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INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

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INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

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COVER

Stereotypic views of Native Americans bear little relation to real people like Barbara Nicholas and her daughter Naomi, Maliseets from New Brunswick. The article beginning on page 3 indicates that non-Indian children in both Germany and the U.S. have acquired similar stereotypic images of Native people. (Photo courtesy of the *Wabenaki Alliance,* a monthly Native American newspaper. Subscriptions are $5. for individuals, $10. for institutions; write the paper at 95 Main St., Orono, Maine 04473.)

Indexed in
Alternative Press Index
Education Index
ERIC *IRCD*

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Surveys of students reveal striking similarities and differences

"Indians" through German vs. U.S. Eyes

By Hartmut Lutz

Germans (and German-speaking Swiss and Austrians) share an enthusiastic interest in Native American peoples ("Indianertümelei," as it is called). There are even clubs such as "Prärie freunde" (Friends of the Prairie), in which adults make their own "Indian" costumes, hold "pow wows" and rodeos and study Native American cultures. This enthusiasm exists in the face of considerable prejudice and outright discrimination in West Germany today against Asians, Africans, Jews, Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) and many South European peoples. The complex roots of this "Indianertümelei"—which is not as positive as it first appears—are discussed later in this article, but it should be mentioned here that the German author Karl May has played a tremendous role in creating this phenomenon (see box on page 5).

Given this societal context, what are West German children's attitudes about Native Americans—and how do they compare with those of children in the U.S.? In 1977 colleagues and I conducted a six-week teaching project about Native Americans for several sixth grade classes (twelve-year-olds) in Osnabrück, West Germany. As part of the course, we developed a questionnaire asking students what they knew about Native Americans and how they saw them. The course materials have been published and used throughout West Germany, and many teachers have returned their questionnaires to us, so that a total of 461 forms have been evaluated. (It should be noted, however, that the questionnaires were not originally designed as part of a larger empirical study but as teaching tools within the project, *i.e.*, they were given to the students in the beginning of the course and were then evaluated and discussed with them, leading to lively dialogues about stereotypes, inaccurate information, Karl May and erroneous ideas the students had prior to the project.)

In 1979-80, while pursuing research in Native American Studies at Tecumseh Center of the University of California at Davis and at D-Q University (the Indian college), I discussed the German findings with my colleagues. As a result of our discussion, a translated version of the questionnaire was given to a sample of U.S. sixth graders (eleven-year-olds) in Woodland, California. The U.S. sample is much smaller (89 students) than the German and, in addition, the children were one year younger than the German students polled. The Woodland group contained several Chicano, Asian and Black as well as white students, whereas the West German students were all white. Both samples, however, were largely of lower- and middle-class background. It is, nonetheless, quite illuminating to compare questionnaire responses. The questions are given below in bold face type and are followed by information about the students' responses.

"Which Indian tribes do you know?" In both samples the Apache were the best known Native American nation (U.S. 18 per cent; West Germany 90 per cent).[1] Whereas the U.S. "popularity" of the Apache may be due to the appearance of "Apache Indians" in numerous Westerns and/or the stereotypic fear of "bloodthirsty Apaches" in the Southwest, their immense "popularity" in West Germany is undoubtedly due to the works of Karl May, whose fictional superhero, Winnetou, is supposed to be an Apache. In the Woodland sample, the Cherokee were listed next (11 per cent), although they only ranked 17th (1.7 per cent) in West Germany. The Sioux ranked second in Germany (76 per cent) and third in Woodland (9 per cent), where they were followed by the Mohawk (9 per cent), only mentioned once in the entire West German sample (0.3 per cent). The most common answer in Woodland to the query, however, was "I don't know" (33.7 per cent), whereas in West Germany less than five per cent of the students gave this reply. All in all, the West German students are acquainted with far more Native American groups than their U.S. peers, identifying an average of three nations as opposed to less then one per student in Woodland.

"If possible, list the names of famous Indians." In Germany, the Karl May fictional hero Winnetou was named most often (71 per cent), followed by a variety of racist epithets derived from German comic books like "Flat Foot," which comprised 36 per cent of the answers. The first historical person appeared next on the list—Sitting Bull (35 per cent), closely followed by a Karl May Apache, Intschu-tschuna (Winnetou's father, 6 per cent). Other names in the list of 29 identifiable persons were Crazy Horse (4.3 per cent), Cochise and Geronimo (3 per cent each) and Tecumseh (2 per cent), but fictional characters like James Fenimore Cooper's Chingachgook (4 per cent) and Uncas (0.2 per cent) and Karl May's Tangua, a bloodthirsty Kiowa chief (3 per cent), and Nscho-tschi (Winnetou's sister, 0.25 per cent) were also included. All in all, fictional characters outnumbered real people on a 2:1 scale in

[1] Although the abbreviation "U.S." is used throughout this article, it should be kept in mind that these figures are based on the very small number of students from Woodland, California.

James Fenimore Cooper

James Fenimore Cooper, who was born in New Jersey in 1789 and grew up in Cooperstown, New York, can be credited with awakening Europeans to the "Wild West" and "Indians." Cooper, who featured Native Americans in 11 of his novels, was remarkably popular in Europe. The five Leatherstocking Tales (*The Pioneers,* 1823; *The Last of the Mohicans,* 1826; *The Prairie,* 1827; *The Pathfinder,* 1840; and *The Deerslayer,* 1841) were the best known of his works and were read all over the Continent.

The Pioneers appeared in a French edition shortly after it was published in the U.S. in 1823, in a German edition in 1824, in Swedish and Spanish editions in 1827, in Danish in 1828, and in virtually every other European language in the years to come. The four other tales have also been translated into numerous European tongues. By 1927, 32 Russian editions of Cooper's works had appeared. A checklist of translations of Cooper's works fills ten pages for the years 1824-1911 in Preston Barba's monograph entitled *Cooper in Germany* (Indiana University Studies No. 21). In addition, *The Last of the Mohicans* was filmed in 1911, 1914, 1920, 1932 and 1936; in 1972, an eight-hour serialized version filmed in England appeared on PBS TV in the U.S.

Cooper was writing at a time when federal policy was devoted to removing Native Americans from the East and "relocating" them west of the Mississippi River either by bribery, threats, intimidation or force. Cooper did not speak out against the expropriation of Native lands or the attendant extermination of Native peoples. He subscribed to the contemporary notions of "savagery" and "civilization" and peopled his novels with ignoble "savages" who continuously try to murder white settlers. His books constitute an examination of the progress of "American civilization" westward. The books contain numerous stereotypic descriptions of Native people.

In *The Last of the Mohicans,* for example, Indians "gratify their childish passion for finery," have "bloodthirsty vengeance in their looks," give "vent to their malignant feelings by the most menacing gestures," speak in tones "of deepest malignancy," execute vengeance "with that barbarous ingenuity with which they were familiarized by the practice of centuries," are "savage tormentors," and on and on. There are some "noble" Indians but they live away from or are the last members of their nations. Also, the "noble" Indians are limited by their life of hunting and warfare and they are, like Chingachgook, corrupted by liquor and civilization in the end.

Cooper had little personal contact with Indians. His chief source of information was *The History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations,* an 1819 work by John G.E. Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary who favored the Delawares and despised the Iroquois. Heckewelder labored among the Delawares and their allies and knew the unhappy accounts of "wild events" left by missionaries who worked among the Iroquois. Consequently, the "good" Indians in Cooper's stories resemble Heckewelder's Christian Delawares and the "bad" Indians are patterned after his Iroquois. In general, however, Cooper knew little about Native Americans, and his works reflect the confusion of other writers who also portrayed Native Americans with scant concern for differences in language, customs, beliefs, etc.

The confusion is reflected in Cooper's erroneous ethnological material. He calls Uncas, a Mohican, one of "the sons of Unamis," but the Unamis were one of the three groups of Delawares who lived in the New Jersey area. The Mohicans and Delawares were distinct peoples. In addition, Cooper did not distinguish between the Mahicans and the Mohicans (generally written Mohegans). Cooper

> placed a Connecticut Uncas in King George's New York "court yard," mixed the Indians of the Thames with those of the Hudson and Lake George, and put the Delawares of New Jersey on Lake Champlain. He had Mohawks aiding the French instead of standing at the side of England's William Johnson. . . .[1]

[1]Parker, Arthur C. See listing in bibliography on page 8; page 454.

About the Author

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Germany. On an average, each questionnaire listed two names. In Woodland, Tonto (3.4 per cent), unheard of across the Atlantic, was the only fictional character. Most of the others listed were either "good Indians" (*i.e.,* Indians who helped whites) unknown in West Germany, such as Sacajawea (9 per cent), Squanto (15 per cent) and Powhatan (2 per cent), or they were those who led Native American resistance against the white invasion—Sitting Bull (22 per cent), Geronimo (8 per cent), Chief Joseph (6 per cent), King Phillip (3 per cent) and Crazy Horse (1 per cent). Again, the West German students were able to list more names than the Woodland group (West Germany 2 names; U.S. 1), but most of these were literary figures. In Woodland, students listed Ishi,[2] the Native Californian, on 35 per cent of all questionnaires, a name not mentioned at all by their German peers. However, this was clearly the result of the Woodland students having discussed Ishi in school a few days before. (Some of the other characters had also just been mentioned in school since the questionnaire was distributed right after Thanksgiving Day.) It seems, however, that the U.S. image of Native Americans is less determined by fictional sources than the West German image is. U.S. students are influenced by history textbooks and other sources that name several "good Indians"—usually traitors to their own people—and also a few "bad" ones who fought against dispossession and removal. The German students may know about real people because they frequently appear in fictional works, as Tecumseh does, for example.

"How did the Indians live in the old days? What did they do?" Both groups described basically the same stereotypical "topography": Indians lived in tipis (U.S. 40 per cent; West Germany 62 per cent), hunted buffalo and other game (U.S. 36 per cent; West Germany 53 per cent) and fought the whites (U.S. 13 per cent; West Germany 25 per cent). Woodland students knew more about Native American methods of subsistence: they named crop-growing and food-gathering on over a third of all questionnaires (34 per cent), compared to 7

[2] Ishi was literally the last of his people, the sole survivor of the Yana band of the Yahi people in Northwestern California, who stepped into "civilization" in 1913.

per cent each in Germany. The students of both groups appeared fascinated with Native American self-sufficiency; "they made everything themselves" was an answer given frequently (U.S. 29 per cent; West Germany 10 per cent) by children who may think that meat and vegetables originate in the supermarket.

"Why did the Indians fight?" Again, the results were almost identical: in each case more than 90 per cent of all the answers given to this question indicate that Native Americans were forced to fight in order to retain their land (U.S. 56 per cent; West Germany 74 per cent) or for survival (U.S. 12 per cent; West Germany 13 per cent). The awareness that Native Americans were indeed forced to fight exists in clear contradiction to the common notion that Indians were "wild" or bloodthirsty warriors.

"How do the Indians live today?" Here, there is a more marked difference between the groups. Whereas 48 per cent of the Woodland students stated that Native Americans "live like us," only 9 per cent of the German students gave this answer. Other answers pointed in the same direction—"they are civilized" (West Germany 22 per cent; U.S. 10 per cent) or "they live in houses" (West Germany 22 per cent; U.S. 11 per cent). Only 9 per cent of the Woodland questionnaires spoke of reservations, compared to 31 per cent in West Germany, and none of the Woodland students mentioned social inequality, poverty or oppression by whites as characteristic of Native American life today, while in West Germany 10 per cent did.

