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INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

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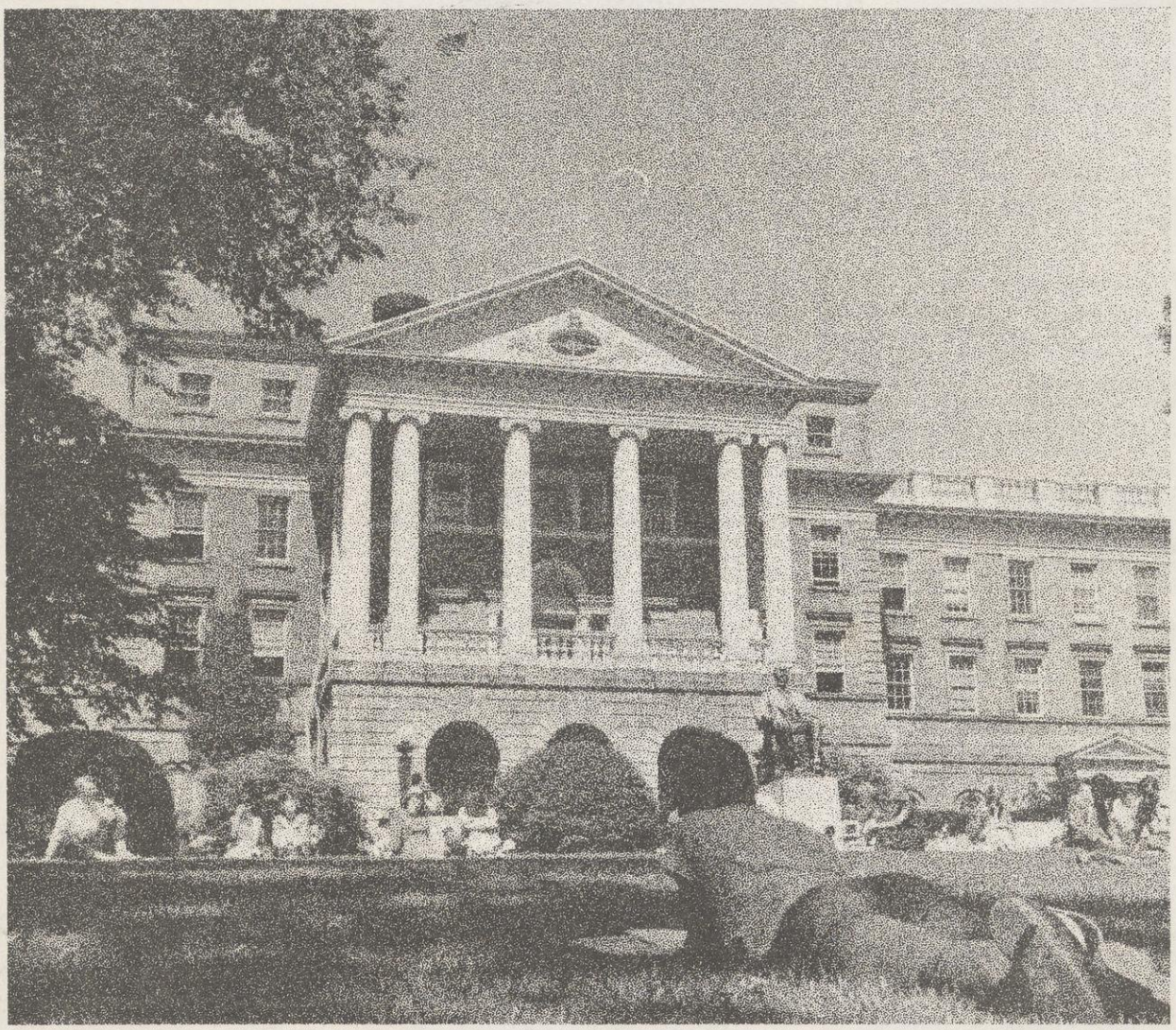

Teacher Training Texts: Sexist, Too

Black Literature—A "Fad" of the Sixties?

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ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER

Schools of education *could* be leading the way to sex equity in education—but are they? An analysis of teacher training materials begins on page 4. (Photo by Erika Stone)

Indexed in
Education Index
ERIC *IRCD*

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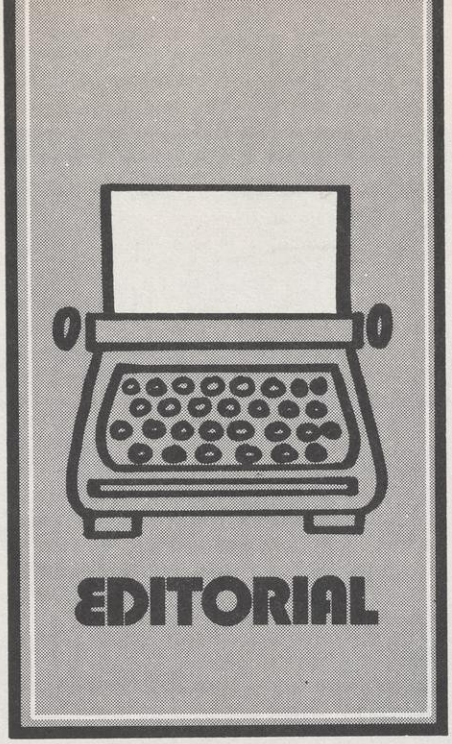

Anti-Nuclear Struggle—Another "Ism"?

NUKISM? No, we're not about to coin another word. But we do believe that the anti-nuclear struggle is integral to our concerns. We would like to open discussion of the interrelationships and urge readers to share their ideas with us. As starters, here are some of the tie-ins we see.

Ageism—When older people unilaterally take actions which will affect the lives and health of young people—such as creating nuclear wastes which can poison the earth and cause cancers and defects in coming generations—it is ageist (oppression based on age). To fight against nukes is to fight for the young and unborn.

Elitism or Classism—Workers in nuclear plants face unacceptable health risks not shared by the plant owners, while a new class of workers known as "sponges" is being exposed to the hazards of short term-high level radiation without understanding the risks involved. (The nuclear industry cannot exist without such workers.) The monopoly control of energy—a trend that will be vastly accelerated in a nuclear society—will lessen the already limited democratic control over energy decision-making and over health and survival issues.

Handicapism—Many who survive exposure to radiation become severely disabled. In Japan, such people are called Hibakusha, and they are rejected by the rest of society. In the U.S., people harmed by radiation are subject to the same discriminatory practices that all disabled people experience in our society. Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York has taken a strong position against nuclear energy because (1) the numbers of disabled people will be increased immeasurably as a result of radiation damage, (2) the members of DIA are all too aware of the oppression faced by disabled people and feel a special compassion toward victims of radiation poisoning, and (3) disabled people will be particularly vulnerable in the event of an evacuation.

Sexism—What good is winning reproductive rights over your own body while losing the right to bear a child who is genetically free of radiation damage? Nuclear arms are the ultimate macho trip; feminists want a world where all people are nurturers, and a nurturing society would not abide nuclear terror. Nuclear energy is too dangerous to be in the hands of men trained to believe in profits over people, trained to believe that might makes right.

Racism—Nuclear arms are the ultimate weapon for maintaining a racist system in which rich whites profit over people of color in the U.S. and in the world. Most uranium in the U.S. is on land still owned by Native Americans. Native Americans are hired to mine the uranium without adequate safety precautions, and their cancer mortality is staggering. In addition, the radioactive uranium tailings (residue of mining) are poisoning Native American land and water.

Future issues of the *Bulletin* will explore these interrelationships further. We also hope to develop lesson plans and consciousness-raising activities to involve even the very youngest children in the anti-nuclear struggle. These will appear in future issues, and we ask readers to join us in preparing these consciousness-raisers.

Meanwhile, we urge teachers and librarians to be aware of lesson plans and suggested classroom activities prepared by the nuclear industry or by agencies of its major sponsor—the U.S. government. These materials are pro-nuclear and dangerously biased.

Readers interested in learning more about the anti-nuclear movement are referred to the bibliography below which was prepared with the assistance of Richard Lercari and Lisha Papert, members of Friends Nuclear Hazards Resource Center.

Subscribers, Please Note

The next issue of the *Bulletin* (Volume 10, Number 8), which completes the current volume, will be published early in January. We apologize for the slight delay in publication.

Bibliography

Energy Bibliography. National Intervenors Inc. (236 Mass. Ave., Washington, D.C.), 1978, 60 pages, $2. (hardcover), 60¢ (paper). This annotated bibliography is an excellent source guide to every aspect of nuclear power. The reviews are clear and concise.

The Energy Efficient Home by Steven Robinson and Fred Dubin. New American Library, 1978, 158 pages, $4.95. A manual for saving fuel by using solar, wood and wind power, this book is a "do-it-yourself" guide.

The Menace of Atomic Energy by Ralph Nader and John Abbotts. Norton, 1977, 431 pages, $10.95 (hardcover), $4.95 (paper, revised 1977). A critical view of U.S. commitment to nuclear technology and the corporate connections to its use, this book also discusses citizen opposition through legal channels. Useful to those who want to become involved in the intervention process.

The New Tyranny by Robert Jungk. Warner, 1979, 268 pages, $2.50. The author concludes that nuclear power will necessitate a police state. Highly recommended for people interested in the nuclear issue, and particularly for those interested in civil liberties.

No Nukes! Everyone's Guide to Nuclear Power by Anna Gyorgy and friends. South End Press (P.O. Box 68, Astor Station, Boston, Mass. 02123), 1979, 478 pages, $8. (paper). This encyclopedia on all aspects of nuclear technology is written in simple, clear language. The volume will adequately answer any questions a layperson

Continued on page 9

An analysis of teacher training materials reveals that the issue of sexism is rarely discussed in the texts—and, in fact, the texts themselves are often sexist

Teacher Training Texts: Sexist, Too

By Myra and David Sadker and Tom Hicks

There is a significant body of information concerning sex bias in education and its effects on students. The research documents a loss of intellectual potential (especially in math and science), of self-esteem, and of occupational aspiration as girls "progress" through school.[1]

The blame for sex bias in education has been attributed to a number of sources, with textbooks frequently identified as a major culprit. In fact, several studies document that sex bias is prevalent in elementary and secondary texts. Publishers' guidelines, teachers' workshops and a number of articles and pamphlets have been designed to reduce or eliminate sexism in textbooks at the elementary and secondary levels.

But what about textbooks at the college level? And more significantly, what about the material used to train teachers? Are the nation's campuses immune from the currents of change and sex equity—or are they in the forefront leading the way to bias-free texts?

If you believe that college texts are leading the way to sex equity, you are in for a profound disappointment. In universities and colleges across the nation tomorrow's teachers are being educated with texts that underscore yesterday's beliefs and biases.

Each year approximately 200,000 teachers graduate from this nation's colleges and universities. Textbooks are an important component of their preparation and are influential in shaping knowledge, attitudes and teaching behaviors. In order to assess this aspect of teacher preparation, we conducted a year-long, page-by-page analysis of the most widely used undergraduate education textbooks.[2] We wanted to determine if these books help new teachers promote sex equity in the classroom and encourage all their students to go beyond the restrictions of sex stereotyping, or if they provide little or no help in eliminating sex bias in school and society.

By contacting major publishers, we identified the 24 most widely used texts in areas that form the core of teacher education programs across the country—foundations or introduction to education, psychology of education and methods of teaching in the content areas. All of the texts selected for analysis—listed at the end of this article—were published between 1973 and 1978 so that it would be reasonable to expect that topics of discussion related to sex equity would be included.

