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INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

BULLETIN

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Children, Race and Racism: How Race Awarenesss Develops

COOPERATIVE CHILDREN'S BOOK CENTER
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Geraldine L. Wilson served as editorial consultant on this special double issue on children, race awareness and racism.

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Developing a positive racial identity—and positive attitudes toward others—is crucial for all children in our society. This issue of the *Bulletin* examines children's racial awareness and suggests ways that adults can help children develop positive racial attitudes. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)

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In this issue, we depart from our usual focus on children's books and materials to examine how children learn about their own racial identity and how—and what—they learn about others'. We do so for several reasons: First, because the topic is critical for all concerned with children, with positive self-images for *all* children, and with the struggle to eliminate racism. Our second reason is that there are almost no materials available to assist parents, teachers, librarians, and others in dealing with questions of race and racism. (See, for example, Vol. 9, Nos. 4 & 5 of the *Bulletin*, which noted how few parenting materials even mention racial issues.) This issue of the *Bulletin* is, in part, a

response to readers who have requested information and suggestions about handling specific incidents, about raising anti-racist children, about helping children deal with racism, etc. Our third reason is that we believe this topic has serious and special implications for all those concerned with children's books and materials—particularly materials for very young children. As the article below notes, "inaccurate, stereotypic and caricatured images and information about racial/cultural groups are particularly harmful" at the stage of development when children are still forming clear concepts of themselves and others.

Children, Race and Racism: How Race Awareness Develops

By Louise Derman-Sparks, Carol Tanaka Higa and Bill Sparks

This article and the guidelines for parents and teachers that begin on page 10 are based on a two-part study conducted in Southern California during 1978-80. In one part, pre-school, day-care and elementary workers recorded children's comments about racial identity and racism. In the other part, interviews were conducted with 60 parents of children ranging from three to twelve years of age and representing a range of racial and socio-economic groups. (Interviewers were of the same racial or national identity as the persons they interviewed.)

The authors of this article implemented the study.

"Why are there Black people?"

"Is Mexican my color?"

"Why am I called Black if my skin is brown?"

"Why does Ruben speak Spanish?"

"If I'm Black and white, and Tim is Black and white, how come he is darker than me?"

"Do Indians always run around wearing feathers?"

"Why is my skin called yellow? It's not yellow, it's tan."

"I didn't know that babies came out Black."

Are young children curious about racial, physical and cultural characteristics? Are they aware of racism? The questions posed at the beginning of this article, together with hundreds of other questions collected from parents and teachers in a two-year study, indicate that children are very much aware of racial differences. Many are also aware of racism. However, to read the vast majority of texts on child development and early childhood education, one would never know it.¹ No mention at all is made in these texts of how young children develop an understanding of their own and others' racial and cultural identities. The silence of these textbooks, which are used to train teachers, psychologists, social

workers and other professionals, reflects and perpetuates a prevailing majority culture ideology—that children are "color-blind," *i.e.*, they are unaware of race and racism. This ideology further assumes that if adults don't talk with children about "it," children will grow up to be non-prejudiced adults. Denial and avoidance, then, appear to be the main techniques for dealing with one of the most pervasive and crucial problems of U.S. society.

The "color-blind" position is analogous to the ostrich's head-in-the-sand strategy. A considerable body of research demonstrates that children in the U.S. are aware, at a *very* early age, of physical and cultural differences among people, and they learn the prevailing social attitudes toward these differences whether or not they are in direct contact with people different from themselves.² For example, Mary Ellen Goodman, after making extensive observations of 100 Black and white children, ages three to five, reported not only that racial awareness was present, but that 25 per cent

of the children in her sample were expressing strongly entrenched race-related values by the age of four.³

Much of the research has also explored the effects that individual and institutional racism in U.S. society have on children's self-concepts.⁴ These studies demonstrate that Third World children's self-esteem can be seriously harmed, though some investigators make a distinction between a child's positive self-esteem fostered by family and community and a child's growing awareness of the racist attitudes and practices of the majority society.⁵ White children are also dehumanized and damaged intellectually by racism. As Judy Katz states: "Racism and ethnocentrism envelop them so that they are unable to experience themselves and their culture as [they are]."⁶ Alice Miel says of white suburban children: "We observed that [they] learn to be hypocritical about differences at a very early age. The prejudices of their society were still very much with them, but they had had it drilled into them that it was 'not nice' to express such feelings."⁷ Further, as Abraham F. Citron aptly summarizes the issue:

White-centeredness is not the reality of [the white child's] world, but he is under the illusion that it is. It is thus impossible for him to deal accurately or adequately with the universe of human and social relationships. . . . Children who develop in this way are robbed of opportunities for emotional and intellectual growth, stunted in the basic development of the self, so that they cannot experience or accept humanity. This is a personality outcome in which it is quite possible to build into children a great feeling and compassion for animals and an unconscious fear and rejection of differing human beings. Such persons are by no means prepared to live and move with either appreciation or effectiveness in today's world.⁸

Constructing a positive and knowledgeable racial/cultural identity is one of a Third World child's major developmental tasks in our racist society. This task is equally important but somewhat different for white children. Many white families do not articulate that they have a racial identity. As Judy Katz writes:

The superior attitude, "white is right," often leaves whites confused about their identity. . . . Because United States culture is centered around white norms, white people rarely have to come to terms with that part of their identity. *White people do not see themselves as white.* This is a way of denying responsibility for perpetuating the racist system

and being part of the problem. By seeing oneself solely as an individual, one can disown one's racism. Lack of understanding of self owing to a poor sense of identity causes whites to develop a negative attitude toward minorities on both a conscious and an unconscious level.⁹

Basic to the construction of one's identity in U.S. society is learning how to deal with racism. For children of groups oppressed by racism, the task is learning to struggle against its impact. For white children, it is learning to be anti-racist.

The "color-blind" thesis is not only untrue; it has several pernicious aspects. At the least, this concept is counter-productive, because while parents, teachers and others are silent about racism, children are trying to make sense of their experiences. In addition, "color-blindness" is a perspective that implies that differences are bad because it focuses exclusively on the universality of humans. Further, the ideology of "color-blindness" permits people to deny the role of institutional racism. By asserting that racism is caused by acknowledging differences, rather than by a social system which exploits certain racial groups for economic profit, "color-blindness" actually supports the racist status quo. As Ann Beuf points out, the "color-blind" thesis implies that only family socialization influences a child's sense of self, and it thereby "allows whites and white institutions to escape the consequences of existing structural arrangements."¹⁰ She continues:

On the other hand, parental training which contradicts ["color-blind" ideologies] can play a vital role in establishing positive racial attitudes in children. . . . Our data with the children of activists suggests that a home in which the positive value of [one's group] is stressed will produce children who feel positive about their group.¹¹

Children will "naturally" grow up to be non-racist adults only when they live in a non-racist society. Until then, adults must guide children's anti-racist development. This will include the fostering of: 1) accurate knowledge and pride about one's racial/cultural identity; 2) accurate knowledge and appreciation of other racial groups; and 3) an understanding of how racism works and how to combat it.

The first step in this process is to accept the fact that a process is required. The second step is to understand how children think about racial issues at different stages in their

development. Toward this end we spent two years gathering data from parents and teachers about the kinds of questions and comments children pose at different age levels. We have used the framework suggested by Piaget's cognitive development theory in our analysis, as we believe it assists in making sense out of children's observations and experiences and enables us to facilitate their learning.

Piaget's theory—that children begin with intuitive concepts based on immediate experiences and gradually become capable of increasingly complex and logical thinking—need not be endorsed to agree that adults have a role to play in teaching children to be anti-racist. In order to play this role adults must first be clear themselves as to the distinction between racism and racial identity. There are racial differences. We can see them. Children can see them. We do not wish to deny them. These differences *only* become racist when either inferior or superior value labels are placed upon them.

The concept of race is basically a social concept, in that the classifications of group membership have been decided by people within particular social systems. Racial (and national) identity includes a complex interrelationship among cultural, historical, political and physical factors. Children must sort out these factors and learn how they interact. This is a rather bewildering task, complicated by the realities of *intra*-group variance and *inter*-group similarities. It is not surprising that this task takes many years, and in the process, children rethink and discard earlier ideas. While all children seem to experience the task of learning about identity and about racism, we found differences in the focus of their observations and questions. For children from oppressed racial/cultural groups, the order of concern seems to be: 1) questions about one's own identity; 2) questions about racism and about whites; and 3) questions about other groups. For white children, the order seems to be: 1) questions about people of color; 2) comments which reflect stereotypic or negative attitudes; and 3) questions about their own racial/cultural identity. In general, then, it appears that in dealing with white children, facilitating accurate knowledge about others and anti-racist attitudes have priority; with Third World children, facilitating accurate knowl-

edge and pride in one's identity, as well as providing tools to combat the impact of racism on the individual, would have priority. This does not imply that Third World children do not learn stereotyped information and prejudice toward other groups; nor does it imply that white children do not need to learn about their own identity.

Three- to Five-Year-Olds

Three- to five-year-olds in Western cultures exhibit certain systematic patterns of thought which Piaget calls "pre-operational." Their questions reveal how much they are aware of racial issues. Since the foundation for much later learning is laid during this period, we will consider this age group in detail. (Individual children may not "fit" exactly into the classifications we discuss, and different experiences will influence the specific questions they may ask.)

We found that preschoolers indicate most interest in physical characteristics of themselves and others; their second area of interest is cultural characteristics that are readily observable, such as language and dress. Many of their comments are in the form of matter-of-fact observations. Typical examples are:

D., four years old, coloring with brown crayon, said to himself: "I'm brown, too. I'm about as brown as this crayon."

S., a Chicano five-year-old, said: "Hey, that record player speaks Spanish."

M., a three-year-old Japanese American, carpooled with a white mother. He said, "Your nose is different because it goes up."

A four-year-old asked, "Why am I white, Mommy?" (She had recently started going to an integrated preschool.)

While young children are excellent observers, their experience of course is limited. When faced with a new experience, children will attempt to explain it in terms of a previous occurrence, even though it may not be applicable from an adult's perspective. (This approach Piaget describes as "egocentric," *i.e.*, the child's explanations make sense from the child's point of view, but may not be accurate from an adult's point of view.)

A two-and-a-half-year-old child with a Black father and a white mother, upon seeing some Black women in a restaurant, commented: "I didn't know women were Black."



Constructing a positive and knowledgeable racial/cultural identity is one of a Third World child's major developmental tasks in our racist society. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)

When J. (white) was three, he watched Flip Wilson on TV. Later, seeing a Black man in a store, he yelled out: "Hey, Mom, there's Flip Wilson."

Upon seeing an interracial couple in church, a three-year-old said: "It's funny that the mommy and daddy are different. They should be the same."

A frequently reported question asked by white children about Black children: "Will the color come off in the bathtub?" (see box, page 14).

Since the act of identifying the salient attributes of group member-

ship is one of the major tasks in understanding racial and national identity, many of the questions and comments reflect the ways in which young children make classifications. It is difficult for them to understand that people who look and act differently are part of the same group. Many Black parents, for example, reported that their children ask why people with different skin tones, including members of the same family, are all considered Black. Similarly, a three-year-old Chicana, upon entering a bilingual preschool, asked her

Piaget and "Universality"

In a forum several years ago at New York University, Piaget took U.S. psychologists and educators to task for distorting many of his findings, concepts and theories and their application. Consider, for example, *Piaget for Disadvantaged Children* by David Elkind. The title implies that Piaget developed a particular model that "works" on "disadvantaged children" in this country. Such is not the case. Piaget has *not* claimed that all children learn in the same way. (It is important to remember that Piaget's observations and theories about how children learn are based largely on his observations of his own children and Swiss school children.) What he says is that researchers who want to use his "tasks" must work in the child's cultural context, use the materials in the child's natural environment and converse with the child in the form of language familiar to the child. It is only after careful observation using the above guidelines that researchers will be able to make some determination about the ways in which children learn to think. Piaget hypothesizes that variables in the environment may yield results different from his. He has encouraged his students from Africa and the Caribbean to return to their environment and begin to see what the differences are in the ways in which children learn to think and how they manifest these differences from culture to culture.

mother: "How come I'm not bilingual? I'm not a real Chicano then."

Around the age that children are beginning to figure out racial identity, they are also learning "colors." They have to learn to distinguish the meaning of the colors applied to objects and the social meaning of colors when applied to race. Parents of diverse racial/cultural groups reported questions reflecting this dilemma:

Asian American children questioned the label "yellow" when they perceived their skin color as "tan." White children wanted to know why they were labeled "white" when their skin color was not equivalent to "whiteness" in other objects, and why interracial offspring of Black and white parents were not "gray."

Another aspect of learning to distinguish between general color and social color is illustrated by the following two examples:

When T. was between three and four, he often asked his mom what her favorite color was. When she said "red" the first time, he became upset and said then she didn't like him. T.'s mother was careful to say next time that brown was her favorite color.

White child: I'm going to get new pants.
Black child: What color?

White child: Not brown. I don't like brown.

Black child: Then you don't like me.

White child: Yes, I do. I just don't like my pants brown.

Conceptualizing how a person can be a member of two different groups at the same time is a puzzle to young

children. For example:

At age three, P. asked, "Why is F. half Chicano and half Japanese?" Her mother said, "Half and half is whole." P. replied, "Is she a whole?"

I.: (a white four-and-a-half-year-old): Are you Indian?

O.: Yes.

I.: Which part is Indian? (I. then takes both her arms and looks at them.) It must be this side, 'cause it's darker.

Another kind of multi-group membership is the relationship between racial identity and being an American. The following conversation between a Black child (four years old) and her Japanese American teacher illustrates the child's struggle to figure out this relationship:

Child: Hello, Chinese.

Teacher: I'm Japanese. What are you?

Child: I'm Black.

Teacher: Are you American?

Child: (Thinks awhile.) Yes.

Teacher: I am too.

Child: Are you Black?

Explaining what seems to be contradictions to the child can lead to greater understanding of the concept of multi-group membership.

Racial/cultural identity not only involves developing clarity about which attributes are salient, it also requires knowing whether these attributes remain constant. (Lawrence Kolberg, for instance, reports that children do not believe that their sex identity will be permanent until they have reached what Piaget calls the concrete-operational stage—around

ages five to seven in U.S. culture.)¹² We found children wondering if they could change physical characteristics or group membership. Sometimes the desire to change is motivated by identification with a friend.

After her teacher read T. (age four) a book about melanin and skin color, T. said she was going to eat a lot of melon so her skin could be brown like D.'s.