"How did you learn about Indians?" The responses to the first part of this questionnaire suggested that U.S. children learn about Native Americans in school, while West German children get most of their information from the books they read. This question confirmed the impression: 74 per cent of the Woodland answers gave "school" as their source of information, compared to a meager 11 per cent in West Germany. Other main sources were "books" (West Germany 77 per cent; U.S. 57 per cent) and "films or TV" (West Germany 83 per cent; U.S. 42 per cent). In both groups, friends, relatives or "hearsay" supplied less than 10 per cent of the reported information.

"Which Indian words do you

Karl Friedrich May

Karl Friedrich May, born in Germany in 1842, created his own version of the U.S. "Wild West." His tales, filled with Indians (both noble and ignoble) and frontier people, still excite German youth and old nearly 70 years after his death in 1912. The stories have been perennial best sellers in Germany from the 1880s to the present; by 1967, over 26 million volumes of May's stories were sold in Germany alone. In Germany there is a Karl May Museum, a Karl May Foundation, there are Karl May streets and Karl May libraries. In addition to Karl May yearbooks, other books and Ph.D. dissertations about him are regularly produced. In addition, Karl May's work has sparked the creation of some 1,200 "Indian clubs" in Germany alone (see accompanying article). May is also popular elsewhere; some 70 million of his books have been sold in 22 languages and just recently have begun to appear in English.

The man responsible for creating, implanting and perpetuating a certain image of Indians never really saw them. Born to a poor family and blind for the first six years of his life, he was a good student though much of his early reading consisted of dime-novels which strongly influenced his later work. In his late twenties and early thirties, he was imprisoned twice—for a total of eight years—for insurance swindles, theft and impersonation. May's version of the "Wild West" was actually born in prison. He began writing for publication while imprisoned. By the time May was finally released, he had amassed so much money from the sale of his books that he was able to buy a large villa outside Dresden.

When May was sixty-six years old, he made his only trip to the U.S. and visited New York, hardly the "Wild West" of his novels. May's works on the U.S. West were not based on personal experience. Instead, he drew upon his imagination, his study of American Indians (he had a library of source materials on Native Americans) and the work of other German writers who narrated their firsthand experiences with Native Americans. The largest influence, however, was James Fenimore Cooper.

Scholars of May have documented Cooper's influence. Richard Cracroft points out that in *Winnetou III* (1893) Old Shatterhand, the principal character, is asked whether he has read Cooper; he replies, "But of course." There are many similarities in the two writers' works. May's Old Shatterhand and Winnetou, the noble Apache chief, are equivalent to Cooper's Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook, the noble Mohican. Both Winnetou and Chingachgook leave their people to accompany white frontier men—Old Shatterhand and Natty Bumppo, mythical heroes who symbolize a certain phase of history. Both noble Indians symbolize once powerful but dying Indian nations. The two guns that Old Shatterhand carries are "Bärentöter" ("Kill Bear") and "Henrystutzen" ("Henry Rifle"), German equivalents of Bumppo's "Kill Deer." May, like Cooper, used the name "Hawkeye" for an Indian chief. May, like Cooper, created "good" Indians (in May's case Apaches) and "bad" Indians (May's Sioux who viciously attack the peaceful Apaches).

Most of May's books are written in the first person because he actually professed to be Old Shatterhand. May also claimed his stories were based on his own experiences in the "Wild West" and distributed photographs of himself dressed up as a frontier person. Of course, these claims were fallacious.

According to Cracroft, May's popularity lay in his ability to blend factual information (he filled his books with an enormous amount of authentic data, particularly on Indian linguistics) and vivid imaginative details

> into tales which seem to satisfy a universal German nostalgia for the romantic and exotic. And May gives them even more—a nationalistic pride so great that Hitler made May recommended reading for his general staff.[1]

It should also be noted that Hitler "kept over seven and a half feet of May's collected works in his private library."[2]

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[1]Cracroft, Richard. See listing in bibliography on page 8; page 257.
[2]Wechsberg, Joseph. See listing in bibliography on page 8; page 53.

About the Author

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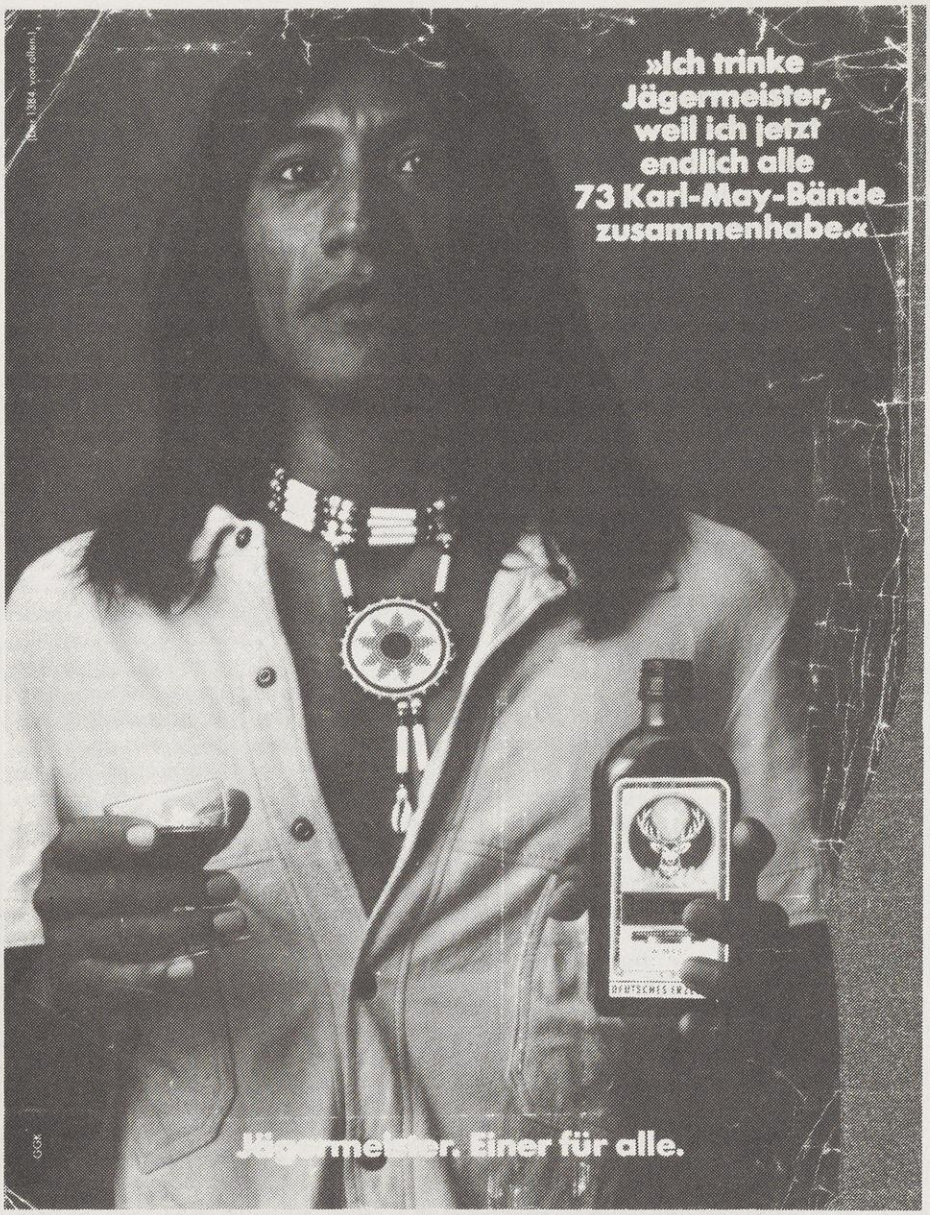

"Indians" often appear in advertisements in West Germany. The caption for the ad above (which attests to the popularity of author Karl May) reads: "I am drinking Jägermeister because I finally collected all 73 Karl May volumes."

know?" Despite the remarkable difference in factual knowledge about Native Americans and despite the difference in the sources supplying the knowledge—or the lack of it—the stereotypes held by both groups are remarkably similar (almost totally identical, in fact). For example, typical Indian words are internationally believed to be "How" (U.S. 46 per cent) or "Hau" (West Germany 76 per cent), or another monosyllable spelled "Uff!" (West Germany 15 per cent) or "Ug!" (U.S. 1 per cent). Again, the Woodland students were more reluctant to supply "information" and put "don't know" (U.S. 43 per cent; West Germany 13 per cent) or listed non-identifiable words (U.S. 16 per cent; West Germany included in "don't know" answers). Other words listed were "squaw" (U.S. 2 per cent; West Germany 16 per cent), "wigwam" (West Germany 14 per cent; U.S. 0 per cent), "Manitou" (West Germany 13 per cent; U.S. 0 per cent), "scalp" (West Germany 7 per cent; U.S. 0 per cent), "tomahawk" (West Germany 7 per cent; U.S. 2 per cent), "tipi" (West Germany 3 per cent; U.S. 3 per cent), "moccasin" (West Germany 2 per cent; U.S. 2 per cent), "papoose" (West Germany 0 per cent; U.S. 2 per cent) and "Kemo-Sabe" (West Germany 0 per cent; U.S. 1 per cent).

Beliefs about Indian character traits were questioned by a set of opposing pairs (see box). The most common "positive"—by white middle-class standards—characteristic of Indians is to be "brave" (U.S. 98 per cent; West Germany 91 per cent) and "hard-working" (U.S. 64 per cent; West Germany 76 per cent); being "wild" is their most common negative trait (U.S. 64 per cent; West Germany 76 per cent). All in all, "positive" traits outweighed "negative" ones (U.S. 61 positive to 39 negative; West Germany 57 to 43) on this scale.

Perhaps the most telling aspect of the whole questionnaire is the Indian pictures drawn by the students (the last question asked: **"What does an Indian look like? Draw a picture of an Indian on the back of this page."**). The pictures were evaluated according to discernable items drawn—feathers, war-paint, tipis, etc. The most common items were feathers (U.S. 60 per cent; West Germany 82 per cent), long hair (U.S. 47 per cent; West Germany 86 per cent), headband or bandanna (U.S. 36 per cent; West Germany 66 per cent), war-paint (U.S. 18 per cent; West Germany 49 per cent) and fringed or ornamented buckskin clothes (U.S. 16 per cent; West Germany 60 per cent). Of course, there were also various weapons, horses, tents and artifacts, but the above items ranked at the top in both samples. Although many German drawings resembled the book illustrations of Winnetou, the stereotypical depiction of Indians is almost identical in both countries.

Surprisingly, the "positive" German attitude towards Indians, which may have contributed to better factual knowledge in some areas, exists side by side with the most atrocious racist

Questioning Character Traits

Beliefs about Indian character traits were questioned by giving students opposing pairs of traits and asking "What are the Indians like? Please choose one from each pair!" The following pairs were presented: hardworking/lazy, brave/cowardly, honest/sly, civilized/wild, peaceful/warlike, friendly/unfriendly, kind/cruel and harmless/dangerous.

thinking. Stereotypical clichés were expressed in the drawings (which share more common stereotypes than the U.S. drawings), in the children's ideas about Indian language (the most racist "Indian words" were listed relatively more often in the German questionnaire) and in their concepts of character traits ("positive" characteristics outweigh "negative" ones less markedly than in Woodland).