To determine how these popular professional texts addressed the issue of sex equity, we developed and field tested a comprehensive content analysis instrument and trained teams of raters in its application. Each of the 24 texts was analyzed by at least 2 raters who applied the content analysis instrument to each book page, including narrative, illustrations, indices, footnotes and bibliographies. The raters analyzed the amount of content allotted to males and females, the treatment of the experiences and contributions of women, the treatment given sexism and sex differences.

After a year of textbook analysis, we reached our conclusion: Our major teacher education textbooks are failing to include the issue of sex equity—and failing badly. As Table 1 indicates, over 95 per cent of the 24 most widely used teacher education textbooks give the issue of sex equity less than one per cent of book space. The "best" book devotes only 1.7 per cent to this issue and many of the books do not mention it at all.

The Report Card below highlights some of our major findings. An analysis of the different types of teacher training texts follows.

REPORT CARD

Of all 24 teacher education texts analyzed:

- 23 give less than one per cent of space to the issue of sexism; the other book gives 1.7 per cent.
- One-third do not mention the issue of sexism at all. Most of the texts guilty of this oversight are in math and science—the areas where girls are more likely to have achievement problems.
- Not a single text provides future teachers with specific curricular resources and instructional strategies to counteract sexism in the classroom or its harmful impact on children.

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[1]While girls start off intellectually ahead of males, by the upper grades their performance on achievement tests begins to decline, especially in the areas of math and science. Female students lose not only intellectual potential, but self-esteem as well. As boys and girls go through school, their collective opinions of boys grow increasingly positive and their collective opinions of girls increasingly negative. Both sexes are learning that in our society, boys are worth more.—Nancy Frazier and Myra Sadker, *Sexism in School and Society*, Harper & Row, 1973.

[2]This research was funded through the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, USOE.

None of the introductory texts present the history of women in education; they ignore the discrimination that women have faced and omit their achievements in the field.

Foundations or Introduction to Education

Prospective teachers usually have their first encounter with the field in a foundations or introduction to education course. Texts for these courses give some attention to historical, philosophical and sociological issues as they relate to education and focus on contemporary issues and problems.

The four foundations texts analyzed give an average of five times as much space to males as females. Their presentation of sexism as a contemporary issue is utterly miniscule; two of the four books do not discuss it at all. One of the books reduces the issue to a bizarre discussion of the relative advantages of a dual salary scale—one which pays women teachers less than men teachers. Only one of the texts mentions Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972—and it describes this complex and important legislation in only four lines.

Not one of the books presents the history of women in American education. The fact that women were denied education (other than in the dame schools where women taught children in their homes) for the first half of this nation's history is completely omitted. Even though education is one of the fields to which women—both collectively and individually—have made great contributions, one would never know it from reading these foundations texts where the history, experiences and contributions of women are non-topics.

Psychology of Education

Educational psychology textbooks not only attempt to describe a number of psychological theories and principles, but also to translate these ideas into the world of the classroom.

Three psychology of education texts were analyzed, and they accord an average of five times more space to males than females. Two of the three books devote less than one per cent of content space to the issue of sexism; the third text gives less than two per cent of space to this issue. All of the books discuss the topic of sex differences, but not one provides a thorough and current analysis of the research in this area.

Aside from the intended lessons in these texts, beginning teachers are also taught a hidden, but discoverable lesson: educational psychology is almost exclusively a male domain. All 3 of these popular texts were written by men; there are 4 times as many bibliographic and reference citations for men; and there are over 20 times more male names than female names in the index. To beginning teachers it must seem that educational psychology is a field conceptualized, studied, recorded and dominated by only one-half of the population.

Methods Texts

The 17 methods texts analyzed in this study are intended to provide elementary school teachers with practical classroom techniques and materials. Each text includes discussion of elementary school curricula, as well as methods and strategies of instruc-

Table 1

Percentage of Content of Teacher Education Texts Concerned with Issues Relating to Sex Equity

Area	Number of Books	Total Number of Pages	Percentage Relating to: Experiences and Achievements of Women	Sexism	Sex Differences
Introduction/ Foundations of Education	4	2,135	1.48	0.31	0.16
Psychology of Education	3	2,252	1.35	0.90	0.86
Reading Methods	5	2,540	3.53	0.04	0.28
Language Arts Methods	4	1,869	1.44	0.12	0.18
Science Methods	3	1,569	0.64	0.01	0.04
Math Methods	3	1,393	0.10	0.00	0.03
Social Studies Methods	2	840	0.61	0.43	0.02

Note that most figures are less than 1 per cent and many are less than .5 per cent.

tion. The purpose of these texts is to help undergraduates function successfully as teachers in social studies, reading, language arts, science, and mathematics. These texts are analyzed below by subject areas.

Math Methods

One needn't look too hard to detect that the fields of medicine, science, mathematics, architecture and engineering are disproportionately and overwhelmingly dominated by males. The most recent data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that the cause of this phenomenon can be traced, at least in part, to our elementary and secondary schools. These statistics, a product of comprehensive national testing, reveal that there is a remarkable gap in math and science achievement scores between male and female students—and as the grade level increases, so does the gap. In short, in the areas of math and science, schools are, in every sense of the word, failing our female students.

If the three math methods texts analyzed in this study are any indication, this educational deficiency will probably be with us for years to come. Not one of the math texts analyzed makes any reference to sex differences in math achievement, to the many problems that may confront female students in this area, or to the very real stereotyping of math as a "male domain." As a result, math has become, in effect, the critical filter which keeps females from entering many careers in science, math and technology.

The math texts do not provide a single reference to any of the programs which attempt to eliminate barriers that discourage females from enrolling in math courses. Nor is there any mention of steps teachers can take to increase the success of females in math. Not only are the special needs of female students ignored, but the achievements of female mathematicians are also overlooked. In fact, the only females populating these books exist in hypothetical problems and classroom activities. Unfortunately, even here they are often sex-segregated and stereotyped.

Science Methods

The problems faced by females in the sciences is a non-topic in two of the science texts analyzed. In the third text (*Teaching Science As Continuous Inquiry*), it receives a passing mention under the title, "A Special Handicap," and the reader is told that girls "know less, do less, explore less, and are prone to be more superstitious than boys."

Of all 24 textbooks analyzed in this study, those in science and math reflect the least sensitivity to the issue of sexism—in spite of the substantial research findings concerning the failure of math and science to meet the needs of our female students.

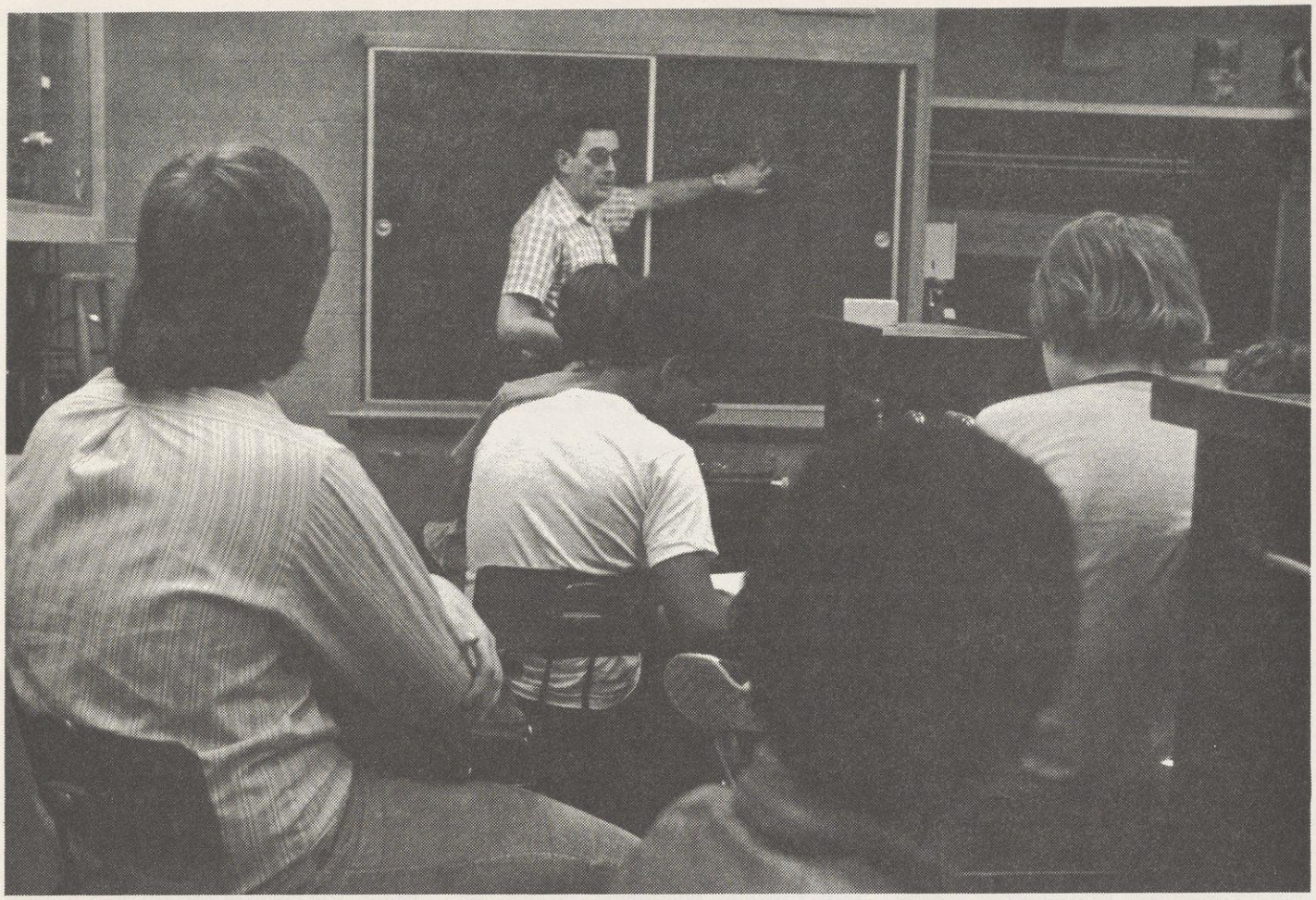
Reading and Language Arts Methods

Although reading and language arts methods textbooks are typically used in separate courses, they share certain characteristics in common. For example, there is frequently some overlapping content included in these two subject areas. In addition, and perhaps not so surprising, while the other textbooks investigated have been written almost exclusively by male authors, female authors have been involved in writing half of the reading texts and the majority of the language arts textbooks. Do methods texts authored by women fare any better on the issue of sex equity than those written by men? Consider the following findings, and decide for yourself.

- The five reading texts analyzed in this study devote an average of over twice as much content space to males as females. Three of the five texts do not mention the issue of sexism at all.
- Although some of the reading texts discuss sex differences in reading achievement and/or interests, the discussion is often stereotypic, as evidenced by the way one text (*The Teaching of Reading*) addresses the differences:

> Boys show interest in action and aggressiveness, in the affairs of the world and therefore prefer adventure, science, hero stories, biography, history, and tall tales, while girls still cling to the fanciful stories, myths, stories of chivalry and romance, home life, biography, and accounts of every day life. . . .

