and gold crown.

### Heavenly/Spiritual Colors

Heaven is depicted in a variety of colors—some pastel, some bright, some dark.

White is associated with heaven, ancestors and the spirit world in both African and African American life. Bright colors are not appropriate for

cally and politically powerful market women are called mummies.) Mammy became a hated word and symbol in Black communities throughout the U.S. So did the caricatured face of Aunt Jemima, a symbol that derogated Black women, their dress (jewelry and head-wrap), their names (Jemima was a traditional African American name), and one of their titles of respect (Aunt or Auntie were—and still are—titles of endearment or respect for older Black women). African cultural aspects of femininity were labeled "unacceptable" by whites.

This brings us back to the two books

under consideration. Both *Jake and Honeybunch* and *Shadow* contribute to the cultural repression of Black people by appropriating and misrepresenting important cultural symbols. Both convey misinformation about Black people, how they live, what they believe, what they consider sacred, what *they* consider appropriate to laugh at. (Whites ridicule Blacks in literature and other media and then accuse Black people of not having a sense of humor.)

The jacket of *Jake and Honeybunch* states that the story has been taken from African and African American sources.

It was. The implication is that it is culturally authentic. It is not. The symbols that would have made it culturally authentic have been misrepresented or distorted (see chart above).

Significantly, the book misrepresents the unique, culturally distinctive view of spiritual life held by people of African descent. We have, for instance, a wonderful, joyous vision of heaven. The scholars who have analyzed spirituals, other traditional songs and the literature of Black people (not to mention the show of Black folk art that the Brooklyn Museum organized last year) document quite



# OF ITS CULTURAL SYMBOLS

## SYMBOL

## JAKE AND HONEYBUNCH

## AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

### Heavenly Food

Barbecued ribs, chicken, pies and other foods are shown floating around as the inhabitants of heaven prepare a meal.

heaven. Neither are dark colors (note the black sky).

Milk and honey are the only foods mentioned in spirituals. Eating is not a heavenly concern. The foods shown are appropriate for earthly celebrations, not in heaven—and any heavenly food would not float chaotically around. (A survey of picture books about Judeo-Christian heavens revealed that none showed cooking as an activity!)

### Heavenly Movement

It takes Jake ten minutes to “flip-flop his way along the glory road” to the Heavenly Gates.

Traditionally, those who have been transported to heaven dance, “shout” or “stomp” (both “shouting” and “stomping,” forms of African American holy dancing, have been suppressed by Euro-Protestant faiths). Jake’s behavior conveys laziness or sloppiness—it is entirely inappropriate for approaching heaven.

### Music

The musicians look like a jazz or blues band playing in a nightclub.

Heavenly music is supplied by choirs.

### “Flying Fool”

Jake says, “I’m just a flying fool” (emphasis added).

In traditional African American stories, a Black man goes to heaven and is expelled by a white God and angels because he flies extraordinarily well and/or fast and thus upsets heaven. He calls himself a “flying fool” because he did well! (If someone says “Tyrone was a dancing fool,” it does not mean Tyrone is a fool. It means he dances well!)

The original stories convey the African American practice of doing “extra-well” in white settings. The statement “I was a flying fool” also has a “self-praising” aspect: even though a white God puts the Black man out of heaven, he knows he did well. Learning how to gauge one’s own performance is important for Black people because whites rarely recognize or validate what Blacks do. Jake’s statement makes him seem foolish instead of accomplished.

clearly what heaven “looks like.” Lucille Clifton refers to our view of heaven in *Good, Says Jerome*, the only children’s book that mentions heaven in a distinctively African American fashion. (When Jerome asks his sister about death, she replies, life “ends when they meet old cousins and brothers and others at the meeting place. They’ll wait for us, too. Me and you.”)

Zemach has not used one culturally authentic clue about heaven as understood by generations of Black people. Those symbols that she has appropriated have been distorted. A real concern is

that Black children will believe the portrayal of heaven in *Jake and Honeybunch* to be culturally authentic, just as the young mother believed Walt Disney created Br’er Rabbit. Much of the furor about *Jake and Honeybunch* has to do with its violation of some highly valued symbols.<sup>6</sup>

*Shadow*, like *Jake and Honeybunch*, also misrepresents important cultural symbols but because it has to do with African life rather than African American culture, its flaws may not be so immediately apparent. *Shadow* lacks the cultural clues that would give an au-

thentic picture of African life. Instead, the book violates some primary African spiritual/religious symbols (see chart on pages 12-13).

Another dimension to the question of cultural repression must be noted here: the refusal of so many whites to even consider it as an issue. When some librarians, reviewers and individuals suggested that the treatment of African American culture in *Jake and Honeybunch* was racist, the classic forms of defense occurred:

**Denial:** Apparently, the easiest way to deal with racism is to deny its existence;



Dorothy Sterling addresses this point in the box on page 5. When interviewed on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," a Farrar, Strauss editor said that the charges of racism were "bizarre." In a separate incident, the editor-in-chief of that same house (who also serves as Zemach's editor) said that librarians who found the book racist evidenced a "misguided point of view."

**Suppression of dialog:** One can, in theory, raise almost any issue about a book and dialog will ensue—not necessarily dignified dialog if the issues are controversial enough, but dialog nonetheless. When racism is involved, however, the *possibility* of dialog is almost inevitably ruled out by those in power. (The reaction of the Farrar, Strauss editors cited above is one way that dialog is suppressed.) The suppression of discussions of racism in children's books is a reflection of the general national suppression of such dialog. It is critical that this type of dialog take place; a suppressed criticism means a repressive literature.

**Naïveté:** Toni Morrison has referred to "the incredible innocence" that leads whites to profess great surprise when people of color object to manifestations of racism. Consider, for instance, the Farrar, Strauss editors who asked why San Francisco librarians weren't buying the book (see the editorial, page 3).

**Appeal to research:** *Jake's* creator defended herself by saying that she did research and used African American sources. That is not the point. One would hope that such research was done. However, the sources selected, the researcher's understanding of those sources, her sensitivity to the tradition, her ability to identify and comprehend the important cultural symbols and their meaning within that tradition are critical issues that must be addressed.

**Appeal to a group member:** A white reviewer who praised *Jake* indicated that an unidentified African American artist-folklorist "considers" the book "rooted in traditional spirituals." An unidentified Black minister has been cited as liking the book very much. Such appeals to a Black authority (usually nameless) generate wry amusement in the Black community. Obviously, there will be some Black people who like such books. That is hardly the point. Producing a "witness for the defense" to justify a work's authenticity avoids what ought to be a collective responsibility to examine practices that result in the production of culturally inauthentic books.

## Statements on *Jake and Honeybunch*

Excerpts from statements on *Jake and Honeybunch* submitted to the Council by Black children's book writers and illustrators appear below. Included are comments by the managing editor of *Ebony Jr!*, an educational consultant and others concerned with the quality of children's books. Copies of the complete statements are available from the Council, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

"I am anti-censorship. I defend the right of Margot Zemach to write this book. I am pro-freedom. I defend and applaud the right of librarians, parents, booksellers, etc., *not* to buy and/or stock it. . . . If you want to know what I believe, don't ask Roark Bradford; ask me, for heaven's sake."—Lucille Clifton, children's book author/poet

"*Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* is entirely demeaning to Black people and is not recommended for purchase by any public school system, any public library or for any home. The book reinforces the white child's negative view of Black people and destroys the Black child's positive self-concept."—Nancy L. Arnez, Ed. D., educational consultant

"*Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* is an attack on Black children. It stereotypes, distorts and ridicules their culture. In the present social and political climate in which Black children are continually maligned and their self-esteem damaged, this book is literally a threat to their health and their survival. . . . First Amendment rights are essential, but the right to speak is of dubious value to the deceased. One further comment: Where is the outcry against de facto censorship—the suppression by publishers and other media of the voices of Third World peoples?"—Eloise Greenfield, children's book author

"It is difficult for most whites to celebrate anything *all* Black—something that has been so distorted for them by racist teachings. Unknowingly (in some cases), even the most well-meaning attempts to tackle Black subject matter ends up reaffirming the same distortions. It is a constant battle for the African American to rescue our own image from these past distortions and false interpretations."—Tom Feelings, children's book illustrator

"I am a lover of books, of books as physical objects, and have many books which I don't like but couldn't bear to part with. On finishing *Jake and Honeybunch*, I found that I couldn't abide the thought of putting it on my shelves, and thus, placed it with the newspapers to be thrown out. Such an act is unheard of in my life. Some might call this censorship, since I deprived my children of the chance to read it. I consider it merely the expression of literary judgment. Those librarians who decided not to add the book to their collections expressed a literary judgment. Those who would call this censorship are, very simply, wrong."—Julius Lester, children's book author/essayist

"*Jake and Honeybunch* is a perfectly horrid book."—Sharon Bell Mathis, children's book author

"*Jake and Honeybunch* is vicious in its racism. It teaches self-hatred to Black children."—Ossie Davis, actor/playwright/director/activist, and Ruby Dee, actress/writer/activist

"In drawing 'freely' on themes from Black American folklore, Margot Zemach has produced a book that is an essentially white and limited view of that material. For whatever reasons, she chose to exclude those themes of resistance and rebellion, of wry commentary on our condition, that are at the heart of these stories in their original form. There is not even a suggestion of this larger dimension. This is a grievous omis-



sion. Without a sense of the underlying meaning of these tales, what is left is a story that does little more than offer up a raft of comic stereotypes.

There's Jake, 'a flying fool,' not because flying provides him—as in the original joke—with the only moments of power he has known in his life; but because in Zemach's version he is depicted as a dimwitted, bumbling, Step-n-Fetch-it type who 'flip-flops' his way to heaven.

There's heaven itself, a segregated ghetto paradise whose inhabitants spend their time jamming and eating. And what a manna of barbecued ribs, chicken drumsticks and pies fill these pages! All that is missing is the proverbial watermelon.

And there's God. True, he's Black, but he's a God without even the power or authority to control an unruly mule. Is he then capable of running heaven?

The implications of all this are disheartening as well as dangerous. The result is a book that is a disservice to children both Black and white."—Paule Marshall, author

•  
"The issue here is not censorship; the issue is racism and the perpetuation of racism by writers, publishers and the media. It should be a matter of concern for us that it was possible to write a book like this in the 1980s."—Lerone Bennett, author/editor/historian

•  
"A cultural group or a nation's folklore is imbued with that group or nation's social and political reality. It is highly unlikely that someone who is outside that group's experience can interpret the *nuances* of the group's reality without the subtle intrusion of his or her own, thus alien, *perceptions* of that reality. Margot Zemach's *Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* is a proper example. Implicit are residuals of the Plantation Tradition that gave us such unfortunate spin-off 'classics' as *Epaminondas*, *Little Black Sambo*, *Ten Little Niggers*, and so forth. . . . I have read Zemach's dialog and pondered her illustrations. *Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* is more minstrelsy, circa 1983, than folklore. I applaud the librarians who understood this and who refused to support it."—Mari Evans, poet/children's book author

•  
"Far from being able to evoke the whimsy and pungency of Southern Black folk humor, Margot Zemach—an alien in the Black world—has created a clumsy, superficial caricature. The Black reading public has every right to reject it."—George Ford, children's book illustrator

•  
"*Jake and Honeybunch* reinforces a negative message that so many American children perceive as the only way for Blacks: hard times are their poor lot; living in ghettos, content to be separate from the rest of the human race. It is one small book. I let a kid I know read it, an older kid. He said, that's the way it is. A lot of Black people live in Black neighborhoods, go to Black schools, so why shouldn't they go to a Black heaven? he asked. It's sad. But maybe the kid's a realist. American society is a segregated society. *The Zemach book reflects that society*."—Virginia Hamilton, children's book author

•  
"I wish *Jake and Honeybunch* would just GO. . . . The scenes of heaven with barbecue are revolting, as are the ideas presented, especially Jake's irresponsibility. Can't we let *Green Pastures* die a well-deserved death of old age and halt the implanting of sordid notions in young minds? I have always opposed censorship, but I vehemently join and endorse those who *censure* this book. It is sickening, dangerous stuff."—Kristin Hunter, author

•  
"The decade of the 80s is upon us all. A decade of renewed racism. A decade of returning Blacks to the arena of confederacy chambers. A decade of fish fries and all-Black glorious hand-clapping heavens where angels and one Black grinning 'flying fool' named Jake reside. This book (and others like it) makes it apparent that in order to realize our human potential, we must organize in every arena. Organize our

Continued on page 21

Such discussions ought to be welcomed, but unfortunately, sensitivity to issues of race and culture is considered outside the purview of craft. (See box "On Separating Art and Content," page 6.)

**Appeal to the concept of the writer's right:** After years of denying that Blacks had a literary tradition, whites are "discovering" the reservoir of African American stories, epics, poetry, etc., and appropriating them for children's books. Whites frequently state that they have the "right" to use materials from other cultures more or less as they see fit. Sometimes citing the First Amendment, sometimes the sacredness of a writer's imagination, they refuse to acknowledge issues of cultural appropriation or misrepresentation. Surely these are issues all of us should want to discuss. (An increasing number of books on African American themes are being written by whites, even as works by Black authors are going out of print.)

**Cries of censorship:** Citing the First Amendment, some people all too often consider criticism of racism (or sexism) as tantamount to a call for book burning. In the course of their duties, librarians and/or reviewers may "not recommend" a book because of its poor artistic or literary quality; they may even suggest that a library not purchase a book for the same reason. No problem. Let someone say the same because of racist content, and all hell breaks loose. This tactic effectively shifts attention from racism to censorship, an irrelevant connection.