Three-year-old A. said: "I don't want to be Chicano because I want to be Japanese like J. [a friend]. Maybe he can be born Chicano like me." Mother responded, "No, he can't." "Okay," A. said, "then I'll pretend I'm Japanese."

Sometimes it is a response to a manifestation of racism:

One day C. asked us, "Do I have to be Black?" To the question of why he asked, he replied, "I want to be chief of paramedics." His favorite TV show at the time was *Emergency*, on which all the paramedics and fire fighters were white.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to clearly separate the influence of ethnocentric and racist attitudes heard or seen by young children in their contacts with parents, relatives, neighbors, other children, books, TV and movies from their lack of experience and egocentric thinking. It is also highly possible that what starts out as the latter can, with inappropriate handling, quickly become prejudice. Questions such as, "Is Black skin dirty?" and the following incidents exemplify this:

M., a five-year-old white boy, was playing with a neighbor, who, on discovering that some of his toys were missing, said that the Indians had taken them (a prevalent prejudice in that community). Later, M. discovered that some of his own toys were missing. He waved down a policewoman in the street and told her that the Indians had stolen his toys.

When D. (Black, age four) met a Native American man dressed in jeans and shirt, he refused to believe the man's ethnicity, because he wasn't wearing feathers and "Indian clothes," as the Native Americans on TV did.

Whatever the source, inaccurate, stereotypic and caricatured images and information about racial/cultural groups are particularly harmful at this age. Having not yet fully formed clear concepts of themselves or others, preschoolers are still in the process of learning to determine what is authentic and what is not. Especially when children do not have many opportunities for feedback about their ideas through direct interaction with people different from themselves, caricatured

images can form the basis of their thinking.

Young children tend to personalize their learning, and to focus on themselves or on others as individuals. While racial identity is based upon a concept of group, they have a difficult time understanding "groupness." The easiest way for them to grasp this is through the concept of "family," since that is an entity they experience. Thus, children can learn that they acquire their physical and cultural characteristics from their membership in a particular family, and their racial/cultural group can be explained as a bigger family.

Adults can help children of this age by making clear that this larger "family" relationship is permanent. Other guidance can include acknowledging a child's observations on racial/cultural identity, helping to sort out incorrect information and generalizations and giving corrective feedback about unfair and untrue depictions of people, expressions of prejudice or racial slurs. In addition, some children need support in dealing with their beginning awareness of racism against themselves. Because young children tend to interpret racist attitudes and behavior personally, they need help in understanding that expressions of racism are not their "fault," and that the adult world does not condone such behavior. (Additional, more specific suggestions for parents and teachers appear in the following article.)

Five- to Eight-Year-Olds

Children at this age are moving into a new period of cognitive development. They show greater interest in cultural characteristics and work at integrating biological and cultural factors which define racial and national identity, as well as the interrelationship between group and country membership. The following examples illustrate issues five- to eight-year-olds grapple with:

M., a three-year-old, said that when another child at school asked her if she was Black, she answered "I'm brown." M.'s mother asked, "What's brown?" M. said, "That means I'm Chicana." Mother asked, "What's Chicana?" M.'s six-year-old sister answered, "A Chicana speaks Spanish, eats Mexican food, sings and dances. But I don't understand all the songs." Mother asked where she had heard all that. Answered the six-year-old, "A blonde kid said it."

Teacher: What are you?

Child (age seven): Chinese American.
Teacher: How do you know you are Chinese?
Child: Because I talk Chinese.
Teacher: Where were you born?
Child: In this country.
Teacher: What country is that?
Child: America.
Teacher: Does that mean you are American?
Child: Yes.
Teacher: Is everybody American?
Child: No. Some are Chinese and some are not.
Teacher: What does it mean to be Chinese?
Child: You talk Chinese and you eat Chinese food, but I don't like Chinese food.

Child (six-year-old Chicana): Mama, can you get a tan?
Mother: Yes.
Child: I thought only Americans get tan.
Mother: What Americans?
Child: White Americans.

This is the period when children's sense of individual identity evolves into group identity both cognitively and emotionally (Piaget describes this stage of development as "socio-centric"). Children become conscious of being part of a *group* different from other groups. They want to know

more about their own group and have public expressions of their groupness, and they develop a sense of pride in their identity and identify with well-known role models.

At the same time, in a racist society, five- to eight-year-olds' awareness of racism against their group is heightened. And conversely, personal prejudice can become an integral aspect of a child's attitudes and behavior. It is important to note that we do not think it is the crystallization of group identity per se that is responsible for the development of prejudice, but the fact that it develops in a racist and prejudiced society. A common expression of personal racism at this age is racial name-calling, which children begin to use against others with intent to hurt. (Certain racial words are also used *within* a group as an expression of group identity.) The following are examples of children grappling with or reflecting racism:

A seven-year-old Black child said to her mother: "It's not right to have certain things put on a group of people, to pick on a person because he or she is Black. Blacks have soul."

Conversely, a white mother overheard a group of her seven-year-old's friends



Three- to five-year-olds are still learning to determine what is authentic and what is not; stereotypic and inaccurate images and information are therefore particularly harmful at this age. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)



For pre-adolescents, feelings and knowledge centered on cultural values and personal struggles against racism become more complex. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)

talking about how they were glad that they were not Black.

A Black seven-and-a-half-year-old was talking with a white friend of the same age, who said that slaves were bad because they fought. The Black child responded, "They were fighting to be free."

A six-year-old Black boy asked, "How come there are no Black Supermen?"

The major task of five- to eight-year-olds is to build an extensive repertoire of accurate information, to deepen pride in their identity, and to learn authentic information about others. With a solid background and growing ability to make judgments about reality, instead of accepting matters at face value, children can be helped to recognize stereotyping and other expressions of racism in their immediate world. Children at this period become increasingly peer-oriented, and they develop a concept of "fairness" through their group games and activities. So, while prejudice can become a part of children's thinking at this age, it is also possible to utilize their emerging moral sense to help them perceive the "unfairness" of racism and to teach them tools for dealing with expressions of ethnocentrism and prejudice in their immediate world. An activist, anti-racist parent offered this example to demonstrate how sensitized a youngster can become.

When D. was about seven he began dancing one day to a record of Navajo music we have. All of a sudden he stopped himself, looked at us and said, "You know, I don't really know how they dance. I'm just making it up." Another day, he told us, after seeing a movie, "I know one way that movie was racist. It only had white people in it."

It is critical that children during this period be made aware that racism is not inevitable and is not an integral part of human nature. Through reading, talking with adult role models and other activities, they can learn that there are people who are working to end racism. They can also cultivate a sense of their personal strength to participate in this struggle.

Nine- to Twelve-Year-Olds

Pre-adolescents deepen their understanding of the various factors defining racial/cultural identity, as the following conversation with a ten-year-old illustrates:

Child: I am Berkeleyan *and* an American *and* a Swedish *and* Irish . . .

Mother: Why?

Child: Because Berkeley is in America. That means I *have* to be both.

Mother: Are you more one than another?

Child: I'm more Irish than Swedish because more people were Irish in my family than Swedish, or they were more sooner (*i.e.*, closer to his generation).

Mother: How do you think about your-

self? Are you more white or Berkeleyan?

Child: I don't think about it because people are the same everywhere.

Mother: What about R. and S. (Chicano friends)? Are they more Chicano or Berkeleyan-American?

Child: I don't know. That's up to them— (pause). It depends. Are they close to Berkeley?

Mother: They live in Berkeley, grew up here just like you.

Child: They are both.

Children at this age begin to understand historical and geographic aspects of racial identity, as well as the concept of "ancestry," as this conversation with another ten-year-old illustrates:

Teacher: What's your nationality?

Child: Well, I was born here; my mother was born here; but my dad was born in China.

Teacher: So what does that make you?

Child: Chinese American.

Teacher: How do you know you're Chinese American?

Child: Because I was born here and my ancestors came from China. My father is an Asian American because he was born in Hong Kong, and when he was eight or nine he flew to the U.S. He stayed and lived with some close friends he had been writing to from China. He paid his own rent. He kept looking at pictures from when he was in China. He remembered when he was picking fruits and vegetables. He told me and sometimes he even cried about it.

Feelings and knowledge centered on cultural values and personal struggles against racism become more complex. A deepening awareness of cultural/political values also occurs. For example:

After a discussion about Malcolm X, eleven-year-old R. stood up and said that his father once belonged to the Black Panthers, and that he still works for the community. R. later stated that the role of his culture was to help people.

Nine- to twelve-year-olds have the capacity for a deeper understanding of racism in its historical and social/institutional dimensions, as well as on a personal level. There are several important concepts that adults can teach children in order to provide them with additional tools for developing anti-racist thinking and behavior. First, help children understand the difference between the recognition of cultural patterns of behavior and stereotypes and caricatures of these patterns. Second, teach them to differentiate between "majority" and "minority" perspectives. The recognition that perspec-

tives can be different will help children to avoid internalizing harmful majority beliefs. Ann Beuf provides an illustration of this:

In almost every home I visited . . . older children expressed great pride in [their] Native American identity. They were not unaware of the disfavor in which their group was held. However, they simply did not accept the image of their group that was propagated by the majority culture. . . . The linguistic format of many remarks in this regard took the form of: "Whites say . . . , but I say . . ." Thus a young girl will say, "Whites think we are dirty, but I know I'm clean."¹³

Children in this age group can achieve what Piaget calls "reciprocity," i.e., understanding the interaction between individuality and group membership and the concept that we are all simultaneously humans and members of specific sub-groups, meaning that we have both similar and different needs.¹⁴

Finally, pre-adolescents can be encouraged to increase considerably their skills for combatting racism. They can engage in concrete social action projects directed toward chang-

We would like readers' responses to the article featured in this issue. Do you think the authors are right to ask parents and teachers to initiate discussions of racial differences with very young children? Have you had experiences that would confirm or deny the thesis that children grow up to perpetuate racism because we as parents and teachers avoid talking about racial issues?

We would like to hear about your experiences and those of your friends and colleagues in this area. Ways in which adults can handle racist incidents, suggestions for family and classroom activities and information about resources would be most welcome. Please do share them with us. (If you would prefer that your name not appear, we will respect your request.)

Speaking of writing to the *Bulletin*, we urge readers to notify us about recent books we may have missed in the Bookshelf department, to suggest topics for articles, to describe anti-racist and anti-sexist strategies they have found effective and to exchange ideas and experiences on related issues.—Editors.

ing a particular manifestation of institutional racism in their community (e.g., biased textbooks in their school, racist programs on their local TV station, a toy store that sells only white dolls, a library that does not have enough books accurately depicting Third World people). The nine-to twelve-year-old period is a critical one. It is a time when racist attitudes and behavior can be consolidated; it is a time also when earlier inaccurate ideas can be challenged and changed.

Guidelines for Adults

What can adults do to encourage anti-racist attitudes and healthy racial identities? First, let us recognize that we daily model attitudes and behavior, verbally and nonverbally, even if we are not conscious of doing so. Second, let us realize that we teach children both by commission and by omission. Third, let us be aware that the background or professional training of people who work with children has left many of these adults poorly prepared to deal with an emotionally difficult area. As noted earlier, many adults believe that if they don't talk about racial issues, then children "won't notice." There may also be the wish that if one doesn't say anything, then children won't ask.

Adults are generally extremely uncomfortable when children comment or ask directly about race and racism. They feel embarrassment, anxiety, anger, sadness, confusion about what to say. As one educator and activist states: "One thing adults do—white, brown, Black, red and yellow—is to lie to children about racism."¹⁵ Delaying tactics are also used. Sometimes this is done to protect children, but in most cases, adults are trying to protect themselves as well. Therefore, a significant factor in encouraging children's anti-racist development is to face one's own feelings, knowledge and behavior. A statement by James Baldwin is pertinent here: "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." In addition, we cannot explain racial identity and racism to children unless we know something about both areas. Adults can help each other by sharing experiences, by working together in consciousness-raising and study groups.

The following article presents some rules of thumb and can serve as a beginning guide. □

Footnotes

¹ Two exceptions are *Child Psychology in Contemporary Society* by J. Dill (Holbrook Press, 1978) and *Enhancing Self-Concept in Early Childhood* by S. Samuels (Human Sciences Press, 1977).

² See *Red Children in White America* by Ann Beuf (University of Philadelphia Press, 1977), *Prejudice and Your Child* by Kenneth Clark (Beacon Press, 1955), *Black Family and Black Identity: A Literature Review* by W. Cross (Cornell University, 1977), *Race Awareness in Young Children* by Mary Ellen Goodman (Collier Books, 1952), "How the Twig Is Bent" in *Toward the Elimination of Racism* by P. Katz (Pergamon Press, 1976), *The Short-Changed Children of Suburbia* by Alice Miel (Institute of Human Relations Press, The American Jewish Committee, 1976), *Children and Race* by David Milner (Penguin Books, 1975) and *They Learn What They Live* by H. Trager and M. Radke-Yarrow (Harper and Brothers, 1952).

³ Goodman, *op. cit.*

⁴ Beuf, Clark, Milner, *op. cit.*

⁵ Beuf, Cross, *op. cit.*

⁶ *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training* by Judy Katz (University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), page 12.

⁷ Miel, *op. cit.*, page 13.

⁸ Katz, J., *op. cit.*, pages 13-14.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Beuf, *op. cit.*, page 122.

¹¹ Beuf, *op. cit.*, pages 119-121.

¹² "A Cognitive Developmental Analysis of Children's Sex-Role Concepts and Attitudes" in *The Development of Sex Differences*, Macoby, ed. (Stanford University Press, 1966).

¹³ Beuf, *op. cit.*, page 86.

¹⁴ "The Development in Children of the Idea of the Homeland and of Relations with Other Countries" by Piaget in *International Social Science Bulletin*, III, 3 (1951), pages 561-578.

¹⁵ Geraldine Wilson, personal communication.

About the Authors

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Suggestions for Developing Positive Racial Attitudes

A healthy racial/cultural identity, plus skills to aid in recognizing and combatting racism, are essential to all children's self-esteem and ability to function productively in our society. Fostering growth in this direction is, therefore, a major parental and teacher responsibility. Adults need to be able to not only respond to children's concerns but also to initiate activities and discussions. The more that we come to terms with our own feelings, attitudes and behaviors towards people different from ourselves, the better prepared we will be to foster our children's growth.