The study reveals absolutely no correlation between factual knowledge and stereotypical thinking. The implications of this are disheartening; it may not be possible to overcome racist clichés merely by supplying less biased and more accurate information. Therefore, stereotypes must be confronted and talked about frankly, and that may be quite a painful process. Also, the ideological, political, social or religious functions that racist clichés fulfill must be examined. It is worth considering what functions stereotypes about Indians serve in the U.S. and West Germany.

As Native American leaders have pointed out, ideological constructs were developed from the very start in the U.S. to "legitimize" the dispossession of the Native Americans by the white colonists and the removal or extermination of Native American peoples. New England Puritans, as late as 1702, claimed that Indians were children of the devil, while today some still believe that Native Americans are the "lost tribe of Israel." Scientific racism linked with the doctrine of "manifest destiny" during the last century supplied ideological justifications for continued genocide, dispossession and removal. Specific arguments—such as the myth that all Indians were nomads who did not really own or need the land—were developed and believed even in the face of conflicting evidence. After the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 the *image* could safely be changed, while old beliefs persisted.

The last Indian warriors of the Plains became objects of nostalgic concern only after open conflict subsided, just as earlier, in the East, James Fenimore Cooper and others created their "noble savages" after the frontier moved West. In general, the further whites have been removed from actual contact with Native Americans, both geographically and historically, the more inclined they have been to glorify them. Today,

with the military action decided but with most of the problems and conflicts between the colonized and the colonizer still unresolved, there is little interest in Native Americans as contemporaries, but increasing interest in Indians of the past. The myth of Native Americans as assimilated or even "vanished" serves to justify the lack of concern. Instead of facing the problems of the past and seeing that they are still unresolved, people choose to ignore these "unpleasant" realities (in West Germany, people do not want to hear about Auschwitz and other concentration camps; they prefer to sweep things under the carpet). The "assimilated Indian" is a projection of that avoidance syndrome (the same mechanism is at work in West Germany's desire to be a friend of Israel without talking about anti-Semitism).

If Native Americans are still presented as having been bloodthirsty red devils, this image serves as an apologetic falsification of history and as a quasi-justification of genocide. If Native Americans are nostalgically presented as noble savages to be contrasted with the corruption of modern times, they are again used as an apology for one's own disinclination to create a more humane society today. If Native Americans are believed to have disappeared or become assimilated, this belief serves as a convenient shield against the present effects of racism. In each case, stereotypes uphold the status quo, easing the colonizer's conscience or even facilitating pleasant, escapist

It isn't only U.S. greeting cards that contain stereotypes. The one above from West Germany is captioned, "Hugh [ugh]—a dance of joy to celebrate a birthday." Below is the cover of a West German TV magazine for young people. It contains an article on Native Americans entitled, "As the Indians Live Today: Old Shatterhand [a Karl May character] would be surprised."

fantasies. Stereotypes about Indians, like all racist stereotypes, reinforce social conditions marked by inequality, exploitation and ideological deceit. To give them up is painful, because it requires people to face the racist facts about their own society, its true history, and even their per-

The survey asked children to "draw an Indian." Two drawings from West Germany are shown (the one above is labeled "old fashioned Indian"). Both West German and U.S. children frequently depicted feathers, fringed clothes, war-paint, weapons and other stereotypic items.

sonal beliefs in it.

In West Germany, the situation may be historically and geographically different, but the function of racial stereotyping is the same. The ostensibly positive image of the Indian may be due to the fact that a "red devil" stereotype has not been needed. In Germany, however, as we have seen, the stereotype is by no means all that "positive"—and furthermore the noble savage stereotype has a particular political function in that country. When Karl May wrote his fantasies about his German superhero Old Shatterhand and his Apache friend and blood-brother Winnetou in the late 19th century, German nationalism was on the rise. Attempts earlier in the century to make the German states more democratic had been totally thwarted when Prussia seized power and formed a German "Kaiserreich." Nationalism was encouraged to strengthen ties between varying regional groups and areas, and a dream of becoming a colonial power like England or France was part of that national chauvinism.

Old Shatterhand became the incarnation of those German dreams. Of lower-middle-class background, this enterprising character embodied all the characteristics frustrated but power-hungry middle-class Germans could hope for: he was strong, handsome, just, very pious, very nationalistic, very true to his Indian friend Winnetou (although Old Shatterhand was, as a white Christian, his superior), very competent, respected and admired by the good, feared and hated by his foes—and a strong believer in the natural superiority of all things German. (Whoever rereads *Winnetou* as an adult is astounded by the book's blatant German nationalism, hypocritical Christian piety and reactionary political doctrine.) Karl May created a superhero with whom his readers could and would identify, a concise "German ideology," and a fantasy colony in which Old Shatterhand was the supreme master. In that fantasy world all Natives except Winnetou were looked upon with contempt—and Winnetou, not unlike Friday, became the colonizer's pimp.

The German Indian prototype, then, is tied in with colonialist dreams as well as with escapist, self-aggrandizing fantasies that are expressive of widespread dissatisfaction with things as they really are, without articulating that dissatisfaction. Winnetou and Old Shatterhand were free, Germans were not. Readers' eagerness to escape into the freedom of Karl May's heroes is the result of the negation of freedom in their actual lives. This function of Karl May's books still exists. Also, in believing themselves (like Old Shatterhand) to be particularly close with a people of another race, Germans may seek to forget about their own racist "past." In copying Indian clothes, hairstyles and customs, "Präriefreunde" escape their own sociopolitical reality. (Even the enthusiasm of AIM Support Group members in West Germany is an outcome of German "Indianertümelei"—pro-Indianism—and has its escapist aspects, although there is also a great emancipatory potential.)

The stereotype of Native Americans is indeed functional—both in West Germany and the U.S. To counteract it, we must not only give young people an awareness of the stereotype, but also assist them in analyzing its origins so they will understand why and for what purposes the stereotype exists. □

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A British study finds that the use of multicultural materials does *make a difference, particularly if the teacher supports multicultural education*

Are Multicultural Classroom Materials Effective?

By David Milner

For many years now, teacher organizations in Britain have pressed for genuinely multiracial, multicultural education. They have urged a philosophy and practice of education that not only reflects a multiracial society but also attempts to combat the effects of racism. It has been an article of faith within this movement that school curriculums and literature which embody these principles can be effective in influencing children's attitudes, but the actual *evidence* that this is true has been in shorter supply than our conviction. Many teachers can relate their own positive experiences with such methods, but it is arguable as to how persuasive this testimony is to conservative colleagues, let alone to national or local policy makers. This article describes a research project which attempted to document this philosophy.

There is, at last, general acceptance of the idea that children begin to develop racial attitudes at a very early age. I have done two previous studies—"Racial Identification and Preference in Black British Children"[1] and *Children and Race*[2]—which have shown essentially the same pattern of racial attitude development among English children as has repeatedly been found in U.S. studies (see the *Bulletin,* Vol. 11, Nos. 3 & 4). In addition, the reactions to minority-group status demonstrated by the children of West Indian, Indian and Pakistani immigrants to Britain have echoed the reactions of Black Americans in earlier periods.

If we are to counter the formation of racist attitudes, we need to intervene at the earliest opportunity; thus, our study focused on five- to eight-year-olds. The study consisted of a year-long classroom intervention program designed to positively influence the children's racial attitudes by (a) the introduction of multiracial, multicultural curriculums and materials, and (b) minority group teachers. The children's attitudes were assessed before and after the program using the conventional doll and picture tests employed by most researchers in this area for the past 40 years. (These tests involve presenting the child with a variety of dolls or pictures representing the different racial groups in the immediate environment; the child is asked a series of questions about the figures to elicit her/his identification, preferences for friends and playmates, knowledge of stereotypes, and so on. The children are encouraged to think of the figures as real people, and there is a lot of evidence that they do so and thus reveal their attitudes towards the groups that the figures represent.)

Our study was conducted in schools in three London boroughs and one provincial city; it involved 274 children of English, West Indian and Asian parentage. In order to simultaneously compare the effects of multiracial and conventional materials and of minority teachers and white English teachers, a rather complex design was set up which is represented in the chart below.

Each of the numbers in the chart represents one class: thus "1" denotes a kindergarten class with an English teacher using conventional materials, while "9" denotes a kindergarten class with a West Indian teacher using multiracial materials, and so on. Unfortunately, the principles of scientific control were confounded by the realities of birth control. The class "4" teacher was granted maternity leave during the course of the study, and as she could not be replaced, this group was not included in the study.

The classrooms using conventional materials had been selected as representative of the "typical" English classroom; the materials—essentially white—were uninfluenced by the multiracial nature of its student body. Such classrooms were not hard to find. No input whatsoever was made into these classrooms. However, the multiracial materials classrooms received a very substantial input of materials. Most of the materials we supplied were books, selected after a long process of reviewing titles from all over the world with the help of published bibliographies and a panel of experienced teachers in multira-

		English teacher	West Indian teacher	Asian teacher
Conventional Materials	Kindergarten	1	3	5
	First grade	2	4	6
Multiracial Materials	Kindergarten	7	9	11
	First grade	8	10	12

[1] Published in *European Journal of Social Psychology,* 3 (iii), pages 281-95, 1973.

[2] Published by Penguin Books, 1975.

cial schools. The selection criteria used were similar to the CIBC guidelines,[3] and eventually we gathered a number of books which portrayed West Indian and Asian people in a positive, non-stereotyped way, either in the context of their cultural backgrounds or in their contemporary urban situations in Britain. Clearly, books were less relevant for the kindergarten classes, so that it was necessary to provide materials for prereaders like alphabets, number charts, word-games, flash cards, story cards, etc. At the time of the study there were no multiracial products of this kind, so such materials were produced specifically for the project.

Selecting Teachers

The selection of teachers for the project posed a number of problems. At the time there was an infinitesimal proportion of Black teachers in the entire country, and some of them, preferring to keep a low profile, did not wish to be involved in a race-related project. After the teachers had been located it was only possible to make an informal, impressionistic assessment of their attitudes and enthusiasm for the project, the extent of the use of materials, etc. However, this assessment had interesting results, described below.

When the children's attitudes were assessed prior to the intervention program, we found results differed somewhat from similar studies conducted some years earlier. Notably, the proportion of West Indian children who showed any ambivalence about identifying themselves as Black had declined significantly, no doubt due to the growth of Black consciousness over the period. When confronted with a Black and a white doll, 27 per cent of these children maintained that the white doll "looked most like them," compared with 48 per cent making this response some five years previously. That this change may be less profound than it would seem is suggested by the high proportion (78 per cent) of the children who maintained they would "rather be" the white doll, compared to 82 per cent making this choice in the earlier study. (This trend has subsequently been confirmed by other studies.) The Asian children's results were rather similar—30 per cent identified with the white doll; 81 per cent would "rather be" the white doll—though there was a small (statistically non-significant) increase in out-group orientation over the earlier study. This could be accounted for either by the increased acculturation of the Asian communities in the interim, or by sample differences on the two occasions ("ghetto" vs. "suburban"). The English children displayed the same total identification with their own group and high level of rejection of minority group figures in their choices of imaginary friends and companions as the English sample had done five years previously. Clearly then, while there had been some marginal improvements in the overall picture, there remained a great deal of scope for influencing the children's attitudes in a more positive direction.