**Denial of responsibility:** Members of the it's-not-our-responsibility brigade—usually publishers and their apologists—are willing to acknowledge their obligation for selection issues such as those related to "literary quality" and finances, but unwilling to consider social justice issues or the effects of racist books on children. States the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* published by the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom:

Whether or not *Jake and Honeybunch* is guilty of racial stereotyping, according to ALA policy as enunciated in the Library Bill of Rights and elaborated in the policy on *Diversity in Collection Development*, this is not for librarians to judge. (March, 1983)<sup>7</sup>

Some 100 years ago, Henry McNeal Turner made a telling—and still relevant—comment. Born enslaved, he fought in the Civil War, became the first chaplain permitted to serve with Black troops and was elected to Georgia's first Reconstruction legislature. He soon saw the gains of Reconstruction being taken away. When Blacks were illegally ex-



# "SHADOW": AN ANALYSIS OF

**Note:** The chart below does not convey the feeling that the book evokes: that Africa is an unpleasant, frightening place. In *Shadow*, Africa is a place only of extremes; of heat-seared deserts and of jungles with snake-draped trees, a place of crawly things—snakes, scorpions and worms—with eagles and vultures hovering overhead.

## SYMBOL

## SHADOW

## TRADITION

### Masks

A large brightly colored mask appears on a double-spread captioned, "Here it [*i.e.*, Shadow] is in a mask." The same spread shows several white disembodied mask-like faces; similar mask-like faces also appear on the frontispiece and title page.

The large mask in *Shadow* is grotesque, frightening and inaccurately colored with large dots and stripes. African masks, made by artists trained in traditional values, are used in religious and ceremonial services; they are not considered grotesque or frightening. As George Tabman, a member of the Dan society in Liberia, has noted, "Beautiful masks keep children from fright, because it is through the masks that they will learn the tradition." The use of ghostly white "masks" is also inappropriate; see below.

### White

Some streaky white disembodied faces that seem to be based on African masks appear in several illustrations (see above).

The white mask-like faces in *Shadow* seem spectral and frightening. White signifies ancestors and other positive spirits, a major element in African spiritual life. It is a color having spiritual, not ghostly or frightening, connotations. The African religious practice of applying white to the face (not to masks) has been caricatured as well as misinterpreted.

### African People

The black cut-out figures have few or no features except for large, slanted white eyes.

The features of African people vary greatly. Many have almond-shaped eyes, dramatic against their dark skin, a characteristic that has been stereotyped and caricatured. African people are a variety of beiges, browns and blacks, a reality obscured by the illustrations in *Shadow*.

pelled from the Georgia legislature, he said:

We are told that if Black people want to speak they must speak through white trumpets. . . . if Black people want their sentiments expressed they must be adulterated and sent through white messengers.<sup>5</sup>

The crucial issue of cultural repression must still be addressed, particularly as it affects children's books. Until there is a forum for open, respectful discussion of the issue, it will be impossible to move toward an authentic, representative children's literature. □

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Reconstruction lasted ten years. During that time, a coalition of Blacks, poor whites and some Northern Republicans who had moved South enacted far-reaching political and social reforms in the constitutional conventions and newly elected legislatures of the

South. The new state constitutions provided universal male suffrage (a few state constitutions disfranchised some former public officials who supported secession, but the disqualifications were minor and temporary). This gave the vote for the first time to newly freed Black men, as well as to thousands of poor whites, who before the Civil War had been deprived of the vote because of property-ownership qualifications. For the first time, Southern states provided free public schools for all children, a gain not only for Black children but for tens of thousands of poor white children who previously had been denied education. The property rights of women were protected, divorce laws written and imprisonment for debt abolished. Orphanages, asylums for the insane and schools for blind and deaf people were established." From *Violence, the Ku Klux Klan and the Struggle for Equality* (The Connecticut Education Association, The Council on Interracial Books for

Children, The National Education Association, 1981). For additional information on the reforms of the Reconstruction era, see: Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Black Power USA: The Human Side of Reconstruction* (Johnson Publishing Co., 1967); The Council on Interracial Books for Children, *Reconstruction: The Promise and Betrayal of Democracy* (The Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1983); W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (Atheneum, 1962); John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War* (University of Chicago Press, 1961); and Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (Knopf, 1965).

<sup>2</sup>For a review of the treatment of Blacks in children's fiction of this period, see Dorothy Broderick, *Image of the Black in Children's Fiction* (R.R. Bowker, 1973).

<sup>3</sup>This is not to suggest that the 60s were a period of bias-free literature. The stereotypes simply appeared in a more subtle form. For in-



# ITS CULTURAL SYMBOLS

## SYMBOL

## SHADOW

## TRADITION

### Clothing

The silhouetted figures (almost all appear to be men) seem to be wearing grass (or feather) "skirts."

Grass "skirts," which are actually worn in very few tropical societies, are not the standard dress for African men or women. The clothing of the hundreds of different African societies varies greatly. A unifying principle, expressed by each society, is the concept of personal adornment, which requires decorating the body or wearing decorative clothing. Clothing styles distinguish Africa's people and identifies them as belonging to a particular society. A note on sex roles: African women—who are barely visible in *Shadow*—play important roles in African society as mothers, warriors, rulers, etc., and their importance is reflected in the extent to which they appear in the art of the continent.

### Architecture

A number of round, thatched "huts" are shown.

The caricatured "huts" depicted have become a shorthand symbol conveying "primitive" people. African architecture is rich and varied; it ranges from the great North African Islamic temples, Egyptian palaces and tombs to Dogon terraced stone homes and Ethiopian stone cathedrals to round buildings covered with woven grass or palm-frond roofs (local materials).

### Spears, Shields

Various figures with "spears" (called lances when used by Europeans) and shields are shown. One spread with such figures is captioned, "It [*i.e.*, *Shadow*] follows man everywhere, even to war."

The depiction of individuals with "spears" and shields reinforces the stereotype that Africans are war-like. It also reinforces the notion that Africans are "primitive," with weaponry that is inferior to that of the Europeans; this obscures the fact that various African peoples routed European invaders for many decades, until the repeater gun was perfected.

stance, the widely-acclaimed *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor (1969) carried the stereotype of the contented slave to its "logical" conclusion: Timothy, who establishes his servile relationship to a young white boy with his very first words, eventually sacrifices his own life to save his master. (The grotesque Negro stereotype also plays a part in this tale.)

<sup>4</sup>Colonialism is a political system of relationships in which one group controls and oppresses another. Fanon, Memmi and others have written about classic colonialism, in which the colony is located far from the metropole (*i.e.*, the colonial center). Lerone Bennett, Jr. discusses "internal colonialism," in which the colonized people live within the same geographic borders as the colonial center; he applies this definition to the situation of people of color in the U.S. Both classic and internal colonialism have five components: racism, cultural repression, political domination, economic exploitation and force.

For further information, see Bennett's *The Shaping of Black America* (Johnson Publishing Co., 1975).

<sup>5</sup>See Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *A Red Record* (Donahue & Henneberry, 1894).

<sup>6</sup>It must be noted that the serious issues of appropriation and distortion are not the only problems with *Jake and Honeybunch*. There is, for instance, the lack of variety in the skin color of the Black characters (everyone is the same color, which is unrealistic), almost all of the Black inhabitants of heaven look miserable (hardly appropriate), Jake can't even be counted on to tend to his job of moon regulator (another incompetent shiftless Black worker). The list goes on.

<sup>7</sup>Lillian Gerhardt of *School Library Journal* takes another position which clarifies the librarians' responsibilities and options regarding book selection:

Farrar, Strauss & Giroux has been behaving as if librarians are obligated to buy

*Jake and Honeybunch* . . . for their children's book collections whether or not they wish to use it with children. No such obligation exists. Nor is any apology due to the publisher for a decision taken against the purchase of the book in accordance with established library book selection policies and procedures. That's book selection. (*School Library Journal*, March, 1983)

<sup>8</sup>"Participation of Negroes in the Government 1867-1870" by Ethel Christler, unpublished Master's Thesis, Atlanta University, 1932.

### About the Authors

DR. BERYLE BANFIELD is President of the Council on Interracial Books for Children. GERALDINE L. WILSON is a freelance education and early childhood specialist and curriculum consultant who is currently working with the Children's Television Workshop.



*The influence of the Texas textbook adoption process on the content of textbooks has long been recognized, but as conservative, fundamentalist forces increase their hold on that process, its impact becomes ever more serious. This two-part article begins below with the story of an organization that is*

# THE TEXTBOOK SELECTION

## Group Works to Improve Selection Process

By the Council Staff

The nine-room office in Washington, D.C., is filled with activity. In one room two word processors work around the clock. Elsewhere, scripts for TV announcements are being written and a documentary movie is in preparation. Five people are busy in the mail room. Tie-lines connect the office to branches in Texas, Ohio, Los Angeles, New York and North Carolina.

This is the headquarters of People For The American Way, founded in 1980 by TV producer Norman Lear and other prominent religious, education and civic leaders. Lear had been researching a feature film satirizing televangelists, and the more he listened to people like Jerry Falwell and the others who politicized religion and attacked those who disagreed, the more alarmed he became. Instead of completing his feature film, Lear made a series of short TV spots to alert the public to the threat of political and religious extremism. To increase the number of these TV announcements, Lear and his colleagues mailed a fund-raising letter to hundreds of thousands of people. The unexpectedly high response indicated that many others were also concerned about the growth of the Far Right.

Today, People For . . . has a national membership of 100,000, and its activities are impressive (see box, page 16). Of special interest to *Bulletin* readers is People For . . . 's Freedom to Learn Project, designed to counter the Far Right's growing influence on the content of school textbooks. Although the project encompasses all states, its major focus for the past year has been on Texas. According to Barbara Parker, who directs the Freedom to Learn Project, "Texas was the obvious place to concentrate our efforts because of its influence on the publishing

industry and because of the Gablers' influence on Texas."

Prior to joining the staff of People For . . . , Barbara Parker was associate editor of *The American School Board Journal* and of *The Executive Educator*, two national monthlies published in Washington, D.C. She wrote the first major article on Mel and Norma Gabler to appear in a national magazine—"Meet the Textbook Crusaders: Your Schools May Be the Next Battlefield in the Crusade Against 'Improper' Textbooks," which appeared in *The American School Board Journal* in June, 1979. (The piece won a first place Charles Stewart Mott Journalism Award and a Clarion Award from Women in Communication, Inc., and it was one of the five finalists in the 1980 National Magazine Awards.) Parker became concerned about the influence of the Far Right on public education and the publishing industry, so when Lear asked her to join People For . . . , she felt the time had come for her to become a "full-time activist."

The Texas Textbook Project—as the Freedom to Learn Project is known in Texas—was launched in July, 1982, with the opening of a People For . . . office in Austin, the state capital and site of the important Texas State Textbook Committee hearings. In charge of the Austin office is lawyer Michael Hudson, a native Texan who formerly was administrative assistant to Texas congressman Micky Leland.

Parker and Hudson began collecting data about the adoption process, and they gathered a large amount of information about the Gablers' activities and methods. Taking advantage of the state's Open Records Act, they secured copies of all the objections to textbooks the Gablers had raised in 1982. In late July they

distributed an editorial memorandum on the Texas process, on the Gablers' role and on that of the publishers to the national press.

The Textbook Selection Committee's open hearings, held annually in Austin in August, had received little attention outside of Texas; they were usually covered by the Texas media but few attended the meetings. In 1982, however, there was a standing-room-only audience at the hearings. More than 100 people—media people, publishers' representatives, interested citizens and others—came. Because regulations did not permit them to speak at the hearings, Parker and Hudson held a well-attended press conference outside the hearing chambers. Stories on the Gablers began appearing in every part of Texas as well as nationally. For many, this was the first time they had ever heard about the Texas textbook adoption procedure or about the Gablers.

Writing in *The Nation* (October 2, 1982), John Henry Faulk commented:

I have heard more expressions of strong disapproval of the Gablers and textbook censorship in Texas these last five weeks than I have heard in the last five years. For the first time in years, a robust dialogue is in progress around the state on this crucial matter. It portends well for the school children of the whole country.

And Austin English teacher Ouida Whiteside told a *Time* reporter:

We all sat back for a long time and thought the whole thing was a joke. Now we realize we'd been had.

The Texas Textbook Project's first objective was to open up the textbook selection process. At the time, the adoption process was very restrictive: only citizens who wished to protest textbooks

Continued on page 16



*in the forefront of a movement to open up the textbook adoption process in Texas. The second part (below) gives a brief history of conservative impact on the Texas adoption process during the past 25 years*

## PROCESS IN TEXAS

# Far Right Works to Turn Back the Clock

By the Council Staff

Textbook controversies—particularly in the state of Texas—are nothing new. The late 1950s, for instance, saw numerous attacks on textbooks. They were spurred to a great extent by the 1958 book *Brainwashing in the High Schools* by E. Merrill Root, which analyzed 11 U.S. history texts and charged that their distortions and “collectivist ideas” were responsible for the U.S. losing the Cold War to Russia. The book stated that the texts were indoctrinating future soldiers with ideas that “parallel the Communist line,” and that this explained why some GI’s had succumbed to “brainwashing” by North Koreans.

Root’s book received little attention when it came out and was scorned by professional educators. But right-wing groups began increasingly to promote the book, and it gained more and more national media attention. A National Education Association memorandum at the time noted that this book:

stimulated other groups and persons to call for censorship action in all branches of school work. Proposals cover fields from American history to zoology and suggest action from bookburning to labelling of “dangerous” books.