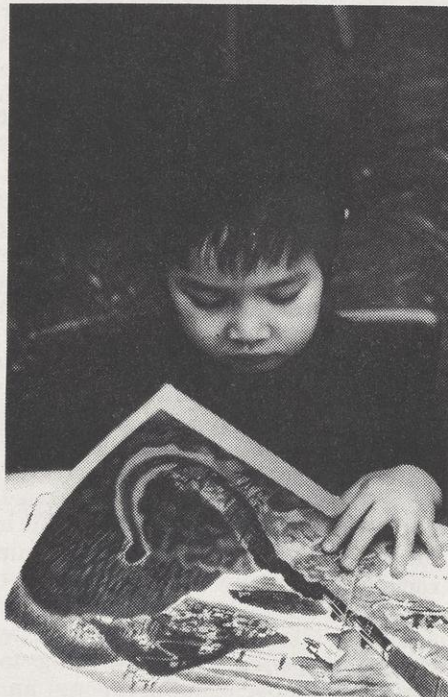
Race is a social concept, not a scientific term. But racism is a social reality, and the concept is used to categorize and oppress large groups of people. It is with this understanding in mind that we offer the following suggestions.

1. Initiate activities and discussions to build a positive racial/cultural self-identity.

Do not wait for the child to ask questions; initiate discussions. When the child is very young, talk about the child's skin color, features and hair texture in positive ways. Admire physical characteristics of other children and adults who are in the same racial group. Make a conscious effort to help a child develop a feeling of pride in his/her heritage. Discuss leaders or members of the child's racial group whom you are especially proud of; make books about them available and display photographs or paintings of them in the home or classroom. Be sure the white leaders presented include anti-racist activists (see box), not just the traditional leaders popularized at most schools. Offer a selection of books that depict

the child's heritage and racial group in a positive way. Visit museums, parades, rallies and concerts that emphasize racial/cultural heritage and pride.

In U.S. society white children and adults receive a type of racial reinforcement that has traditionally been considered positive. It is often a great struggle for white adults to understand that much of this "reinforcement" promulgates racism because it makes whites feel superior to others.



Books that depict a child's heritage and racial group in a positive way can help build a positive self-identity. (Photo by Erika Stone)

It is important that white children develop a healthy self-image, rooted in a realistic, respectful perspective on the world and its people, and reinforced by knowledge of white people who have struggled against racism. All children—not only white children—should learn the difference between feelings of superiority and feelings of racial pride.

2. Initiate activities and discussions to develop positive attitudes toward racial/cultural groups different from the child's.

Young children learn best through concrete experiences reinforced through such media as TV, movies, books and toys. Discussions are not enough. Children need to be exposed to a large variety of experiences, information and images about each cultural group in order to develop an understanding of rich cultural patterns and diversity. (Even an accurate and positive image can become stereotypic if that is the only information a child has.)

Adults can encourage positive attitudes by making it clear that all shades of skin, types of hair and other racial characteristics are beautiful and are to be considered of *equal value* (and not exotic). Adults can also learn about and initiate discussions about leaders—white and Third World, women and men—who have been active in anti-racist struggles; search out and offer the child books about anti-racist leaders; hang their pictures in the home or classroom. Other activities: place multicultural pictures and posters around the house or classroom; celebrate multicultural holidays; attend multicultural art exhibits; develop a multicultural library; have youngsters join the anti-racist



Interacting with many different cultural groups in school, camp and other activities is important for young children. (Photo by Erika Stone)

activities in which you participate. Such activities and discussions should be planned as part of *everyday* family/classroom life, rather than saved for rare, special occasions.

In addition, when possible, white parents should seek out the services of Third World professionals, *i.e.* doctors, dentists, optometrists. They should also provide opportunities for children to interact with a mixed racial/cultural group of people by seeking out after-school activities, Saturday programs and day camps where children can have positive experiences with children from backgrounds differing from their own. Teachers should plan a curriculum that includes lessons about the major cultural/racial groups, and representatives of those groups should visit the classroom.

Families who live in racially homogeneous communities face a more difficult task. Too often parents and teachers resign themselves to this "reality," rather than working to find ways to know racially and culturally different people and to incorporate

multicultural toys, multicultural media and multicultural experiences into their children's daily lives. The cliché "Action speaks louder than words" is of great relevance here. The behavior parents and teachers model is at least as important as the experiences and books they provide. Children are quick to recognize contradictions in adult behaviors. White adults, for

White Anti-Racist Activists

Whites frequently have trouble identifying white leaders active in the anti-racist struggle. Here are a few examples:

Susan B. Anthony
John Brown
William Lloyd Garrison
Angelina and Sarah Grimke
Thomas Wentworth Higginson
Thomas Paine
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Charles Sumner

example, who talk about appreciation of other groups but live in a totally white environment are teaching a double message regardless of their intent.

3. When a child asks questions about race, always answer when the questions are asked.

Never sidestep the issue by saying, "We'll talk about it later," "It's not polite to ask that," or "We don't say things like that." Respond at once, no matter who happens to be around at the time. But do not *over-respond*. (This is a common reaction when children ask questions about sexuality, another topic which makes many adults uncomfortable.)

Offer information and feedback appropriate to what the child is asking at the moment. Don't say "We are all the same," "We are all human," or "All people are alike." Denial of differences that do exist functions as a cover-up for racism. Previous discussion—and practicing possible answers—with family and friends will help you to be ready. You might also try role-playing to prepare for the



Help a child develop feelings of pride in her/his heritage by providing toys that reinforce the child's racial identity. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)

candid—often loud—questions that children manage to ask. You don't have to say everything there is to say on the topic at once. There will be other opportunities to discuss the issue again.

4. Listen carefully—in a manner that seems relaxed—to children's questions and comments and make sure you understand what the child means and wants to know.

It is important for adults to separate children's curious, age-relevant questions and comments about race and color from questions that indicate children are learning negative attitudes about themselves or others. Consider the developmental stages of the children, their experiences and knowledge.

Be aware that children may not be asking what you think they are asking. Be sensitive to the fact that young children are still making sense out of the world and do not have a storehouse of information and/or experience to explain phenomenon that they see. A curious question meant to gather information should be treated as such. As an example, since young

white children learn that Black/dirty are thought of together (see box), a common question is "Will the Black wash off in the tub?" This can be answered with, "The color of the skin will never wash off; we take baths to wash off the dirt." (Black children who associate with white children or whose parents may not have been precise in their use of language may ask the same kinds of questions.) Another curious but profound and often confounding question is "Why is Willa Black?" "Willa is Black because her mother and father are" is usually what very young children want to know. Older children may be asking what causes skin color to be black; they can be told about melanin.

Be clear that children learn the not-so-nice practice of name-calling at an early age. Epithets of all kinds—race, gender, size, color, intellectual ability, etc.—are learned from the family, school and media. A young white child who says, "I don't want to play with John because he's Black" already has a mechanism in place for name-calling. The first response to a four- or five-year-old at that point is to say "That is not a good reason" or

"That is not acceptable." The adult can then attempt to discover exactly why the child doesn't want to play with John. The child may, for example, be angry at John for a reason that has nothing to do with color; in that case the adult can move to deal with the real issue. If, on the other hand, it becomes clear that color is indeed the issue, the adult must repeat that the reason is not acceptable and make clear the standards of behavior for the space that the adult is in charge of (classroom, backyard, etc.). For instance, a teacher could say, "In this classroom we will work to get along together—Black, white and Puerto Rican—and I am here to help you learn how to do that."

5. Pay attention to feelings.

Sometimes children ask questions because they need confirmation of their observations. At other times, questions may involve emotional and attitudinal components. It is important for children to get effective and informational feedback, including expressions of support and positive reinforcement for who they are. Adults

"First, parents need to talk specifically with their children about racism and not speak only in general terms about treating people fairly. Children should know that racism involves more than just "fairness."

Second, we have found that when parents are committed to working against racism, there is a spill-over effect for their children. Children learn anti-racist attitudes almost automatically. This is probably true with any deep value that parents hold. If the children experience this kind of commitment rather than just hearing about it, it is in fact much more effective. (The commitment does not have to be an all-consuming thing or something that takes parents away from the children.)

Third, we've found that children are often able to recognize racism, both overt and subtle, whereas adults will often deny that something is racist. Adults often have much to protect; they're defensive. It's as if there were layer upon layer of "protective" coating for adults that prevents them from seeing and acknowledging racism. Children don't have that coating, that need to deny reality."—Roni Branding and Kathy McGinnes.

should openly express disapproval of child's racist remarks and behavior, but the child should not be made to feel rejected. On the other hand, anti-racist behavior should meet with open approval. Adults should include an explanation of why they approve or disapprove, e.g., "I will not let you call J. that racist name because it hurts her feelings, because it isn't true, and because you can do better than say that." When pertinent, you should also share your own feelings about incidents, e.g., "It is not fair" or "That makes me feel angry and sad" or, conversely, "That makes me feel proud and good."

6. Provide truthful explanations appropriate to the child's level of understanding.

Honest answers can be offered at all levels, from the simplest to the most scientific or "advanced" levels. An example of a simple response is given in the box at the right.

Teachers must carefully plan lessons so that history, social studies, literature, etc. will be accurately conveyed to children. Materials that may be insulting to children of color and/or misinforming to all children must be identified by the teacher. He/she must learn how to use insulting or demeaning textbooks to develop critical thinking and anti-racist sensitivity. For example, if a text says "People thought of slaves as possessions, like dogs, cattle or furniture" the adult can explain chattel slavery

"We were telling our five-year-old son about his adopted one-year-old sister's Native American Heritage. She is a Winnebago, and we told him about her people and culture. Suddenly he interrupted and nervously asked if his baby sister "will kill us when she grows up?"

We knew that words would not be enough to reassure our son. First, he had to be shown that his image of Native Americans was a stereotype held by many whites; second, he had to understand where the stereotype comes from (the "cowboy-and-Indian" image of books, TV and the movies, for example); and, third, he had to find out for himself that the stereotype is not true by meeting and getting to know Native American adults."—Kathy and Jim McGinnis

while pointing out that the concept is racist and invalid. Adults can also help children see that the ethnocentric phrasing of that sentence implies that all "people" are white. The adult might say, "Some ignorant or greedy white people treated Black slaves as less than human, but the slave people, free Black people and some white people always fought for justice and equality. And *we're* still fighting today." In this way, you clearly include yourself and people of all colors among those opposed to racism.

The truth about racism is inevitably painful to Third World children so adults frequently try to shield them by avoiding certain questions or sidestepping honest discussions. Often white adults are too uncomfortable themselves to talk about the issue honestly. However, avoiding the truth or giving incorrect or incomplete information—even with the best of intentions—is not helpful to children of any color. Avoidance does not offer tools with which children can effectively deal with the realities they will experience. Honest, accurate information does provide the tools. For example, if a child says he/she does not want to be Black because all the paramedics and firefighters on a favorite TV show are white, the parent can respond by telling a four- or five-year-old: "That TV program is not true because in real life there are Black paramedics and Black firefighters." If the child is a little older, you might add: "There are not as many as there should be because some white people are unfair to Blacks. Maybe a white person wrote the TV story and didn't know the truth. Maybe the owner of the TV station is unfair. That makes me angry, too. Let's write a letter to the TV station and say that they should have paramedics and firefighters of all colors."

7. Help children explore their own ideas, giving them support for their efforts.

Engage children in give-and-take discussions; goals for positive, constructive anti-racist behavior should be stated clearly, firmly and warmly. Don't make them feel they are "dumb" or "cute" because their ideas differ from an adult's. Give them praise for their efforts to figure out. Here is a conversation between a four-year-old and her mother:

Child: How do people get their colors?

Mother: How do you think they do?

Child: You tell me.

"I was working as a consultant in one of this country's "best schools" for "academically talented children." I entered the school at closing time and began to walk upstairs. As I rounded the second landing, I could hear a young child crying and screaming and the sound of small feet stamping. I looked up and saw a little girl about four years old. The mother holding her hand saw me and looked mortified at the precise moment that the child—seeing me—looked at her mother and said loudly, "I told you I want to be Black." As I walked up to the landing where they stood rooted by the mother's embarrassment, the child continued to yell, "I want to be Black! Can I be Black?" I stopped in front of the little girl, looked at her, put my hand out to touch her and said quietly, "You *can't* be Black." She looked incredulous, turned off the big tears, snuffled and sobbed quietly, "But I want to be." I said, "Look at your mother." She did. I said, "You look like your mother and daddy and your grandparents. I look like *my* mother, daddy and grandparents. You can't ever be Black. Do you have Black friends in your class?" She smiled and said yes. I said, "You can have Black friends and you can ask your mother to buy you a Black doll and some books about Black children, but remember you can't be Black." Graced with the four-year-old's radiant smile, I continued my climb. Shortly thereafter I could hear the little girl screaming. "I want a Black doll and some books." I smiled. I had solved one problem. The child's demanding attitude was up to the mother."—Geraldine L. Wilson

Mother: Well, people have a special thing inside their body called melanin.

If a person has a lot of melanin, then they have brown skin. If they have a medium amount, then they are tan, and if they have a little they are white.

Child: (Laughs.) You mean they eat melon?

Mother: No, the word is melanin. It sounds something like melon, but it's different. It's something we are all born with.

Child: Well, I was wondering about pens.

Mother: What do you mean?

Child: You know, the pens you can put red or blue on your skin if you want to.

Mother: You mean Magic Markers?

Child: Yes.

Blacks, Whites, and "Dirty"

White parents must struggle to uproot the idea that there is something dirty about Black skin. (Books like *Harry and the Dirty Dog* don't help. In it, a dog is covered with black ink or paint and is not recognizable to his mother. Outrageously unlikely.) First, adults both Black and white must monitor their own language to be sure that no connections are made between "black" and "dirty." Don't ever say things like, "You're filthy! Wash all that black dirt off!" or "You're absolutely black; go wash!" or "Wash those dirty black hands."

Second, try to determine quickly if children's comments and/or questions about (a) Black children or (b) Blackness indicate that they are relating Blackness to dirt. If they are, move quickly to indicate one or all of the following: (a) "The skin of Black people is not dirty." (b) "Some dirt may be black in color when it gets on skin, but we call it dirt. To call it dirt is enough." (c) "If the dirt is not black in color, don't call it black. Call it dirt." (d) "Calling dirt black offends and hurts Black people. It will also hurt you because to be unkind to other people hurts you."