The language arts textbooks are more equitable in their content distri-



Math classes remain a "male domain" and act as a critical filter to keep women out of many professions — yet texts do not suggest ways that teachers can change this sexist pattern. (Photo by Erika Stone.)

bution to females, but two of the four books analyzed provide a stereotyped discussion of sex differences in reading interests. In one instance (*Teaching Elementary Language Arts*), the stereotyping pushes inexorably on to a rationalization for maintaining discrimination:

> . . . For example, it has been found that boys will not read "girl books," whereas girls will read "boy books." Therefore, the ratio of "boy books" should be about two to one in the classroom library collection.

Social Studies Methods

The two social studies texts analyzed set a tone of sensitivity toward and moral support for sex equity. They indicate that this is "one of the most significant developments of our time" and has "many implications for social studies education in the elementary school." But they afford a miniscule amount of space to the topic (significantly less than one per cent), and they never tell future teachers what these implications are.

A vague and general call to arms is all the novice teacher is given to wage the war on sex bias. It is evidently left to the intuitive powers of these future teachers to determine strategies for non-sexist teaching. The texts provide no tactics or specifics to help teachers understand and counteract sexism. What the reader finds in these texts is a sensitivity to the topic, but it is a sensitivity without substance.

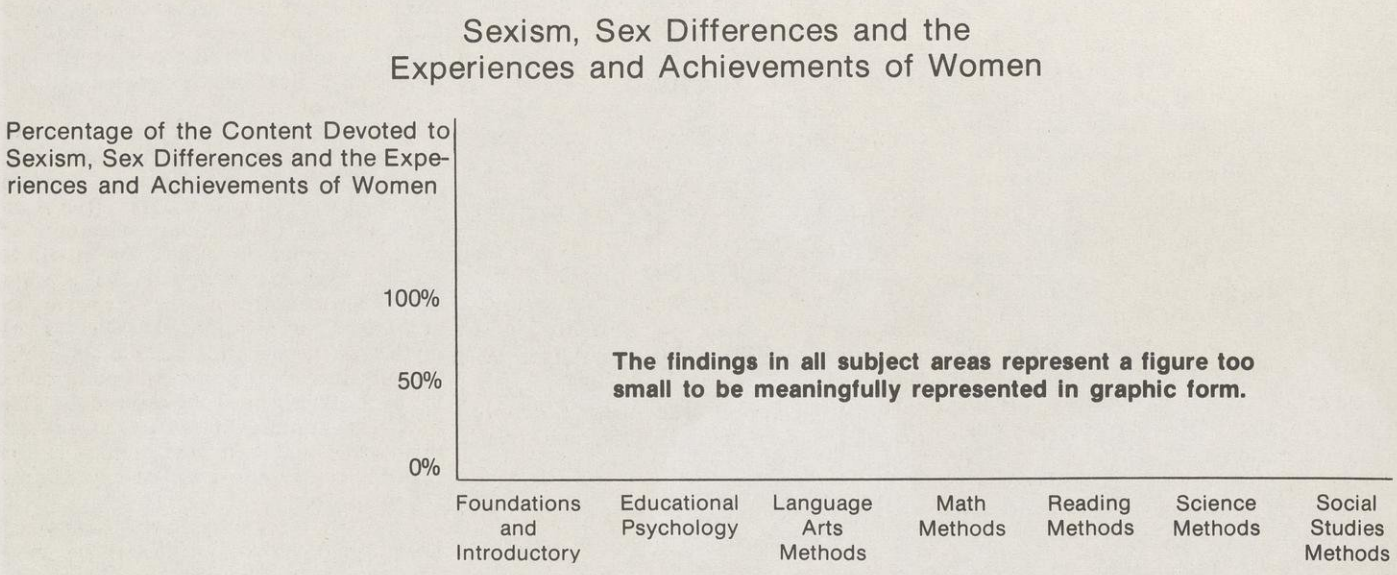
Language

The language authors use may shape the content of the text narrative. Our analysis of language in these textbooks disclosed that 20 of the 24 books use supposedly generic nouns and pronouns such as *he, man* and *mankind* to refer to all people. There were also many examples of the way language reflects sexist assumptions and attitudes. For example, one text (*The Reading Process*) recommends the following kernel sentences for teachers to use in transformational grammar activities.

> John works.
> Julio gardens.
> Mary teaches.
> Ramon farms.
> Enrique drives a truck.
> Mr. Jones practices law.
> Marianna cooks.
> Mrs. Chacon makes dresses.
> Mr. Acosta plays chess.
> Larry studies at the university.

Another text (*Psychology Applied to Teaching*) refers to a "thirty-three year old girl" and elsewhere offers this advice: "If all the boys in a high school class routinely get distracted when a curvaceous and provocative coed undulates into the room to pick up attendance slips, tape the attendance slip to the outside of the door."

Our teacher education texts can



provide future teachers with a thorough understanding of the issue of sexism; they can encourage commitment to sex equity in education; they can help future teachers develop the curricular and instructional skills needed for sex-fair teaching. The potential is tremendous; however, it is a potential not yet realized.

It is essential that teacher educators, authors and editors work toward the creation of sex-fair texts in all areas of teacher preparation. These texts should provide a balanced and accurate portrayal of the profound achievements women, both individually and collectively, have made in the field of education. Sexism should be presented as a contemporary educational issue; its causes should be analyzed, and its impact on male and female students should be discussed. There needs to be thorough, accurate and current discussion of the research on sex differences and its implications for classroom teachers. And the texts need to provide clear and specific curricular resources and instructional strategies so that future teachers can counteract the effects of sexism in their classrooms.

These texts should integrate information on sexism throughout the book as appropriate to the various topics discussed. Special boxed off inserts and segregated sections and chapters offer only a respite of sensitivity; further, such fragmented treatment implies that the experiences and achievements of women are not integral to the mainstream of educational developments. Women's issues must be woven into the entire fabric of teacher education texts in all areas, and not relegated to a back pocket.

A major effort must also be made to close the gap between the textbook publishers' guidelines on avoiding sexism and the publishers' books. Blatantly sexist comments, sexist language and examples and the so-called generic nouns and pronouns should be eliminated. (Language can, in fact, be anti-sexist if authors give examples and discuss subject matter in ways that expand options and choices for women and girls.)

By taking these steps, teacher education texts might ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to institute fair classrooms—classrooms where the real lesson isn't one that teaches our children that boys are worth more.

While the focus of this study concerned the treatment of women, sexism and related issues, we decided to go beyond this boundary in order to consider the coverage afforded racial and ethnic minorities in these major education texts. We found that in half the texts analyzed, less than one per cent of content space is devoted to the issue of race and ethnic discrimination. Several texts do not mention racial and ethnic discrimination. A few texts even use dated references to make derogatory and stereotypic comments about specific minority groups. One text even quotes from a 1962 journal article referring to the "lower-class Negro adult male" as "an ineffective family leader" and as one who "is seldom regarded as a worthwhile masculine model for the boy to emulate." Since 12 of the texts do include information on racism (one text gives almost 7 per cent of its content to this issue), the issue of racism does receive more comprehensive coverage than that of sexism; however, education texts still have far to go if they are to prepare teachers to work effectively with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. □

Teacher Education Texts Selected for Content Analysis

Foundations or Introduction to Education

James Johnson et al. *Introduction to the Foundations of American Education.* 3rd Edition. Allyn & Bacon, 1976.

Robert Richey. *Planning for Teaching.* 5th Edition. McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Kevin Ryan and James Cooper. *Those Who Can, Teach.* 2nd Edition. Houghton Mifflin, 1975.

William Van Til. *Education: A Beginning.* 2nd Edition. Houghton Mifflin, 1974.

Psychology of Education

Robert Biehler. *Psychology Applied to Teaching.* 3rd Edition. Houghton Mifflin, 1978.

Project Combats Sex Bias

Currently, the Non-Sexist Teacher Education Project (NSTEP) is attempting to address these patterns of omission and stereotyping. Funded under a grant by the Women's Educational Equity Act, NSTEP is designed to provide teacher educators with multicultural materials to combat sex bias in teacher education programs. NSTEP will make supplementary materials available and provide teacher candidates with knowledge and skills in establishing classrooms characterized by sex equity. These materials will help fill the gaps in our current teacher education courses.

NSTEP is now in its second year and is field-testing sex-fair teacher education materials at ten geographically dispersed and multicultural demonstration sites. After the materials have been evaluated, and appropriately revised, they will be disseminated to supplement and enhance the current teacher education curricula.

The fundamental goal of NSTEP is to bring the issue of sex equity from its position on the periphery of preservice teacher education into the mainstream. The potential of all our children is the heart of the issue—less than one per cent of textbook space does not do it justice.

If you would like more information on sexism in teacher education, write the Non-Sexist Teacher Education Project, c/o The American University, Roper Hall 113, Mass. and Nebraska Aves. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.

N.L. Gage and David Berliner. *Educational Psychology.* Rand McNally, 1975.

Thomas Good and Jere Brophy. *Educational Psychology: A Realistic Approach.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1977.

Methods of Teaching Reading

Martha Dallmann et al. *The Teaching of Reading.* 4th Edition. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974.

Dolores Durkin. *Teaching Them to Read.* 2nd Edition. Allyn & Bacon, 1974.

Robert Karlin. *Teaching Elementary Reading.* 2nd Edition. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.

George Spache and Evelyn Spache. *Reading in the Elementary School.* 4th Edition. Allyn & Bacon, 1977.

Miles Zintz. *The Reading Process.* 2nd Edition. Wm. C. Brown, 1975.

Methods of Teaching Language Arts

Paul Burns and Betty Broman. *The Language Arts in Childhood Education.* 3rd Edition. Rand McNally, 1975.

Sara Lundsteen. *Children Learn to Communicate.* Prentice Hall, 1976.

Walter Petty, Dorothy Petty and Marjorie Becking. *Experiences in Language.* 2nd Edition. Allyn & Bacon, 1976.

Dorothy Rubin. *Teaching Elementary Language Arts.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975.

Methods of Teaching Science

Glenn Blough and Julius Schwartz. *Elementary School Science.* 5th Edition. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974.

Peter Gega. *Science in Elementary Education.* 3rd Edition. John Wiley, 1977.

Mary Budd Rowe. *Teaching Science As Continuous Inquiry.* 2nd Edition. McGraw-Hill, 1978.

Methods of Teaching Mathematics

Foster I. Grossnickle and John Reckzeh. *Discovering Meanings in Elementary School Mathematics.* 6th Edition. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973.

James Heddens. *Today's Mathematics.* 3rd Edition. Science Research Associates, 1974.

John Marks et al. *Teaching Elementary School Mathematics for Understanding.* McGraw-Hill, 1975.

Methods of Teaching Social Studies

John Jarolimek. *Social Studies in Elementary Education.* 5th Edition. Macmillan, 1977.

John Michaelis. *Social Studies for Children in a Democracy.* 6th Edition. Prentice Hall, 1976.

About the Authors

MYRA SADKER is Dean of the School of Education at American University. DAVID SADKER, Professor of Education at American University, is Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Sex Equity based at A.U. Together the Sadkers are Co-Directors of the Non-Sexist Teacher Education Project. TOM HICKS, a freelance writer and former teacher, coordinates the Non-Sexist Teacher Education Project at American University.

Continued from page 3

might have on nuclear technology, weapons, civil disobedience, alternative energy, etc., but it does not provide in-depth or philosophical answers. Highly recommended.

Nuclear Madness by Dr. Helen Caldicott. Autumn Press (25 Dwight St., Brookline, Mass. 02146; distributed by Random House), 1978, 120 pages, $3.95. This is an articulate, clear and thorough account of nuclear technology and some resulting medical implications. Caldicott knowledgeably discusses the medical implications of nuclear technology and disproves the myth that the scientific facts and speculation about nuclear power are too complex to be comprehended by laypeople. She forcefully appeals to readers to educate themselves and take direct steps in the battle against nuclear technology. Highly recommended.