During the same period, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) published a report entitled “Textbook Study.” It attacked 170 titles—giving no annotations—as “subversive” and “un-American.” (The DAR’s list was based on an earlier 1949 study by the Sons of the American Revolution, which had been done to find out “if our young students are emphatically taught love of God and country or are being corrupted to accept socialism and materialism.”)

The DAR’s report claimed that a pattern of “economic determinism” was de-

tectable in all the objectionable texts and complained:

History books and economic texts contain uncomplimentary pictures of slum areas or of long lines of the unemployed during “The Great Depression,” one book even labeling such a photograph “A Long Line of Unemployed Waiting for Christmas Dinners.”

Next came Operation Textbook, started by a group of business and industrial leaders calling themselves America’s Future.<sup>1</sup> Operation Textbook was dedicated to countering “subversion in school texts” and offered free “authoritative, objective” reviews of texts. (The first textbook reviews that Mel and Norma Gabler ever read were supplied by this organization.) Reviewers included, among others, the above-mentioned E. Merrill Root, several editors of a John Birch Society publication, and a former staff member of Joseph McCarthy’s subcommittee of the Senate Internal Security Committee.

The theme of all these groups was the same: textbooks defamed the American image and promoted a collectivist society; and they erred in mentioning the income tax, Social Security, TVA, the United Nations and/or liberal authors. Textbook controversies erupted in numerous states including New York, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Illinois, Michigan and California. The strongest attacks on textbooks occurred in Texas.

Groups like Texans for America, which had not previously expressed interest in textbooks, supported all the textbook complaints of other right-wing groups, and, in addition, demanded the censure of comments favorable to federal subsidies to farmers. Christian fundamentalist groups added an objection of their own about the theory of evolution (this particular complaint was largely ig-

nored in the face of a national concern about the Soviet Union’s scientific achievements in the post-Sputnik era).

Racial integration in textbooks was also condemned. A textbook describing Ralph Bunche as “a distinguished statesman” came under attack in Texas, as did language arts texts that included poems by Langston Hughes. (The Texas Textbook Committee voted to delete Hughes from texts bought with state funds.)

Groups also demanded that open-ended questions (those with more than one “right” answer) be eliminated. Stated the president of Texans for America:

The stressing of both sides of a controversy only confuses the young and encourages them to make snap judgments based on insufficient evidence. Until they are old enough to understand both sides of a question, they should be taught only the American side. . . .

How did educational publishers in the 1960s respond to these attacks? Describing the 1961 textbook hearings, Bob Merrill of the *Texas Observer* wrote:

It was about as poor a job of public relations as I’ve ever seen. The press heard the fanatics’ full voice, but heard hardly a chirp from the publishers. . . . The publishers operated in an atmosphere of frantic commercialism [and showed] an eagerness to sail with the wind of strongest opinion.

University of Texas historian J. Frank Dobie referred to Texans for America as “one of the worst things that has happened to Texas education in my lifetime.” He said of the publishers: “Their aim now is to offend nobody.”

In 1961 the Texas House of Representatives called for an investigation of school texts. In establishing the inves-

Continued on page 18



## The Activities of People For . . .

People For The American Way is now into its third year, with a national membership of 100,000. In addition to the Texas Textbook Project described in the accompanying article, the organization has been active in the following ways:

- Confronted publishers who pre-censor texts in order to maximize book sales. For example, more than 10,000 People For . . . members signed petitions protesting Doubleday's elimination of the word "evolution" from its only high school biology text, *Experiences in Biology* (1981).

- Sponsored TV spots on freedom of expression that have been broadcast on more than 300 stations.

- Played a leadership role in the Coalition for Religious Liberty's efforts to prevent the passage of a 1982 congressional amendment permitting school prayer.

- Conducts the Media Fairness Program to monitor TV for application of the "fairness doctrine" requiring a "balance" of viewpoints on social issues. Thus, when a New York TV program exhorted against abortion in the name of religion, People For . . . 's intervention led to a program that gave the Planned Parenthood Association an opportunity to respond.

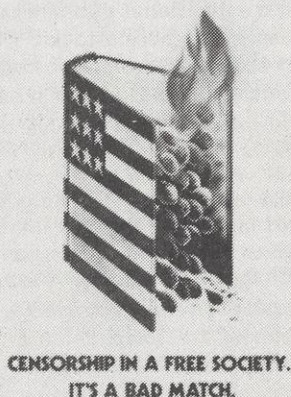
- Disseminated public service print advertisements such as the one shown below. A full-color poster of the ad is also available for \$7.50 from People For . . . 's national office: 1424 16th St. N.W., Suite 601, Washington, DC 20036.

- Developed TV spots challenging the New Right. Also developed a half-hour documentary film, "Life and Liberty . . . For All Who Believe," narrated by Burt Lancaster, which aired on TV stations in over 35 media markets.

- Develops films—one is now being prepared on the dangerous effects and spreading influence of the so-called "pro-family" movement. A second film on censorship is also in the works.

- Has prepared a soon-to-be-published citizen action guide, "Protecting the Freedom to Learn"—a how-to book that contains model selection and reconsideration policies, samples of Far Right materials used to spark censorship controversy, strategies for preventing censorship, and methods for democratic resolution of censorship problems when they occur.

- People For . . . asks readers to help monitor and counter the New Right by sending them newspaper clippings or brief notes about (1) local textbook controversies, (2) school and library censorship incidents or attempts, (3) attempts to mandate prayer and "creationism" in local public schools, and (4) similar activities. If possible, include the name and phone number of anyone who could provide more information about the particular incident. Send clippings and notes to People For . . . , National Headquarters, 1424 16th St. N.W., Suite 601, Washington, DC 20036.



Censorship is the greatest threat to American freedom. It suppresses the words, ideas, and values that are the heart of our nation. It is a threat to the very existence of our country. People For The American Way is the only organization that is dedicated to the protection of our First Amendment rights. We are the only organization that is dedicated to the protection of our First Amendment rights. We are the only organization that is dedicated to the protection of our First Amendment rights.

People For The American Way

A People For . . . ad/poster; see above.

were allowed to appear before the State Textbook Committee. No one was permitted to *defend* textbook content, and citizens wishing to counter the objections raised by Mel and Norma Gabler, for example, were not permitted to testify. The only defense allowed was by publishers whose books were under attack. (Publishers submit written answers to the bills of particulars entered against their titles, but they have been reluctant to counter charges at the hearings. They would, in fact, prefer to make the requested deletions or changes rather than risk open controversy, because even recommended books can be challenged by local districts, and a book is more likely to be purchased if there has been no open controversy about it at the hearings.)

In February, 1983, People For . . . released the results of their seven-month

study of the Texas process in a report titled "As Texas Goes, So Goes the Nation: A Report on Textbook Selection in Texas."\* The report formally requested that the Texas rules be changed to allow positive comments about textbooks and to allow people other than publishers to rebut citizens' objections. The request was approved last February by the Texas State Board and the Texas legislature. "A significant victory," commented the *Washington Post*.

Buoyed by the success of their first year, Parker and Hudson set their next objective: to effect changes in the Texas code governing the content of textbooks. Many consider this code, which is spelled out in the Texas Proclamation, a major factor in influencing the content of textbooks used nationally.

The Proclamation, revised annually, is divided into two sections; one deals with standards of manufacture (quality of paper, binding, etc); the other establishes content requirements. Some requirements are positive; for instance, the Proclamation requires that textbooks "shall avoid bias" and "stereotyping" and "shall present a wide range of goal choices and lifestyles." Men and women are to be presented "in a variety of roles and activities" and their contributions, "past and present," noted. Also, "textbooks should reflect varieties of work" and people "should be treated without bias toward particular kinds of work." Some requirements, on the other hand, are far from positive: for instance, evolution must be treated as only "one of several theories that explain the origin of humankind. . . ." (This section was added in 1974 to placate the Gablers.)

The Proclamation also mandates that textbooks "emphasize patriotism and respect for recognized authority." Last year, this was used to protest civic textbooks suggesting that interpretations of the Constitution may differ, that women are denied equal rights to men, that students should discuss how school policies are made, that students should learn about the Great Depression and that the Founding Fathers might be thought of as "revolutionaries." In each case the objection was that discussion of the issue leads to questioning of "constituted authority" and therefore violates the Proclamation.

The Proclamation also prohibits materials that would cause "embarrassing

\*Single copies of this report are available from People For . . . , 1424 16th St. N.W., Suite 601, Washington, DC 20036.



situations in the classroom." This requirement is frequently cited in objections to open-ended questions that stimulate class discussion. Last year, for example, the Gablers cited it in objecting to classroom discussions of questions on job satisfaction, on non-traditional roles for women, on society's responsibility to minorities and on psychological defense mechanisms. In every case, the Gablers charged that the questions were "exploring personal values" and "invading student privacy." The same requirement was also used to protest textbooks suggesting that teachers poll students on a variety of issues (poll-taking was called an "invasion of privacy" which subjects "students to peer pressure").

Last spring, in coalition with the Texas Civil Liberties Union, the Texas Coalition for Excellence in Science Education and the National Education Association, People For . . . presented arguments in favor of changing the state's content requirements. They brought a Nobel prize-winner, university professors and other educators to the May hearings of the State Board and made a formal presentation, suggesting alternative guidelines. The Board set up a special committee to study the recommended changes; it met in June and in less than an hour voted unanimously against making any changes whatsoever.

In their bills of particulars submitted to the Textbook Committee this past summer, People For . . . endorsed the very teaching methods the Gablers have long protested—open-ended questions at the close of chapters and classroom discussion of social issues. The texts' suggested topics for class discussion were praised, and People For . . . 's reasons for the praise and the Gablers' objections were given as well. They also presented statements comparing the Gablers' protests with similar protests from the national Pro-Family Forum. The intent, as stated in Barbara Parker's "Memo on Objections/Responses Filed by Gablers and Others" (July 8, 1983), was to show that the Gablers' objections are part of the nationally orchestrated Far Right rhetoric.

People For . . . also challenged the Gablers' insistent demands that the teaching of evolution be balanced with the teaching of "scientific creationism." This issue has been covered by the national media in some detail, and People For . . . 's response appears in the above-mentioned Memo. The Gablers' objections to 1984 world history texts that suggested classroom discussion of the

## The Importance of Being Texas

Most states are what publishers call "open territory." In these states—27 in all (the East and most of the Midwest and Far West)—publishers sell direct to school districts or to individual schools. No central authority passes on which textbooks the schools can or cannot buy. The other 23 states—almost all in the South and Southwest—are "closed territory." In these states, centralized adoption committees draw up lists of approved textbooks from which individual schools make their selections. Schools are generally free to buy textbooks that are not on the approved list, but if they do they can't use state funds to make the purchase. (Few schools have funds to buy books not on the list, so the approved list assumes major significance.)

In closed states like Texas, state officials who do the selecting have extraordinary power. Texas, for example, can require publishers to eliminate passages or to rewrite entire sections of their textbooks before they are adopted. The more populous the states, the greater the power. Texas and California are the two largest closed adoption states, but Texas (a \$66 million market in 1983), even though second to California in population, wields more influence on textbook publishers than any other state. For one thing, Texas adopts textbooks for both elementary and secondary schools, while California's statewide adoption is limited to elementary schools. Secondly, the number of textbooks that Texas approves for any one subject is five at most (a minimum of two), so the economic stakes in Texas are particularly high. The third reason is that Texas purchase contracts are in effect for eight years (before 1983, it was six years). This means that the world history and language arts texts bought this year will remain in Texas classrooms—and will be reordered as copies wear out—through 1992.

In addition, Texas has a very favorable single-payment system—one check covers the state's entire purchase (California's school districts make individual payments). As one publisher said, "The money we get from textbook sales in Texas is fast and clean." Texas even warehouses the textbooks in massive depositories and handles distribution to individual schools.

All of the above factors place Texas in a pivotal position as the "most wanted" state; this explains why publishers—in deciding on what to include or exclude in their textbooks—give Texas most favored status.

nuclear threat were also refuted in People For . . . 's bills of particulars (see the Memo referred to above).

The importance of refuting the Gablers' objections cannot be stressed enough, yet it is also important that steps be taken to improve the *quality* of textbook content. Countering groups like the Gablers will, at best, keep textbooks from becoming more biased than they already are, but is maintaining textbooks at their present level enough? Progressive groups must also work to eliminate the racism, sexism, militarism, classism and all the other biases that study after study show pervade textbooks.

Now that the Texas textbook adoption process has been opened up, social justice advocates have the opportunity to impact in a very positive way on the future content of the nation's textbooks. In addition to the feminist presence—which, fortunately, has been increasing over the years—it is essential that adoption committees hear from people of color, from disability and gay rights advocates, from peace and labor activists—from all

groups that have a stake in making textbooks reflect the realities and the hopes of a multiracial, pluralistic, just society.

A People For . . . report on last May's public hearings before the State Board of Education notes that representatives of local and national organizations attended those hearings. The report states that some Board members were impressed by the presence of non-Texans, as it helped them see the significance and importance of the Texas proceedings on the rest of the nation. "For this reason alone," the report states, People For . . . believes that:

It is imperative for national organizations to appear at future public hearings that permit testimony from non-Texans. It is important to convince the Texas Board that the eyes of the nation are on Texas—in so far as guidelines influencing textbook content are concerned.