Note: All children can learn the prevalent attitudes in the society. Asian American, Native American and Latino parents must also be vigilant about discouraging anti-Black attitudes. This is particularly critical for Latino and other parents whose children have an African heritage. This can be a mechanism for healing the divisions that have been created among people of color by the myths of racism and cultural oppression.—Geraldine L. Wilson

Mother: Do you think that is how people get their skin color?

Child: Yes, they draw it on.

Mother: I am glad you are trying to figure things out, but that's not the way people get their skin color.

8. Help children recognize racial stereotypes.

In addition to providing positive images and accurate information, you can help children recognize stereotypes and caricatures in books, TV, movies, greeting cards and other media. Trips to amusement parks or historic sites often provide opportuni-

ties for consciousness-raising also (see the *Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 3 and No. 6 and Vol. 10, No. 5). Children quickly grow adept at spotting racial stereotypes (as well as sex stereotypes), and you can point out the ways in which such stereotypes are unfair.

For example, you can explain that Native American people lived in this country before white people came. They were friendly to whites until the whites took away their homes and land. Then they fought back to save their homes and families. White people then called them "wild" and "savage," but that wasn't fair, because anyone would fight to save their homes and country.

As children get older, we can help them see how stereotypes are used to justify oppression, such as lower wages, less important jobs, poorer housing, etc. Explain to older children why "wild" and "savage" are stereotypes. Explain that when whites call Indians "wild" or Blacks "stupid" it is just an excuse so that whites can take away land or make people work as slaves or work for less pay than whites get. Encourage children to write letters protesting stereotypes to authors, publishers and TV stations. Such letters usually receive a response, which can lead to further discussion or action.

9. Encourage children to challenge racism by your own example and by giving them skills appropriate to their age level.

It is important that adults provide children with anti-racist behavioral models—by always responding to racist remarks or incidents, for example. When a child has been hurt by a racial slur, the adult must always support the child and show disapproval of the perpetrator. When adults are involved, responses must depend on circumstances. In friendly or neutral adult interactions, racist jokes should never be countenanced. Racist remarks should also be answered. In hostile interactions, such as an encounter with a racist police officer, reactions, of course, must take possible abuses of power into consideration. If racial youth groups are fighting one another, the children's safety is a priority before racial issues are dealt with.

Sometimes children are embarrassed or become fearful if their parents confront someone's racist remark or behavior. While your child's embarrassment or anxiety should not cause you to ignore the racism, you can

have discussions about tactics which would prove less embarrassing to the child. Help the child talk about his/her feeling and express what he/she would do. The child may need to understand more clearly the reason for the adult's behavior. Children must find out that confronting injustice is *not* always a "popular" activity, but they must also find out that it is important to live up to one's beliefs.

All racial incidents involving a child should be thoroughly discussed within the family or classroom. A range of appropriate responses can be suggested for the child to choose from in the future. However, a child should not be made to feel inadequate if a situation is handled poorly. Discussion with groups of adults and children usually leads to greater skills and confidence. Practice is important!

10. Cultivate the understanding that racism does not have to be a permanent condition—that people are working together to create change.

As children reach school age, you can begin to help them develop a historical perspective about the true role different groups have played in U.S. history and of how racism has been an integral part of the develop-

"I am a white, Jewish mother of two children. Their father is Black, of Caribbean and African descent. I convey to our children pride in both their African and their Jewish heritage and try to help them create a positive self-image as being doubly endowed—bicultural—rather than 'half this and half that'—an offensive notion, like the term 'half-breed.'

Whatever heritage children like ours are taught to be proud of, they must also learn that our society will always perceive them as Black—and less than white. So we—like parents in families where both parents are people of color—must help them to understand that certain white people don't like dark-skinned people. We often discuss how wrong and unfair this attitude is and let the children know that sometimes such people can be mean and hurtful. My seven-year-old has, on several occasions, stood up for herself and adamantly affirmed her pride in being Black. Of course, we strongly encourage this behavior."—Paula Phillips



Parents should initiate discussions and activities that will help build a child's positive racial and cultural identity. When children are very young, adults can talk positively about the child's skin color, features and hair texture. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)

ment of this country. At the same time, children should learn that racism is not a natural condition nor is it due to "human nature"; rather, it is the result of specific practices that give unfair advantages to some at the expense of others. It is also important that children feel they can play a part in combatting racism—and that you believe it is important they play that role. Adult modeling is critical here. In a study by Ann Beuf of children's racial identity which looked at the effects of parental activism, investigators found that children of activist families showed greater self-identification and pride and were better able to withstand societal stereotyping (see page 4).

One last word: keep in mind that learning about racial identity and racism is a long-term process.

Don't panic. Remember that learning continues throughout childhood into adulthood and will take many different forms. Children will change their thinking many times. You don't have to deal with every issue all at once. Consider "mistakes" you might make as opportunities to learn. There will be another time, initiated either by you or by the child. Try keeping a

log. You will be fascinated by your growth and the child's. Consider sharing your log with others. There's precious little around to help us help children. □

Resources for Parents, Teachers, Librarians

Clark, Kenneth. *Prejudice and Your Child*. Beacon Press, 1955.

Dill, John. *Child Psychology in Contemporary Society*. Holbrook Press, 1978. One of the few textbooks which has a good summary of the research on how children develop race awareness.

Goodman, Mary Ellen. *Race Awareness in Young Children*. Collier Books, 1952. One of the most important of the research studies. Very readable.

Katz, Judy. *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racist Training*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1978. Contains many useful, specific activities to use with adults to do consciousness-raising and learning about institutional and cultural racism.

Kohl, Herbert. *Growing With Your Children*. Little, Brown, 1978. The only parenting book that deals with

white children and racism.

McLaughlin, Clara. *The Black Parent's Handbook*. McMillan, 1952. Discusses ways to foster self-esteem and positive racial identity.

Miel, Alice. *The Short-Changed Children of Suburbia*. Institute of Human Relations Press, 1967. Fascinating study of children in a white, middle-class suburban city.

Paley, Vivian Gussin. *White Teacher*. Harvard University Press, 1979. A journal of one white teacher's change from an ethnocentric to a pluralistic consciousness.

The CIBC's Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators produces a variety of anti-racist materials. Two items are listed below; write us for a free catalog.

CIBC. *Winning "Justice for All."* CIBC, 1980. A curriculum guide for fourth, fifth and sixth graders. Provides activities, books, filmstrips which teach children about social injustice and show them that they have a role in combatting it.

Moore, Robert. "Racism in the English Language." CIBC, 1976. An essay on the many ways our language reflects and perpetuates racism; a lesson plan adaptable for different age levels is included.

Sticks and Stones and

The Word *NIGGER* Is What's Not Allowed

By Geraldine L. Wilson

Until colonialism with its component of racism is ultimately and finally destroyed, the word *NIGGER* will always be a controversial NO-NO. Many Black people have never used the word, never heard the word in their families, and they learned to fight about it whenever they heard it from Blacks or whites. That has been one of the historic responses over the years. Other Black folk, understanding the general destructiveness of the word, will never use it in front of children, but they do use it selectively—in humor, to chastise other Blacks, to illustrate a point, to move Black people to “Blackness” as did many of our poets in the late 60’s and early 70’s. Sometimes, it is said, the word can be used lovingly.

Since the early 70’s some Blacks and whites moving in what they consider to be avant-garde circles feel that the mutual use of the word at cocktails is a mark of some kind of liberalism and/or freedom. There seem to be at least two additional ways that whites use the word. One is the traditional epithet approach that is used on the street and on “nigger-go-home” signs. The myth held that only poor and/or uneducated whites used the word, but “integration” efforts made it obvious the word *NIGGER* had currency in boardrooms and split-level communities. Two, there seems to be another, a “new” and seemingly off-hand, nonchalant use of the word *NIGGER* by whites—who unfortunately no longer consider the word taboo—who are young, moneyed, with academic credentials, supposedly creative. (Usually, but not always, they are in the arts or media.) The way in which it is used is new; the oppressive message is



NIGGER is a provocative, aggressive word. Children confronted with such racial slurs must learn how to defend themselves in a variety of ways. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)

the same old thing.

Richard Pryor did a lot, unfortunately, to popularize the use of the word *NIGGER*. He is often brilliant in his humor and loved by many Black folk. Taking action, they prevailed on him to discontinue the public use of the word and he agreed. We applaud his actions and are sure he’ll keep his word. He has set an important example for others.

It is clear that at the gut level *NIGGER* continues to be taboo for most Black people. It continues to be the word that hurts, derogates, shames and angers Black people. It is a word that puts you “back in your place” or “keeps you in your place.” The public use of the word *NIGGER* is also an evaluation/assessment tool for Black people. The increased extent of racism “in the air” can be determined by the extent to which whites feel free to use the word. It also signals Black people that there is widespread societal permission for whites to use words meaning harder times ahead. *NIGGER* is a barometer, then, of the racial climate. What after all does it say about our society when TV’s popular “Saturday Night Live” can present a grotesquely insulting skit about a Nigger-rand, a “spoof” about the South African Kruger-rand, a coin in honor of Kruger, the architect of apartheid. *NIGGER* is probably the most powerful short-hand verbal symbol—known around the world—symbolizing for whites their power to humiliate. For Black people, the word *NIGGER* symbolizes almost four hundred years of anti-African racism and cultural repression. The guidelines and/or suggestions below were developed because teachers and

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Racial Slurs Do Hurt

Dealing with Racial Slurs

By Louise Derman-Sparks

The pervasiveness of name-calling in our society facilitates and "legitimizes" the use of racial name-calling and epithets. Keeping this in mind, adults can develop strategies to teach children who are the victims of name-calling to respond appropriately and to help change the behavior of the name-callers.

In helping children learn to deal with racial slurs directed against them the following factors are important:

1. Reinforce the child's racial/cultural identity; *e.g.*, "We know that we are fine; and we are proud to be who we are." Encourage the child to talk about her/his feelings and be supportive.

2. Confirm that you think use of such words is wrong. Even if the name-calling occurs because of anger about something the child did, it is crucial to make a distinction between the child's specific act and the fact that the use of a racial slur is *never* O.K. Young children are apt to use racial name-calling in anger, because adults and older children often name-call during angry exchanges. (This point should also be discussed with those who use racial epithets.)

3. Stress to the child who has been name-called that he/she is not at fault or responsible for the name-calling. It is very important to clarify this, especially with young children who tend to personalize things.

4. Explain why racial name-calling occurs. Very young children can best understand explanations that focus on the behavior of the specific person, *i.e.*, the person is mean; the person thinks whites are better. Many adults tell children that people who name-call "don't know any better." Name-

callers may not have been taught to *do* better, but it is hardly the point and as a reason is confusing and ambiguous to children. Neither is it always true; many name-callers do "know better" and use a term because they understand its hurtful nature. The subject of fear and whether people who use racial names are "scared" is complex. However, people who are called racial names or distortions of their cultural names are hardly impressed that the name-callers might be scared. Again it is not the issue. Name-callers use and/or seek the protection of the power of the society when they name-call.

As soon as possible (when the child is seven or eight years old), it is important to begin providing explanations that communicate an institutional and historical perspective about racism; *i.e.*, people behave in a racist manner because racism exists in our society; that children learn how to act and think in racist ways from their families, from TV, books, movies, etc.; that racism breeds aggressiveness, ignorance, guilt, rigidity, fear, hate, superiority; that some people exploit or use racism for economic and social benefit.

5. Develop several strategies for combatting name-calling. Children need to learn a variety of strategies and to learn when each technique can be applied. Children also need to see how adults handle racial slurs, since adult modeling is a major way that they learn.

6. Discuss name-calling with other children and adults. Discussions are particularly helpful for school-age children. Parents can initiate discussions with family members and friends; teachers can facilitate class-

room discussions in which children share strategies for coping with racial slurs. Involve children in creative activities such as role-playing, flannel-boards, magnet boards, puppet-shows, etc. to learn action-behaviors to combat name-calling.

Teaching children not to use racial slurs against others is another important task for parents and teachers. Take the position that racial name-calling is not acceptable for *any* reason because it is one way of perpetuating racism. Children can be told that, "I will not let you use that word. It hurts people's feelings too much. It hurts my feelings when you use it. It is bad for you to call names. You will become an ugly kind of person." This can be expanded with an explanation that racial slurs are like other hurting behaviors which are not permitted in the family or in the classroom.

Beyond communicating limits, it is important that parents, family members and teachers consider why a particular child uses name-calling in order to do follow-through that will help change the child's behavior. Children may name-call when they are testing, angry, teasing, feeling left out, or out of fear and/or ignorance.

If children are testing, setting limits may be sufficient. If a child is expressing anger, the adult should help the child resolve or come to terms with the anger. If a child is teasing, does not know how to relate to other children or feels left out, providing strategies for helping the child interact in positive ways with the other children is necessary. If name-calling seems to come from fear or prejudice, the adult will need to counter whatever

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The Word NIGGER. . .
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parents have listened and observed closely. Children—Black, white, Indian, Latino, Asian American—are still using the word among themselves and/or against Black children.

1. The ideal “rule” regarding the use of NIGGER in both Black and whites homes is that it should not be used by children, teen-agers, adults or other living beings because:

(a) It hurts.

(b) It insults.

(c) It is not the correct name of people of African descent. We call them Black people, African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans or Africans.

(d) The word was made up by whites to label Black people as inferior.

2. Black and white adults in the family and community should discuss the implications of the use of the word NIGGER and come to family and community policies about its use so that children begin to experience consistent responses from adults. Older children can be a part of the discussion.

3. If there is disagreement among family members about its use, NIGGER ought not be used with or in front of young children. Young Black children can be helped to understand that Black people may not agree on its use among Blacks and that therefore they will hear different rules for its use. This will reduce confusion.

4. If children want to know what the word means, they should be told the truth: “It is a word that used to mean the color Black. It came to be a word that meant Black people. For a long time now it has been a word that means Black people are not as good as whites. It is a word that hurts.”

5. Adults should understand that the use of the word is not necessarily declining. Black children will be protected if they understand that the word is calculated to hurt; *i.e.*, they will hurt less. It does not help a Black child to be armed with an unrealistic response like, “People who are not nice are niggers” or “Every group has no-good people who are called niggers.” These responses are more appropriate for adults who want to have esoteric conversations about the word. When Black children use these responses, white children usually further deride and ridicule them. Everyone knows what a NIGGER really is! Important is the fact that in and out of the presence of adults, Black

children need to be able to respond with dignity, control of themselves and power. They can learn to say “Call me by my name” or “Don’t call me that again.” Someone has suggested the time-honored, “You Mama’s one.” At any rate, children should be helped to develop a *range* of strategies of response: (a) sometimes ignoring the word is an effective defense; (b) direct defense;* (c) a response of walk-away-regroup-respond; (d) get immediate assistance; (e) handle it yourself, then get help;* (f) come home and cry so we can talk about it and comfort you (do *not* leave this out of the set of strategies).