Poverty of Power by Barry Commoner. Knopf, 1976, 382 pages, $10. A good scientific grounding. The first part covers various aspects of energy, while the second part does an excellent job of laying out the economic and political aspects.

Radioactive Contamination by Virginia Brodine. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, 190 pages, $7.95 (paper). Written in factual but non-technical terms, this book deals with several case studies of radioactive contaminations resulting from weapons testing. The enormity and extent of contamination discussed is shocking. Highly recommended.

Shut Down: Nuclear Power on Trial. The Book Publishing Co. (156 Drakes Lane, Summertown, Tenn. 38483), 1979, 192 pages, $4.95. Highly engrossing and easy to read, this book is a direct transcription of portions of the Honneger vs. Hendrey trial which took place in 1976 when Ms. Honneger accused nuclear power of being directly responsible for health hazards and death. Testimony by Dr. John Gofman (physicist) and Dr. Ernest Sternglass (biostatistician)—two of the most outspoken anti-nuclear power scientists—is included. Many different aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle—and their medical implications—are discussed.

The Silent Bomb: A Guide to the Nuclear Energy Controversy edited by Peter Faulkner. Published jointly by Vintage and Friends of the Earth, 1977, 383 pages, $10.95 (hardcover), $3.95 (paper). The book is a collection of essays dealing with the controversy about nuclear power, particularly the safety issues. The book covers several aspects briefly and goes into detail on the structural problems of the power plants' designs.

Swords from Plowshares by Albert Wohlstetter. University of Chicago Press, 1979, 228 pages, $5. Subtitled "the military potential of civilian nuclear energy," this book deals with international safeguards and controls. It also is one of the few books that make connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

Has Black literature become an integral part of school curricula or is it seen as a "luxury" that is easily discarded?

Black Literature– A "Fad" of the Sixties?

By Barbara Stanford and Jean Procope-Martin

"Black literature, that was a fad of the sixties!" replied a rather typical English teacher to our informal survey on the current status of the teaching of Black literature in secondary schools.[1] While her comment—fortunately—does not tell the whole story, it sums up quite accurately the current attitude of many educators.

Ten years ago things were very exciting. Demands that Black studies be included in the curriculum were successful and courses were instituted throughout the country. They were often hastily constructed collections of bits of literature and history, but sometimes very creative and well-designed courses were offered in both high schools and colleges.

It seemed for a while that the curriculum changes of the late 1960's were a great improvement—although, after all, any improvement over nothing appears dramatic. Before student and teacher demands caused a change, the curriculum in the all-Black school one of us taught in included not a single selection by or about a Black person in the course of study for average and below-average students and only two selections for the honors students—a very short biography of George Washington Carver and "The Creation" by James Weldon Johnson. Most U.S. children could complete high school and even major in English in college without ever seeing any evidence that any Black person had ever written anything.

Today, high school students are much more likely to read at least a few poems and perhaps a novel or play by a Black writer. In schools with electives, a semester course on Black literature is a common choice. But it is a choice, usually elected by only a small percentage of the students. There are still, unfortunately, many students who complete their education with minimal exposure to Black writers.

We have found that it is still not at all difficult to complete college with almost no knowledge of Black literature. A white student teacher came for help when she was assigned to teach *Native Son* because she had never studied any Black literature and did not know how to approach the book. When four students recently asked their college instructors about including Black authors in their English literature courses, they were told, "If you want to do *extra credit* reports on a Black writer—fine." When a freshman at a Washington, D.C. college wrote a book report on one of Maya Angelou's books, the instructor admitted that she had never heard of the author. Someone who has been teaching English composition for 15 years said that she uses samples of U.S. writers to motivate students, but admitted that it had never crossed her mind to use the writing of a Black author. Another teacher claimed that he never knew that there was any "good" literature by Blacks; he thought that Black writing meant "poor speaking," and he didn't want to use that in his classes.

While the increase in the quantity of Black literature being taught does not seem to be as significant as is often assumed, the change in the quality and focus of Black literature being published, particularly Black adolescent literature, has been dramatic. Probably the most important change during that period was the recognition of the Black audience. Before the late 1960's Black writers faced limitations on subject matter and style for a variety of reasons, including the assumption by publishers that all the reading public was white.

Blackness Treated as "Problem"

Books for young people were even more restricted, because many of the writers of such books about Black people were white. While many writers were well-meaning and courageous to deal with what was at that time an almost taboo subject, their stories about Black young people were clearly written by outsiders and were aimed at white readers. On the positive side, the personal disappointments suffered by Black teen-agers as a result of segregation were often portrayed effectively and were probably informative for white children of that era—many of whom had no contact with Blacks other than the grotesque pictures of happy slaves found in their history texts. But in subtle ways, the books were damaging. Instead of confronting racism, books from the 1950's

[1]A questionnaire was sent to school districts selected for their diversity throughout the country.

and 1960's treated Blackness as a problem to be overcome, with no hint that the "problem" was imposed by a racist society.

During the 1960's a gradual change began to occur. Books began to suggest that the most appropriate response to racism might not be individual success and acquiescence. Black writers like Kristin Hunter, Rosa Guy and Sharon Bell Mathis began to write genuine literature about the joys and anguish of Black adolescents without the self-conscious lessons of earlier books. The new books were written by Black people, primarily for Black people, but like all good literature they can be universally appreciated.

Black Children Ignored

As in the publishing of Black literature, the teaching of Black literature has changed as teachers have recognized and begun to respect the Black audience. Before the mid-1960's, the Black student was as invisible as the Black writer. Textbook writers assumed that students were white middle-class children and used examples appropriate for their experience. Not until the mid-1960's did textbook publishers make any attempt to relate their subjects to the experience of Black children.

Today, the Black audience is well-recognized in the educational community, and the need of Black students to study Black literature is scarcely contested. (In fact, other ethnic groups are also stressing the importance of studying their own heritage.) However, the need for *white* students to study Black literature is much less widely accepted. As we discussed Black literature with teachers, we found that a common response was, "I don't need to worry about Black literature; I don't have any Black students."

The frequency of this response is another disturbing piece of evidence that the teaching of Black literature may not only be not very pervasive, but also not very permanent. Our informal observations of a number of school systems suggest that in predominantly white schools, Black literature is generally regarded as a frill which may be included if there is time.

So a critical issue in the teaching of Black literature is the fact that many English teachers still regard Black literature as something needed only by a particular group of students to improve their self-concept or improve their human relations skills, not as an integral part of American literature. It is therefore likely to be a victim of the regular swings in American educational policy between concentration on the needs of the individual child and concentration on the discipline itself and set standards of achievement. In the 1960's, of course, the needs of the individual child were emphasized, and so it seemed natural to promote Black literature to meet the needs of *Black* children. But the 1970's, with their emphasis on competency and back-to-the-basics, leave little room for individual differences. And the educational establishment is far from recognizing that knowledge of Black literature is something that *all* educated Americans should possess.

A critical analysis of textbooks shows the same disturbing trend;

Electives on Black literature are common but it is still possible to complete college with almost no knowledge of Black writers. (Photo by Marion Bernstein)

Authors who wrote authentic literature about the jobs and anguish of Black adolescents began to be published in the 1960's. Among them were (top to bottom) Kristin Hunter, Rosa Guy and Sharon Bell Mathis.

Black literature is seen as an extra, not an integral part of the curriculum. A cursory glance at any English textbook exhibit might be reassuring to someone interested in Black literature, for almost any publisher's display will include a reasonable representation of Black people both in literature and in pictures. But a closer analysis shows some disturbing trends. Black literature tends to be concentrated in special inner-city series and softbound supplementary texts. The hardback anthologies that have been the core of English curricula for a generation have a much lower percentage of Black literature.

Publishers take seriously the need to meet the demands for Black literature made by many city school districts, just as they take seriously demands from other pressure groups to avoid such topics as evolution. Almost all textbook publishers today have detailed guidelines about the inclusion of Black writers and characters. The policy statement of one major publishing company states, "The various races are to be portrayed in the same proportion in which they exist in our society." While such policies are a victory and are certainly an improvement over earlier policies which excluded Blacks, their existence is evidence that authors cannot be expected to include Black people automatically. Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks and Ralph Ellison may turn up in an anthology of American literature, not because the editors recognize them as major American writers, but because the guidelines say that Black writers must be included. Guidelines are certainly a step in the right direction, but as long as guidelines are needed, we cannot relax.

Guidelines No Guarantee

A closer look at current publishers' guidelines reveals some additional problems. Publishers who during the 1960's concentrated on including all Americans in their texts are now being pressured from a number of other directions, and other kinds of guidelines are taking precedence over anti-racism guidelines. The guidelines quoted above go on to read, "All portrayals of people in our material will be positive, free of bias, stereotype, and career-role restriction." This may sound helpful, but interpretations of these guidelines give reason for concern. Specific directions to authors noted that books are to include "nothing grim" such as "politics, slavery or the civil war." Japanese internment during World War II was specifically proscribed. No family quarrels, no unhappy incidents and no serious illnesses are to be included. So one by one the Black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian writers and characters have been removed. "A Portrait" by Carolyn Rogers was crossed off as "questionable." A painting by Diego Rivera was removed because the artist is "controversial" and expresses "anti-capitalist sentiments." The editor suggested that Norman Rockwell should be substituted. An excerpt from Martin Luther King was marked "too controversial." Of course, not all references to Blacks were removed. The editors did allow paragraphs on Phillis Wheatley and Althea Gibson and an excerpt from one of Kristin Hunter's books. But it is quite obvious that the *inclusion* of Black writers and characters is not the highest priority in the guidelines.

So at a time when Black writers are portraying Black characters genuinely with the full range of human emotions, other forces are pushing textbooks and schools to "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative" and to refuse to deal honestly with concepts such as racism.

Positive Trends May Not Continue

As we have looked at textbooks and curricula, we have found considerable improvement in the inclusion of Black literature over the past decade, but there are serious warnings that the positive trends may not continue. An analysis of teachers' attitudes shows much the same thing. As part of her dissertation research, one of the authors discussed Black literature extensively with teachers. While teachers are generally aware of Black literature and generally have a positive attitude toward it, most still felt that their training did not prepare them to teach Black literature; they were not familiar with the materials and did not know how to choose appropriate materials for the classroom. Very few teachers were familiar enough with Black authors to discuss their writings.

Those teachers who do use Black literature gave several interesting reasons for including it. One group used primarily stories that had been shown

on television, feeling that they would not have to worry about parent reaction if children had already seen the story.