The *Bulletin* will keep readers informed of developments in Texas. Readers in Texas are urged to get in touch with People For . . . 's Austin office and to take an active part in future textbook adoptions. □



Continued from page 15

tigatory committee, the House expressed the desire

that the American history curriculums in the public schools emphasize in the textbooks our growing and throbbing history, of hearts and souls inspired by wonderful American principles and traditions.

The investigation began in 1962 with public hearings throughout the state. Large crowds attended, and always the DAR, the Texans for America, the Christian fundamentalists and allied groups dominated the meetings. The hearings were described as "wild, comparable to a rodeo." When someone condemned a textbook, there was "loud foot stamping" and "lusty applause"; whenever someone supported a text, there were "raucous boos" and charges that "the speaker must be a communist."<sup>2</sup>

A hearing in San Antonio opened with a film titled "The Ultimate Weapon," which held that American prisoners in Korea succumbed to brainwashing because of "a weakness in American character," and the speaker introducing the film claimed that textbooks were responsible for this "weakness." The film narrator was Ronald Reagan.

In the midst of the ferment that surrounded textbooks in the early 60s, Mel and Norma Gabler began to get involved in the adoption process. Mel Gabler had a clerical job at Esso's Humble office, purchasing pipe and pipe fittings. He was a Sunday school teacher and a church deacon in Hawkins, a little oil town with a strongly conservative and fundamentalist population. Norma Gabler was a housewife. (When asked about her qualifications to judge textbooks, she replied, "God chose me for this work, that's the only qualification I need.")

By the Gablers' own account, their concern with textbooks began in 1961 when their teenage son complained that his textbook minimized the Constitutional restraints on the federal government. (Before this, the Gablers say, they trusted textbooks almost as much as they did the Bible.) The Gablers started looking at other history texts. They found that familiar "patriotic" sayings—the stirring words of Nathan Hale and Patrick Henry, for example—were missing. Texts had too little to say about the virtues of capitalism and not nearly enough about the evils of socialism. The Gablers phoned a local call-in show to complain, and they kept calling every week for several months. Letters began coming into the radio station asking to hear more from the Gablers, and soon

## Perspectives for Sale

After the Civil War, forces in the North and the South each tried to dictate their own version of history, and just two years after the conflict, a New York publisher advertised: "Books prepared for Southern schools by Southern authors, and therefore free from matter offensive to Southern people."—*NEA [National Education Association] Journal*, May, 1963.

they were appearing on numerous radio shows. They became favorites with the media as "home folks" and their fame spread throughout East Texas.

The Gablers speak of their early involvement with textbooks as a struggle against an entrenched educational establishment. There is no doubt that Texas officials had long enjoyed a very free hand in running state and local school affairs, and the educational establishment was not at all pleased when Mel and Norma Gabler began raising questions in public about the texts used in Texas schools.

## The Lone Star Stumbling Block

In spite of the power wielded in Texas by the Gablers, the Textbook Committee and the advisory committees, the ultimate power lies with the State Board of Education. And it is this 27-member Board, each member representing a Congressional district, that is the real stumbling block to better textbook content. Its mindset is illustrated by its response to a new member's proposal requiring the Board or the Commissioner to give their reasons for rejecting a book recommended by the Textbook Committee; said Joe Kelly Butler, the chairman of the Board:

If we [the state board] want to reject a book because we don't like the way someone parts his [sic] hair, that's our prerogative. We've never had to tell anyone why we don't like a book and that's the way it's going to be as long as I'm chairman. [Butler's term expires in 1985.]

Barbara Parker recently made this comment: "Once anyone has seen the State Board in session, the task of convincing anyone of the intent of the Board—or the need for reform—becomes unnecessary."

The first reviews of textbooks the Gablers sent away for were those prepared by Operation Textbook, the New York-based group organized by America's Future to "counter subversion in school texts." They also sent for the DAR's "Textbook Study." What they found confirmed their suspicions that textbooks were undermining patriotism, the free enterprise system, religion and parental authority. They began organizing and preparing informational booklets for parents in 1962, and Norma Gabler spoke at several Texas Textbook Committee hearings, but it wasn't until 1964 that the Gablers submitted their first formal objections or "bills of particulars" to the Texas Textbook Committee and began appearing regularly at public hearings. In that year high school textbooks prepared by the federally funded Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) group were up for adoption, and content reflected the increased post-Sputnik attention to science. More space was given to evolution, for example, than had ever appeared in textbooks used in the Texas schools, and this led to formal objections from a number of church groups as well as the Gablers. Despite the strongest protests in the memory of press observers (NBC-TV gave the hearings national coverage), the Textbook Committee approved the disputed books.

## Gablers Initially Ignored

Indeed, the bills of particulars submitted by the Gablers during the next few years went largely unheeded by both the State Textbook Committee and the State Education Board. The climate had changed by 1969, when the two subjects up for adoption were history and, again, biology—ideal subject areas for sparking protest from traditionalists as well as anti-evolutionists. History texts were just beginning to reflect the concerns of the Civil Rights Movement, a change that distressed many white people in Texas. The Gablers complained bitterly that the history texts were "demoting" national heroes, "trivializing" important historical events and making white children "ashamed of their heritage." The new biology texts were similar to the earlier BSCS books and earned the same protests. For the first time, the Textbook Committee accepted the Gablers' objections and rejected textbooks they opposed.

The next year the Textbook Committee, a relatively independent group ap-



pointed annually, refused to accommodate the Gablers, and they continued to ignore the Gablers' objections for the next three years as well. However, the State Education Board, which is an elected group, supported the Gablers and rejected the books. (The Board has veto power over the Textbook Committee selections, and need not explain its decisions.)

It is instructive to review the bills of particulars that the Gablers submitted over the next several years. In 1970, world history and language arts texts were up for adoption. In world history the Gablers objected to (1) the treatment of the American Revolution as "just one of a series of revolutions and not as *the* revolution" and (2) references to U.S. military interventions in Latin America that made the U.S. "look like a bad guy." In language arts, they protested that texts (1) gave negative portrayals of people; (2) depicted "the white man as a villain against minority groups"; and (3) encouraged children "to rebel against constituted authority." In 1971 the Gablers challenged the inquiry approach in social studies texts and the open-ended questions at the close of chapters designed to stimulate students to think critically. The Gablers said:

Everything is questioned. There is an emphasis on change but *none* on absolutes. In fact, much of both the pupil's and teacher's editions consist of open-ended questions with seldom a firm answer. These social studies texts utilize inquiry as the means of learning—not the imparting of knowledge by the teacher. This approach is used specifically to teach the child that there are no absolutes, no certain values, that what he learned from his parents and his church is to be discredited or at least disregarded.

### The Gablers Oppose . . .

The Gablers take a still firmer position today. They oppose role-playing in the classroom and polling students on social issues that involve personal beliefs. They oppose any method of teaching that challenges "home-taught" values. "Liberal" writers, they say, undermine the "old-fashioned virtues" of "patriotism," "love of God" and the "sanctity of the home." These writers, they hold, are guilty of "humanistic bias" and have "censored" content that upholds "parental authority," "womanhood and femininity," the "Protestant ethic" and "just plain Americanism."

By 1972 the Gablers were charging that "objectionable trends in books had accelerated." They accused textbooks of



Ralph Barrera/Austin American-Statesman

*Above: Mel and Norma Gabler at the August textbook hearings. Below: A dynamited classroom was but one result of the 1974 textbook controversy in Kanawha County, W. Va.; the Gablers have been called "an important influence in sustaining the conflict."*

"engendering racial hatred" by discussing racial discrimination. Asked the Gablers, "Does not reality include the many acts of kindness between the races across the nation?" They objected to "too much emphasis on poverty" and to questions that "cast doubt in the mind of the child." They complained that one text—*Search for Freedom* (Macmillan, 1973)—equated Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi with Jesus, while it can't even say that Benjamin Franklin once used prayer to calm a troublesome Constitutional Convention.

It must be noted that the Gablers are not without a sense of humor. When a textbook mentioned Marilyn Monroe more often than George Washington, Norma Gabler asked, "Is Texas ready for Marilyn Monroe to become the mother of our country?"

In 1973, they protested that the new psychology texts "condoned and encouraged homosexuality," and charged that in a sociology text, "[w]hite racism is disproportionately emphasized compared to the racism practiced by many Blacks, which is not mentioned." They also opposed the text because it suggested that students should "question, experiment, challenge and debate issues of life, much of which have been settled in history." That was a particularly successful year for the Gablers. Of the eight textbooks they protested, six were rejected outright and they caused minor revisions in one text and major revisions in the other.



In that same year, Mel Gabler took early retirement (he was fifty-eight) to devote full time to the criticism of textbooks. By now he and Norma Gabler had divided their workload; he did the research and writing and stayed home with the textbooks while Norma Gabler did the organizing, attended hearings and made the speeches. Beginning in 1964, twice and sometimes three times a year Norma Gabler made the 600-mile trip to appear at the textbook hearings in Austin. She now travels to Austin even more often and attends the regular



## The Texas Textbook Adoption Process

Textbooks in Texas are adopted on an eight-year cycle. Each year a different subject area begins a new cycle.

*Step 1* is the issuance, usually in March, of a Proclamation by the State Board of Education. The Proclamation establishes the codes, procedures and schedule to be followed in that year's adoption cycle.

*Step 2:* In April publishers deliver two sets of galleys for each textbook they plan to submit for adoption to 20 regional state textbook centers. (This year, a total of over 200 different textbooks were submitted by some 25 publishers.)

*Step 3* is the appointment, usually in May, of the State Textbook Committee by the Texas Board of Education. The Committee consists of teachers and school administrators who are specialists in the particular subject areas under consideration for that year. The Committee varies in size. This year it consists of 27 members. The Committee serves one year and is unpaid.

From April, when textbook galleys are submitted to the regional centers, to about mid-June, citizens of Texas have an opportunity to examine the textbooks.

*Step 4* is the filing of textbook comments—positive or negative—which can be submitted by any citizen of the state; anyone filing is referred to as a petitioner. The comments—termed bills of particulars—are then sent by the Textbook Committee to the publishers and to anyone else requesting them. Prior to this year, only objections (*i.e.*, negative comments) could be filed. No textbooks could be praised or compared.

*Step 5* is the filing of written responses or refutations to the objections. Before 1983, only the publishers whose textbooks were criticized could respond, but as a result of People For . . . 's efforts, anyone now can defend a textbook. The written responses must be filed six weeks prior to the next step, which is the open hearings.

*Step 6* is the State Textbook Committee hearings, which this year were held August 1-3. These hearings are open to the public, but only petitioners who have already filed written bills of particulars may speak at these hearings. Prior to this year, there were few restrictions on the time allotted to petitioners. This year, because of the large number of petitioners, the Committee set a six-minute time limit per subject area for each petitioner. Following the hearings, the Committee makes its recommendations. Changes in content recommended by the Committee are now negotiated with the publishers.

*Step 7* is a review by the Commissioner of Education, who either approves or rejects the recommendations. The Commissioner need not give any justification for a decision.

*Step 8:* The last step is the final determination of the textbooks to be approved. This decision is made by members of the State Board of Education, an elected group. At this time, usually in November, petitioners are given a second opportunity to present their case at a public hearing. Right after the hearing, the Board announces its decision. The Board may, if it chooses, reject recommended titles, but it must leave a minimum of two in any subject area, and it cannot add new titles.

The entire process—from the issuance of the Proclamation and the submission of textbooks to their ultimate selection—takes nine months. The textbooks selected constitute a shopping list from which school districts select one textbook for each subject area.

monthly meetings of the Education Board. ("There's more to education than textbook content," she says.) In addition, she makes numerous speeches before parent and church groups, which generate considerable pressure on the adoption process. (It is known that the Gablers have spurred as many as a thousand letters from parents protesting a particular textbook—these letters are addressed, significantly, not to the Textbook Committee but to the State Education Board.) The speaking circuit nets the Gablers much of their income,

and it is supplemented by contributions from several Texas businessmen and donations to a newsletter the Gablers publish intermittently.

In 1973, the Gablers incorporated themselves as the tax-exempt Educational Research Analysts, and they hired an assistant. (Today, their single-story ranch house in Longview—they moved there from Hawkins in 1972—serves as home and office, and they have a paid staff of eight, including three full-time researchers, plus an unspecified number of part-time volunteers. They are now

mounting a drive for funds to build their own office building.)

The Gablers won a major victory in 1974. Their insistence over the years that textbooks "balance" evolutionary teaching with Biblical "creationism" resulted in the State Board of Education actually rewriting state guidelines to require that textbooks identify evolution as "only one of several explanations" for the origin of life.<sup>3</sup>

In 1974, the Gablers became involved in what was perhaps the most violent U.S. textbook controversy when Christian fundamentalist attacks on language arts texts in Kanawha County, West Virginia, led to boycotts, pickets, a school strike, the dynamiting of schools and several shootings. The Gablers were invited to the area, and Dorothy Massie of the National Education Association notes that "the Gablers themselves were an important influence in sustaining the conflict and in providing much of the rhetoric for the protest." (For more information on the controversy, see the *Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1975.)

### Gablers Counter Feminists

In 1975, the first year that feminists took an active part in the Texas textbook hearings, the Gablers successfully countered a drive by representatives of the National Organization for Women to change sexist terminology in a number of language arts texts.<sup>4</sup> NOW submitted bills of particulars protesting, among other things, the use of the so-called generic male pronoun, and the Textbook Committee agreed to require publishers to make the appropriate changes, and the publishers even accepted the changes. But following the Gablers' testimony before the Board of Education, the recommendations of the Texas Committee were vetoed and the sexist terminology stayed. In the intervening years, the feminist presence at the hearings has been fairly consistent, and this year NOW was the only group that submitted comments in every subject category.