Enthusiasm Varied

During the program teachers were encouraged to develop ways to work with the multicultural materials, and these ideas were shared with other classrooms. Inevitably there was a wide variation in the enthusiasm with which the different teachers put these ideas into practice or indeed utilized the basic materials. In some cases the materials were simply "there" for the children to use if they wished; in others they became the central focus of classroom activities and produced encouraging spin-offs that had not always been anticipated. Some teachers, for example, reported how displays of the materials on Open-School evenings delighted a number of Black parents who had previously shown little enthusiasm for what the school was doing. Others said the materials had aroused the interest of a number of reluctant readers through themes and characters with which they could identify.

At the end of the program, the reassessment of the children's attitudes produced a mixed though basically optimistic picture. The least change in attitudes took place among the English children: no change in groups 1 and 2, a little in groups 3 to 6, a little more in groups 7 to 12. Although these changes did not quite attain *statistical* significance, it is perhaps significant that any attitudinal change took place at all, given the relatively short duration of the program and the strength of societal pressures favoring prejudice. It is worth noting that every instance of attitudinal change was in the desired direction (that is, towards greater acceptance of the minorities), and there was no single instance of more negative attitudes developing (which might have been expected through simple random variation, if nothing else).

Some Dramatic Changes

More dramatic changes were exhibited by the minority children, however. It was clear that the program significantly affected both the West Indian and Asian groups. Of the children who had shown ambivalence about their racial identity before the program, between one-half and two-thirds had become thoroughly identified with their own racial group by the end of it, as evidenced by their responses to the same tests. It was also possible to determine which aspects of the program had contributed most to these changes. A series of statistical comparisons showed that a significant part of the attitudinal changes could be attributed to the effects of the minority teachers *per se*, but that by far the most significant factor was the multiracial, multicultural materials. Obviously these factors are not completely independent, and it was interesting to discover that when the teachers were rank ordered for their attitudes and enthusiasm for the project and for usage of the materials, the ranking paralleled almost exactly the amount of attitudinal change achieved in each classroom. In other words, the more the teacher entered into the spirit of the program, the more change was achieved.

There are many questions which this study raises but cannot answer, simply because the size of some of the individual classes precludes detailed statistical analysis. Questions concerning the significance and above all the permanence of these attitudinal changes will also have to wait upon a larger-scale exercise. The study is best seen as a pilot project which suggests that the strategies for multiracial education we have pursued can indeed play a role in cultivating resistance to the pressures of racism. □

[3]See CIBC's *Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks*.

About the Author

DAVID MILNER is the author of Children and Race (*Penguin, 1975*).

A noted sports columnist suggests that children's books about sports do young readers a disservice by perpetuating myths and avoiding unpleasant realities

Peddling Sports Myths: A Disservice to Young Readers

By Robert Lipsyte

Former sports columnist for *The New York Times,* Robert Lipsyte is the author of nine books including *Free To Be Muhammad Ali,* a biography for young readers, and *The Contenders,* an ALA Notable Book and a winner of the 1967 Children's Book Award of the Child Study Association. His *Sports World: An American Dreamland* analyzes the pervasive effects of the sports culture on winners and losers, players and spectators alike. His latest book is *Summer Rules,* published in March, 1980, by Harper & Row. The following observations are excerpted from a taped conversation with Betty Miles of the Cle Editorial Board.

I recently watched a sports program on television in which a commentator was discussing a basketball coach who pounds on his players—kicks them, calls them dirty names. And the reporter said, "Well, I'm not sure I would want to be treated like that. I would want to be treated like a human being. But who can argue with this kind of treatment when the coach's won/lost record is so good."

Across America, kids are sitting in front of their TV sets taking that in. And too many of the sports books they read reinforce that same ethic: *Winning is the only thing. When things are tough, try harder. Success is up to you.*

Sports is, or should be, just one of the things people do—an integral part of life, but only one aspect of it. Sports is a good experience. It's fun. It ought to be inexpensive and accessible to everybody. Kids should go out and play, test and extend their bodies, feel good about what they can achieve on their own or with a team. And children's books about sports should encourage that approach.

Instead, adults try to make sports into a metaphor—a preparation for life. We endow sports with mystical qualities that don't exist and raise unreal expectations about what it can do. At the same time, by making sports into a metaphor, we devalue it for itself. It's no wonder that the kids who read sports books are confused by them. The things that happen to people in the books bear very little relation to their own experiences and anxieties in real life. So the kids read them and wonder, "What's wrong with me?"

What the books don't say is that in our society, sports is a negative experience for most boys and almost all girls. Soon after they start school, at an age when they have no other standards on which to judge themselves, we force children to judge each other on their bodies, which is the thing that everyone's most scared about. They're required to define themselves on the basis of competitive physical ability.

Sports is the basic way kids learn sex roles. Traditionally, the boys are sent out into the arena to prove themselves and the girls are given the baton to cheer them on. The boys now begin a series of qualifications for the rest of their lives, which are called cuts. Somewhere along the line, most boys will get cut. They'll be deemed unworthy boys, and they'll see themselves as inferior because they weren't chosen; they didn't make the team. At a time when they needed it, they didn't get the approval that mattered.

Things are supposed to be changing for the better for girls in sports, but I don't think that they are. What's happening is simply that more girls are getting the chance to recapitulate what the boys do. Little League is integrated now, but the token girls in it are as intimidated by their coaches and their parents and as anxious about their performance as the boys. Most sports books are basically about somebody overcoming obstacles to make the team, and now, of course, we have girls doing that. Showing grit and determination—but for what? It's not really in the individual's best interest to be subservient, to take orders, to cooperate with others for some authoritarian's goal, which is what much of sports is about. The fact is that *nobody* should play Little League. What equality there is for girls in sports is equality within a rotten system. A few girls will make it into the pressures of competitive team sports, while most of them, like most boys, will be cut; they too will see themselves as unworthy. They'll become spectators. They'll read books about other peoples' sports.

The people who are writing and producing and selling these books are people who have been bent by the system themselves. Most of them hate or are awed by sports because *they* were rejected, and they produce books which reinforce the idea that if you don't make it in sports you're a failure as a person, instead of reaching out to kids through books that say, "It's OK—you're in better shape than you think you are. We've all come through this, and most people survive."

I'd like to see sports books for children that would take away some of the pressures they feel and defuse the sense of competition and rejection. To do this, I think the books must acknowledge children's real fears about sports.

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The first, perhaps ultimate, fear is of being ridiculed—the fear that everyone's going to laugh at you because you're not good. Children know that when they're ridiculed for not catching a ball, they're being ridiculed for their bodies. I think this is much worse than being laughed at for reading badly or whatever. You're being totally rejected as a person.

A second fear is the fear of getting hurt. This is particularly scary for kids in Little League who have to stand up at the plate and have hard balls thrown directly at them. And the way Little League works, it's the pitchers who are almost always the biggest and strongest athletes (too often, the coaches' sons). Books that talk about people's fears of being hit with a ball, getting knocked down or punched or trampled would help children see that their own fears are not unusual.

A third fear that kids have about sports is of disappointing their parents. I've seen some interesting examples. One involved a family in Detroit whose lives revolved around the schedules of two teen-age sons who were all-star hockey players—getting them to the rink at five a.m., taking them to out-of-town games, and so on. The boys actually wanted to quit hockey, but they felt they would be letting their parents down. They brought it up very hesitantly, and it turned out the parents were thrilled. They'd all been afraid of disappointing each other. I was thrilled when my son quit Little League. He didn't like it. He was afraid of being hit with the ball, it was boring, he wasn't good at it, and he realized that I would never take him out for hours and pitch to him the way the coach did with his sons. So he quit, and I thought that took real guts on his part. Books could help to free kids from the idea that they should do sports to please their parents. (My son went on to soccer, where he flourished.)

Girlsports, *one of the best children's books on women and sports, deals with many topics that are usually ignored—the difficulties of being a committed athlete, the role that money plays in sports and the effects of racism and sexism on athletes.*

Finally, there's the basic, overall fear of not measuring up in sports—of not being man enough, or woman enough. This may be the most meaningless definition of being a worthy person in our society.

I don't think we have to make any rules for sports books for children beyond asking that they present some sense of truth about the role of sports in our lives. But most books perpetuate the old myths. Even in the new, trendy sports stories, where problems like pregnancy, dope, and so on are admitted, the basic point that comes across to the reader is that if you're willing to take orders, if you're determined to succeed, everything else will work itself out. Blacks and whites will get together, the coach will be understanding, poor kids will get rich, and the team will win the championship. Kids who read these books wonder why such things don't seem to happen in real life, to them or to people they know. Most of them, no matter how hard they push themselves, will never make the team, and of those who do, many will discover that the coach is a tyrant who exploits his players and that the brotherhood of sports they've read so much about doesn't exist. The legendary 1969-1970 New York Knickerbockers, for example—Black and white, living together, working together. Bill Bradley and "Clyde" Frazier. The integration of playing. Well, I covered that team as a journalist, and the moment the game was over, either at home or out-of-town, everybody went their separate ways. The Blacks went to their bars and the whites to theirs. But kids on high school basketball teams look around and feel guilty because the magical brotherhood that's touted in the books simply isn't there. They feel inadequate because they can't make it happen, any more than they can suppress their feelings of anger when the coach treats them as less than human. They believe the books and think, "If these sports heroes did it, why can't I?"

The myth that sports is a way out of the slums has been exploded. But as long as there's a Rocky image, as long as the books lionize one or two real kids like Sugar Ray Leonard who've made it, we're saying to all the others, "It's your fault for staying poor. It's not society's fault. You didn't try hard enough. You didn't listen to coach. You didn't play hurt."

One of the most sainted names in sports literature is John R. Tunis. He was ahead of his time. He wrote about cooperation; he said that winning isn't the only thing, that doing your best is what matters. But he, too, pushed the myth that a real man plays hurt.

I remember that once, when I was playing softball, I fell and ripped my arm open on a rusty nail. It was pretty terrible looking. I was really scared. But the coach ran out and looked at it and said it was going to be all right. Then he spat on it. And it *was* all right. What appalls me now, looking back, is that I felt kind of enhanced by this, because I was going through the male myth, being tough and masculine and behaving as I was expected to behave. I was playing hurt. But I know that if anybody ever treated my son like that today, I'd kill him.

Biographies as Junk Food

Sports biographies for children, which perpetuate all these myths, are really the junk food of publishing. They're all too easy to produce. You get scissors and a paste pot, raid the newspapers for false biographies of the hero of the moment—and sports writers never were trustworthy in terms of biographical material—and make a book. The trouble is that teachers and librarians feel justified in pushing these biographies at kids because "it gets them reading." But the kids who get hooked on them aren't going to be able to move on to books in which every other adjective isn't "immortal" or "fabulous" and

every sentence doesn't end with an exclamation mark. Or in which every hero's success isn't simply a matter of hard work and determination.