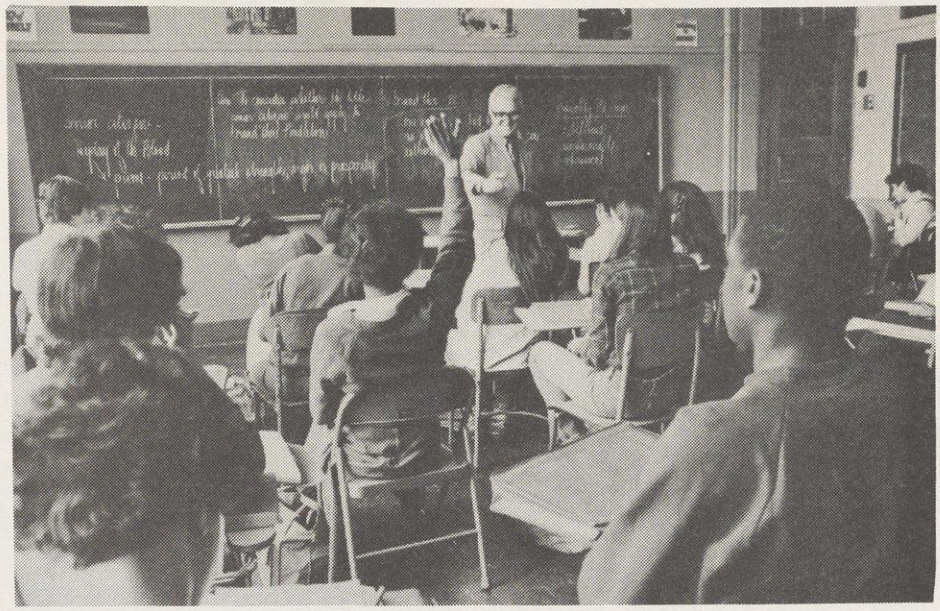
Other teachers felt that they had to teach Black literature in order to maintain their liberal image. These teachers tended to teach selections that were "safe," that other teachers had used without receiving any parental complaints. Content and interest level were less important than freedom from complaints.

Others taught Black literature because it was included in the curriculum. If someone ordered books by Black writers, they used them. Some teachers taught Black literature because it had been taught to them in college. If it was offered there, it must be all right. They generally taught the books they had studied in the same way that they were taught.

Some teachers taught Black literature because they honestly enjoyed the stories and wanted their students to know about Black literature. They felt that the literature by and about Black people was an important part of the English literature program. They generally selected their own literature, but seemed reluctant to choose stories and poems that were not familiar to them.

Underlying the comments of at least the first four groups of teachers were several serious problems. First, Black literature has only a very tenuous hold even on most of the teachers that are now teaching it. If societal pressures in favor of Black literature were removed, only a very small number of teachers would still teach it.

Another underlying problem was that most teachers seemed tired, frustrated and even fearful. Too many conflicting pressures from too many parental groups have left them afraid to teach anything that has not been proven safe. Large classes and heavy assignments have left them with no time or energy to read or research anything new. A number of teachers said that they would be happy to teach Black literature if someone else would write the curriculum, select the books and plan the lessons. But with all of the other pressures on them, they simply could not take the time on their own. While the interest in Black literature among professionals has decreased in the past few years, the students' need to study it remains as high as ever. While students in general are somewhat more familiar with Black literature, their reactions to it show that they are far from being able to study it simply as literature. Their own prejudices and fears are still closely interwoven in their interpretations.



Most English teachers do not treat Black literature as an integral part of the curriculum. (Photo by Marion Bernstein)

White Students Defensive

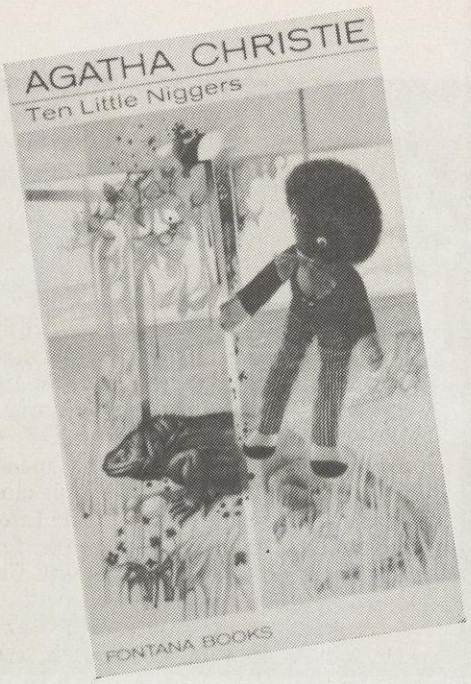
White students still often react defensively or with anger to literature that speaks frankly about racism. In fact, now that liberal attitudes are not quite so much in vogue, they may be more willing to express their feelings than they were ten years ago. In addition, white students—through ignorance or unconscious racism—often misunderstand the literature. For example, in a college sophomore class, students read Rosa Guy's *The Friends* as a case study in adolescent development. On the final exam, almost one-third of the all-white class revealed that they had assumed that the character who was intelligent, a good student and somewhat snobbish was white and that her Black classmates were treating her cruelly because of her color.

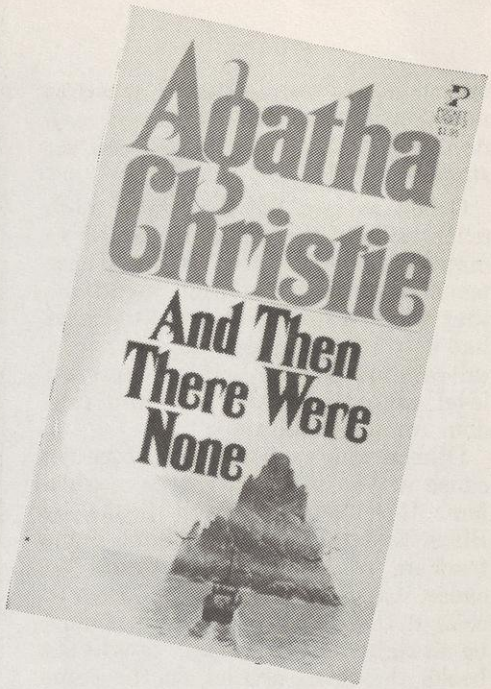
Black students, too, still feel societal pressures that influence their reactions to literature. During a recent study of the effect of Black literature on the attitudes of suburban students, Black students and their parents protested vehemently about a questionnaire designed to measure attitudes toward Black people. The students and their parents feared that the questionnaire might encourage prejudice. Both Black and white students—particularly if they are a small percentage of a group—are likely to want to avoid the issue of racism, fearing that the results of a discussion might be even worse than the status quo.

In summary, Black literature does not have a prominent place in the English classroom today. Although most teachers have heard of Black literature, it is not an integral part of most curricula. Unless there is a mandate or a sound policy Black literature will continue to be something to teach, "if I have time." □

About the Authors

BARBARA STANFORD has taught high school English in St. Louis, Mo., and Boulder, Colo., and teacher education at Utica College of Syracuse University. She is the co-author of Black Literature for High School Students, *written in collaboration with Karima Amin. JEAN PROCOPE-MARTIN, a middle school English teacher in West Hartford, Conn., is completing a Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut, doing her dissertation research on "The Effects of Selected Black Literature on the Attitudes of White Adolescents towards Blacks."*





Racist Nursery Rhyme Has Long Life

The pervasiveness of racist stereotypes is dramatically illustrated by an Agatha Christie mystery tale based on the "Ten Little Niggers" rhyme ("Ten little nigger boys went out to dine,/One choked his little self and then there were nine. . . ."). A British edition of the Christie book, featuring a hanging golliwog doll on the cover, is shown at the left. In the center is *Zehn kleine Negerlein* (Ten little nigger boys), a German paperback purchased recently in Frankfurt, West Germany. (Perhaps the publishers hoped that their "symbolic" cover with cups of black coffee and coffee beans would minimize the racist title!) At right, a U.S. edition, reflecting a title change made by the U.S. publishers, Dodd, Mead. (They also publish a hard cover edition entitled *Ten Little Indians;* like the paperback, it is available in most bookstores.) Of course, the U.S. versions contain the same basic rhyme as the original, but the text has been changed from "niggers" to "Indians."

An interesting—if somewhat bizarre—explanation for the U.S. title change has been offered by G.C. Ramsey in *Agatha Christie: Mistress of Mystery* (Dodd, Mead, 1967):

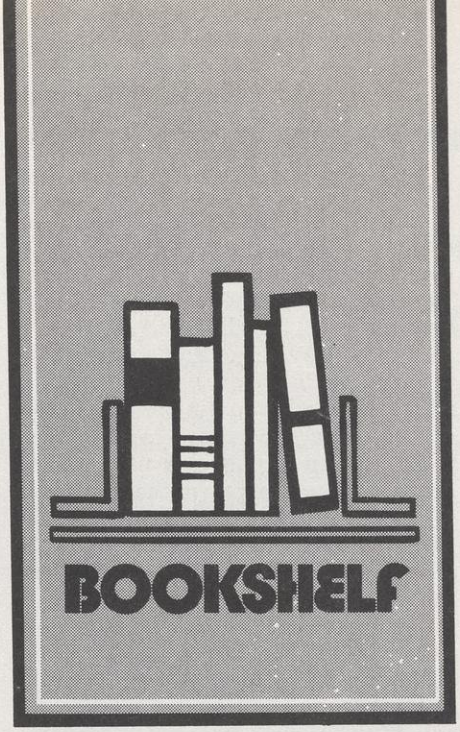
> . . . The most famous example of a nursery rhyme followed to the last detail [in an Agatha Christie book] is of course *Ten Little Niggers*, published in America variously as *And Then There Were None* and *Ten Little Indians*, in order to avoid any sense of prejudice. Naturally, in England, where people of the Negro race had up until the 1960's been so rare as to be curiosities, no one would have thought that using the word "niggers" in a children's rhyme would suggest any sense of prejudice or condemnation. The substitution made by Dodd, Mead of "Indians" for "niggers" was an inspiration in itself, for American Indians are held in a sense of curious respect by Americans, who both value them as a national treasure and are somewhat guilty in their minds about the more unpleasant results of the nineteenth century's Manifest Destiny, which simply took land away from the Indians. . . .

It should be noted that in spite of Ramsey's praise for the "inspired" change, the rhyme is still racist, particularly given the genocidal destruction of the Native population in this country. (The use and objectification of Native peoples in counting rhymes is a common stereotype.)

The verse has a long history. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* by Iona and Peter Opie (Oxford, 1969), the rhyme first appeared in the U.S. as "Ten Little Injuns" by Septimus Winners. It inspired the similar "Ten Little Nigger Boys" in England in 1868 or 1869. Adaptations were "immensely popular at nigger [sic] minstrel shows, and version followed version. . . ." The song also became "a great favourite with young people, to whom it affords a fund of amusement." □

The "Ten Little Indians" nursery rhyme is still alive and well in children's books. The garishly illustrated cut-out version of 5 kleine Indianerlein *shown above was recently sent to us by* Bulletin *correspondent Jörg Becker with the report that it is just one of many popular editions in West Germany. The U.S.* Children's Books in Print *does not list a similar title still in print, but the verse appears in various collections of rhymes unfortunately very much in use and in out-of-print books still in circulation.*

In the BOOKSHELF, a regular *Bulletin* department, all books that relate to minority themes are evaluated by members of the minority group depicted.—Editors.



Chloris and the Weirdos

by Kin Platt.
Bradbury Press, 1978,
$7.95, 231 pages, grades 5-7

First love, California style, is the topic of *Chloris and the Weirdos,* Kin Platt's third book in a popular series about two teen-aged girls growing up with their divorced mother. The story is about thirteen-year-old Jennifer's budding relationship with fourteen-year-old Harold the Hawk. Against a backdrop of the problems that children of divorced mothers have dealing with their mothers' sexuality, Jennifer learns about some of the joys and sorrows of growing up in a less stereotyped world.