The Gablers' influence is not limited to the South and West. It is felt in many states and as far away as Australia and New Zealand. According to a 1980 survey conducted by the American Library Association, the Association of American Publishers and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, half of all the state-level respondents reported that "the Gablers' activities had affected textbook adoption proceedings in their states."



## Recent "Success" Stories

Here are just two of the Gablers' recent success stories:

●1978: Four major publishers dropped Shirley Jackson's award-winning 1949 short story, *The Lottery*, from their literature anthologies after the Gablers objected to it, citing the Texas guidelines that textbooks shall not "serve to undermine authority" and should "contain a minimum of violence."

●1981: The Texas Textbook Committee voted to recommend two dictionaries: the *New Collegiate Dictionary*, published by G. & C. Merriam, and Houghton-Mifflin's *American Heritage Dictionary*. After the Gablers objected to "certain obscene words," the Commissioner of Education informed both publishers that he would approve the dictionaries for purchase only if they agreed to delete the offensive words. Houghton-Mifflin agreed but Merriam refused. Because Texas requires that at least two books be recommended, the state purchased no new dictionaries that year.

In the spring of 1981, an organization called People For The American Way set up offices in Austin (see Part I, page 14). Working with professional teacher groups, they launched a campaign to change the more restrictive aspects of the Texas textbook adoption process. Their efforts presented Mel and Norma Gabler with their first major challenge in 21 years. □

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>America's Future, with headquarters in New Rochelle, N.Y., is still in operation. Its director says that the organization "is not as active as it once was in the textbook field."

<sup>2</sup>Readers interested in exploring the history of the textbook situation in Texas are referred to *The Censors and the Schools* by Jack Nelson and Gene Roberts, Jr. (Little, Brown, 1963).

<sup>3</sup>Is it simply coincidental that a study of secondary school texts conducted by Professor Gerald Skoog of Texas Tech University found that the quality of scientific coverage, which had been increasing and improving in the post-Sputnik era, was halted and reversed in 1974? Since then, the amount of text devoted to evolution in science and geology texts has been reduced by as much as a third in comparison to 1973 editions.

<sup>4</sup>This action by feminists brought accusations from some officials of the National Council of Teachers of English that NOW was engaging in censorship because, like Mel and Norma Gabler, they only submitted negative objections. The accusations were made without realizing that at the time the Texas guidelines only permitted negative comments.

Continued from page 11

priorities and keep the books coming that will deliver the earth again into the hands of the humanitarians."—Sonia Sanchez, poet/children's book author

●  
"When reading *Jake and Honeybunch*, I kept thinking that someone had played a very cruel joke on me and had written a children's version of the movie 'Green Pastures.' . . . We need to be about the business of creating positive images for our Black children that reflect the sights and sounds and colors of their communities."—Marcia V. Roebuck-Hoard, managing editor of *Ebony Jr!*

●  
"The notion that we glance at another culture and instantly know it because we are reasonably clever is a fallacy whose time, I thought, was past. . . . I do not care for *Jake and Honeybunch*. TV bombards my child with enough images of Blacks as clowns and buffoons! I don't have to bombard him with yet another. I'm equally sorry that thousands of white children will see this book and have the negative images of Blacks as People of Amusement reinforced once again.

I would like to see the publishing industry get off its public high horse and stop talking about First Amendment rights, the dangers of censorship and moral issues when its overriding private position—and the one that increasingly dictates what it will and will not publish—is profits."—Walter Dean Myers, children's book author

●  
"What happened to all the progress the publishing world made during the late 60s and early 70s toward improving children's books about Black people? What happened to all the Black authors with stories of significance and inspirational content for our kids? What happened to all the top quality Black illustrators uncovered during that period? Has the publisher of *Jake and Honeybunch* suffered a relapse to the mentality that prevailed prior to the 60s?"—Leo Carty, children's book illustrator

●  
"I am amazed that this book was published for I find no merit in its concept, the story or the art. At best it is cruel caricature. The librarians who refused to put this volume on their shelves are to be commended."—Lorenz Graham, children's book author

●  
"I regretfully concur with the librarians who have taken the stance that the book is demeaning and subsequently refused to promote it among children. I suspect Ms. Zemach's intentions were good, as those of writers and illustrators working outside of their particular experience so often are. It would be wise if such artists would have the sensitivity and respect to seek out responsible readers from the particular group they wish to write of. . . . Publishers should more actively recruit minorities for the telling of their own stories."—Brenda Wilkinson, children's book author

●  
"*Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* is yet another vicious stereotype of 'childish' Black folk and their 'simplistic' dream of landing in Heaven after going through these hard times here on earth."—John Oliver Killens, author

●  
"The creators of African American folk stories threaded double and triple lessons into their tales, making them function as survival tools in a racist society. To create *Jake and Honeybunch*, Margot Zemach borrowed scenes, situations and dialog from various African American folk lesson stories, but her story contains none of the original's protective, regenerative lessons. The borrowed images and phrases and scenes scattered throughout her story have been separated from their symbolic, historic and protective meanings. In her disregard for the sensibilities of the African American community, Margot Zemach has perpetrated a rape on African American folk literature."—Camille Yarborough, children's book writer

## On the Other Hand . . .

"I simply am not in agreement that *Jake and Honeybunch* is a racist book. Ill conceived perhaps when one considers the flack it has raised but I don't see what could or should have been done differently."—Nikki Giovanni, poet/children's book author



*Even very young readers can learn to turn a critical eye on their reading material. A class of five- and six-year-olds learns how to do it*

## Helping Young Readers Become Book Critics: Here's How

By Patricia B. Campbell

Have five- and six-year-olds critique children's books? Well, why not? These books are *for* children, and children's interests and perspectives are often quite different than adults think. Also, a very important side effect of critiquing books is an increased awareness of sexism and racism in books. That awareness—plus the knowledge that children can and should be critical of books—are important for children to acquire.

With this in mind, Susie Rogers—head teacher of the Green Family at Wang Child Care Center—and I—a longtime *Bulletin* reader, author and reviewer—decided to make the Green Family into book critics. Let me first describe both the Green Family and the Wang Child Care Center. The Center, in Chelmsford, Mass., is supported by Wang Laboratories, an office automation computer company; it serves over 100 youngsters, most of whom are the children of Wang employees. The children, from three months to six years old, come from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds; approximately half of the parents are blue-collar workers, half white-collar. The Center emphasizes educational rather than custodial programs and, in the eyes of this biased parent, does a good job. The Green Family, the Center's kindergarten class, is composed of about 20 five- and six-year-old white, Asian, Asian American, African American and East Indian children.

To help the children become critics, we first discussed the concept of book reviewing and why it is done. Only one child in the class was familiar with the process (that was my daughter Kathryn, whom I've consulted when doing *Bulletin* reviews), but all of them liked the idea. The children were particularly pleased that they were going to be evaluating books for others. Having their opinions



*Teacher Susie Rogers (left) of the Wang Child Care Center reads to the five- and six-year-olds who will critique the book. Book reviewers include Susan Beauregard, Brandon Bonnell, Carol Calache, Kathryn Campbell-Kibler, Jennifer Chung, Lisa Corbin, Shawn Corey, Heather De Vine, Shala Dugas, Amy Geddes, Brian Hayhurst, Kimberly Hubert, Jamie Ledoux, Julie Manning, Jason O'Rourke, Yvonne Ou, Danielle Paradis, Kimberly Sayer, Lorrelle Valentine, Jeanne Yu, Ian Sutherland, Laurie Snyder and Brian Moorehouse. (Author Patricia Campbell, right, ponders the students' reactions.)*

count gave a significant dimension to the process.

We then briefly discussed what a good book should be like. This discussion touched on both the need to present the diversity of experiences that the children see around them and the negative effects of presenting girls or boys who always act in the same ways. In retrospect, I think more attention should have been

spent on this topic and that the children should have developed explicit, written guidelines. A more specific discussion of racism and sexism would also have been helpful. (Ideally, of course, some of these issues will already be somewhat familiar to the children.)

After our discussion, teacher Susie Rogers read *Starting School* to the class. We then discussed the children's reac-



tions to the book. Since the class was multi-racial, asking them how the children in the book were like or not like them brought out that there were no Asian and East Indian children in the illustrations. This led to a discussion about how the roles of the fictional girls and boys/men and women compared to their own experiences. While attention was good and discussion was lively, some of the children started to get silly after 15 minutes and the discussion was closed.

After that point I went home and drafted a review based on the children's comments. Several days later I went back to the class and read my draft to the class. They had several comments and corrections. Their memories of the discussion were excellent (better than mine with notes), and they were very concerned because I had omitted a point that they felt was important.

After the draft was revised, a second book, *Families*, was read and discussed. The children liked this book very much and found it very hard to be critical. Even when they were asked what they didn't like about the book or what they would change, their comments, more often than not, turned out to be positive. Their major concern was that there should be some Asian families in a book about all kinds of families. (The Asian American children in the class were particularly concerned about this.) Because the children were much more in agreement about this book than about *Starting School*, the discussion was more polite and less lively. Again, it lasted about 15 minutes. We followed the same procedure for preparing the written review as we had for the previous book. (Both reviews appear in the Bookshelf department, beginning on page 26.)

### The Book May Be Wrong

This was really the first time that the children realized that they could and should have a role in judging the quality of books. The process helped them to realize that if books don't reflect their lives and those of their friends, then the problem is with the books, not with the children. Perhaps most importantly, the children learned that they could be right and the books could be wrong.

We adults had wondered if the children would be willing to take the project seriously, but our concern was groundless. Once the children realized that *we* were serious and that we wanted

## Tips for Guiding Very Young Book Reviewers

Helping young children review books does require some planning. The suggestions below may assist you in turning your students, the children who use your library or your own children into book reviewers.

Few children know or understand the *concept* of book reviewing; all need some discussion of the process. Reading a review of a book that is familiar to the children often helps to get the idea across. Asking children to discuss how *their* feelings about the book *differ* from those of the reviewer is a good way to validate their own ideas.

The reviewing process should make children more aware of the racism and sexism in what they read. In order to do this, discussions about racism and sexism should be held prior to doing the review. With very young children, the emphasis can be on how some people do not believe that other people can or should be able to do some things because of their sex or color—and how stupid that is. You can discuss how ideas like that hurt everybody, both the people who say, write or think them and the people about whom they are said. Examples frequently help. (For instance, ask a boy how he would feel if someone said that boys shouldn't play with the trucks; if lots of people said that, would he stop playing with trucks? What would a student do if an adult decided that children with brown hair couldn't have snacks? Would that be fair?) Children usually find discussions of "fair" and "not fair" most relevant and soon generalize, with an adult's help, from the personal examples to the broader concepts of racism and sexism.

You might also discuss the people the students know. Talking about the racial composition of the class or community can sensitize them to the flaw in "all-white" books, for instance. Talking about the jobs and tasks done by their parents and other adults they know can lead to discussions of sex roles. (Picture books can also be used to spur such discussions.) Whether you use the words racism and sexism is up to you—and the age of the children. Frequently it is easier to get the concepts across without worrying about terms. Also, racism and sexism are very emotion-laden words that may bring negative responses from parents.

Talk with students about what constitutes a *good* book. Of course, it's helpful if children have been read to a lot and are familiar with depictions of positive role models. (You may want to read some of the guidelines developed by the CIBC and other groups first.) Help students develop some—perhaps five or six—guidelines for evaluating books. If the children don't include guidelines on racism and sexism, mention it yourself. Guidelines should be short and to the point, such as "Is the book unfair to boys or girls?" (Don't just focus on sexism and racism; an anti-sexist, anti-racist book that is boring or poorly written has little value.)

Come out with a written product, even though you will have to write the review for younger children. It is important that the children see that their opinions have been written down and can be read. Base your review on the children's comments and be sure that they have the chance to react to it before it is "published" or disseminated.

Children need to know that reviewing is not just a make-work project and that their opinion is valuable and will be read by others. Although it is not always possible to have children's reviews published by the *Bulletin* or *The New York Times*, there are other possibilities, including class and school newspapers, library bulletin boards and PTA newsletters. Reviews can also be posted on a class bulletin board. Even if the reviews are only used to help classmates decide what books they want to read or have read to them, the sharing is important.

Good luck—and have fun.

thoughtful consideration and not silliness, most children responded well and gave serious, well-considered opinions.

The children are very much looking forward to seeing their work in print. (They may be surprised that the reviews have been edited; unfortunately, we didn't discuss the publishing process!) When they do, it will be an occasion for further discussion of what books should

be like and how children should critique them. □

### About the Author

PATRICIA B. CAMPBELL is the Director of Campbell-Kibler Associates, an educational research and evaluation firm located in New York City and Groton, Mass. In spite of the current climate, Dr. Campbell is still working in educational equity.



## Help Save WEEA!

We urge readers to respond to the latest attack on the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA). In addition to going to court to try to narrow the scope of Title IX, as we go to press the Administration has just fired Dr. Leslie Wolfe, director of the WEEA program, along with all of her staff (except for two men). Please enter immediate protests with your congressional representatives and, to help form a "Save WEEA Committee," write or call Pat Campbell at Groton Ridge Heights, Groton Ridge, MA 01450; (617) 448-5402.