I recently reviewed a juvenile biography about Alex Karas which glossed over anything that might have been of real interest to kids. His father died when he was young, and he and his brothers and his mother all had to go out to work. He had real problems with his older brothers, who were football players. He himself was banned from football for a year when he was in the pros, for gambling. And now he's divorced—what about his relationship to his sons? They're in their teens, are apparently athletic boys. None of this was discussed seriously in the book, so the kids who read it never learn that Alex Karas has problems like everyone else.

Truth Is Controversial

The basic questions of what sports figures are like have hardly even entered adult sports books. And when they do, as in Jim Bouton's *Ball Four*, you have many people saying that the book should not have been published. Not because anything in it is untrue, but because they feel that kids should not be exposed to such truths about their heroes. They feel it's more important to have false heroes than it is to know the truth. And then, of course, teachers don't suggest adult books like this to kids, because they worry about running into problems with parents about the language. But I think that if they'd read some of these books along with the kids, kids would profit from them and enjoy them. *Ball Four* is a charming book: it's one big Valentine to baseball. *Life on the Run*, by Bill Bradley, is a good book. *Paper Lion*, by George Plimpton. A very nice book called *Heaven Is a Playground*, about Black basketball players by Rick Telander. These books tend to be honest. There's no reason that books like them could not be written specifically for kids. I'd like to see that.

Trying to reform sports books for children is discouraging, but you've got to start somewhere. That's what we do as writers. If we can reach one kid, affect some program somewhere, wake up one teacher, it's probably worthwhile. We should be trying to write books that acknowledge kids' fears about sports and say that other people, even heroes, share them. Books in which nice guys do finish last and it doesn't matter. In which making the team doesn't end all the problems and the team doesn't win all the games. Books that integrate sports into the rest of life. If we write more truthfully about sports, perhaps we can encourage kids to relax and have fun with each other—to challenge themselves for the pleasure of it, without self-doubt and without fear. □

Children's Books on Women and Sports

In general, children's books on women and sports still emphasize the traditional attitudes exemplified by football coach Vince Lombardi's, "Winning isn't everything; it is the only thing." Since winners sell, most books emphasize winners and winning. Also stressed is the myth that individual determination is the sole key to success. Young readers are told that an athlete needs drive most of all, and that individuals need *more* drive, *more* "killer instinct" than their competitors in order to succeed. In addition, books on women and sports still perpetuate the notion that the ultimate compliment for a female athlete is telling her that she skis/swims/plays/competes "like a man."

In the profusion of books in which no one fails and injuries are never serious or debilitating, there are some exceptions which give young readers an accurate picture of athletics and of serious, yet human, athletes. One is tennis player Billie Jean King's autobiography, *Billie Jean* (Harper & Row, 1974), which discusses the hard work and pain that are a major part of the life of any top athlete. Discussed, too, are the costs of winning—the "broken friendships, broken dreams and broken bodies" that are all sacrificed to become number one. Unlike many others, Ms. King is painfully honest about her life and refuses to smooth over or ignore the rough spots.

Diana Gleasner's books—*Women in Sports: Swimming* (Harvey House, 1975) and *Women in Sports: Track and Field* (Harvey House, 1977)— also delineate the pains and fears that are so much of an athlete's life. The women and girls in Ms. Gleasner's books acknowledge both the physical pain of training and the psychological pain of, possibly, not being the best.

One of the best books on women and sports is Karen Folger Jacobs' *Girlsports* (Bantam, 1978). Ms. Jacobs interviewed 15 young women, ranging in age from nine to fifteen, who are active athletes. Unlike the personalities in most sports books, these young women are not "stars" and in many cases will never become "famous." They are, however, committed athletes who honestly discuss the relation of athletics to their lives. They talk about areas as diverse as their classmates' reactions to their athletic prowess and fame and the effects that racism and sexism have had on their performance.

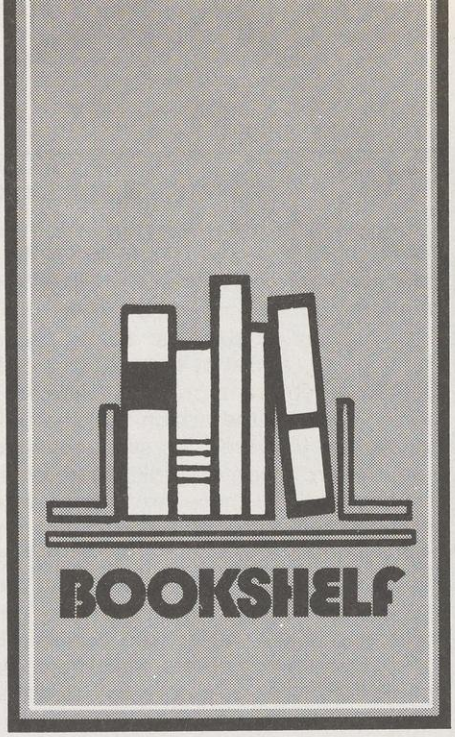
Girlsports also discusses the role that money plays in sports and how the lack of money can make the difference between being good and being great. It includes the story of nine-year-old Adrienne Tucker, a Black tumbler who coaches feel could be a world class gymnast if there were only someone to pay for her training, and of ten-year-old Tricia McNaughton, who is qualified to wrestle at international championships—but her parents can't afford to send her.

The pain, the problems and the many failures before success comes are all chronicled in this book, as are the successes, joys and just plain love of their sport that these girls share. These young women know the fears of being ridiculed, of being hurt and of not measuring up, and then share them with the reader.

Unfortunately, for every *Billie Jean* or *Girlsports*, there are at least ten other books that focus on women in sports as being "wealthy, white and winning" (see the *Bulletin,* Vol. 10, No. 4). Authors still pretend that money doesn't matter, that talent and determination will win out over all odds and that the most important thing is to be *Women Who Win* (as one series is entitled).

It is difficult to expect books to change, particularly when they are reflecting a societal ideology as entrenched as sports mythology is. However, we do have the responsibility to try.—Patricia B. Campbell, Director of Campbell Kibler Associates (an education equity consulting firm), is the author of the study of children's books about women in sports that appeared in Vol. 10, No. 4 of the *Bulletin.*

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



People

written and illustrated
by Peter Spier.
Doubleday, 1980,
$10, unpaged, grades p.s.-4

People is a book that no doubt was created with the best of intentions. Nonetheless, it perpetuates grossly biased images. If the book were only words, one would welcome its author's attempt to help children recognize and appreciate human diversity. But a picture's worth a thousand words and Spier's illustrations, which often intrigue and fascinate with their detail, all too often destroy that which the words intend to create.

A panorama of the garden of Eden, on the opening pages, depicts a white Adam and Eve walking alone in a world ultimately to be populated in large part by people of color. On subsequent pages, one finds grotesquely drawn faces of all colors, but people of color seem most hideous. Slits and slants suffice for eyes for Asians. Feathers and tipis identify American Indians. Stereotypic costumes predominate for Third World people. A number of Third World women—but no white women—are shown with bare breasts. Whites, usually shown in modern clothing, predominate in depictions of contemporary, technological settings, while Third World people appear more frequently in "primitive" settings.

Of the 40 or so examples of the "few of us . . . remembered long, long after we're gone" for a range of achievements, all are white except for Cheops and Mohandas Gandhi, and almost all are male. Males also predominate in depictions of occupations, and women predominate among those who cry and hold babies.

The book's final message is that "each and every one of us is unlike any other." Unfortunately, the differences depicted by Spier too frequently rely on stereotypic and demeaning imagery. Indeed, the book as a whole would be more likely to perpetuate white and male chauvinism than it would be to break them down. [Robert Moore]

Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of American Indian Women

by Carolyn Niethammer.
Collier/Macmillan, 1977,
$7.95, 281 pages, grades 11-up

Carolyn Niethammer believes that, "The rare person who considers the word Indian to include women no doubt pictures either a regal Pocahontas or a downtrodden, burden-bearing . . . wretch, trudging behind . . . her warrior husband." Her answer to this misconception, and the thesis around which she has built her book, is that, ". . . conditions varied greatly from tribe to tribe and Native American women . . . often had a great deal of power and authority over their lives."

The text is organized around the stages of the life cycle: The Dawn of Life, The Indian Child, From Menarche to Menopause, Sharing a Life, etc. Working within this framework, Niethammer has compiled data from standard anthropological sources about all aspects of the lives of Native women of North America during the historical period. There is a treasure of material here, most of it previously unavailable to the general reader. The value of having it gathered together in one place is obvious. Less valuable is the author's uncritical acceptance of the anthropological record. Without emphasizing the questionable aspects of her book, I would like to cite some examples of content that it might have been worth her while to explore further.

The chapter on women and war contains a section titled, "Captors and Captives," which describes the practices of the "cruel, vengeful torturer[s]" of several Nations. Such sources of this information as Rolandson's 1828 work, or the account of their captivity given many years afterward by the Oatman "girls," are not now considered to be particularly truthful. Certainly, this material does nothing to negate the bloodthirsty savage image.

Niethammer speaks of her need ". . . to gain a deeper feeling for just what it means to be a Native American"; nevertheless, her choice of language sometimes indicates, if not disdain for the customs of the people about whom she is writing, at least a certain lack of sensitivity. For example, speaking of fasting during the vision quest, she says, ". . . presumably [they] would be rewarded for their perseverance by the appearance of a guardian. In fact, it is very likely that anyone would begin to have visions or hallucinations after being without food and water for ten days."

Niethammer pays lip service to the fact that "religion" was an inseparable part of life, life itself; however, she does, in fact, treat it very separately, in the shortest chapter of the book. The spiritual context is notably absent from the rest of the book; the discussion of woman as "shaman" seems to be more concerned with the quest for power than with spirituality, for example.

The material that seems to me to be most inaccurate is that dealing with lesbianism and the position of homosexual women in the society of various Nations, and I do not think it would have been possible for the anthropologists to obtain correct information in this matter. If few generalizations can be made about the

Native Peoples of North America, one thing that does seem to be characteristic of most of them has been a certain reticence about sex. (And I am *not* talking about a group of Elders, sitting in the sun, making ribald cracks to each other about their husbands.) By now, it surely isn't news that anthropologists are capable of hearing what they want to hear, but if people consider it pretty poor behavior to discuss certain aspects of a subject, even amongst themselves, it seems fairly doubtful that they are going to go into detail about it to a stranger from another race.

Finally, there is no attempt to make a connection between the past and the ways in which Native women live today, nor to deal with the total dislocation caused by the European invasion. Given the realities of Native American history, this cannot help but limit the usefulness of the book as a tool for understanding the real lives of real women.

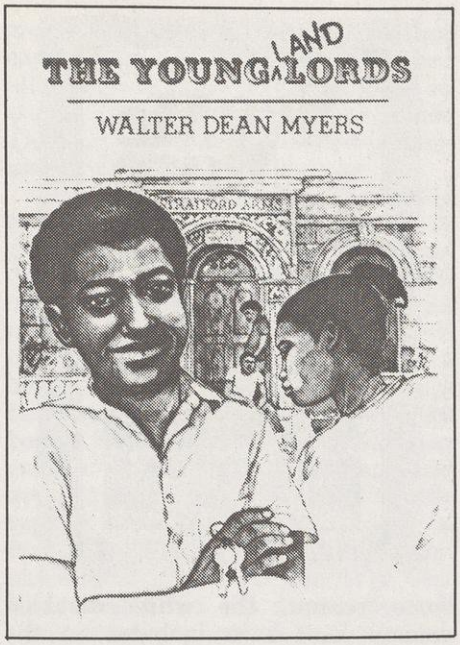
Taken as a whole, then, *Daughters of the Earth* contains a wealth of information for the use of a knowledgeable teacher or other adult, who can use it with discretion—perhaps in conjunction with something like Beverly Hungry Wolf's *The Ways of My Grandmothers* (Morrow, 1980, $9.95). [Doris Seale]

The Young Landlords

by Walter Dean Myers.
Viking, 1979,
$8.95, 192 pages, grades 7-up

Walter Dean Myers has taken an implausible story line and created an entertaining novel complete with humor, pathos and sensitivity. It is a well-written book which I enjoyed in spite of certain drawbacks.