Mr. Platt—an award-winning writer—has done an excellent job with the character of Jennifer, portraying her problems and her solutions to those problems in a way that is easy for middle class preteens to identify with and learn from. His other characters do not come across as well. Harold is the perfect non-stereotyped adolescent, who is frequently just too good to be true. Jennifer's sister Chloris and her mother are portrayed as somewhat one dimensional, while her grandmother is portrayed in a negative manner that contributes nothing to the story.

The writing is smooth and easy as the book moves toward what seems to be its inevitable conclusion of Jennifer resolving her concerns about Harold and her mother's dating. Then Jennifer's mother goes away for a weekend with a man and Chloris runs away. The resulting family discussion on what family members owe each other and what they owe themselves is well done, although the reader is left hanging somewhat as to how the mother-daughter conflicts will be resolved. Perhaps that will be included in the next book in the series.

In general the book is a reasonably good one, although somewhat weakened by its negative portrayal of the grandmother. It can be of value to the preteen children of divorced parents trying to come to grips with both their own and their mothers' sexuality. [Patricia Campbell]

An Album of the Great Depression

by William Loren Katz.
Franklin Watts, 1978,
$5.90, 96 pages, grades 6-12

The photo histories of Katz, like the works of Milton Meltzer, provide rich historical material for high school students. This skimming of the events of 1928-1941, and of how they affected the lives of millions of U.S. families, may not explain why depressions occur, but it does give young people a picture of the U.S. poverty that was the reality for many of their parents and grandparents. Most youngsters will find much of this information difficult to comprehend, but this book, coupled with information about our present "recession," will be useful to teachers and parents who believe that human rights includes the right to work and to have adequate food and shelter.

Most of the photographs are superb and many classics are included; the reproduction quality sometimes leaves much to be desired, however. [Lyla Hoffman]

The Ostrich Girl

written and illustrated
by Ray Prather.
Scribner's, 1978,
$8.95, unpaged, grades p.s.-3

The Ostrich Girl, set in East Africa, is about a baby girl who is found by a fisherman under a thorne tree. She is swaddled in white cloth and looks like an ostrich egg. The fisherman and his wife, a weaver, keep and raise her. They name the child Oster, which means "little ostrich girl." Oster is kept close to their house at the edge of the forest because the fisherman and weaver fear that the child's real parents will find her.

One day, Oster manages to go to the village alone. The village children taunt her, telling her she was stolen from an ostrich nest. Oster runs home and asks if the villagers' story is true. When the weaver's only response is tears, Oster runs deep into the woods to look for her real parents. After many horrifying experiences with a witch, a snake, a "dwarf" and a giant, Oster makes her way back home.

The book is written in a style that is a cross between a fairy tale and a folk tale. All of the characters are Black. The illustrations are attractive and very colorful. A plus is that the townspeople look and are clothed in a variety of ways that seem very realistic for today's Africa.

However, parents and teachers should think twice before reading this story to children as the book presents real problems. For one, many young children have an active fear of being deserted and/or separated from their parent(s) and this book could aggravate such fears. Furthermore, inquisitive children will find their questions unanswered. For example, Oster appears satisfied that the ostriches could not possibly be her parents, but then, who *are* her real parents? Why did they abandon her? Why did her foster parents live in mortal fear that Oster would be discovered and taken away from them?

By not addressing these questions, the book undermines legal adoption, foster care, and even primary responsibility for child rearing by members of the extended family. These, after all, are situations that a fairly large number of children experience. In short, *The Ostrich Girl* inapprop-

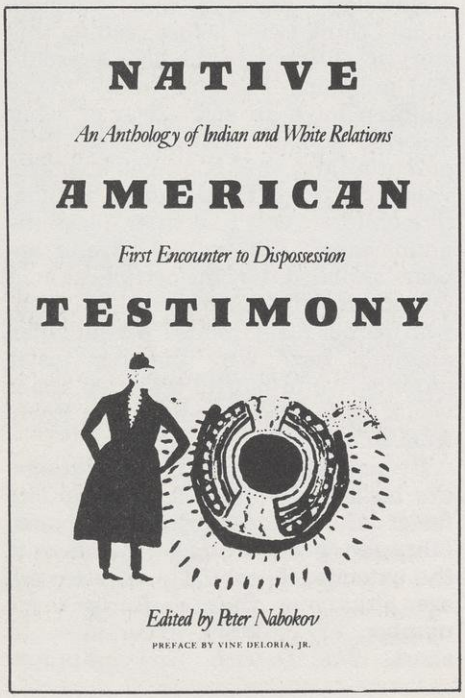
riately treats as fantasy or leaves unanswered issues which are very real and very serious to most children.

Another difficulty we had with the book is the insensitive portrayal of a short adult as a "funny-looking dwarf." This is offensive. Finally, with the exception of the weaver and fisherman, the people Oster encounters are mean and cruel. The illustrations of these other characters are incongruously like caricatures in contrast to the realistic illustrations of Oster and her parents. Overall, the book gives an upsettingly negative view of humanity. [Child Care Resource Center, Cambridge, Mass.]

Native American Testimony: An Anthology of Indian and White Relations

edited by Peter Nabokov,
with a preface by Vine Deloria, Jr.,
illustrated with photographs.
T.Y. Crowell, 1978,
$8.95, 242 pages, grades 7-up

Native American Testimony is unusual because it relies on original documents, mainly oral records told by Indians. It demonstrates the diversity of individual experiences, the diversity of Indian cultures and the diversity of events related to contact with whites. The introductions to the chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of Indian-white relations, show familiarity with the historical background in which the individual's personal story occurs. The collection ranges from early Indian prophecies of a "white brother" who would eventually appear, to descriptions of various swindles perpetrated and carried out by government agents, to painful outcries over the now ravaged landscape.



Some of the personal testimonies from very different cultures may be too difficult for seventh or eighth grade students to comprehend, although the editor emphasizes the radically different perspectives of Indian cultures in relation to those of the Europeans. Otherwise, the collection is a good resource. [Eugene S. Rave and Beryl C. Gillespie]

China: Geography, History, Customs, Festivals and Food

by Jean Butterfield,
illustrated by Linda Simmons.
Youth Publications/The
Saturday Evening Post Co., 1979,
$1.25 (paper), 34 pages, grades 4-10

An awful mishmash of racist stereotypes and historical inaccuracies make up this quicky "course" on Chinese history, geography and culture. In addition, the book's compressed style leads the reader to conclude that traditional ways are also the ways of modern China and Chinese Americans.

The first page gives the general tone of this booklet: "China is a country of paradox," "No other country has had more regard for culture and wisdom, yet illiteracy was commonplace, and bandits roamed the countryside," and "China's customs also seem to be contradictory [contradictory to whom?]. White is the color for mourning, and red is used for weddings." And it gets worse. Describing table etiquette, the text states: "By using chopsticks, everyone can reach the bowl and it does not have to be passed. Teeth are used as knives." And of course we mustn't forget "The Chinese people are usually very polite, shy, and modest."

Alternating between wincing and muttering while reading this booklet, I was also deeply upset that this kind of material continues to be published for young people. Such books do nothing to teach young readers about China and the Chinese; rather they reinforce old racist stereotypes and, worse yet, teach them to a new generation. [Liz Gong]

A Secret Friend

by Marilyn Sachs.
Doubleday, 1978,
$6.95, 111 pages, grades 4-7

Marilyn Sachs is an award-winning author. She spent over 15 years as a children's librarian. These facts make her newest book especially difficult to fathom.

The story is about unhappy Jessica, who is about eleven years old. She is the youngest child in an upper-income, white, nuclear family. Mom is overprotective, controlling and not too bright. Jessica is bereft because Wendy, her dominating and cruel "best friend" of five years, has suddenly rejected Jessica in favor of their classmate, Barbara. Jessica tries many whining ways to win back nasty Wendy. Finally, she resorts to writing notes to herself—notes which ostensibly are written by a secret, would-be-friend. She hopes these notes will intrigue Wendy and win her back. This incredibly dumb behavior fails, but Barbara, the new "best friend," tires of Wendy's nastiness and becomes Jessica's friend.

The moral of this dull tale is the conclusion by Jessica and Barbara that, "People like [us], we just have to get out of the way when somebody like Wendy comes along." How inspiring—learn to duck, kiddies, and you won't get hurt.

The dustjacket of *A Secret Friend* shows two white girls and one Black girl. But I saw the jacket after having read the book. Confused because I didn't remember a Black character, I reread the book. Sure enough, page 66

does state, "Her skin was very dark and very smooth." I found two subsequent hints, equally vague. But never once in the entire book do Jessica or Wendy ever mention that Barbara is Black. And never once do their mothers comment on the color of their daughters' newfound friend. How idyllic the author's view of the outcome of integration! While color-blind about Black and white, the author does manage to throw in a classmate, Susie *Edelstein*, who has a long, ugly nose, and Lori *Chu*, who is very smart. [Lyla Hoffman]

Puerto Rico: Island Between Two Worlds

by Lila Perl.
Morrow, 1979,
$8.95, 159 pages, grades 8-12

In an attempt to be totally objective, one can often err by presenting "all sides" of a controversy, thereby making the issues seem fuzzier than they really are. That is the basic criticism of this book, and it is both a positive and a negative one.

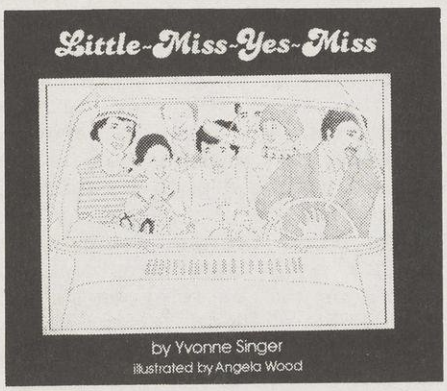
In a positive sense, Perl presents information and viewpoints not often expressed in books of this type. For example, she cites U.S. expansionism as the real reason for the Spanish-American War, practically dismissing the Maine as anything but a pretext. Instead of glowing praise for the accomplishments of "Operation Bootstrap," she describes it as making Puerto Rico an "investor's paradise" and comments that the one-time "poorhouse" has now become the main "Welfare State of the Caribbean," largely due to the artificial propping-up of an economy for the sole purpose of enlarging U.S. corporate profit. When referring to the Jones Act of 1917, she mentions that U.S. citizenship was "imposed rather than offered" to the Puerto Rican people; and, again, in referring to the Commonwealth status approved by the U.S. Congress in 1952, she states, "the islanders were not asked to choose but simply to approve." This same honesty of presentation can be seen, in varying degrees, in the author's treatment of the issues of ra-

Continued on page 18

Books from Kids Can Press

A small Canadian publishing house—Kids Can Press—has published some 20 multicultural books for children from two to ten years old. All books are colorfully illustrated paperbacks. All are inexpensive. Many are bilingual. While none can be said to be strongly anti-racist or anti-sexist, the following books are pleasingly non-biased and carry welcome messages.

The smallest book, 4½ x 4½ inches in size and 99 cents in price, is called *Friends*. It is a simple story of four children. One speaks English only, another French only, the third Urdu only and the last Spanish only. Yet they communicate through their play and are good friends who will soon start school together (for two- to five-year-olds).



Little-Miss-Yes-Miss is 7½ x 6¼ inches and costs $2.95. It tells of Cicely who leaves her home in Jamaica and moves to Toronto. In school the other children make fun of her accent and her good manners, and Cicely is miserable—for one day. She asserts herself and is well on her way to making new, multicultural friends by day two. The black and white drawings are culturally sound (for four- to seven-year-olds).