## New Organization Works For Educational Equity

Educational Equity Concepts has been formed to focus on the development of programs and materials to help teachers, parents and others raise children free of racism, sexism and handicapism.

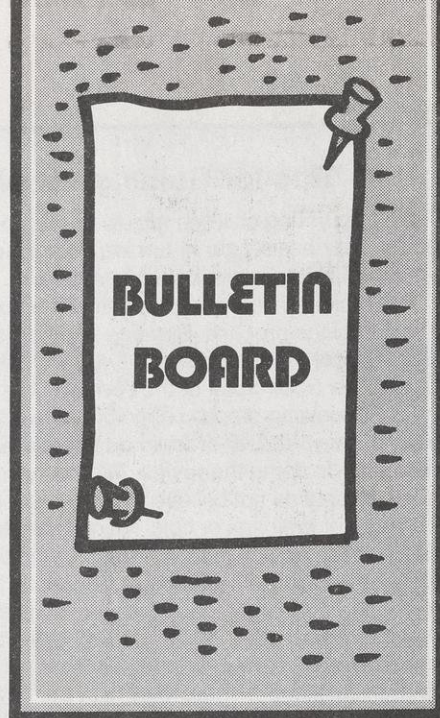
The new non-profit organization will provide teacher/caregiver training, parent education and consultation services. It also will conduct research and develop and market classroom materials and toys for children beginning at the earliest level.

Merle Froschl and Barbara Sprung will co-direct Educational Equity Concepts. For more than a decade, Froschl and Sprung have worked to bring about educational change through curriculum development, material design and teacher education.

National in scope, Educational Equity Concepts will take an "inclusionary" approach—one that makes the connections between the various equity issues of sex, race and disability. For more information, write Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

## Curriculum on Central America

The Teachers' Committee on Central America publishes a curriculum entitled "El Salvador: Roots of Conflict." It was described in the special *Bulletin* on Central America (Vol. 13, Nos. 2 & 3), which contained an adaptation of one of the lesson plans. The Committee has recently issued revisions of one section of the curriculum to reflect the changes which have taken place in that country. Those who have purchased the curriculum but have not received the revisions should



## To Our Readers—Many Thanks!

In a recent *Bulletin* (Vol. 14, Nos. 1 & 2), we reported on an attack on the CIBC that appeared in the American Federation of Teachers' magazine, the *American Educator*. We are very grateful to all of our readers who responded by writing to us and/or to *American Educator* to protest the attack and support the CIBC. Many thanks to you all! (For news of the latest attack, see page 3.)

write to the committee at 5511 Vicente Way, Oakland, CA 94609. Complete copies are available for \$6.

## Interracial Family Project Seeks Input

The Interracial Family Studies Project (IFSP) is seeking contact with Black and white interracial families. Project directors Sandy and Willie Campbell are working to identify positive solutions to problems and successful coping skills; they are also focusing on the development of self-esteem in biracial children.

The Campbells hope to have at least 200 U.S. families complete a questionnaire. They will also conduct self-esteem testing with the children. In addition, the project is assembling a resource library of material directly relating to the

interracial family experience. However, materials are limited as little work has been done in this area and literature on biracial children is particularly scarce; reader suggestions on this topic are welcomed.

The IFSP is now sponsoring a family support network in the Houston area and hopes to assist in the formation of other groups that may someday develop into a nationwide affiliation of networks.

Interested families should contact the Interracial Family Studies Project at (713) 749-1211 or 749-7192 or write to IFSP, P.O. Box 16248, Houston, TX 77222.

**Note:** *Bulletin* readers interested in participating in the preparation of a special *Bulletin* issue on interracial families (including families that are interracial through adoption) are asked to write the CIBC, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

## Help Wanted on Sex Equity Project

Lesson plans, activity ideas and other materials are sought for a new Equity Intropacket Project being prepared by the editors of *TABS: Aids for Ending Sexism in School*. The Project will produce six introductory teaching packets on these topics: Asian American Women, Black Women, Careers, The Changing Family, Disabled Women and Women's History.

The *TABS* editors are searching for short, adaptable materials that can easily be integrated into existing curriculums for kindergarten through twelfth grade levels. Send suggestions to *TABS*, 744 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY 11215.

## Corrections

An incorrect address was given for the Lesbian History Archives in the last issue (Vol. 14, Nos. 3 & 4). The correct address is P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10116; the phone number given—(212) 874-7232—was correct.

The address given for the Gay Task Force, American Library Association (Social Responsibilities Round Table) was out-of-date; the group's new address is P.O. Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103; the new phone number: (215) 471-3322.



In the BOOKSHELF, all books are evaluated by members of the group depicted.—Editors.

## Big Sixteen

retold by Mary Calhoun,  
illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman.  
Morrow, 1983,  
\$8.50, unpagged, grades p.s.-3

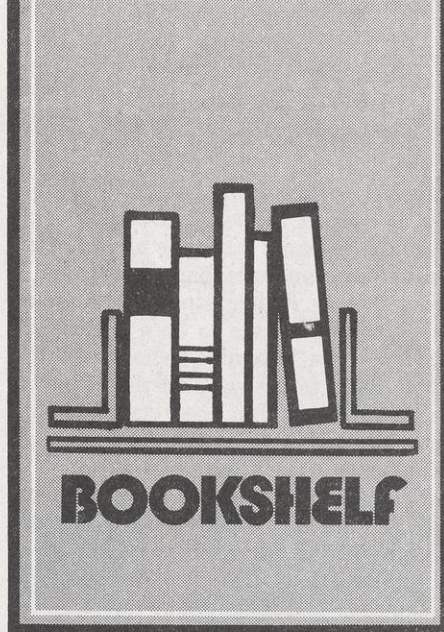
*Big Sixteen* is yet another children's book based on Black people's traditional stories that does serious injustice to its source (see page 4 for a fuller discussion of the important issues raised by such works.)

Calhoun's text is based largely on a version Black anthropologist/author Zora Neale Hurston recorded in *Mules and Men* in the 30s and 40s. The original, which was not meant as a children's story, was one of the ways enslaved/oppressed African Americans have dealt with injustice, racism and exploitation. Such stories generate collective and individual courage and self-esteem and illustrate how "mother wit" and intelligence can insure survival. Most of these stories, therefore, turn on delicate but sharp irony, satire and protective self-effacement.

In this picture book the powerful slave, Big Sixteen (named for his shoe size), successfully digs to Hell to get the Devil for his master. When Big Sixteen dies years later, he is refused admittance to Heaven because he is too strong and not accepted in Hell because he killed the Devil. He then wanders the earth looking for a place to go.

The book violates the original from the very first page. Here Big Sixteen "worked for The Old Man. And Big Sixteen was so strong The Old Man thought he could do anything. . . ." The Hurston version says Big Sixteen "was big and strong and *Old Massa* [emphasis added] looked to him to do everything." Quite a difference! The retelling obscures the master-slave relationship and derogates Big Sixteen's powers in one brief line. Here, a Black St. Peter keeps Big Sixteen out of a Black heaven because he is too powerful. Those who heard the original understood that a *white* St. Peter bars Big Sixteen from a *white* heaven for that reason. Space does not permit a detailing of all the other misrepresentations.

To say that the illustrations are racist



is an understatement! The Devil's wife and children are the vilest caricatures of Black people that I have ever seen in children's literature. The naked, Afro'd, horned children have *tails*! (Remember the degrading, devastating myth about Blacks having tails?) The menacingly "evil" Devil's wife, also complete with Afro, horns and a feathered tail, wears caricatured "African" jewelry. Big Sixteen grins whenever he undertakes a new chore for his master. Two small Black children are shown either bug-eyed scared or grinning. There's even a tiny fat Black mammy type. The slave master is a benign looking old man, leaning on his cane. Pul-leeze!

*Big Sixteen* dishonors Hurston's work and Black people. [Geraldine L. Wilson]

## Circle of Fire

by William H. Hooks.  
Atheneum, 1982,  
\$9.95, 147 pages, grades 4-7

Few novels give young readers information on Klan activities. When one turns up that has some questionable content, is it worth buying? You decide.

It is late in 1936 in North Carolina's tidewater farm country. An eleven-year-old white boy is best friends with a Black boy and girl. A local bigot and bully who is a Klan member threatens them, and the children learn that the Klan is planning a major attack on a visiting camp of "gypsies"—Irish tinkers, who do not like being called gypsies. The children, with some adult assistance, thwart the Klan and a tinker baby is born in the white

boy's barn on Christmas eve. Happy ending.

Positive points: The book is anti-Klan, opposed to prejudice and exciting enough to capture the interest of young readers. This makes it valuable.

Negative points: Klan members are hopeless bigots while nice whites are opposed to the Klan and take action against it—an overworked and harmful myth. White and Black children have a lovely friendship of equals although the Blacks make heavy use of "ain't" and such talk, while the white boy speaks standard English. Another myth.

The authenticity of the portrayal of the traveling Irish tinkers is one this reviewer is not equipped to pass judgment upon. [Lyla Hoffman]

## The Man Who Dropped from the Sky

by Kevin Shyne.  
Messner, 1982,  
\$9.29, 62 pages, grades 3-5

Roger Reynolds was an ace Army parachutist when his parachute failed to open during a jump, causing him to plummet to the ground at 85 miles per hour and break every major bone on his left side. His experience as a parachutist, his recovery and his running in the Boston marathon are the premise of this unremarkable book.

Too often children's books describe an individual who has "overcome" his/her disability. What authors (and publishers) fail to realize is that these individuals were probably overachievers even before they became disabled. In any case, they are not your "average" child or young adult, and their stories are not average either. They are therefore difficult for any child, whether disabled or not, to relate to.

The author has done a nice job of describing the nitty gritty of sky-diving and Roger's enthusiasm for the sport. However, statements such as "Life has so much to offer. It's all right there in the palm of your hand. If you're just willing to sweat a little, who knows what might be down the road?" will leave a disabled child frustrated by the unrealistic goals and simplistic solutions. Children need realistic role models, not superheroes. [Emily Strauss Watson]



## Families

by Meredith Tax,  
illustrated by Marilyn Hafner.  
Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1981,  
\$7.95, 32 pages, grades p.s.-3

"Families are who you live with and who you love." So says *Families*, which describes some of the many different types of families that exist today. Beginning with Angie, who lives with her mother but who visits her father, stepmother and half-brother in another city, the book goes on to tell about the families of Angie's friends.

The Green Family was enthralled with this book. They paid close attention to the story and recognized families similar to their own and those of their friends. They particularly liked the love that was shown in all the families. The nurturing behaviors shown by fathers came in for many positive comments, as did the animal families that are mentioned. Indeed, the ant family was the biggest attention getter; several children decided that they would no longer step on ants because the ant families would be sad. [The book is also to be commended because it is one of the very few picture books that seems to depict a lesbian family; as noted in the last *Bulletin* (see page 17) one child lives with her mother and godmother.—Editors]

There were few negative comments. Yvonne noted that while there were many kinds of families in the book, none were like hers. Yvonne was right, because there are no Asian American families in the book. In addition, other minority families tend toward the stereotypic. The Black family consists of

a mother and grandmother, and the little boy is named Frederick Douglas (sic). The one Hispanic family is an extended family, with one member employed in a dress factory. Other stereotypes occur: one little boy wants to be a superhero, and there is a "superdad" who invites the whole class to his son's birthday party, an undertaking that prompts one of the fictional mothers in the book to say "You've got to be kidding."

Still, *Families* gives kids an opportunity to see that their families are not "different" and that caring for each other is what matters. Children respond well to the book and it can make an excellent beginning or ending to a pre-school or primary school unit on families. [Susie Rogers and the Green Family, Wang Child Care Center; see page 23.]

## The Bomb

by Sidney Lens,  
illustrated with photos.  
Lodestar Books (Dutton), 1982,  
\$11.50, 139 pages, grades 10-12

By depicting the threat of nuclear holocaust and the urgent need for an end to nuclear armaments, *The Bomb* performs an important service. With devastating clarity, the author covers a 40-year period: the development of the atomic bomb and Truman's decision to use it against Japan; the way that U.S. development of nuclear weaponry became a justification for security policies of unprecedented strictness and then political repression; how U.S. militarism compelled the Soviet Union to develop its own nuclear warheads; the historic moment in 1955 when Moscow agreed to a Western plan prohibiting aggressive use of nuclear weapons but the U.S. rejected the proposal; the repeated U.S. government lies about a "gap" in nuclear strength between the U.S. and the Soviet Union to justify further U.S. military buildup; the chilling series of nuclear accidents that could have brought annihilation without a war (and how such an accident is all too possible today).

After reading this book young people should find themselves with grave doubts about our government and the reasons given to the public for such policy.

But the picture is incomplete.

Nowhere does the author, a longtime union leader who has written extensively on politics, labor and other major topics, attempt to analyze the *reasons* for the U.S. policy he describes. He does probe "the politics behind the bomb," as the jacket promises, but he does not explain the source of those politics. The current nuclear threat cannot be explained simply by stubborn, "big stick" presidents like Truman or idiotic, super-macho generals. There is no discussion of this economic system, which puts profit above all else, so that the motto becomes "making the world safe for Big Business"—and too bad for the great masses of humanity on this planet. Lacking such an explanation, the reader is left with a sense of horror, overwhelming anxiety and even anger, but not a genuine understanding of "the bomb." It is important that young readers see that the nuclear threat is only part of a much larger problem—although at the same time, it is the final expression of that problem.