White children should be taught to assist in defending Black children who are called NIGGER. They should be taught how to respond to the use of the word when no Black people are around. And the above strategies for defense can be used when white children are called NIGGER-lovers.

A planned defense is a shock-absorber. People are always sent into shock when the word is used!! Children need shock-absorbers and having them in place empowers the young ones themselves (as well as can be expected under the circumstances). Children depend on us to do that for them. If we care about them that’s the least we can do. The best all adults can do is stop using the word NIGGER. □

*For Black people the issue of defense against white aggression and how appropriate defense is handled with young children is complex. First, a direct defense, does not mean—in and of itself—a physical response to name-calling. It could be a direct verbal defense. “Handle it yourself” may result in a child’s using fluent verbal defense and then getting adult aid. It is racist behavior for whites to equate the use of the word NIGGER with the use of other names like *fatso*. It is a provocative aggressive word, meant to provoke, and if often may require defense. Children who are Black have to learn how to handle themselves when no adults are around or no supportive adults offer assistance.

About the Author

GERALDINE L. WILSON, former director of the New York City Headstart Regional Training Office at New York University, has worked for many years with parents and children as a teacher. She is presently completing her doctorate in teacher training and curriculum development.

Dealing with Racial Slurs
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misinformation about people of color the child may have learned.

In addition to teaching children how to respond to racial name-calling and not to use racial slurs themselves, we must assist children in acquiring information and ideas about how to combat the use of racial epithets wherever they will meet them. The following story illustrates one kindergarten teacher’s attempt to do this:

While on a walk in the neighborhood, they passed a wall on which was written “No yellows. No niggers. White Power.” The teacher stopped the group, pointed out the wall and said vehemently, “That is really racist. It makes me very angry.” She read the words to the children and said, “These are hurtful, hateful words.” One of the kids asked, “But why did somebody do that?” The teacher replied that she thought it might have been some frightened white people who thought that writing mean things about other people would make them feel good. One of the kids said, “I don’t think it should be there.” The teacher replied, “Neither do I. What should we do about it?” The kids suggested washing it off or covering it with paint. The class has now taken that on as a group project.

There is a lot more to know about helping children combat racial name-calling—and combatting racism in general. One important source is parents of racially/culturally oppressed groups, who have been helping their children deal with racism for hundreds of years. For example, Barbara Richardson at Pacific Oaks College is presently working on a study based on interviews with 100 Black mothers about how they teach their children about racism. We need more work like hers. We also need to know more about how to teach white children to be anti-racist. It is important to inculcate a sense of responsibility to eradicate racism without inducing immobilizing guilt. Write to the *Bulletin* about your ideas and experiences. □

About the Author

LOUISE DERMAN-SPARKS, co-author of the first article in this issue, is on the faculty at Pacific Oaks College, Pasadena, Cal.

Handling Racist Incidents: A Case History

By Patricia Simmons

A., a white three-year-old at the Cambridgeport Children's Center, was heard making statements like "No Black kids are allowed in my spaceship" (part of the outdoor climbing structure) or "No Black kids can come in the sand box" several times during the same week. The teacher who overheard these remarks responded with disapproval and talked about these incidents with other staff people. She also talked briefly with A.'s mother.

At the end of the week, A.'s mother approached me with her concern about these incidents and told me that the child had been saying similar things at home. She requested a parent-teacher conference and asked that the teachers tell her if any further incidents occurred.

The following week I overheard A. saying, "You can't come in my play house, no Black kids allowed in my house" (A. was referring to a structure that he and some other children had made with large hollow wooden blocks.) A number of children both white and Black were already inside the house and a number of children—Black and white—were outside. I went over and asked what was going on. A. said "There's no more room in this house." I said that it didn't look like that to me, and I went into the structure and sat down with the children. I told A. that he had to share with other kids, that the blocks were for all the children at the center to build and have fun with. A. softly mumbled something like "When I build a spaceship they still can't come in my spaceship." I said that he would not be allowed to use the blocks to build a spaceship if he couldn't share.

I then pointed out that there were both Black and white people in the house and that all kinds of people can share together. I started identifying everyone in the house according to race. When I got to myself and said I was Black, some of the children challenged me because I am fair-skinned.

We then started talking about the fact that "Black" is a name for people in the U.S. who have African ancestors. I said that Afro American and African American were other names that Black people in the U.S. used for themselves. At that point J., a four-and-a-half-year-old and one of the Black kids A. had been trying to exclude from the house, came forward and said that he was "part of the African people." He began relating some of the things he knew about Africa. We then talked about the fact that Black people have many different skin shades, and we compared our skin colors. I expanded this activity to include all the children who were around, prefacing this by saying that there are all different kinds of people in our neighborhood (the surrounding area is a diverse one), just as there are in our day-care center. I had the children compare and contrast themselves and talk about the people they see in their neighborhood. We also talked a little about why people are different colors—for instance, looking like one's parents or a "combination" of one's parents, having a sun tan—and the fact that dark skin is a protective factor for people in hot, sunny climates.

Later that week the staff met and discussed the incidents that A. had been involved in. The staff agreed that similar incidents observed by any staff member should be shared with the other members. Such incidents should be responded to immediately and in a consistent manner; that is, A. should be made to understand that discriminatory behavior that attempted to exclude children on the basis of race would not be tolerated. The staff also discussed A.'s behavior and interactions at the day-care center and any special circumstances that might be affecting him. We noted that there was only one child in the center whom A. would seek out to play with and whom he seemed to be friends with. He seemed

timid, and there were certain kinds of activities, especially active or rough outdoor play, that he would not enter into unless his friend accompanied him. He also stayed away from interactions with the "big kids," although their activities appeared to be very attractive to him. It also seemed important to note that A.'s parents had recently separated, and that he was attempting to adjust to that significant change in his family situation. Overall, it appeared as if A.'s insecurities were motivating him to attempt to exclude other children in certain situations, and because of the racist nature of the society we live in, it is unfortunately not surprising for a white child to attempt to exclude a Black child on the basis of race.

On the day after our staff meeting I had a parent-teacher conference with A.'s mother. First I shared the staff discussion with her. She agreed with our perceptions and said that she had been trying to get A. to be more outgoing. She asked what she could do beyond expressing disapproval of A.'s discriminatory behavior and pointing out to him the contradictions in his behavior, *i.e.*, that they as a family had Black friends and that he also had Black friends at the center, although all were younger than A. (It is important to point out that children can easily accommodate what adults perceive as contradictions. In fact, they operate in much the same way as adults do, *i.e.*, based on a limited and often isolated experience they stereotype a whole group and then make exceptions when it is convenient. For instance, a white child may say "Black kids are mean" after having a conflict with a Black child. If his/her parent asks, "But what about your friend X. who's Black?" the child is likely to respond, "Yeah, but X is nice." In a situation like this it is important that the parent do more than just point out "exceptions." Making exceptions is part of the whole scheme of stereotyping and the parent

Guidelines for Child-Care Staff

Below are some guidelines which teachers at the Cambridgeport Children's Center drew up after dealing with the incident described in the accompanying article.

1. Observe

- How many children are involved? Who are the victims, victimizers, bystanders or observers, etc.?
- What other factors might affect the situation beside racial conflict/discrimination; e.g., sex differences, age differences?
- Was the incident precipitated by conflict over toys, space, etc. so that the issue of sharing should also be discussed?

2. Respond

- Let the child know that discriminatory behavior, name-calling, etc. are not tolerated and that sharing, cooperative behavior will operate to her/his advantage.
- When a child has been victimized, make that child feel supported.
- If other children have witnessed or been peripherally involved in the incident, it is important to involve them in the process of responding to the incident.
- Determine if it is necessary to separate children and talk to them individually. Sometimes the most appropriate action is to take the "victimizer" aside to discuss her/his behavior, especially if the intended victim was not aware of the discriminatory comment or action.
- Try to turn a negative situation into a positive one; for instance, turn exclusion into sharing.

3. Communicate with Colleagues

- Report any incidents of discriminatory behavior to other staff members.
- Decide upon consistent strategies for responding to future incidents.
- Talk about the child/children involved and factors that might influence behavior. These discussions should be comprehensive, taking into consideration the day-care/school environment, home, neighborhood and society.
- Decide if and how parents will be involved in the intervention process. (Parent-teacher communication is an integral part of our center's program so parents would probably be involved. The high level of parent-teacher communication at our center was a major influence in making the intervention process described in the accompanying article effective and educational.)

4. Parent-Teacher Communication

- Has the parent witnessed discriminatory behavior by the child outside the center?
- How has the parent responded?
- What things might be influencing the child's behavior? Consider siblings, friends, TV, books, etc., or stressful situations.
- Develop strategies for responding and successful intervention with the parent.

should help the child see how stereotyping is a distortion of reality.)

In my conversation with A.'s mother I also focused on the fact that a child's environment influences his/her behavior within the day-care center. In that context we looked at:

1. The people with whom A. and his family associated outside of the center (primarily white.)

2. Children's books in A.'s home; at first his mother said his books were primarily classics, but when we discussed them more critically she referred to them as "white classics."

3. Television. She said that neither she nor A. watched much TV, and

when he did he usually watched "good shows" like ZOOM or Sesame Street. (On occasion he watched some "super hero" shows or cartoons at his father's or friend's houses.) She rarely watched TV with him.

Based on what she told me I made the following suggestions:

- That she should encourage any friendships with Black children that A. had begun to develop at the center.

- That she should take A. to public events or gatherings where Third World people were likely to be heavily represented or in the majority.

- That she acquire some books for A. in which Black people were repres-

ented. She noted that most books she had seen with Third World characters were books like *Who's in My Neighborhood*, rather than stories with good plots. I said that books were out there if one looked and suggested titles in which the central character(s) are Black. I also mentioned some adventure stories which I thought would particularly interest A. and told her about some books in the day-care center that she could read to A. when she was there parent-teaching (our center is a parent/staff cooperative and parents work in the classroom). In fact, one of the books I suggested eventually became a favorite of A.'s.

- That she watch "good" TV shows with A. so that she could discuss and reinforce positive images. (Enforced selective TV viewing is a good first step.)

We did not witness any more instances in which A. attempted to discriminate on a racial basis. Due in part to the efforts of his mother and the teachers at the center, A.'s relationships with other children at the center increased and improved.

A couple of weeks later A.'s mother told me that she remembered an incident which may have precipitated A.'s discriminatory behavior. She said that a number of weeks before she had picked up N., a Black child at the center, because the child's mother was going to be late. She took the child home with A. until her mother could pick her up. Next door to A.'s some older white kids had built a play house out of scrap lumber and junk. A. had expressed an interest in visiting the play house but was too shy and timid to go by himself and was further discouraged by the children's very rough play. However when N. came to his house that evening he took advantage of her companionship and ventured over to the playhouse. His mother did not see what happened but she speculated on the basis of language she often heard those kids using (racial/ethnic slurs and cursing) and, as she readily admits, some class bias (she is middle class; the neighbors, low income white working class) that they may have run N. and A. out of the play house while directing racial slurs toward N. □

About the Author

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

María Teresa

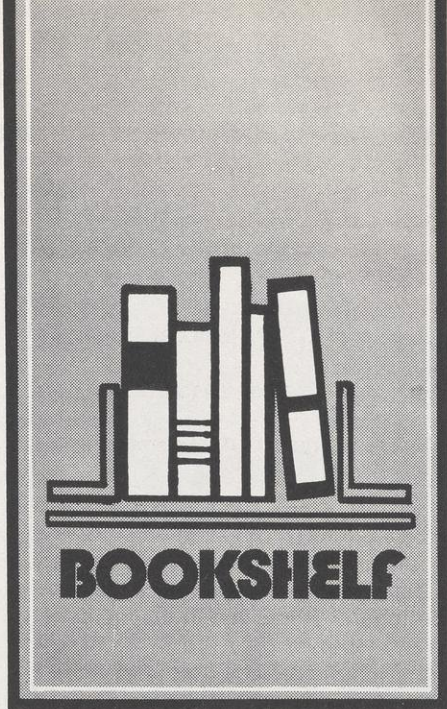
by Mary Atkinson,
illustrated by Christine Engla Eber.
Lollipop Power (P.O. Box 1171,
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514), 1979,
\$2.35, 40 pages, grades 1-4

María Teresa is a charming story about a young Chicana who moves to a small Midwestern town and is directly faced with discrimination for the first time in her life. Signs of outright discrimination are few (nobody in school can pronounce her name and students giggle when trying to do so); but María Teresa (Maritere) notices other things that set her apart—the grocery store doesn't stock some of the staples used by Maritere's mother; there's not enough room on the library card to write her entire name; and the children in her class seem to avoid her.

An alter-ego is the device used by the author to rescue María Teresa from the loneliness of discrimination. *Monteja la oveja* (Monteja the sheep) is a hand puppet to whom Maritere confides everything. Monteja gives advice and support, all the while speaking only in Spanish (the passages are translated at the end of the book). It is only when Maritere takes Monteja to "Show and Tell" and speaks through the puppet's mouth that the other children begin to respond to her. The story ends with Maritere and Tracy, an Anglo girl, seemingly becoming fast friends.

There are two flaws in the story that, although not major, do detract from its effectiveness. The first is that the answer to María Teresa's dilemma seems too pat. In the best of all worlds, this should indeed be the ending. We do not, however, live in the best of all worlds. To reflect reality more fully, the story could have been developed so that some of the complexities which are always present in such situations could be brought to the surface.

Another problem concerns the roles that people have in the story. Granted



that there is a dire need for people in non-traditional roles, in this story *everyone* is in a non-traditional role, so much so that this in itself becomes a stereotype (the leading characters are two females; the elementary school teacher is a man; there is no father in the home; the puppet is female). In fact, there is such a forced attempt to portray people in different roles that the very credulity of the story is strained as a result.