I love my plant! J'aime ma plante! is also $2.95 and measures 8 x 7 inches. It is excitingly illustrated in green and black. An older sister teaches a young boy how to care for his plant. This French and English book is imaginatively executed.

Mrs. Poppy's Great Idea! measures 5½ x 8 inches, costs $2.25 and is 44 pages long. The two main heroes are a zippy, enterprising older woman and a seven-year-old girl. Together they turn an empty city lot into a community garden. It's a fun book for five- to seven-year-olds.

The Sandwich is also small (5½ x 8 inches) and costs $2.95. It tells the story of how peanut-butter-and-jelly youngsters learn to accept other food when Vincenzo Ferranti introduces the strong aroma of mortadella and provolone sandwiches to the school lunchroom. He stands his ground, and the other kids finally dare to taste and enjoy his "stinky meat."

Kids Can Press offers a free catalog (book orders must be prepaid). Write to the press at 585½ Bloor St. West, Toronto, Canada M6G 1K5.

Continued from page 17
cism, consumerism, industrial pollution, changing values and Puerto Rican women.

Nevertheless, one gets the sense that the author was engaged in a constant balancing act while writing the book. The result is not so much an objective look at Puerto Rican history and society as a confused one. Thus, although she states that pollution is a serious problem, she often neglects to mention why it is allowed to exist in the first place. Again, she recognizes the deleterious effects of consumerism and materialism, but seems astonished that Puerto Ricans drink frozen orange juice from Florida while Puerto Rican oranges rot on the trees. The bland manner in which she describes the introduction of slavery on the island is a further example: "Spain was thousands of miles away and the colonists had an immediate, pressing need for a work force on the island." Put in this way, an institution as virulent as slavery can seem antiseptic and almost benevolent, like an employment agency for the people of Africa.

In other instances, although she introduces issues that have been omitted from other histories of Puerto Rico, she uses language that minimizes their importance. (Thus, uprisings against Spain are characterized as "skirmishes" and the Grito de Lares, although it became a "solitary" symbol of Puerto Rican resistance, was a "failure.") In addition, although there is an in-depth analysis of the failure of Operation Bootstrap, the primary blame is placed on the Puerto Ricans themselves; overpopulation is blamed, but nowhere in the book is any mention made of sterilization abuse or of the use of Puerto Rican women as guinea pigs in testing contraceptives in the 1950's.

The problem with this type of "objectivity" is that personal views and prejudices always surface, whether through omissions, through positive or negative characterizations, or simply through the use of language. That Puerto Rico is a colony or suffers from colonial domination is not mentioned, perhaps because Perl considers that this is not objective, not a fact. Yet, the United Nations has declared that Puerto Rico *is* a U.S. colony, thus shaking the very basis for the Commonwealth status imposed on the island. This interpretation, by the way, is nowhere to be found in the book, although Perl does state that the issue is brought before the U.N. every year.

The book is more than just history, although that is its main focus. There are five chapters, two of which deal primarily with history or politics and two of which deal primarily with culture. The format is the oft-repeated one of giving an historical background of the island's first inhabitants, then the Africans, and finally the Spaniards, followed by a recounting of recorded history, all in sequential order. (There are two glaring errors, hopefully the fault of the printer. According to the text, there was a Dutch attack in 1925; and the Grito de Lares is said to have occurred on Sept. 24, instead of 23.) There is also a very thorough geographical section, although it may prove too detailed for young people.

The chapters on culture cover everything from furniture to food, with mixed results. Although these sections may be useful for research or as reference, they too may be tedious or meaningless for adolescents to read at one sitting. One of the highlights of the book is a very complete analysis of the U.S. role in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of the people. However, as in most such brief treatments of culture, stereotypes abound. (It is disturbing, for instance, to find a statement like: " . . . in the mestizo marriage that may produce children of various skin colors, Puerto Ricans say that it is often the darkest-skinned child who is the most loved.")

Another disconcerting note is the author's unbridled pitch for tourism. If she had been employed by the Puerto Rican Tourism Company, it couldn't have been more obvious. After going on for several pages about the delights of Puerto Rico and characterizing it as "a Latin culture that has many exotic features [to whom?]," she says, "Water is safe to drink, standards of hygiene and sanitation are high, and there are no tropical diseases to worry about." The final touch seems designed to really sell this Caribbean island to potential tourists: "Puerto Rico qualifies as an important destination for Americans who subscribe to the theory that one should 'see America first.'" It is all too reminiscent of the ad campaign, so offensive to many Puerto Ricans, which ends with the words, "Puerto Rico, U.S.A.!"

Puerto Rico: Island Between Two Worlds should not be the only text on Puerto Rico with which young people are presented, for it has an aura of authenticity and objectivity which are difficult to refute and which can be taken for the "whole truth." [*Puerto Rico: Commonwealth, State or Nation?* by Byron Williams (Parents) is an alternative for high school students; *Puerto Rico: The Flame of Resistance* by the Peoples Press Puerto Rico Project (Peoples Press) is a good adult resource.]

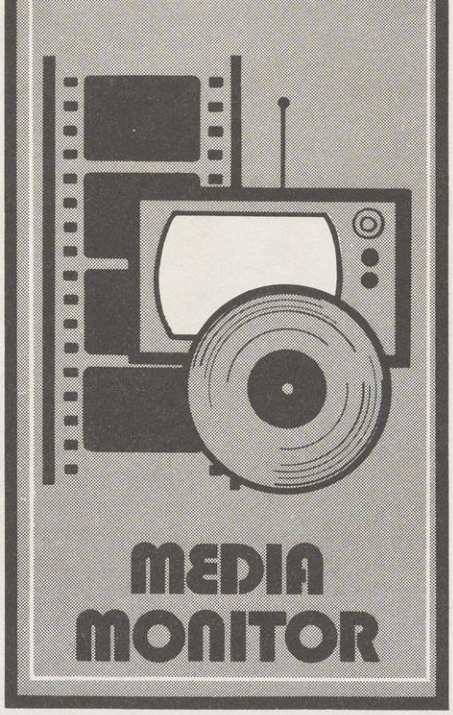
The book ends with the same dualism with which it begins: "Will there one day be a fifty-first state known as Puerto Rico? Will there perhaps be a small Caribbean nation known as the Republic of Boriquén?" A final indictment of the author's objectivity can be seen in her choice of references—only one of the books in the bibliography was written by a Puerto Rican. [Sonia Nieto]

Women in Congress

by Essie E. Lee,
illustrated with photographs.
Julian Messner, 1979,
$8.29, 224 pages, grades 6-12

Adulatory biographies and flattering photographs of 21 women who are or were recently members of Congress are presented in a well-written book which is intended to encourage young women to aspire to high political goals. Some of these Congresswomen were elected as recent widows of Congressmen. Most made it on their own.

The book is carefully apolitical, praising all of the women, whatever their positions on women's issues. Despite all the unconvincing and gratuitous emphasis on "supportive" husbands, young readers will learn a little but they will get a sanitized picture of the world of committee assignments, legislative directives and protocol. [Lyla Hoffman]



Films about Disabilities

Angela's Island; 16mm, color, 23 minutes; $340 purchase, $35 rental; Films Inc., 733 Green Bay Rd., Wilmette, Ill. 60091.

This movie focuses on Angela, a ten-year-old with severe physical disabilities who lives in Goldwater Memorial Hospital on Roosevelt Island, New York. A doctor, social worker, rehabilitation counselor and teacher each speak briefly about their work with Angela and the progress she has made.

The film makes it clear that we must not disregard or overlook the potential and ability of people with disabilities. This message is overtly stated by Angela's doctor and reinforced covertly since the rehabilitation counselor shown working with Angela is also severely physically disabled and had, in fact, been a patient at Goldwater. A sequel showing Angela interacting with the community outside the hospital, including non-disabled peers, would be useful.

Angela's Island is well-done cinematically, and it conveys a good basic message geared toward the general public. [Paula Wolff]

Understanding the Deaf; 21 minutes, color; $300 purchase, $30 rental; Perennial Education, 477 Roger Williams, P.O. Box 855, Ravinia, Highland Park, Ill. 60035.

Understanding the Deaf is a short film designed to acquaint teachers and grade school children with those having profound deafness. The film is artistically created and with much empathic content. It is seriously flawed in one important respect, however, because the school that produced the film practices the "oral" approach to educating the deaf. (The oral method involves total dependence upon the spoken and written word in teaching deaf children the rudiments of language. Use of gestures or sign language is actively discouraged because its use is believed to inhibit the development of speaking and lip-reading skills.)

This film ignores "total communication," a newer approach taking into account various factors that the oral method does not. First, it is almost always easier for a deaf child to learn sign language than spoken English. Second, early learning of a language is crucial for intellectual, emotional and social development. Third, once a language, any language, is learned it becomes possible to transfer language skills to the learning of another language. Fourth, continuing rejection of sign language stigmatizes deaf people in general and damages the self-esteem of a deaf child. For these reasons, educators who use total communication encourage both modes of communication, and try to identify and improve upon the individual child's weakest language skills. It is a shame that this film does not present the wider picture. [Kipp Watson]

Economics for the Classroom

The Great Swindle; written and directed by Carl Marzani; produced by Union Films; 1947; 16mm, black-and-white, 30 minutes; $350 purchase, $35 rental; Tricontinental Films, 333 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10014.

When this film was made inflation had jumped prices one third in six months because a new business-controlled Congress had lifted price controls. The National Association of Manufacturers, in addition to almost all newspapers and radio stations, had mounted an extensive campaign claiming that a "free market economy" would bring prices down—as long as wages remained level. This film was an attempt to prove to the average worker that business was interested only in high profits, "A Great Swindle."

Students will be fascinated by the prices in the 1940's. They will also learn a lot about the profit system and the tenuous connection of wages to prices—information which is just as pertinent today as it was in 1947. The anti-big-business approach is not generally available in classrooms today and the strong views expressed in this film, produced when some unions were less tied to the "establishment," should prove a surprise.

A teacher using this film should first collect information about the enormous surge of profits in the last quarter of 1978, and of government, business and union responses to those unprecedented profit levels. The teacher might also be prepared to discuss relative prices and incomes for 1947 and the present. And, finally, the teacher should alert students to the attitudes towards sex and race which inadvertently surface in the film.

With proper preparation and use during a two-period time block (the film can be stopped midway for discussion as it contains a film within a film), plus discussion before and after each segment, the film provides an excellent lesson about economics and inflation—then and now.

Documentary Is Excellent Resource

Clorae and Albie; 16mm, color, 36 minutes; $425 purchase, $30 rental; resource book, $3 per copy; EDC Distribution Center, 39 Chapel Street, Newton, Mass. 02160.

In this documentary, Clorae and Albie, two Black women who have been friends since high school, talk about their lives. Clorae married early and had children; now divorced, she is getting her high school diploma while caring for her children and holding a job. Albie, who hasn't married, had a succession of dead-end jobs and an unhappy, isolated time at a prestigious university in Vermont ("There were 275 people and 2 Blacks. And I represented the whole Black race," she notes). She is now finishing her education at a public university near Boston. Both women demonstrate—by example as well as through the dialog—the need for young women to take charge of their own lives, to plan ahead and to consider career possibilities given the very real probability

that there will not be a "happy-ever-after" in which a man is their sole source of support.

The film's content makes it particularly relevant for today's students. Another asset is the positive depiction of the two women, their warm friendship, the support they get from each other and from family, their own strengths. The film presents a realistic picture of young women striving to "get it together" and avoids being stereotypically negative, unrealistically gushy or simplistic (says Albie, "Seems like it's a lifetime ambition, trying to get oneself together").