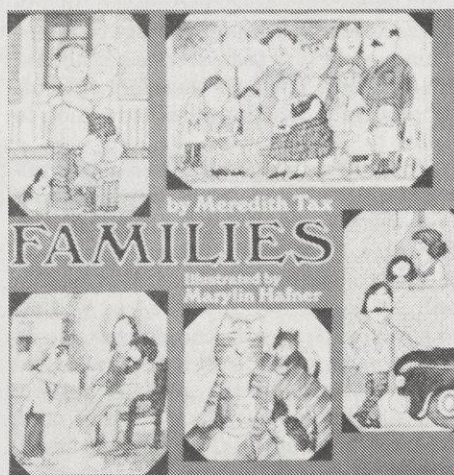
At the same time, Lens does indicate—and there are numerous photographs which carry this message even more strongly than the text—that the only answer to the nuclear threat is organized protest. He makes very clear the contradiction between U.S. government policy and the people's desire for peace, as shown in many demonstrations. Therefore, *The Bomb* is not simply "depressing"; it is a call for action that young people need to hear.

Even with the book's limitations, it must be said that *The Bomb* is must reading for young people. After all, it is surely *their* lives that are at stake. [Elizabeth Martinez]

## My Mama Needs Me

by Mildred Pitts Walter,  
illustrated by Pat Cummings.  
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1983,  
\$9.50, unpagged, grades p.s.-1

*My Mama Needs Me* deals nicely with important themes. One is the welcome of a new baby by a sister or brother and the older child's subsequent adjustment to the new baby. A second theme is the help and concern young children can learn to express for the new baby in a positive family setting. This straightforward, uncomplicated text conveys Jason's wel-







come and concern for a new sister, as well as his concern for his mother. We see the worry Jason feels when he's away from home for even a brief while. What Jason really needs is reassurance that he can get a hug from his Mama when he needs it in spite of the presence of the new baby. And that's what he gets.

The illustrations are interesting and convey a fine sense of design. Combinations of pastel colors are set off occasionally by two or three bright colors. There are some beautiful close-ups of Jason, who is Black, and his friends and the supportive adult neighbors. It is through the illustrations that we know that Jason's family is in a neighborhood where both Black and white people live. [Geraldine L. Wilson]

## Tic Tac Toe and Other Three-in-a-Row Games from Ancient Egypt to the Modern Computer

by Claudia Zaslavsky,  
illustrated by Anthony Kramer.  
T.Y. Crowell, 1982,  
\$9.50, 96 pages, grades K-8

## Count on Your Fingers African Style

by Claudia Zaslavsky,  
illustrated by Jerry Pinkney.  
T.Y. Crowell, 1980,  
\$9.95, 33 pages, grades K-3

Everyone has played tic tac toe, but how many have played Shisima, Tatapan, Five Square or Nine Men's Morris? They are all three-in-a-row games developed in Kenya, the Philippines, China and

England. These games, and many others requiring a player to get three counters in a row to win, are carefully explained with diagrams in *Tic Tac Toe*.

Although the reading level of this book is between 4th and 7th grades, many of the games would interest kindergarten children, and others are suitable for adults. The rules, tips and strategies for each game are given, but players are encouraged to experiment to make the games more interesting and challenging. In addition, children are cautioned that a game should be played to have fun, not just to win, and that "helping an opponent improve his or her skill makes the game more interesting for both players."

Another unusual aspect of the book is that Zaslavsky puts the games in a historical context and cultural setting which shows the African and Asian origins of many of them. For example, diagrams of game boards have been found in an Egyptian temple built 3,300 years ago, and the author states that Egyptians may have learned three-in-a-row games from their African ancestors. She traces the probable spread of the games from Africa to Greece to Rome and then other parts of Europe, and notes that African culture also came to Europe when the Moors entered Spain from North Africa in the 8th century. Since most history books still center on Europe and the U.S. and ignore Africa and Asia, this book helps break the myth that all important historical and cultural events originated in the West.

The book's clear illustrations and attractive drawings are a great asset, and teachers and parents will find this book helpful in developing children's thinking and mathematical skills.

The author's earlier book—*Count on Your Fingers African Style*—explains how people throughout the world count on their fingers since fingers are a "handy calculator." The illustrations show African marketplace scenes where people speaking many languages use a wide variety of hand signals to indicate how many items they wish to buy.

Although counting on one's fingers has been frowned upon by teachers and parents in the West, it is a practice found all over the world through the ages. Recently finger counting has begun to be recognized as a positive and natural practice, a way to concretize simple, abstract arithmetical concepts.

*Count on Your Fingers African Style* was chosen as a Notable Social Studies Book, an Outstanding Science Book, and was picked for the honor book list of the National Council of Christians and Jews. Although the work is written on a K-3 level, people of all ages will find it interesting.

Both books would be a valuable addition to any home, school or public library. [Jane Califf]

## Sonya's Mommy Works

by Arlene Alda,  
with photos by the author.  
Simon & Schuster, 1982,  
\$7.95, unpagged, grades pre-K

A photo-story of a few weeks in the life of Sonya, a soon-to-be six-year-old, whose mother has recently returned to work. Though the girl has a few mild anxieties about the new situation, she also has two doting parents, a charming baby sitter, a good school, a loving grandmother and an upper-middle-class home. While the photos are of fine quality, the text may be boring for any child over three. [Lyla Hoffman]

## Piñatas and Paper Flowers/Piñatas y Flores de Papel: Holidays of the Americas

in English and Spanish  
by Lila Perl,  
translated by Alma Flor Ada,  
illustrated by Victoria de Larrea.  
Clarion Books, 1983,  
\$11.50 hardcover, \$4.50 paper,  
91 pages, grades 3-6

This look at eight holidays provides much information that would otherwise be difficult to locate in one place. The book, with English and Spanish on facing pages, attempts to show both the similarities and differences between holidays as celebrated in the U.S. and various countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America. It is a good source of information on this topic.

Because of its very theme, however, the book tends to perpetuate the "exotic" image of Latin America; after all, every-



thing centers around holidays, food, costumes and parties. The pervasive "party tone" cannot give a balanced view of the people and their everyday lives.

The author has tried to avoid ethnocentrism by comparing and contrasting customs in the U.S. and Latin America, but on more than one occasion she fails (for example, Columbus "discovered" America and America is called a "brand new world"). Also, when referring to certain indigenous peoples, she mentions their worship of the gods or their offerings of human sacrifices. Taken out of the context of religion and cultural values, these practices are difficult for children to understand.

*Piñatas and Paper Flowers* can be used as a source of information—or, better yet, as a catalyst for further research and discussion. If supplemented by texts on other aspects of culture, social life and economic and political realities, this book can help children see holidays as one part of the totality of cultural experience. [Sonia Nieto]

## Ten Miles High

by Felice Buckvar.

Morrow, 1981,

\$8.95, 159 pages, grades 6-up

Pity poor Andromeda Shore! She is fourteen years old and lives with her overweight, disturbed, manipulative, deceitful mother, a woman without one redeeming feature. In addition, Ann was deserted by her father, who keeps promising to return. The only bright spots in her life are her boyfriend Robbie, a working-class drug addict with a questionable future, and her English teacher, Ms. Barclay, who is rumored to be a lesbian.

Ann struggles to find love, but her mother sabotages all her efforts. Mrs. Shore chases away Ann's boyfriend, and she sends Mr. Shore away when he gallantly returns to the scene to "rescue" Ann. In the end, Ann gets a chance for a new start when she obtains a scholarship to a private school, and that's that.

The book presents working-class life as a dead end street. The homophobic stereotype of Ms. Barclay speaks for itself: "She shares an apartment with Miss Johnston, and you know how mannish she is . . . you shouldn't stay alone in the room with her." [Jan M. Goodman]

## Starting School

by Muriel Stanek,  
illustrated by Betty and  
Tony Deluna.

Whitman, 1981,

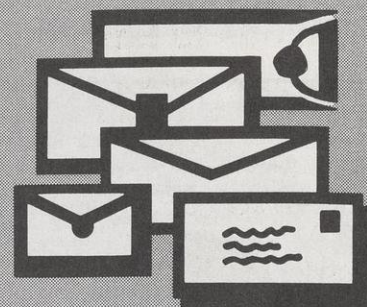
\$6.50, unpagged, grades p.s.-1

*Starting School* tells of a little boy's first day at school—and how he gets ready for it. The boy, who is nameless, goes to the doctor and the dentist, learns about school and his teacher and, on the big day, walks to school with his mother. The school day is filled with excitement (one child's dog follows him to school), conflict (one boy, who is Black, pushes and is selfish), resolution (the hero, white, and the pushy boy become friends) and accomplishment (all the children make drawings and paintings).

In general, the Green Family liked *Starting School*. They particularly liked the cooperation when the two boys became friends and everyone shares. They also liked the central character's independence when he is able to walk to school by himself on the second day of school. There was some discussion about whether the book should be "all happy" or if it should present some of the less pleasant aspects of school. While a majority of the children argued for "all happy," several children pointed out that "all happy is not all real."

The children noticed several other ways in which the book is not real. Their school has many different kinds of children, but the book has only Black and white children (there are no Asian Americans or Native American children). In their school, mothers, fathers, grandpas and even a bus driver take them to school; in the book, with one exception, *mothers* are responsible for that task.

The book has much going for it. The children can identify with and understand the feelings and events in it. The adults noted that *Starting School* has a Black male doctor, a white female dentist and a class of Black and white children who look like individuals. However, all the active children are boys and Dad-dies are only tangentially involved in the whole process. *Starting School* is good, but with a little more care it could have been excellent. [Susie Rogers and the Green Family, Wang Child Care Center; see page 23.]



## LETTERS

### To the Editor:

I appreciate the opportunity you gave me to share with your readers my experiences in "Getting Books on Gay Themes into the Library" (Vol. 14, Nos. 3 & 4). I would like to bring you up to date on some developments since then.

Shortly after our school librarian placed the books in circulation, the *New York Post* printed a story about the matter under the headline, "H.S. Given Homosexual Books By Lesbian Dean." Although the personal consequences of this unwanted publicity were limited (both faculty and students were overwhelmingly supportive), the authorities were apparently quite nervous about the whole thing. The principal, who had tacitly approved the books initially, proceeded to remove them from the library for another review. The Superintendent of Manhattan High Schools then locked them away altogether, pending the establishment of criteria by which to assess the merits of books for inclusion in school libraries. The Curriculum Division of the Board of Education formed a committee for that purpose, and I'm afraid the books would have been lost indefinitely in the bureaucratic maze. But so many individuals and organizations expressed their objections at this attempt at censorship, that my principal was finally instructed (in June) to transfer the books from the closet in which they had sat for three months, back to the library shelves where they belong.

As you can see, homophobia is alive and well in New York City, which has the largest concentration of gay people in the world. Thank you for your efforts to help eliminate this form of oppression in your fine issue, "Homophobia and Education."

Carol Bloom



## Open Minds to Equality

by Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson.

Prentice-Hall, 1983,  
\$16.95, 273 pages

*Open Minds to Equality: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Promote Race, Sex, Class and Age Equity* is a thoughtfully crafted resource for elementary and middle-school teachers. It is filled with practical and involving classroom activities designed to promote equality in the classroom, community and nation.

For those who still believe that education should function to teach basic skills, promote critical thinking, encourage concern and responsibility for others and develop the skills and commitment necessary for young people to help bring about greater social justice, *Open Minds to Equality* is a must.

Developed by Nancy Schniedewind, Associate Professor of Educational Studies and coordinator of a Master's Program in Humanistic Education and the Women's Studies Program at the State University College, New Paltz, NY, and Ellen Davidson, a teacher at the Phoenix School in Cambridge, MA, the sourcebook is obviously the product of much thought and care. One only regrets that the illustrator relied on stereotypic slits and slants to denote Asian eyes.

## American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography

by Arlene B. Hirschfelder.  
Scarecrow Press, 1982,  
\$17.50, 296 pages

If the majority of non-Native people in the U.S. think about Indians at all, it is certainly not as people, on the same level of humanity as themselves. The enormous labor of putting together *American Indian Stereotypes* has been done in the hope that this might be changed—to show how children absorb the little they do “know” about Native Americans and to demonstrate ways in which the racist attitudes they learn can be counteracted.

The Reader part of the book contains articles on children's misconceptions about Indians, on the portrayal of Native peoples in textbooks and children's literature, and on the inauthentic and insulting use of “Indian” imagery by the toy in-



*Hits & Misses* reviews material intended to assist adults working with children in the classroom, the library and at home. Professional literature, parenting materials and other resources are reviewed. Readers are invited to submit materials that should be considered.

dustry. Mary Gloyne Byler's excellent introduction to *American Indian Authors for Young People* on children's literature is also included. The misuse of Native American religious ritual by Boy Scout/Girl Scout/Campfire Girls-type organizations is also examined in an article that asks, “Can you imagine a group of non-Christian children pretending they are Catholic for an evening once every two weeks; the group of non-Christian children and their fathers taking Catholic holy names such as Jesus Christ, Saint Paul, or the Pope . . . taking communion, making a crucifix, or saying Hail Mary?” Good question.

The Bibliography is divided into two parts. The first lists articles and books that describe and analyze the treatment of Native people in a wide variety of printed materials, as well as movies, TV, the arts, etc. The issue of stereotyping in general is also covered. The second section—of necessity much shorter—lists “corrective” materials.