In spite of these flaws, the story is a pleasant one. The black-and-white illustrations are quite good, the use of Spanish is a nice touch, and overall there seems to be a real sensitivity to the kinds of discrimination suffered by Hispanic children. This book would certainly be a good introduction to the issue of prejudice for children who have never suffered its effects. [Sonia Nieto]

Freedom Road

by James D. Forman.
Franklin Watts, 1979,
\$6.90, 115 pages, grades 8-up

This is a "fictional reconstruction of the first weekend of that Freedom Summer" in 1964, during which three young civil rights workers were murdered by the Klan and its police allies. Because the occasion is still so vivid to anti-racists over thirty-five (espe-

cially one who has had a nodding acquaintance with the parents of two of the victims), it is difficult to consider this as any sort of fiction. Michael Schwerner, the principal white character, is fleshed out by the author. James Chaney, the Black in the trio, is somewhat less clearly depicted. Andrew Goodman, the other white who arrived in the South one day before he was murdered, remains a shadowy, peripheral character. The story unfolds with chilling suspense—even for this reader who knew what was going to happen.

Children's books about the civil rights struggles of the sixties are indeed welcome and needed. Young people can benefit from understanding the kind of sustained efforts required to effect change. Therefore, this book is recommended, although a few points are troubling. When so many more Blacks are killed fighting for their rights than are whites, why do publishers find the murder of whites more book-worthy? It could be because the whites could have avoided those situations and are therefore seen as martyrs giving their lives for others. Or it could be because the full humanity of whites is more readily perceived by publishers. Whatever the reason, children's books on these issues should certainly present Black perspectives at least as frequently as they do those of whites. But that does not happen because so few Black authors get published and not enough white authors convey the Black perspective.

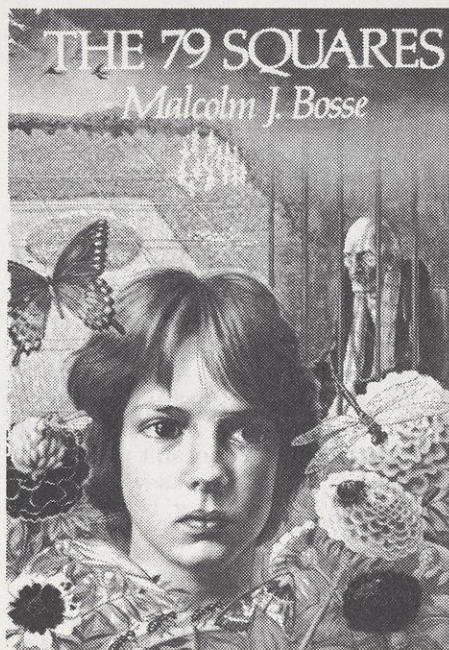
In this book, as in most others, the author's race is telegraphed without need of a jacket portrait. For instance, Forman's Introduction uses the word "Negro" interchangeably with "black," although "Negro" is not used by most Blacks today. Forman describes "Mobs, black and white . . . in a spectacle of racial violence which had been simmering for centuries." He then continues, "The black had good cause ever since he [sic] had been kidnapped from Africa and sold into bondage, the southern white since he had lost the Civil War." This equation of centuries of vicious oppression with the loss of a four-year war would hardly be a comparison offered by an Afro American writer.

At the end of this book Forman,

writing about the changes which have occurred since 1964, says: "For the young of the television generation there are wider identifications. They do not want to be seen as rednecks in the space age." A Black author would not leave out the word "white" before "young," because the next sentence does not apply to Black youths. In addition, given today's headlines about the resurgence of the Klan in the South and its popularity with young whites in the North, Forman's conclusions seem unduly optimistic.

The point is not that an author's color should *not* be identifiable by his/her writing. Authors' culture, background and perspective inevitably surface in what they write. That's fine. But whites in our society have been trained to consider themselves the "norm." For example, when white authors write about "people" they take it for granted that the "people" are white, and often leave out the word "white"; this results in a subtle form of racism.

Nevertheless, this is a good book, written to oppose racism. [Lyla Hoffman]



tantly agrees to let Mr. Beck teach him to "see the garden," though he doesn't know what this means. Gradually Mr. Beck teaches Eric the process of really "seeing" things which has enabled the old man to survive prison and to become an artist. Eric divides the garden into 79 six-foot squares and spends an hour in each one, looking. He moves from boredom to fascination to identification with every ant and twig. He reads everything he can find about insects, birds, plants, weather. In an exhilarating half-hour when he barely survives a thunderstorm in the garden, Eric realizes that he has become a part of the garden. He finds a place in the ravine that he wants to learn to see, too; the process will work anywhere.

But oppressive social forces are at work. Townspeople, outraged at Mr. Beck's 40-year-old crime, and gang members jealous of Eric's defection close in on the pair in the garden. First come ugly phone calls, then broken windows, finally an attack. Eric defends his friend. By the end of the book, the old man has died, but Eric has found his own strength. He has resisted pressure from his family, eventually earning their respect, and he has begun to make solid friendships with some young people, perhaps with his brother.

The 79 Squares is an anti-ageist

book. It shows Mr. Beck as a strong, intelligent, perceptive person.

The book is also anti-materialistic. Eric's family is fairly wealthy, but the parents almost never eat dinner with their children. Mr. Beck, on the other hand, shares with Eric a skill that costs nothing but makes life worthwhile. *The 79 Squares* shows the value of human commitment; Eric moves from being the discontent Solo to being someone who risks everything for a friend.

Unfortunately, this otherwise excellent book does convey some sexism. Only one female character, Sophia Beck, is strong and admirable. The others are not. Eric's mother is a clubwoman who neglects her children; his sister cares only about social appearances; one female neighbor is an alcoholic; another is a gossip. Then there is the girl who allows herself to get dunked repeatedly in the swimming pool. "Solo was appalled by her acceptance of his violence. . . . It made him ashamed and angry that she chose not to resist more."

One Black character appears briefly in the otherwise all-white cast. His treatment is partly anti-stereotypical (he's not a gang member) and partly stereotypical (he has "catlike agility" and is a super achiever).

Overall, *The 79 Squares* is valuable, particularly for its depiction of a friendship between an old person and a young one. The story is so compelling and the imagery so visual that the reader seems to see it all happening. This is only appropriate because the story is about learning to see. [Anne G. Toensmeier]

The 79 Squares

by Malcolm J. Bosse.
T.Y. Crowell, 1979,
\$7.95, 185 pages, grades 7-up

Eric is a fourteen-year-old member of a clique of outcasts. This summer he is on probation for vandalism. His wealthy suburban family, except for his lonely younger brother, are so busy being upwardly mobile that they leave Eric to himself.

Mr. Beck is eighty-two. His daughter has just arranged for his release from prison, where he has served 40 years for a crime of passion. He has only a few months to live. If the townspeople do not learn of Mr. Beck's history, he can live those months in peace. Every day he sits in a lawn chair, looking at the garden.

In spite of his stereotypes about old people, the disapproval of his gang and his parents, and the stern warnings from his probation officer Eric—"Solo" to his gang—develops a powerful friendship with Mr. Beck. He reluc-

An Illustrated History of the Chinese in America

by Ruthanne Lum McCunn.
Design Enterprises of
San Francisco, 1979,
\$11.95 hardback, \$6.95 paper,
129 pages, grades 5-9

Although this illustrated history reveals the role of the Chinese in settling this country, it is also a brutal account of the overt racist persecution of a race of people. The abuses and

atrocities against Chinese people need to be documented as they are here, but it is disturbing that the author perpetuates stereotypic images. Three examples follow.

In the preface, the author "explains" that the history of the Chinese in the U.S. has not been told by stating, "Perhaps this oversight is due to the fact that Chinese-Americans still number less than a million in a nation of 220 million." There is no doubt the author knows the facts behind this rationalization because she notes that the Chinese were excluded from this country. However, she avoids any specific mention of the U.S. government's role in the overt racial persecution and exclusion of an entire race from the freedoms it professed as the rights of all human beings. Such an omission allows for continued misconceptions and reinforces prejudices.

The author is also guilty for not dispelling the common stereotype about the Chinese use of opium. Opium is merely described as a "powerful drug," without any indication of the insidiousness of drug addiction and the imperialistic intent of the English who forcibly introduced opium to China. The author's explanation of why opium was accepted by the Chinese is too simplistic and indicts an entire race: "Life for many of the Chinese people was often unbearably hard. Opium made them forget their troubles." Opium smoking no doubt was at one time wide spread among rich and poor, but it was soon affordable only by the rich who suffered few hardships.

The author also continues to perpetuate the Westerner's belief that all Chinese men held their queues in reverence because it was a sign of their manhood! This explanation is nonsense and should be so labelled. Manchurian rulers threatened all Chinese men with beheading if they were found without a queue. Consequently, if a Chinese immigrant ever hoped to return to his homeland to see his loved ones, he had to return with his queue intact.

Teachers looking for classroom material would do better to use *Roots: An Asian American Reader* (Asian American Studies Center, UCLA). [Charles W. Lee]

I Wish Laura's Mommy Was My Mommy

by Barbara Power,
illustrated by Marilyn Hafner.
Lippincott Junior Books, 1979,
\$7.95, 46 pages, grades k-3

Jennifer, a six- or seven-year-old who must make her own bed, clear the table after meals, serve herself breakfast and eat wholesome snacks to set a good example for her two younger brothers envies her friend, Laura. Laura is an only child. Laura's mother serves the girls delectable snacks after school, doesn't insist that Laura help with housework, and seems to have nothing better to do than to serve the children (and her husband).

Then Jennifer's mother decides to go back to work. She employs Laura's mother as a family day-care provider. (A family day-care provider, unlike a babysitter, cares for children in her/his own home instead of the children's home.) Laura's mother, finding herself busy with small children in her home, no longer has the time to be the "model" mother Jennifer envied. And Jennifer's mother and father become less harried and able to devote more time to Jennifer.

Barbara Power has written a story perfectly adapted to a child's level of

understanding, that naturally and sympathetically explains the pressures, the difficulties and the benefits of mothers' employment outside the home. Furthermore, she and illustrator Marilyn Hafner have sensitively depicted two families with quite different lifestyles whose behavior becomes more similar in response to economic circumstances. The book offers many opportunities for adults to initiate discussions with children about work in the home, work for wages, family life, nutrition, and the roles and responsibilities of family members.

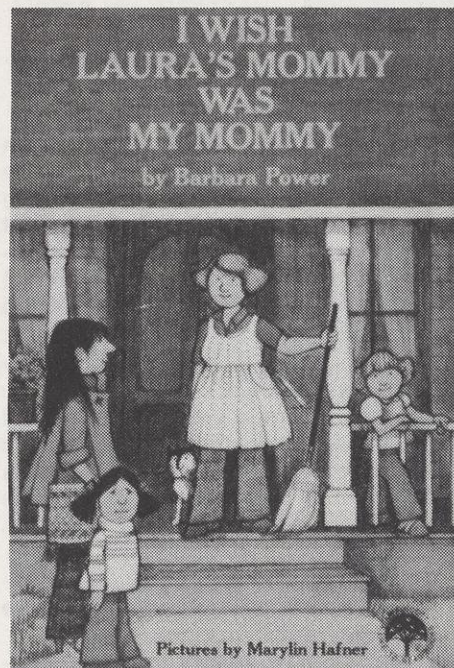
The black-and-white drawings are completely engaging. Although both families depicted in this book are white, their experiences transcend racial or cultural background. [The Multicultural Project, Cambridge, Mass.]

Bright Fawn and Me

by Jay Leech and Zane Spencer,
illustrated by Glo Coalson.
T.Y. Crowell, 1979,
\$6.95, unpagged, grades p.s.-3

The setting of this picture book is a journey made by a group of Cheyenne people to a trade fair "on Horse Creek near the North Platte River in Western Nebraska." We learn this from the brief foreword; the text itself is just one long complaint by the narrator against her little sister, Bright Fawn. The narrator has to fold her sleeping robe, Bright Fawn gets to play with her doll. Bright Fawn "rides on the travois and plays with her doll," while the narrator has to walk—and so on. Only at the very end, after another girl throws leaves on the little one and calls her a pest, does the big sister come to Bright Fawn's defense and decide that she is not so bad after all. Finis.

The jacket blurb claims that author Leech has "an intense avocational interest in American Indian culture," but neither the authors nor the illustrator demonstrate very much familiarity with Native American culture or history. When does this story supposedly take place? The book's introduction says "more than one hundred years ago." The illustrations, in



shades of brown, tan and mud-purple, show that the Cheyenne do not yet have horses—although there are a couple wandering around at the fair—which would certainly make it prior to the 19th century. On the other hand, the Navajo women have long, full skirts and velveteen blouses, and they are depicted wearing, and offering for trade, squash blossom necklaces, which would make it no earlier than the 1880's. At that time, most Native people were pretty busy just keeping alive, never mind running around to trade fairs, supposing there were any.

Except in one illustration, only the women are shown doing any work. The men (who are called "braves") stand around looking gorgeous, running races, talking and such. The pictures are filled with tipis, pots, blankets and other objects, all covered with suns, animals and amorphous zigs and zags to "look Indian," without the illustrator's having to do the work of reproducing actual Native designs. Although the Introduction says that the Trade Fair was attended by "Indians from many tribes," the illustrations show only Navajo and people in a sort of generalized northern plains dress.

This is not a *badly* racist book, in the sense of the feather-bedecked, blood-thirsty, howling savage or "I is for Indian," but in spite of the trappings, there is nothing "Indian" about it, either. It is a little piece of Western middle-class sibling rivalry in buckskin dress which implies that such behaviors are universal. In other words, this is the usual rip-off. [Doris Seale]

Complete Version of Ye Three Blind Mice

by John W. Ivimey,
illustrated by Walton Courbould.
Fredrick Warne, 1979,
\$6.95, unpagged, grades 1-3

The *Complete Version of Ye Three Blind Mice* is a new edition of a book which was first published in England in 1904. My sympathies to the unsuspecting child who finds this handicapist, stereotypic piece of trash on his/her bookshelf.

This book reinforces the prejudicial view that disability leads to emotional disturbance:

The bramble hedge was most unkind:
It scratched their eyes and made them blind,
And soon each mouse went out of his mind,
These three Sad Mice.

The poem then goes on to introduce the equally handicapist idea of the magical cure—these mice are given some medicine and recover their sight and severed tails.

The book falsely equates a disability such as blindness with illness ("Three Sick Mice"); it also implies that disability is a bizarre and/or amusing sight—"Did you ever see such a sight in your life/ As three Blind Mice!" The illustrations showing one mouse using a cane and another with an insect guide are insulting.