The young landlords of the title are indeed youthful—teenagers, in fact, who become the unwilling owners of a Harlem tenement after they band together to confront the slumlord who, they believe, is getting rich from the building's rentals. Such is not the case, however. Mr. Harley, who had actually been ready to abandon the building as a lost cause, proceeds to dump it on the protesting "Action Group."



The property is transferred to Paul Williams, since he is the oldest member of the group and he has the sum for which the building is sold—$1. Once Paul realizes that he actually owns 356 West 22nd Street, he elects to share the dubious honor with his fellow activists. The shoe is on the other foot! The Action Group is soon beset with the problems of maintaining a crumbling building, collecting rents from non-paying tenants and conforming to city housing codes.

They also become entangled in solving a robbery which involves one of their buddies. Even though they are frequently terrified, they persevere until the mystery is solved. Unfortunately, the solution is not what they had anticipated—their friend is less than squeaky clean. It is a bitter pill for the youngsters to swallow, but it is one of the book's more realistic moments.

Unlikely as the story is, I enjoyed it. I especially liked the respect with which Myers treats his young heroes. He carefully explores their feelings and perspectives. A case in point is his portrayal of the relationship between Paul and his father. Paul frequently feels overwhelmed and oppressed by Mr. Williams, who he thinks sets him up to be ridiculed. Paul responds by withdrawing, but later in the book he sees things from his father's side. He doesn't like his father's attitudes any better, but he at least begins to understand their origin.

I applaud the author's attempts to present a balanced picture, to suggest that there are at least two sides to most situations—not only with Paul and his father but in tenant-landlord relationships, male-female relationships, people-to-people situations.

As much as I enjoyed *The Young Landlords,* I would have appreciated it even more if there had been some acknowledgment that the dilemma of a deteriorating neighborhood is directly related to a political system which fosters the emotional and physical decay of certain segments of this society. The solution goes well beyond taking over one building on one block in one city. In addition, I get the sense that the author intended to be nonstereotypic by presenting both sexes as creative, courageous, caring and energetic. However, it quickly becomes apparent that the boys will save the day. A disappointment.

In spite of these objections, I feel that this book can be one vehicle through which these issues can be introduced and explored. Some lively class discussions could be generated after reading *The Young Landlords*. I heartily recommend that it be used in this way. [Ashley Jane Pennington]

See Me More Clearly: Career and Life Planning For Teens with Physical Disabilities

by Joyce Slayton Mitchell.
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1980,
$8.95, 273 pages, grades 6-up

Teen years are full of struggle. Escape from numbing ennui, flee the trite cliché, rise above the commonplace. Find love, happiness, meaning and maybe even a nice hamburger joint. The disabled teenager also struggles, but must look far and wide for Jon Voight to come home.

Joyce Mitchell has written a book that deals compassionately and intelligently with the anxieties that are not relieved by *Teen* magazine. Fritz Perls said take risks. Jerry Rubin said

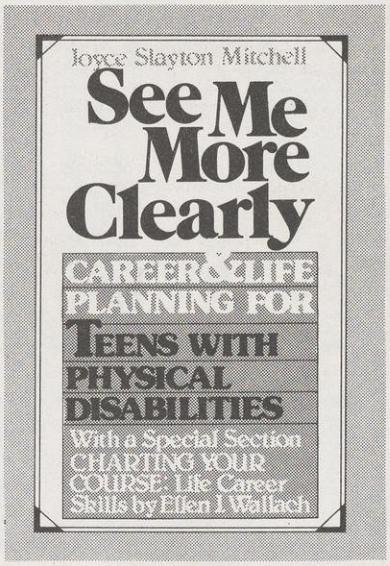
do it! Joyce Mitchell tells the disabled teenager to cope. I have heard this word so many times that I could have sworn it ran out of meaning; however, the message of the book comes across clearly and unmistakably.

The author properly places great emphasis upon understanding the difference between disability and handicap. A handicap, of course, is the additional limitation imposed by society or the environment upon a person who is already limited in some physical or mental sense. Thus we say that a society that discriminates against people upon the basis of disability is handicapist, and its discriminatory policies constitute handicapism.

A disabled teenager cannot become a "somebody" unless s/he can cope with the distinction between limitations due to a natural condition and handicapism. The author observes: "With the help of the disability rights movement, many disabled people of all ages are learning, for the first time, that they really are interesting, bright, creative, innovating, and fun to be with. And they are learning it from each other. They are learning that they are somebodies." (The book suggests that the reader join an organization such as the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, California, or Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York.)

In addition to exploring situations that are common to all disabled teenagers, Mitchell urges readers to take stock of their own individual abilities. She includes a veritable checklist of survival skills ranging from apartment hunting to washing windows in addition to coping strategies ranging from good educational decision-making to learning transferable skills.

Although the book clearly shuns materialistic values, there is an interesting chapter entitled, "Making Money Feels Good!" The author doesn't pull punches when she spells out the stark statistics: "a disabled white male makes 60 cents compared to $1.00 that the nondisabled white male makes. A disabled black male makes 25 cents on the $1.00 that a white male makes, and a disabled black woman makes 12 cents on the $1.00 compared to a white male. And for



some reason, the white disabled woman isn't even included on the scale put out by the United States Department of Labor's *Monthly Labor Review*!"

This book is a real eye-opener. Had it been available when I was going to high school, I might have achieved a satisfying career goal years earlier. [Kipp Watson]

Women Pioneers of Science

by Louis Haber.
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979, $7.95, 171 pages, grades 7-up

Women's contributions in the field of science have been largely ignored by our society. "Six women have won the coveted Nobel Prize in . . . science in this century," states author Haber. "Yet few scientists, let alone lay*men* [sic] are able to name more than one of them—Marie Curie" (italics added; note the irony).

Haber has collected biographies of 12 contemporary women scientists who have made and continue to make important contributions in the fields of medicine, chemistry, physics, psychology and biology. Although his book contains a lot of information, it is flawed because it presents a partial perspective.

The women are viewed only in terms of their accomplishments, and little information is provided about their racial and ethnic backgrounds, their personal lives, and their probable struggles to succeed in traditionally male professions. Two of the women included are Black, but their racial identities are only discussed briefly, and the ethnic backgrounds of the other women are unspecified.

In the chapter about Dr. Jane Wright, Haber makes but one reference to her racial identity, quoting Dr. Wright as saying, "I don't think I was discriminated against for either reason [being Black or a woman]—although I may have been too stupid to recognize it." Dr. Wright then remembers an incident when "a bewildered doorman tried to make me take the service elevator to a dinner being given in my honor." Haber concludes that for Dr. Wright, "Being a woman and black has not been a handicap." Based on her latter statement, the author's conclusion is misleading and unjustified; in any case, Dr. Wright's responses are contradictory. Had Haber pursued the question of discrimination further with Dr. Wright, perhaps her responses would have been clearer. In addition, Haber neglects to discuss the question of racial discrimination with Dr. Myra A. Logan, the other Black scientist in the book. By omitting such a discussion, he sets Dr. Wright up as a spokesperson about discrimination against Black women scientists.

Haber's writing style is clear, factual and straightforward, though fairly uninteresting because the reader doesn't get a chance to "know" the women. Also, there are many scientific terms and descriptions that might be difficult for a junior high school or high school student to understand. Readers must have a good grasp of scientific principles and concepts to comprehend all the book's details.

Haber presents important information about women scientists from a variety of fields in an effort to "free women from the myths that impede their progress." However, it is unfortunate that the biographies do not include the women's personal perspectives and do not realistically discuss women's oppression in fields dominated by men. [Jan M. Goodman]

The Chinese Americans

by Milton Meltzer.
T.Y. Crowell Junior Books, 1980,
$8.95, 181 pages, grades 5-up

When I received *The Chinese Americans,* my conditioned initial reaction was that it would probably be another poorly researched, poorly thought out and uncritical book about the history of Chinese in the U.S. To my pleasant surprise, I found the book quite good and thoroughly engaging.

Meltzer is not only a competent social historian with an impressive number of books to his name; he is also a very good writer who presents material in a way that is far from dry and boring. Instead of giving the usual chronology—*i.e.,* the immigration, what the Chinese did first, what they did second, and so on—Meltzer begins with the only bit of knowledge most non-Chinese Americans know about this neglected history. What did the Chinese build? Of course: The Chinese built the railroads. By dealing with the obvious Meltzer draws his readers into a fascinating reconstruction of this monumental project. The reader then quickly realizes, "Gee, I didn't know that." Meltzer goes on to discuss Chinese miners, farmers, fishermen and a number of other "I-didn't-know-that" occupations.

One chapter deals with where Chinese immigrants came from by discussing the history of relations between the West and China. Meltzer displays a fair knowledge of the difficult conditions within China which prompted much immigration, and he discusses the imposition of Western imperial powers upon the weak Manchu dynasty. Throughout, China is treated with understanding and respect.

The book's most effective chapter, "Pictures in the Air," examines the very difficult problem of cultural stereotypes of Chinese and Chinese Americans. Meltzer talks about his own childhood images and misunderstandings of Chinese and he writes frankly about learning the chant, "Chink, Chink, Chinaman sitting on a rail/Along comes a white man and cuts off his tail. . . ." He discusses how he came to realize that stereotypes distorted his understanding. Instead of moralizing about racism, the author carefully shows how stereotypes are all around us in the media, in jokes, in stories passed down for generations. This gives the reader concrete examples of racism in U.S. culture.

Two things bothered me. The first is relatively minor, but worth raising. A photograph shows a Chinese woman dressed in ornate holiday attire walking on a sidewalk. (Although it is not mentioned, the photograph was taken by Arnold Genthe in San Francisco before the 1906 earthquake.) The caption states that this woman had bound feet in "accordance to Chinese custom." First of all, the woman's feet are *not* bound, as evidenced by the type of shoes she is wearing and the fact that she is walking about unaided by an attendant. Secondly, Chinese custom did not dictate that all Chinese women have their feet bound. Binding became fashionable as a sign of femininity and beauty much as very high heels with pointy toes have again become fashionable in Western high fashion, but it was primarily the well-to-do whose feet were bound. Imagine a book on the U.S. with a photograph of a debutante ball captioned: "A rite of passage for U.S. women in accordance with Western custom." A more significant reservation I have is Meltzer's overuse of the word Chinese. It is difficult in such condensed histories to include the names of individual Chinese people. Nevertheless, constant referrals to a monolithic Chinese people do not help the reader to identify with individuals; they also encourage blanket statements about a whole people, such as "All Chinese are hard working." I have often been guilty of this same tendency when I want to make a general point; the solution is to be specific and give examples of actual situations. In order to give names to the people, a great deal of additional historical research in the field of Asian American studies is necessary.