No brief summary can do justice to the contents of this book. While some of the essays have been published previously, all gain power from their appearance together. The writers do not deal in broad generalizations, but in specifics. Even for the reader familiar with the literature, and more than familiar with the situa-

tion it describes, certain statements stick in the mind:

“U.S. Bureau of the Census reports that Native Americans have the lowest income, life expectancy, and standards of housing and health, and highest levels of infant mortality, T.B. and suicide of any racial group in the U.S.” (p. 48).

“John Fadden (Mohawk) works at the Six Nations (Iroquois) Indian Museum. He reports that time and time again children ‘refuse to come onto the grounds of the museum because of an intense fear of possibly meeting an Indian. Some actually cry and scream’” (p. 47). (Any Native person who comes in contact with Anglo children can match that from his or her own collection of horror stories.)

“A white family is telling their five-year-old son about his adopted one-year-old sister's Native American heritage. . . . Suddenly the son interrupts and nervously asks if his baby sister ‘will kill us when she grows up’” (p. 47).

It is hard to believe that any but the most determined bigot could come away from a reading of this book unchanged. I cannot recommend it highly enough. It is an invaluable resource and should be required reading for anyone who bears any responsibility for what gets into little kids' heads. [Doris Seale]

## Equal Their Chances: Children's Activities for Non-Sexist Learning

by June Shapiro, Sylvia Kramer and Catherine Hunerberg.  
Prentice-Hall, 1981,  
\$14.95, 164 pages

Every elementary curriculum writer and Title IX administrator should own a copy of this book. Every elementary school should make copies available to its staff—and teacher-training institutes need them as well. The book is practical, well-organized, and has an ample supply of well-thought-out classroom activities to promote sex equity in all curriculum areas.

There is consciousness-raising information about the ways that adults perpetuate stereotyping and suggestions for countering school practices that contribute to the separation and stereotyping of children by gender. There are also helpful chapters that focus on different curriculum areas—reading, language arts, math and science, social studies, etc., with suggested readings for each chapter. Buy a copy today!



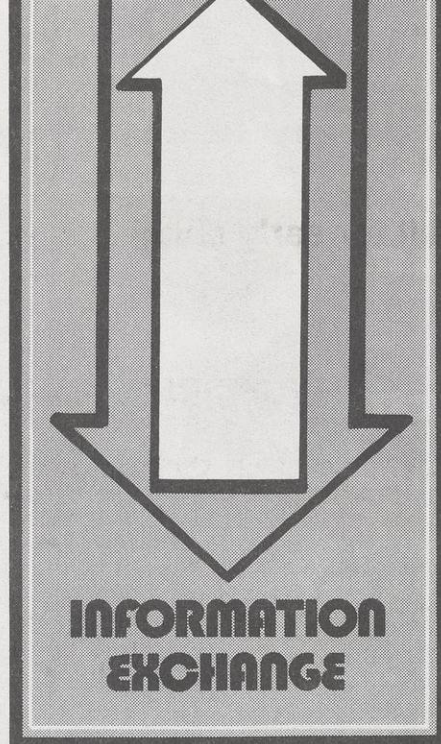
A trilingual scholastic-year **calendar** (September, 1983-August, 1984) in English, Spanish and Chinese is available from ARTS (Arts Resources for Teachers and Students, Inc.). The 10" X 14" spiral-bound calendar, which features traditional and modern Hispanic and Chinese clothing, is \$3 prepaid. ARTS also publishes a "**trictionary**," a dictionary of Chinese, Spanish and English translating more than 3,000 words from each language into the other two. Aimed at grades 5 and 6, the trictionary also includes vocabulary from the fields of law, health, school, the arts and Chinese and Hispanic cultures. The 432-page paperback is \$12 prepaid. Order from ARTS, 32 Market St., New York, NY 10002. (A list of other ARTS materials is also available.)

*Sinister Wisdom* has published a special double issue entitled "A Gathering of the Spirit," which features writings and artwork by **North American Indian women**. Included are poetry, paintings, essays and other works by more than 60 contributors. The 224-page issue is \$6.50 plus \$1 postage and handling (there is a 10% discount for orders of five or more copies). Write *Sinister Wisdom*, Box 660, Amherst, MA 01004.

"Come Tell Me Right Away" is a "positive approach to warning children about **sexual abuse**." It counters common myths about sexual abuse and provides suggestions for helping children avoid victimization. The 24-page paperback is \$1.95 from Ed-U Press, Inc., P.O. Box 583, Fayetteville, NY 13066.

Lambda Rising, a bookstore that "celebrates the **gay experience**," publishes "The Whole Gay Catalog." A selected and annotated list of books on gay and lesbian themes, the catalog includes books on a variety of topics including young readers, religion, childrearing and the arts. For a copy of the 112-page catalog, send \$2 to Lambda Rising, 2012 S St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

*Radical Teacher*, a "socialist and feminist journal on the theory and practice of **teaching**," devotes a recent issue (#23) to elementary education and the effect of teaching on teachers. Single copies are \$3; subscriptions to the triannual magazine are \$11 for institutions,



\$8 for individuals. Write *Radical Teacher*, P.O. Box 102, Kendall Square Post Office, Cambridge, MA 02142.

"Oh, No! What Do I Do Now?" is designed for parents of preschool and young children to help them determine what messages about **sexuality** they wish to give their children and how best to convey that information. Some typical situations and suggestions for responding to them are included. The 24-page booklet is available in English or Spanish. Single copies are \$1.50 (11-49 copies, \$1 each, 50 or more, 75¢ each) from SIECUS, 80 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011.

Straight Talk is a mail-order catalog of pamphlets, books, study kits, directories, etc. on a variety of "public interest" topics. The catalog seeks to promote literature that is free of "**sexist, racist** or exploitative bias." For a copy, write Straight Talk, 2351 Bear Valley Road, P.O. Box 750, Pt. Reyes Station, CA 94956.

The Data Center, an affiliate of the Investigative Resource Center, is a **public interest** research and information center on such issues as foreign investment, the New Right, "creationism," political parties and movements in Latin

America. Its collection on these topics is extensive. For information on services and materials, write them at 464 19th St., Oakland, CA 94612.

Oxfam America is part of the international network that funds self-help development and relief assistance projects in Asia, Latin America and Africa; its educational program provides information on **hunger and development issues** in the Third World. Among its resources is a "Facts for Action" series (single copies are 25¢). A free catalog of resources is available; write Oxfam America, 115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116.

The Organization of **Pan Asian American Women** seeks to combat discrimination and achieve equal opportunity for Asian-Pacific women. Its activities include educational programs, political activities and the dissemination of various resources, including the *Pan Asia Newsletter* (\$12 annual subscription). Dues are \$15 (\$7.50 for students). For more information, write the organization at 915 15th St., N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005.

*Caribe* is a quarterly that "chronicles and celebrates" the **African presence** in the Caribbean and the Americas. Articles on art, history, religion, politics and other topics are included. Subscriptions are \$7/year for individuals, \$10 for institutions. Write *Caribe*, 10 East 87th St., New York, NY 10028.

"Shmate, a Journal of **Progressive Jewish Thought**" covers a variety of relevant topics. A recent issue (Vol. 1, No. 3) included "Library Cataloging: The Jewish Question" by CIBC Advisory Board Member Sanford Berman. Single copies are \$2.50; subscriptions (six issues/year) are \$15 for individuals, \$25 for institutions. Write *Shmate*, Box 4228, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Concerned Educators Allied for a Safe Environment (CEASE) is a network of educators concerned about the dangers of **nuclear power** and **nuclear war**. To join the network and receive its newsletter, send \$5 to CEASE, c/o Peggy Schirmer, 17 Gerry St., Cambridge, MA 02138.



An audio-visual training kit for early childhood staff, parents and teachers

## CHILDCARE SHAPES THE FUTURE: ANTI-SEXIST STRATEGIES

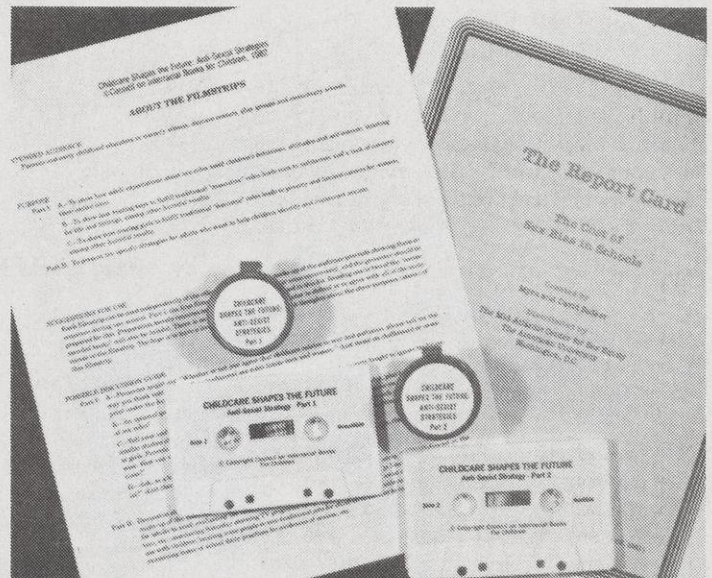
*"The 80 childcare workers who viewed the filmstrips last week were overwhelmingly enthusiastic. I am impressed with how well the filmstrip flows from research findings to behavior outcomes to ideas for making changes. The powerful message is backed up by concrete data."*—Imogen Trolander, Child Development Associate, Bank Street College of Education

This learning kit contains two filmstrips. The first filmstrip presents research findings on differing adult treatment of girls and boys; conscious and unconscious ways in which adults mold children to fit societal sex-roles; the harm of fixed sex-roles to children's full development; the special harm of "masculine" behaviors to our society and planet; and anti-sexist childcare goals.

The second filmstrip offers ten strategies for anti-sexist childcare. These strategies, with examples of each, go far beyond the usual rules for establishing a "non-sexist" environment. Rather, they explore methods of helping children to become aware of various forms of sexism and to become strong enough to resist pressures for conformity by peers, TV and storybooks.

The training kit contains the two sound-color filmstrips and cassettes discussed above (the first strip is 12-minutes and 93-frames, the second is 15-minutes and 118-frames); the filmstrip scripts; a booklet with a list of research studies; a list of recommended reading; and an 8-page *Report Card* subtitled, *The Cost of Sex Bias in Schools*.

**Recommended** for all educators of young children, parent groups, teacher trainers, women's studies classes and women's centers.



Produced by the Council with the aid of Louise Derman-Sparks, Professor of Early Childhood Education, Pacific Oaks College, California, and Geraldine Wilson, formerly with the New York City Head Start Regional Training Office.

L.C. 81-730652

Cost is \$45.00

Send check or purchase order to  
The CIBC Resource Center for Educators  
1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023

For a free catalog listing anti-racist, anti-sexist materials, write the CIBC at the address given above.



## SUBSCRIBERS—PLEASE NOTE!

Will you help us save the expense of renewal mailings? It is really very easy. Unlike many periodicals which have long, puzzling codes on the first line of your address label, ours is simple. The single number near your name indicates both the volume (first two figures) and the issue number (last figure) that ends your subscription. Thus, if the number is 148, your subscription ends with Volume 14, Number 8.

You are now reading Volume 14, Number 5. If your mailing label shows 145, your subscription expires with this issue; please renew as soon as possible to avoid missing any issues. If your mailing label shows 146 or 147 renewing now will prevent interruption of service. (If you renewed very recently, your present mailing label may not yet reflect the change of expiration date. Please be patient; the next one will.)

Please note that the *Bulletin* is not published monthly; if you write to us about a particular issue, please indicate the relevant volume and issue number.

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE BULLETIN!

Interracial Books for Children Bulletin  
1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023

14/5  
8 ISSUES A YEAR

( ) New ( ) Renewal

INSTITUTIONS 1 yr. 2 yrs. 3 yrs.  
( ) \$18 ( ) \$32 ( ) \$42

Please enclose payment if possible; we will bill you only if a purchase order is enclosed or upon request.

INDIVIDUALS ( ) \$12 ( ) \$20 ( ) \$30

Personal subscriptions must be paid for with a personal check. Please enclose payment; the cost of billing individual subscriptions has become prohibitive.

( ) I am pleased to enclose a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
All contributions are tax deductible.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Bulk rates for subscriptions or single copies are available on request.

Foreign subscriptions (excluding Canada) should, if possible, be paid by international money order or by a check payable through a U.S. bank. Otherwise, please add \$5 to the rates given above. Subscriptions outside the U.S. will be sent via surface mail; if air mail is preferred add \$15 per year to the subscription cost and check the following box.

Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.

1841 Broadway  
New York, NY 10023

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
NEW YORK, N.Y.  
PERMIT No. 5090

185 129P 3-ISSUES LEFT  
COOP CHILDRENS BK CTR  
GINNY MOORE KRUSE  
600 NORTH PARK ST  
MADISON WI 53706

## WHAT IS THE COUNCIL ON INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN?

CIBC is a non-profit organization founded by writers, librarians, teachers and parents in 1966. It promotes anti-racist and anti-sexist children's literature and teaching materials in the following ways: 1) by publishing the *Bulletin*, which regularly analyzes children's books and other learning materials for human and anti-human messages; 2) by operating the Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, which publishes reference books, monographs, lesson plans and audio-visual material designed to develop pluralism in schools and in society; 3) by conducting workshops on racism and sexism for librarians, teachers and parents; and 4) by initiating programs that bring to public attention the unrecognized talents of Third World writers and artists. For more information about CIBC and a free catalog of its Resource Center materials, write us at 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

Cooperative Children's Book Center  
4290 Helen C. White Hall  
600 North Park Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706