Clorae and Albie would be valuable for career education classes, women's studies, Black studies and a number of related areas. It will be of interest and assistance to all viewers, male or female, Black or not. A resource book for teachers suggests exercises, discussion topics and further reading for classroom use (we just wish it focused a little more directly on racism and sexism). The film is highly recommended.

Films on Sexism

Girls at 12; 16mm, color, 30 minutes; $165 purchase, $15 rental; **Vignettes;** 16 mm, color, 15 minutes; $165 purchase, $15 rental; Educational Development Center, 39 Chapel St., Newton, Mass. 02160.

These companion films are part of a curriculum on the Role of Women in American Society. *Girls* is a documentary about three girls (all white) growing up in a small, predominantly white industrial city near Boston. The film shows them at play, in school, with their families and talking about boys, their interests, their futures. *Vignettes* features interviews with five of the women who appear in *Girls*—parents, teachers, siblings.

While *Girls* is a straight, non-editorializing documentary, *Vignettes* does address feminist concerns more directly because the interviewer asks specific questions about relevant topics; the responses—which are not challenged—reflect the mixed messages that society conveys to girls. For example, when one father discusses his daughter's future, he states that she is free to go to college if she wishes, but he is quick to add, "I think I'd like her to get married and live what I consider to be a normal life."

A scene from Girls at 12, *a documentary that depicts the sexist socialization process.*

Both films are devastating pictures of the sexist socialization process that most girls face. However, because the films do not editorialize about what they portray, careful discussion will be needed for these films to be useful as consciousness-raising material. Fortunately, an excellent Teacher's Guide ($2) and a Student Resource Book ($5) are available. Both contain specific suggestions for discussions and activities and list additional resources; both are highly recommended for use with the film and/or as resources for units on sexism.

Series on Integration

Desegregation and **The Integration Process** and "The Integration Primer" (**Part One: Multicultural Education in Practice: Dealing with Learning Styles and Language; Part Two: What to Do about Resegregation; Part Three: Building Effective Community Involvement**); the first film is $22, the others are $45 each; a package of all five films is $180; produced by Dennis Hicks, 938 Marco Place, Venice, Cal. 90291.

These five filmstrips on school desegregation are designed for use in staff development workshops, community meetings and workshops. Two of the filmstrips—*Desegregation* and *The Integration Process*—attempt to present the positive side of desegregation efforts. The former suggests that desegregation has been much more successful than commonly assumed and implies that in many cases isolated incidents of violence have been blown up out of proportion by the media. Several school systems are cited as having been successful in achieving desegregation, but, unfortunately, one of those most highly praised has been described elsewhere as failing to adequately educate its Black students. The latter film focuses on those school districts considered to be moving beyond desegregation to the ultimate goal: successful integration. Here again, the film does not make a valid strong case because the weaknesses of many of the practices shown (such as setting aside specific weeks for study of specific cultures) have already been documented.

The three films that comprise The Integration Primer package are much more effective and could easily serve as the basis for intensive workshops for teachers, parents, administrators and community school board members. Important insights gained through research are presented by experts in the field. Successful practices are highlighted and weaknesses are pinpointed. The tendency to treat various cultures in a superficial manner is underscored by a Black school administrator; commenting on the tendency to provide multicultural education by focusing on ethnic foods and ethnic festivals he notes, "All you'll do is create fat kids who dance well."

The three films focus respectively on (1) the elements of a well-rounded multicultural education program, (2) effective ways of involving parents in actual decision-making, and (3) the ways resegregation occurs and how to eliminate it. These three films are recommended.

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 for this new column.

White Racism: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training

by Judy H. Katz.
University of Oklahoma Press, 1978,
$12.95, 211 pages

Katz presents the rationale for an anti-racism training program for whites only, saying that "we must not place the burden for changing white attitudes and behaviors upon the members of minority races." She then proceeds to give a theoretical overview of the problem, instructions to facilitators and a series of exercises for a training session encompassing a few days. The appendix includes a bibliography and other resources for facilitators and participants.

This basic racism awareness training is applicable to school personnel as well as personnel in non-educational institutions. Katz suggests that the best team to lead the training consists of female and male co-trainers. She notes that an interracial team is possible, but warns of some potential problems—problems which one assumes experienced and skilled trainers would be prepared to use constructively to increase participants' awareness of racist behaviors.

Katz further states that facilitators should be trained in group process techniques and have a "deep understanding of the issue of racism." Unfortunately, most white people believe that they *have* an understanding of racism. Reading this book, or any book, is not enough preparation for any white person to facilitate racism awareness workshops. Participation in a number of such workshops, plus critiquing by some minority people, is essential before anyone undertakes to train other whites. This lack of emphasis on how the trainer receives her or his training is the major drawback of this otherwise very useful book.

A second reservation concerns the final segments of the training program, in which participants develop their action plans in order to combat racism in their institutions and alter their own everyday behaviors. There is no caution that whites avoid action until they discuss their plans with minority people in their institution or their community. It is all too easy for white people to emerge from a training session with plans which they alone decide are anti-racist but which directly affect the minority people. Such paternalism is, of course, simply one more way in which white racism is manifested.

Despite these serious flaws, the book can prove useful to those who want to better understand one form of racism awareness training as well as those who have experienced some training themselves and are looking for exercises and information to use in developing training formats for their own use.

Ourselves and Our Children: A Book by and for Parents

by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective.
Random House, 1978,
$6.95 paperback, $12.95 hardcover, 266 pages

When some of the authors of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* put out *Ourselves and Our Children,* it was expected to do for parenting what the earlier book had done for women's health. But there's a problem. Biology is more universal than our families and our life styles, and writing the definitive work for all parents is a much harder task.

While the authors interviewed hundreds of parents and clearly demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the parenting process, their insights are limited by their own experience. As white middle-class women—"writers, therapists, teachers, administrators, education consultants, graduate students, artists"—living in or near Cambridge, Mass., they are a relatively privileged group. The authors recognized the uniqueness of their lives, and in fact, recruited an article from someone outside their group who is a parent of a "grown-up"; I only wonder why they stopped there.

The authors talk a lot about ideals. So much of what is advocated in this book—shared parenting, cooperative and communal child-care—sounds wonderful, but for most people the problem is how to live with the *lack* of alternatives, how to do the best with what we have *without* being overwhelmed by guilt. The chapter "Helping Ourselves and Finding Help" comes closest to recognizing our limitations.

The authors talk as if readers are part of the women's movement and that the only problem is how to live by feminist convictions. For those with similar concerns the book is supportive, but for the majority of parents important steps in the development of a feminist consciousness are missing. There is little sense of how these women got to where they are.

The book is particularly strong in its discussion of sexism and sex roles; the authors' feminist consciousness is well integrated into every chapter in the book. They also correctly acknowledge that sexism affects both men and women in this society. Yet a similar analysis of racism is missing. The only section that discusses racism directly presents it as a problem affecting "minority groups" exclusively; the sections that lay out the problems that parents face through each stage of their children's development constantly discuss sexuality and sex roles, but never offer advice on how to rear children in a racist society.

There are several attempts to show how our economic system sabotages parents' efforts to raise healthy,

happy, caring human beings. This is seen most clearly in the chapter on "Society's Impact on Families." But capitalism is never fully discussed and though socialist countries by no means offer perfect models, they are never even mentioned. For a group of authors with so many visions of what family life could be, these are curious omissions. I also can't help but ask why therapy gets more attention than political activism—especially when the authors emphasize the need for "networking with others" and acknowledge that only with conditions like flexible work hours, full employment and decent wages will their visions become realities for the vast majority in this country.

Expectations for *Ourselves and Our Children* were high. While it is an important addition to parenting books, it doesn't do all that I had hoped it would. [Vicki Breitbart]

In the last *Bulletin* this department carried reviews of two NCTE publications. Unfortunately, due to a production error only a portion of the review of *Response Guides for Teaching Children's Books* was included in the issue. The complete review appears below.

Response Guides for Teaching Children's Books

by Albert B. Somers and Janet Evans Worthington. National Council of Teachers of English, 1979, $5 ($4 to NCTE members), paperback, 119 pages

It is distressing that a publication which shows so little sensitivity to the issues of racism and sexism in children's literature should have been published under the imprimatur of the respected and influential National Council of Teachers of English.

The praiseworthy objective of the volume is to "provide teachers with guides that will help them light small fires with books, kindling an enthusiasm for reading while at the same time reinforcing the teaching of reading skills and interrelating the language arts with other areas of the curriculum." Unfortunately, the authors fail to recognize that antihuman values can be reinforced through books, and they make no provision for dealing with such values in their discussion guides. Indeed, their treatment of such materials would seem to indicate tacit acceptance of some of these values.

In presenting such works as *Sounder* and *The Matchlock Gun*, the authors attempt to get themselves off the hook by noting that both books have been severely criticized, although their equivocal explanations of the criticisms never mention the word "racism." Moreover, the guides for these titles leave no doubt of the authors' feelings. Their appraisal of *The Matchlock Gun* reads: "*Despite its setting and faithfulness to history* [emphasis added], *The Matchlock Gun* has been criticized by some who say it depicts Indians as blood-thirsty savages and emphasizes violence." In addition to minimizing the criticism of the book, this comment also fails to note the book's casual references to slavery. In the companion exercises, children are asked to read about the Native Americans along the Hudson River in the 1700's and to answer the question: "Were they all warlike?" Students are also asked to write on the following statement: "Indians are always to be feared." Such exercises—particularly in the hands of an insensitive teacher—can only reinforce racist views of Native Americans.

The Courage of Sarah Noble is another tale about "brave" settlers who ward off "menacing" Indians (in addition, it uses the offensive word "squaw"). In an activity of dubious value, students are asked to rewrite sentences as "concisely" as Indian John [sic] might say them; the old stereotype of Native American speech is thus reinforced.

Sounder is described as a "powerful story of human courage" with "timeless values." That many African Americans have criticized various racist aspects of *Sounder* is reduced to the comment, "some . . . feel that the characters' acceptance of their fate unfairly stereotypes blacks [sic]." In fact, teachers are told that there is no better way to "encourage empathy for the downtrodden and respect for courage than by leading a class through *Sounder*." There are no suggestions that would lead to a meaningful analysis of the causes of the Black family's wretched condition. Insensitivity to the real issues involved in the book is exemplified by an exercise suggesting that students experience what it is like to be poor by living for one day on the "food the poor are often restricted to"!

The authors' lack of sensitivity is underscored by the inclusion of *The Little House in the Big Woods*. They mention the "fine tales told by Pa" but omit any mention of Pa's racist song beginning, "There was an old darkey/And his name was Uncle Ned," and ending, "There's no more work for old Uncle Ned,/For he's gone where the good darkeys go."

In addition, the authors violate a very basic rule for the use of a folktale—that the land, people and culture from which the folktale comes be accurately and adequately identified. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aardema, which they recommend, is identified as a "West African folktale" but it has actually been so rewritten as to eliminate all African content.

Finally, the authors repeat the sexist assumption that books about boys are for all children, but that books about girls are of interest only to girls.

There is little indication that the authors of *Response Guides for Teaching Children's Books* sought input from NCTE's own Task Force on Racism and Bias. Certainly the type of awareness that led to the adoption of the NCTE resolution on racism and sexism awareness in 1976 is lacking in this material. This is a most disappointing volume—all the more so because its objectives were right on target.

FILMSTRIPS FOR ANTI-RACIST TRAINING

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