It isn't often that a book for young readers is as well researched as this one. Meltzer manages to combine informed historical knowledge with a great deal of sensitivity for his readers and for Chinese Americans. The end product is a book with intelligence and feeling. It should be noted that this is a state-of-the-art book: it offers some of the best current scholarship, but it also means that current scholarship is far from where it should be, and a great deal more primary, nitty-gritty research is necessary to give names to the many faces and statistics that can now only be described as "the Chinese." [John Tchen]

The Ballad of Penelope Lou . . . and Me

by Drew Stevenson,
illustrated by Marcia Sewall.
The Crossing Press (Trumansburg, N.Y. 14886), 1978,
$2.50 paper, 27 pages, grades 1-5

In bouncing rhyme we hear the tale of Penelope Lou, reared to be a brave sailor:

> Penelope grew to love the sea
> And soon had a ship of her own.
> She said goodbye to family and friends
> And sailed the wide oceans alone.

The "me" of the book title is a would-be suitor, terrified of water in all forms, but determined to prove his bravery and win the hand of Penelope. Inadvertently he does, helped by a monstrous whale. Eventually, he confesses. By then they have a child and,

> When I was done she took my hand,
> Her voice was soft as a lover.
> "I love the sea, you love the land,
> We have much to learn from each other."

The drawings are delicious, the message welcome, the humor attuned to children and adults. So who cares about the poor binding? A happy little book! [Lyla Hoffman]

The Star Husband

by Jane Mobley,
illustrated by Anna Vojtech.
Doubleday, 1979,
$6.95, 30 pages, grades 1-5

The Star Husband is the tale of a young Indian woman who wants a star for a husband. While she sleeps, her wish is granted and she is taken to live in the sky by her star husband.

There she eventually has a son who becomes the Moon. But the woman becomes bored with living in the sky and begins to miss her life on the earth. She returns to her people on earth and becomes the "Wise One," a medicine woman.

The book is very beautifully illustrated. The art is colorful, free of the European features that artists often give to Native American characters. The story itself, however, lacks educational substance (Native stories are often explanations of those things that surround us in nature). In addition, tales differ from nation to nation, but there is no mention whatsoever of a nation in this story. If *The Star Husband* is based on an oral story of a particular nation, it should be made clear. Otherwise children may think that this is an "Indian story," instead of a story of the Lakota or the Arapaho, etc.

The Star Husband is not a distasteful narrative, but it lacks the authenticity and specificity necessary in children's books about Native Americans. [Donna Lovell]

The Twins Strike Back

by Valerie Flournoy,
illustrations by Diane DeGroat.
Dial, 1980,
$7.95, unpaged, grades 1-4

The protagonists of this picture book are middle-class Black sisters who face an added kind of discrimination—twin prejudice!

"Weell, if it isn't Pete—and Repeat!" cousin Nate teases Ivy and May. The girls overhear their mother on the phone talking to their grandfather: "If Ivy can get a B in math, why can't May?" Worst is older sister Bernadine's comment: "They dress alike and they probably even think alike!"

Spurred on by that last insult, May and Ivy devise a plan. On their eighth birthday, they pretend to read each other's minds. Cousin Nate and sister Bernadine are totally taken in. A male buddy named Fish gives the twins help, but the girls never lose credit for wittily tackling the problem themselves. When the joke is revealed, moments before a family birthday party, the twins' grandmother scolds Cousin Nate and sister Bernadine: "You're treating Ivy and May like they're some freaks. . . . They're just regular people like you."

The author, a twin herself, treats the subject matter too simplistically. The teasing is too quickly erased for complete plausibility. Differences between Ivy and May appear in the prose but don't emerge strongly enough. One grasps the story line but not the total "feel" of being a twin.

The illustrations are realistically drawn (the twins remind me of girls I've known). The setting is neat and cheery, with an occasional white child thrown into the outdoor scenes. Mom is introduced in the kitchen (sans apron), but she and Dad scold sister Bernadine together. [Melanie M. Lee]

Words in Our Hands

by Ada B. Litchfield,
illustrated by Helen Cogancherry.
Whitman, 1980,
$6.50, unpaged, grades 2-6

Words in Our Hands is about a family in which the parents are deaf and their three children can hear. The story is told by nine-year-old Michael, who explains how the family communicates with each other (fingerspelling and sign language) and the people around them (lip-reading, speech, writing). Michael also explains how his mother and father wake up to alarms with flashing lights and "hear" their children cry with cry-alarms; he also tells how their dog, who seems to have trained itself, warns them of pans boiling over on the stove and calls the alarms to their attention.

The family moves to a new town when Michael's father decides to keep his job with a company that is relocating. This move causes some realistic problems for the parents—being stared at when they sign while shopping, having difficulty being understood by people unused to hearing deaf people speak, and depending on their children for help in communicating when they open a bank account or ask the prices of items in the stores.

At school the children learn of a play being performed in sign language by the National Theater of the Deaf. The family attends the performance and discovers other deaf and hearing people in the town who communicate in sign language.

Unfortunately, up until this point the reader is given the impression that the parents are the only deaf people around—and that there are no social organizations or functions sponsored by deaf people in either town. The parents seem to have had no deaf friends in the town they left, nor do they make any attempt to find deaf people in the town they move to. In general, deaf people in the U.S. have a strong sense of community and deaf people moving from one place to another would more than likely make an effort to find out whether there were other deaf people, social functions or organizations in the new city.

The book is positive in its approach, however, and makes every effort to avoid using stereotypes often associated with hearing-impaired people. In addition, the book presents a lot of information on hearing impairment in a very positive way, although the reader will come away with the impression that all deaf people have never, will never and can never hear any sounds. This is misleading since most deaf people have some degree of residual hearing. [Janet Acevedo]

Once I Was a Plum Tree

by Johanna Hurwitz,
illustrated by Ingrid Fetz.
Morrow, 1980,
$7.50, 160 pages, grades 4-up

The search for roots doesn't always entail a voyage through time and space. Johanna Hurwitz has written a touching novel about the identity crisis of a Jewish ten-year-old that many young people will find relevant.

Gerry Flam finds religion a perplexing problem. Part of her heritage seems to have been lopped off like her surname, and what is left is meaningless (her family was once called Pflaumenbaum, German for plum tree, and her grandparents were observant Jews). Religious practice has dimin-

ished in each generation, and now Gerry finds her observance is limited to sitting on a New York City apartment house stoop during the High Holy Days while her Catholic friends are off at school. Gerry is also cut off from friendship with her Jewish classmates, who live on "the other side of the tracks," are cliquish, and treat her coldly.

But the time is 1947, and Gerry's world is affected by life-shattering events. The Wulf family, German refugees, move into the same apartment house and widen Gerry's horizons. Mrs. Wulf becomes her piano teacher, and young Edgar Wulf shares a world of ideas. But more importantly, the Wulfs provide Gerry with the opportunity to understand her Jewishness in historical and personal terms and to experience belonging.

Feminists will appreciate the little girl the author has created, or, perhaps, recreated from her own childhood. (P.S. 35 and the Joyce Kilmer park of the novel actually exist just off the Grand Concourse in the Bronx.) Gerry, though loyal and appreciative of the love and companionship of her family and friends, learns to think for herself and begins to construct a consciousness based on her own experience and a knowledge of a heritage shared with others. Readers will find that they don't have to be Jewish to find the theme and story of this book appealing.

The book's style and typography are attractive and appropriate for middle grade readers, and the line drawings enhance the text. The book is recommended as a good resource for group discussions focussing on racial and cultural heritage as well as for individual pleasure. [Ruth S. Meyers]

Rinehart Lifts

by R. R. Knudson.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980,
$8.95, 88 pages, grades 4-up

I had hoped that they weren't still writing books like *Rinehart Lifts*, but unfortunately I was wrong. Rinehart is a stereotypical sissy who is good at school, gentle and loves plants; Zan is a tomboy who cares only for athletics and surprisingly enough—Rinehart. The book takes us through the trials and tribulations necessary before the characters find and accept their "proper roles": Rinehart changes from a "Mr. Nobody" to a champion weightlifter while Zan gives up all of her own athletic activities to become Rinehart's coach and cheerleader and to care for his plants.

The book could have been written in 1960 rather than 1980; it extolls the virtues of violence, competition and sex-role stereotypes. The Mighty Four, the school's top athletes, spend most of their time threatening or hitting someone. The Mighty Four and Zan see "beating the enemy" as the purpose of athletics. Rinehart, whom Zan convinces to train to be a weightlifter (if he doesn't he will lose Zan's friendship), finds athletics can make you feel good and proud of your accomplishments, but his idealistic vision is soon blurred as he is convinced that the real purpose of athletics is to win, to be the best.

Cruelty seems to be a major focus of the story. Rinehart and Zan are frequently abused by the Mighty Four, and their plants and belongings are partially destroyed when the Mighty Four break into Rinehart's garage. Adults are no help; indeed, the only adult mentioned in the book (other than sports stars) is Rinehart's mother, who "drives his father to work at the same time every morning."

The book does have a happy, although unrealistic, ending. Rinehart shows that he is a better weightlifter than the Mighty Four (Zan, the only girl in the story, does not participate in the contest), and in a complete turnabout, the boys become his friends. Shades of the old Charles Atlas ads!

Rinehart is an appealing character, although much less so after his metamorphosis into "Mr. Universe," and the book does give children a view of the pain and time involved in athletic training. However, these pluses are far outweighed by the minuses. Children do not need to read about nine-year-old boys who are mean, have "muscles on top of muscles" and who, when asked to help with the cooking, suggest "make your sister cook cookies." [Patricia B. Campbell]

A Treasure Hunt

by Christopher Wilson,
illustrated by Dagmar Wilson.
U.S. Superintendent of Documents
(U.S. Printing Office,
Washington, D.C. 20402), 1980,
$2.25, 32 pages, grades p.s.-4

The National Institute on Aging commissioned a children's book to overcome stereotyped views about older people. The author and illustrator, a husband/wife team in their sixties, obliged by creating a pleasant fantasy about the country of Leafland where a tree is planted whenever a baby is born. Everyone lives near their own birth tree, and no one is allowed to pluck the fruit of another person's tree. But two children do pick fruit from the birth trees of an old gardener and an old potter.

Afterwards, the children feel guilty and shun the old people. So a group of older people devise a treasure hunt, designed to show the children that old people are active, able and friendly and have a lot to teach as well. The ruse is successful and, "In the gardens of Leafland the old trees and the young trees waved to each other in the breeze."

Leafland is interracial, the old baker uses unbleached flour, there's no sign of pollution or ageism. Nice book. [Lyla Hoffman]

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.

Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80's

by Letty Cottin Pogrebin.
McGraw-Hill, 1980,
$15.95, 642 pages

For the enormous task of non-sexist child-rearing in this society, Letty Pogrebin has written an appropriately-sized book—its 548 pages of text and an additional 92 pages of notes represent 8 years of the author's exploration and study of the issue. The book contains a wealth of information, on every subject from a parent's pre-natal attitude to the school system and the media. It follows a child through adolescence, documenting the process of sex-role socialization and how to combat it. Other reviewers have described this book as a "practical guide," "a blueprint," and an "encyclopedia"—and they are right. This is by far the most comprehensive and readable book on non-sexist child-rearing to date.