In total, the *Complete Version of Ye Three Blind Mice* is one of the most handicapist, stereotypic and thoroughly offensive books I have had the misfortune to read in years; it is an affront to children and adults with disabilities. [Paula Wolff]

How Does It Feel to Be Old?

by Norma Farber,
illustrated by Trina S. Hyman.
Dutton, 1979,
\$7.95, 32 pages, grades p.s.-3

If the querulous, whiny old woman who is this book's protagonist reflects how Norma Farber feels to be old, we can only offer her our sympathy. But when her peevish complaints are presented as the essence of old age itself, then we must challenge this one-sided picture. Every nasty stereotype that our society inflicts on older people is here. (For example, in one picture the woman is shown as an ill-tempered old harridan holding up an entire line in the supermarket as she shrieks complaints.) The text's mawkish verse is distasteful. It is filled with the protagonist's self-contempt, and in the end she moans with soggy sentimentality that the flowers will still be blooming when Grandma is dead.

The "I" in the book is totally self-

absorbed. She is interested in nothing outside herself, and she is concerned about other people only as they relate to her. She is completely focused on the past and obviously cares not at all for anything in the present. While she does accept the inevitability of her death and the fact that she has only a limited time left (as indeed we all do), she has no sense of filling her last days with a special richness that becomes possible at this time.

In short, she accepts without question the limitations which the stereotypes place upon older people. Apparently, she is unaware of what is being imposed upon her, and she is certainly not angry about it. To understand just how distorted this picture of old age really is, we need only think of older people who do not fit this circumscribed view. I remember a children's librarian in my own community who did a radio broadcast on children's books until she was past eighty. Or my friend who, in mid-seventies, has just completed her term as president of the Mental Health Association of our populous county. Or even the group with whom I backpacked across the Grand Canyon last fall—three people were in their seventies and three more in their late sixties. We can multiply these examples many times.

The three great problems of older people in our culture are loneliness, poor health and poverty. Farber deals only superficially with the first and ignores the other two altogether.

The book's style is no better than its content. The verse has no poetic quality. It is full of singsong rhymes and trite images. In short, it is dull doggerel. Hyman's illustrations, with their devastating detail, are merely well-drawn cartoons. They deny the book's protagonist any kind of unique personal quality and any dignity at all. It is instructive to compare this book with the genuine poetry and passion in the statements of older people that Ronald Blythe presents in his fine adult book on aging, *The View in Winter* (Harcourt, 1979).

One older woman who read Farber's book gave it "A for awful" and "O for obnoxious." As for myself, an older human being who turned sixty-five last fall, I feel personally insulted by it. [Betty Bacon]

Law Students File Complaint with HEW

Law students at the University of California at Berkeley filed a complaint in April, 1979, with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare charging that they are being deprived of an adequate education because of the lack of women and minorities on the faculty.

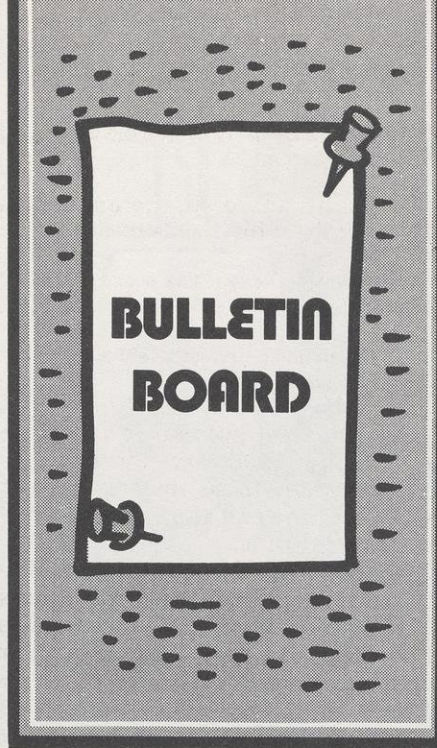
The student group, The Coalition for a Diversified Faculty, filed the complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The statutes prohibit discrimination against students on the basis of race and sex respectively in institutions receiving federal assistance. The complaint did not charge the law school with any specific act of discrimination. However, included with the complaint were numerous affidavits from women, minority and white male students giving instances of how their education was affected by the lack of women and minorities on the faculty. There are four women and two members of minority groups among the 45 faculty members at the Berkeley law school. One-third of the more than 800 students are women, and one-quarter are minority group members.

—The Project on the Status and Education of Women, *Summer/Fall, 1979*

Nestle Boycott Continues

Some time ago *Bulletin* readers were asked to join an international boycott of Nestlé products (Vol. 10, No. 5). The boycott had been organized to protest Nestlé's policy of encouraging mothers in developing countries to use Nestlé powdered milk formulas instead of breast feeding—a practice which leads to widespread infant malnutrition, diarrhea and death.

Correction: The resource list on nuclear energy that appeared in Vol. 10, No. 7 of the *Bulletin* gave the price of *Energy Bibliography* (published by National Intervenors, Inc., Washington, D.C.) as \$2. in hardcover, 60¢ in paperback. There is, however, only a paperback edition; its cost is \$2. plus 60¢ postage.



Since then, readers may have read of a UNICEF meeting on "Infant and Young Child Feeding" held in Geneva last fall. Reports implied that as a result of that meeting Nestlé would change its marketing practices. However, this has not been the case, and, in fact, Nestlé has mounted a massive public relations campaign aimed at stopping the increasingly successful boycott.

We ask readers to continue to boycott all Nestlé products and those of their subsidiaries including Libby's, Crosse & Blackwell, Stouffer and L'Oreal. For a complete list and more information on the boycott, write IN-FACT, 1701 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis, Minn. 55414.

Jane Addams Book Prize Awarded

Many Smokes, Many Moons (Lippincott, 1978) by Jamake Highwater has been chosen for the 1979 Jane Addams Peace Association Children's Book Award. Ossie Davis, author of *Escape to Freedom: A Play about Young Frederick Douglass* (Viking, 1978), and Katherine Paterson, author of *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (Crowell, 1978), will receive Honor Awards.

Since 1953 the Jane Addams Children's Book Award has been given annually by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Jane Addams Peace Association for a book that most effectively promotes peace, social justice and world community.

CIBC on the Road

We welcome the invitation from the University of California, Los Angeles, for an open discussion May 3 of the issues that have long separated CIBC from the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF). It was OIF that led a conservative move in the American Library Association to rescind the Racism and Sexism Awareness Resolution—a move that was rebuffed by the Association's membership. Dr. Robert Moore will speak for CIBC. Judith Krug will represent OIF. The third panelist will be Professor Steven Shiffrin of UCLA's Law School. The presentation will take place at the James West Alumni Center, at 2:30 p.m.

Additional discussion on the issues will take place this summer at the American Library Association's annual conference to be held in New York City. Attorney Howard E. Meyer, author of *The Amendment That Refused to Die*, a history of the Fourteenth Amendment (Beacon Press, 1978), will speak for the CIBC. He and Dorothy Samuels of the American Civil Liberties Union will discuss the legal aspects of consciousness-raising and the interdependence of the First and the Fourteenth Amendments. Responding will be a panel selected by a joint task force of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table and the Social Responsibilities Round Table. The program will take place Monday, June 30, from 2 to 5:30 P.M. (librarians, please check ALA catalog for place). High priority is being given to audience participation. We think this will be an extremely important program, and we urge readers to participate and to inform their friends and colleagues about it.

CIBC's outreach is expanding dramatically. Since last reported, our officers and staff have made presentations on the work of CIBC in seven

Continued on page 30

Alert to Readers

Beware of wolves in new clothing! Currently on sale in supermarkets is *The Sesame Street Treasury*, a four-volume repackaging of the first 12 volumes of the 15-volume Sesame Street Library that was criticized in Volume 10, No. 5.

On TV, Getting Older Doesn't Mean Getting Better

Old people are not seen very often on TV drama, and when they are seen, they are portrayed as powerless and inferior. These were some of the findings of a two-year research project at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications. Some other findings:

- The more TV viewers watch, the more they believe that people, especially women, reach old age earlier in life and that the number of old people is declining instead of increasing.

- Old people are shown as less serious but more stubborn and eccentric than other TV characters.

- On TV, younger women play opposite older men, so a disproportionate number of young women are seen on TV.

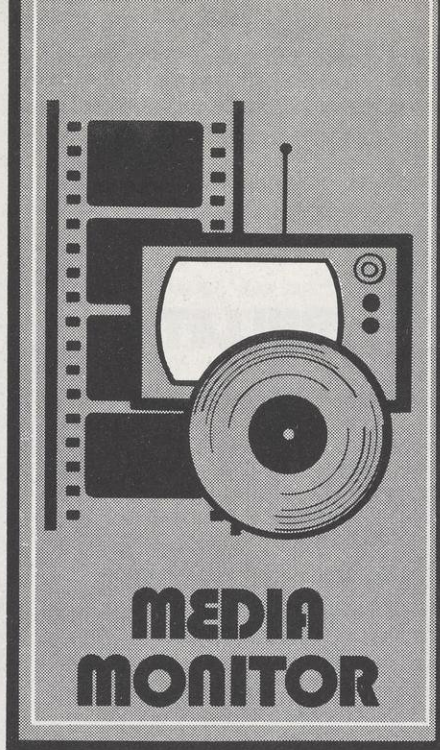
—From *Media Watch*, the newsletter of the National Committee for Broadcasting, Fall, 1979.

Film on Sex Roles

Happy to Be Me; 16 mm. color film; 25 minutes; \$425 purchase, \$40 rental first day, \$20 each additional day; Arthur Mokin Productions, Inc., 17 West 60 St., New York, N.Y. 10023.

Happy to Be Me is a sensitive, handsomely produced documentary which provides needed insights concerning attitudes held by children and young adults concerning gender and sex roles, and it quietly underscores the cultural and societal influences that may determine the formation of such attitudes. The film is based on the results of a survey conducted among more than 600 school children from kindergarten through twelfth grade who reside in one of the most culturally and economically diverse areas in New York City. This is an enormous advantage since it permits the film to illustrate the rich flavor of a multicultural society and to indicate ways in which cultural patterns may influence attitudes toward gender and sex roles.

The students are treated with dignity and sensitivity as they discuss with an unseen interviewer their feelings about their own sex and their perceptions concerning appropriate sex roles. Many talk freely about ways in which family experiences influence their thinking. More mature students reflect on societal attitudes and their own acceptance or rejection



of these views. While many of the sentiments expressed by the students, particularly those in the lower grades, indicate that they have accepted many of the stereotypic conceptions concerning gender and acceptable sex roles, there are strong indications that many others have already developed more open attitudes.

The producers wisely allow the words and actions of the students to speak for themselves. Many statements are used as effective counterpoint to engaging scenes of students participating in leisure time activities in the school playground and in the neighborhood. This is an appealing film in every respect, rich in material that can be used in a variety of settings. Teacher educators will find it invaluable in aiding inservice and preservice teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators to examine their own attitudes and the messages they may be conveying to students and colleagues. Parent groups and instructors of women's studies will



One of the students interviewed in *Happy To Be Me*.

also find it extremely useful. It can also be used to advantage with students from the intermediate grades through high school in the areas of social studies, career guidance, women's studies and family living.

A lesson plan is provided with the film as well as a detailed report of the questions asked and an analysis of the results. Highly recommended.

Counting Rhymes Recorded

Who Goes First? Quien Va Primero? Children's Counting-Out Rhymes in English and Spanish; collected by Kay Hill. Folkways Records FC7857, 1978, \$7.98.

According to the descriptive notes inside the record jacket, "The basic purposes of this bilingual collection of counting-out rhymes are to have a little fun and to give children in particular a glimpse of children in another culture in a way that fosters cross-cultural identification in spite of differences." Certainly this is a noble objective; unfortunately, the record falls short on both counts.

First, I would challenge any young child to listen to this record, not only in its entirety, but even in short segments. Because of their very nature, the rhymes are repetitious. This is fine if children are learning one or two rhymes, but anything more becomes boring, particularly since the record has no music and the adult voices with no accompaniment tend to be quite monotonous. In fact, I cannot imagine why this collection was made into a record; the material would have been much more effective as a teacher's guide.

In the second place, it is difficult to see how counting rhymes in and of themselves can give children a cross-cultural glimpse unless there are very clear activities for teachers to follow. Simply knowing that a particular rhyme comes from Peru will not teach children anything about the life that children lead in Peru.

The idea behind the album is certainly a good one and the compiler did a noteworthy job in presenting such a varied selection of rhymes. In addition, the material is a potentially unique way of introducing multicultural concerns at an early age. I would hope that the compiler would give some thought to putting together a book with the same theme; it would certainly be a more useful tool for teachers. [Sonia Nieto]

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.

The Day Care Book

by Grace Mitchell.
Stein and Day, 1979,
\$10, 239 pages

The New Extended Family: Day Care That Works

by Ellen Galinsky and
William H. Hooks.
Houghton Mifflin, 1977,
\$6.95 paperback, 280 pages

Adequate day care is still a dream for the future. Proposed legislation that would have provided an additional \$90 million in federal funds to set up day-care centers was recently withdrawn because its sponsor, Senator Cranston, felt it wasn't receiving enough support. Perhaps the fatal blow to the bill came when the White House representative produced a long list of reasons why the bill was unnecessary.

Ask any parent looking for a decent child-care facility if more and better services are necessary and you will most likely get a very different story (see the *Bulletin*, Vol. 6, Nos. 5 & 6). The most recent statistics on day care (1975) show that only one-sixth of the established need is being met by publicly funded facilities—and these often provide poor and inadequate services.

So what's a parent to do? Two recent books on day care—*The Day Care Book* by Grace Mitchell and *The New Extended Family* by Ellen Galinsky and William H. Hooks—were written with the expressed purpose of helping parents deal more effectively with present realities. These books have a lot of points in common. Both wholeheartedly support day care and see it as a potentially positive force in the lives of parents and children. The books share a common concern with the full development of the whole child; both show an awareness of the limiting



effects of race, class and sex role stereotypes. Both titles provide many helpful hints and detailed check lists of what to look for when choosing a program. Both give a praiseworthy overview of day care in this country (Mitchell looked at over 150 centers nationwide and Galinsky and Hooks visited numerous centers and programs coast to coast).

The authors' approach to their research, though, is somewhat different. Mitchell starts with a hypothesis of what quality day care is and sets out to test it in different geographic locales with various ethnic, cultural and economic groups. In a free-flowing, home-spun style that integrates theory and anecdotes extremely well, she looks at the standard forms of day care including family day care, group day care, infant care and school-age programs. Throughout, she stresses the importance of a staff's commitment and concern as essential ingredients for quality care. Her philosophy of "I am, I can" emphasizes a positive self-image and competence for all children. Overall, she proves that the traditional humanist values of early childhood education are relevant for a variety of settings.

Galinsky and Hooks, associated with Bank Street College of Education, have a decidedly progressive educational philosophy, but they seem to have reserved their definition of quality day care until the completion of their exploration. Their definition, therefore,

is more creative and complex.

Galinsky and Hooks use the same outline to discuss each program, systematically examining the program's origin, goals, parent participation, etc. At times this makes the book somewhat dry and repetitive, but the vitality of each of the 14 programs examined still seems to emerge. (The multi-racial photographs are also an asset.) The programs include the forms of day care in the Mitchell book and also present other options, including an experimental program that relies on the informal care existing in every neighborhood. They found that the "best programs have goals that address themselves to the needs as well as the values of the communities they serve."

Galinsky and Hooks present a more dynamic and political view of day care than Mitchell. While Mitchell is defensive about the need for private day care and, in fact, values "private enterprise," Galinsky and Hooks are more wary of industrial day care and profit-making schemes (they stress cooperative efforts and the significance of networking isolated day-care units). Mitchell wants to improve the system which grants both licensing and supervising functions to the same individuals; Galinsky and Hooks prefer to separate these roles. Mitchell flatly states that she is against free day care for all and feels people will only respect a service if they have to pay for it. Galinsky and Hooks state that people they interviewed seem to support a sliding fee scale, but they present a sophisticated alternative for funding which includes parents (either in time and/or money), government, community and private agencies, as well as industry. They also recognize the importance of separating day care from the present welfare system which stigmatizes day care as a "do-good society's token for the poor."

Mitchell seems to stress making the most of what is provided; Galinsky and Hooks go a step further. They never shy away from advocating activism to achieve the best opportunities for children. If there is any reason to be optimistic about the future of day care in this country, it comes from reading their *The New Extended Family* and sensing the indefatigable and creative spirit of people who are working to change the conditions that limit their lives. [Vicki Breitbart]

We welcome letters for publication in the *Bulletin*, and unless advised to the contrary, we assume that all letters to the CIBC or *Bulletin* may be published.—Editors.

Dear CIBC:

As an elementary school teacher, a subscriber to the *Bulletin*, and a member of the Safe Energy Alliance of Alabama, I was thrilled to see the editorial, "Anti-Nuclear Struggle—Another 'Ism'?" in Vol. 10, No. 7, and the bibliography is excellent! Also, I applaud your plans to devote further attention to the issue of nuclear power.

The education committee of the Safe Energy Alliance (SEA)-Birmingham Chapter has been working on educational presentations to schools and offer our assistance to teachers in preparing their own programs on nuclear power. Last year we sent packets of information on nuclear power and safe energy alternatives to area high school debate teams as the national debate issue was "energy." Our information was well received since they had been inundated with materials from our electric utility.

We are beginning to get calls to make presentations to elementary, junior high and high school classes and are actively seeking audiences with them. Thank goodness the need for a balanced view is recognized by some teachers. Teachers of gifted students are the most interested. One problem that has arisen for ourselves and the teachers is parental response. Some teachers tell me that they get angry calls from the parents for presenting these controversial issues. It appears that the power company's presentation is not controversial, only the opposing viewpoint: the anti-nuclear one. Yet, for the most part, teachers find our presentations honest and refreshing. It is probably the same everywhere, but our local power company spends thousands and thousands of dollars on public relations and educational programs which they present to all schools. The need to reach teachers and schools to encourage a fair and balanced presentation of the issues is an urgent and vital concern, as it is with any biased program.

The following comments concern the interrelationships expressed in the editorial.

Ageism: Here is another slant to



the ageist tie-in:

A Look Backward at Retirement
Arthur Cherkin, Veterans Administration Center, Sepulveda, California, recommends that skilled "SWAT teams" of senior citizens should be trained to cope with Three Mile Island type accidents. He offers three reasons:

—that older workers are less likely than younger ones to have children and thus pass on genetic mutations;

—that older people are unlikely to live long enough to receive cancer from exposure to radiation;

—that older people will have the opportunity to work after retirement.

—Birmingham News, 11/15/79

Racism, Elitism or Classism: Because of the dangers of nuclear power plants, they are primarily being built

Dear Reader—

May we suggest that letters to us NOT be addressed to "Dear Sir"? Those of us who happen to be women are rather put off by this form of address, particularly when the request is for non-sexist material! For non-sexist communications, may we suggest "Dear Friend," "Dear Person," "Dear CIBC staff," Dear *anything* that acknowledges that the recipient may be of the male or the female persuasion. (In spite of recent *New York Times* comments about graceless and cumbersome letter salutations, we'll take awkwardness over sexism any day.)

or are encouraged to be built in rural and/or remote areas (although many of the older plants were built near large cities). These areas tend to be economically depressed. The poor Blacks and whites who live in these areas are so glad to have the opportunity to work, such as in construction or as "sponges," that even when they are knowledgeable of the dangers of the plants (which isn't always the case), they ignore this because of their need to feed and support their families.

Anti-humanism: The nuclear industry's reduction of all people to a faceless, expendable commodity in the interest of their self-preservation and profits. (In the event of nuclear plant disaster, as at TMI, even the rich can get nuked.)

I have xeroxed the *Bulletin* editorial and included it for the next mailout through the southeast communication network. This network reaches peace, anti-nuke, safe energy, and some women's and civil rights groups in the southeast. I did this in hopes that you will get more subscribers and input on your ideas in the editorial.

Thank you for your work and efforts.

Debra Gordon-Hellman
Birmingham, Ala.

Dear CIBC:

Your article on the book about the Civil War ["The Old South Rises Again," Vol. 10, No. 8] was lucid and reasonable and a contribution. . . . Probably the publishers thought they were making a great concession to the Union just to call that war the "Civil War." The worst I ever heard it called was in South Carolina—"the War of Northern Aggression."

Mary Neville Woodrich
New Day Press
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear CIBC:

I am writing on behalf of the pueblo of Macanche, an agricultural, grass hut village of approximately 3,000 people in the northeastern part of Guatemala. Without electricity or running water, the greatest resource of the pueblo is human energy. The desire to learn here is pervasive as is evidenced by their current construc-

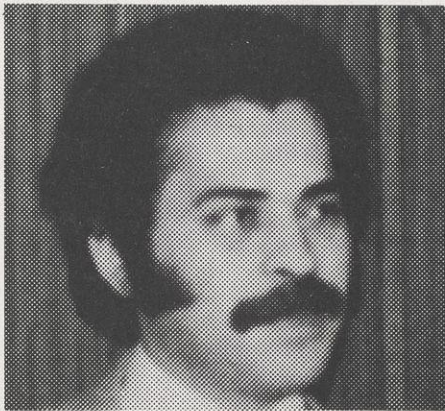
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EL CABALLERO

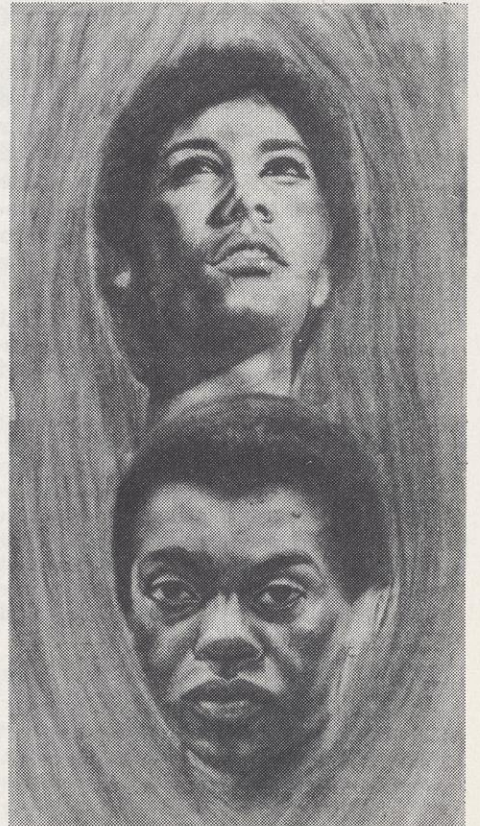
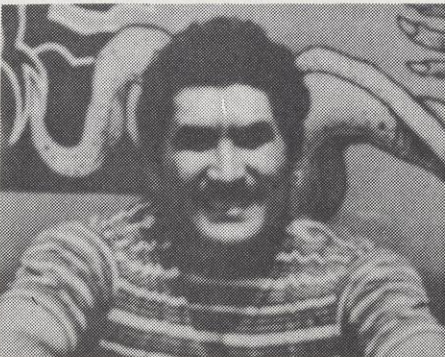
Por ALFONSO CUESTA Y CUESTA



ILLUSTRATOR'S SHOWCASE



Alex Castro, whose work appears at the right, has studied and taught in both the U.S. and Puerto Rico. His work has been shown in numerous museums, cultural and education centers. Mr. Castro can be reached at 887 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11226; tel.: (212) 284-3443 or (212) 284-8577.



Edward Carbajal, whose work appears above, is a free-lance illustrator. Mr. Carbajal studied at Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles; his work has appeared in many publications including *La Opinion*. Mr. Carbajal can be reached at 3348 Pepper Ave., Los Angeles, Cal. 90065; tel.: (213) 221-4878.

states and, in addition, in Europe and in Latin America.

Last September, CIBC made an all-day presentation to the U.S. Office of Education on "Stereotyping and Bias in Learning Materials." The presentation, sponsored by OE's Horace Mann Learning Center, was for program officers, curriculum specialists and others at OE in a position to evaluate materials. Dr. Beryle Banfield presented criteria for evaluating instructional materials, and Dr. Moore gave an analysis of the subtle stereotypes and distortions that exist in current textbooks.

Shown during the afternoon were the filmstrips produced by CIBC's Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators: "Unlearning 'Indian' Stereotypes," "Identifying Racism in Children's Books," and "Identifying Sexism in Children's Books." During the discussion that followed, one OE program officer said: "Maybe we should start re-evaluating the children's TV programs we've been funding and take a look at the hidden messages they contain."

In November, an international conference to consider the role of children's books, magazines and comics in the teaching of human rights selected Beryle Banfield as conference vice president. A content analysis of French children's books and magazines by Marcel Neveux of Monaco University showed the very extensive presence of racist, sexist and other biases. The conference was organized by AMADE (L'Association Mondiale des Amis de l'Enfance) and sponsored by UNESCO. It took place in Monaco. The conference voted the following resolution:

(Conference) recognises the important role of children's literature in the education of children and in the formation of their value systems. . . .

(Conference) requests immediate action from editors and journalists working in children's literature . . . to struggle (in their publications) against racism, racist discrimination, colonialism and apartheid, as well as against all other forms of economic, social and cultural discrimination, including those that still, too often, oppress women and young people.

CIBC also made a presentation at a "Publishers Meet Their Critics" conference sponsored by the School Division of the Association of American Publishers. The all-day conference took place November 13 at New York's Plaza Hotel.

Other November presentations and workshops were given at the national convention of the National Association for the Education of Young Children in Atlanta, Ga. on November 8 and at a national conference on "Stereotyping and Bias in Career Education," sponsored by the American Institute for Research, November 23 at Washington, D.C.

In January, Dr. Banfield and Dr. Moore gave lectures and conducted two-day workshops in Carlyle, Pa., on combatting stereotypes in curriculum materials. The program was sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education.

Recent support for CIBC from The United Methodist Women (UMW), led among other activities, to a CIBC workshop in February for the staff of that organization's Division of Education and Cultivation. The workshop was held in preparation for a major program to counteract institutional racism within the Methodist Church during the next two years.

"Class and Race in Latin American School Texts" was the topic of a week-long consultation held in San José, Costa Rica, March 10-14. This was the first spin-off of the World Council of Churches 1979 conference on children's books and school textbooks, held in Arnoldshain, FRG (*Bulletin*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2). CIBC vice president Irma Garcia, who represented CIBC at the consultation, reported a high degree of concern with issues of racism in instructional materials in a number of Latin American nations. She was particularly interested in the level of discussions on class issues. Her report on the conference will appear in a future *Bulletin*.

At a two-day institute in March devoted to "Building on the Strengths of the Black Child," Dr. Banfield introduced the fifth and sixth grade curriculum recently developed by CIBC, *Winning "Justice for All."*

In Lansing, Michigan, April 28, Dr. Al Schwartz will address teachers and administrators in the social studies and English departments of the Michigan schools. The conference is on multicultural education for the 1980's, and Dr. Schwartz will make the point that programs designed to promote multicultural values will succeed only after students develop an awareness of how racism and sexism operate to oppress minorities and women and how students can combat this oppression.

tion of a public library.

A Macanche family donated a piece of land, and the following day, men, women and children, all volunteers, came with machetes and axes to clear the entire lot. Despite tedious work from Monday to Saturday, a large group of men hiked to the bush on a Sunday to chop and haul wood for the building. Every day, after working in the "milpa," groups of men construct the building while the children help clean the wood.

Though the "monte" offers plenty of material for a building, the average \$2/day earnings per family, coupled with the absence of a source of literature within the village leaves the problem of obtaining books. The village has organized a letter writing campaign to appeal to organizations in Guatemala and other countries. They asked me to write to any organizations that I knew of in the U.S. that might be sympathetic and able to help their fledgling library. I have come to know of the Council through a number of the excellent books you have sponsored. I thought you might have some Spanish books on hand that you would be willing to donate. In addition if you have any other ideas on how to obtain books and/or grants for books we would be most appreciative if you would inform us.

Any assistance will be greatly appreciated. The excitement that the prospect of this library has generated is difficult to communicate. The people really want to make this library work. They keep saying books can offer them the opportunity to take their lives beyond the seemingly endless poverty cycle in which they and their children are immersed.

All correspondence (preferably in Spanish) may be addressed to: La Biblioteca de Macanche c/o Osmin Galban Zalaya, Macanche, Flores, Peten, Guatemala.

Thank you so much for your help.

Richard Sokolow
Macanche
Flores, Peten
Guatemala

Correction Note: The photographer's credit for four photos was inadvertently omitted from the last issue; the photos on pages 11, 12 and 14 were taken by Berger Erikson.

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Says *Top of the News* of the American Library Association:

. . . [T]hese excellent filmstrips . . . point out that the important thing to be aware of as we consider our collections is that even sexist and racist books can be teaching tools. . . . [S]ince both sexist and

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The set consists of two filmstrips, two cassettes, the script for each filmstrip, and copies of the *Interracial Digest*, Nos. One and Two.

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