For parents or educators who waiver on the importance of finding new options and alternatives for raising children, this book is very convincing. Pogrebin set out to prove that "non-sexist child-rearing is good for your child," and she skillfully tackles any questions and doubts the reader might have. She begins with a discussion of the differences researchers have found between males and females. Pogrebin concludes that these are minimal, and that the problem is more what we make of the differences than the actual differences themselves. The really dangerous belief is not that "one sex is different from the other," but that "one sex is better than the other." Pogrebin artfully condenses all the myths and stereotypes into two basic premises: 1) Girls are meant to be mothers, and 2) Boys are Better. She then shows how these ideas gradually mold and then emotionally and psychologically injure our children. These two simple but insidious myths block the healthy development of energetic, creative and loving human beings.

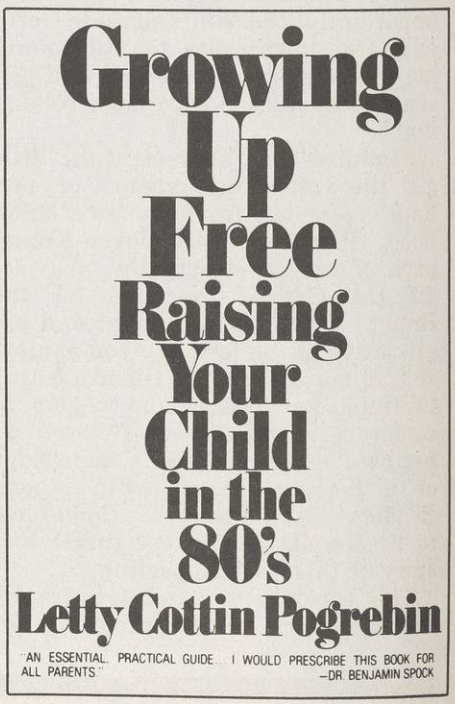
For those already convinced that children and our society as a whole will benefit from new forms of child-rearing, this book is a long overdue affirmation of an often lonely and difficult job. It helps transform a general commitment into a carefully worked out and thought-through plan. Everyone trying to raise a child in the 80's has been socialized in a sexist culture, and it takes a book like this to help sensitize and re-educate parents so they can in turn free their children. By marshalling all this material, Pogrebin has armed parents with the knowledge, information and support that are needed in order to persevere.

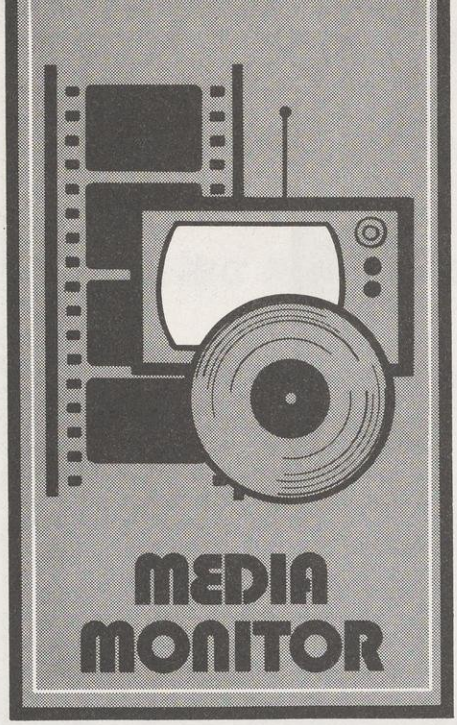
Moreover, this text is not just an intellectual exercise. Pogrebin has lived through the experience, and this is evident throughout. Many parents, for example, who feel they are raising bias-free children are alarmed when one day they see their own child being the most rigid on the block. It is comforting to be told that this is an acknowledged developmental stage towards what Pogrebin calls "transcendence." The problem is not that a child may reach this stage of conformity, but that "she or he may never leave it." Once a child reaches transcendence, however, she or he may then face the prospect of being isolated from peers. But here Pogrebin offers support:

> Ostracism hurts, but it must not be given the power to deal a death blow to the "liberated child." Teasing, bullying, and ridicule leave scars. But they can be overcome. Children can talk back, fight, make converts, organize alliances, or stand alone if they ARE alone on justice's side. Ostracism from a destructive group is better than surrender to its values.

At times, Pogrebin does become prescriptive. Yet in spite of the book's many directives, the author never loses sight of children's right to self-determination; she never loses her respect for young people.

Pogrebin writes very well; her arguments are powerful and her words often inspiring. Yet I wish she had chosen her title more carefully. Growing up in a non-sexist home is an important step towards growing up "free." But to be free in this society also requires being free of many other prejudices as well. Pogrebin is generally sensitive to this: she mentions race, class, and differences in sexual preference and how they may alter the specifics within her general framework. But additional suggestions or another chapter on the relationship of class, race and sexual preference to non-sexist child-rearing would have added greatly to the book. I also found myself wondering what happened to all those debates in the women's movement about the relationship between sexism and the economic system. Yet when a book offers so much, it is difficult to ask for more. [Vicki Breitbart]





"Song of the South" Strikes Again

The article below was written by Ron Finney, director of the Hilda G. Finney Center, an independent Black research group in Los Angeles. It is reprinted from the *Los Angeles Times*.

Hollywood has seldom been respectful in its treatment of the Black image, and the 1980s began as no exception. In the spring, there was "Beulah Land," a [TV] fantasy about slaves on a plantation in the Old South. Now we've seen 1980 close with the rerelease of a film that has debased Blacks for 34 years. The fact that Walt Disney Productions' "Song of the South" circulated during the holiday season is a callous addition to the web of disrespect that surrounds Blacks.

Lately, Black leaders across the country have been expressing dire fears of troubled times ahead. They point to the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, challenges to civil-rights legislation, mysterious killings, the Reagan presidency, joblessness and inflation. Well, they can add Hollywood to the list.

From "Song of the South" and "Beulah Land" back to 1915's "Birth of a Nation," the message has been clear: When it comes time for the entertainment of America and the profit of Hollywood, the Black image has no standing, not even under the revered Disney name.

"Song of the South" is a live-action film interspersed with animated scenes from the classic "Uncle Remus" stories, narrated by a live Uncle Remus. How, you ask, can Bre'r Rabbit stories told to children be harmful? Read on.

The plot begins with a white boy, his parents and his Black mammy (Hattie McDaniel, reprising her Oscar-winning caricature from "Gone With the Wind") visiting his grandmother on her Georgia plantation. The father must return suddenly to Atlanta, and young Johnny is depressed until he meets ol' Uncle Remus, the plantation story-teller. From there, the film goes straight downhill, at least for the Black characters. The despicable images are legion. A few examples:

- The slaves returning from the fields, singing in perfect harmony about how fortunate they are to be on the plantation.
- Toby, the Black child assigned to be Johnny's companion and protector, gushing about how Uncle Remus' stories are the best in "all the United States of Georgia."
- In a take-off on the coon-scared-of-the-ghost bit, Toby having to pinch Johnny to confirm that he is real.

The animal cartoon characters are treated just as badly, all having either tattered hats or coon dialects—or both—just like the human coon characters.

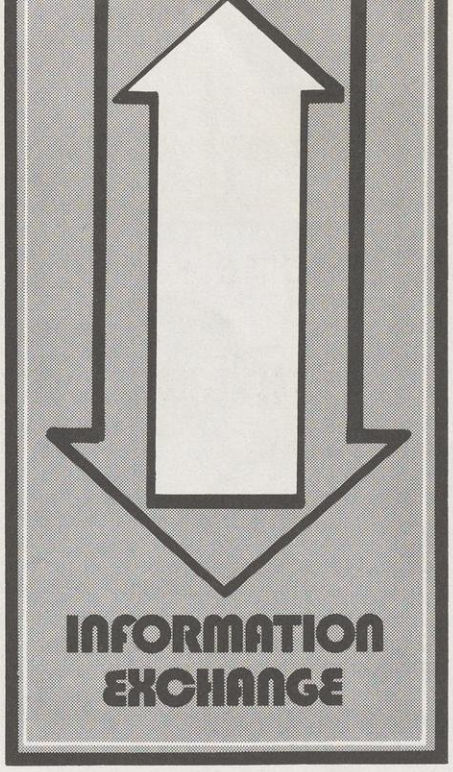
History, too, is laid low in the service of fun and coonin'. It's not clear when the story takes place. If it is the period before the Civil War, how could Uncle Remus, dejected at one point, leave the plantation on his own to live in Atlanta? And if it is after the Civil War, why isn't there a single indication—in the scenery, in the dialogue or at least in the characterization of the Blacks—that slavery is over.

No wonder Clarence Muse, a Black actor and screenwriter who had been hired to work on the script, quit when his ideas about improving the Black characters were rejected. He said the picture was "detrimental to the cultural advancement of the Negro people." At one point, the unappreciated Uncle Remus wonders aloud about his tales: "If they don't do no good, how come they last so long?" The same question can be applied in reverse to these racist images: They do lots of good for lots of people; that's precisely why they last so long.

Numerous studies have shown that children get their view of the world as much, if not more so, from the media as from school. With these images of a 1946 film added to the contemporary demeaning images of Blacks on TV, how can children be expected to view Blacks as people of dignity, worthy of respect?

HAVE YOU GOT A GAME THAT DEVELOPS SHARING AND COOPERATION?

For a discussion of toys and games, see "Toys Are Political, Too: A Guide to Gift-Giving the Year 'Round" in Vol. 11, No. 7.



The Barrio **Bilingual** Communications Catalog lists a variety of materials for school, library and home use. Filmstrips, children's books, reference books and posters about Mexican and Chicano cultures are featured; many of the materials are in Spanish. For a copy of the catalog, write Barrio Bilingual Communications, P.O. Box 4214 Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, Cal. 90051.

The sixth edition of "A **Gay** Bibliography" was recently published. The selective non-fiction list includes 563 items grouped under such topics as history and biography, law and civil rights, literature and the arts, etc. Films, filmstrips, periodicals, directories and bibliographies are also included. The bibliography is $1 each for 1-2 copies, 85¢ for 3-9 copies, 70¢ each for 10 or more. Orders under $25 must be prepaid; write to Barbara Gittings, Gay Task Force, Box 2383, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103. (Make checks payable to Barbara Gittings, Gay Task Force.)

The Community Media Project's goal is to bring **audio-visual materials** to grassroots groups. "In addition to suggesting relevant media, the project staff will often be able to provide resource people who can help get discussions going." To find out more, write the Project at 208 West 13 St., New York, N.Y. or call Marc Weiss or Lina Newhouser at (212) 620-0877.

OHOYO provides news and information for and about **Native American women.** The bulletin is free; to obtain a subscription, write OHOYO, 2301 Midwestern Parkway, Suite 214, Wichita Falls, Tex. 76308.

The Women's International Resource Exchange Service (WIRE Service) reproduces published and unpublished accounts and analyses by and about **women in the Third World.** It promotes an understanding of women's struggles and gains in a global context as a way to confront sexism, racism and classism in the U.S. Materials are available on such topics as "Nicaraguan Women and the Revolution" and "The *Fotonovela* as a Tool for Class and Cultural Domination." Many of the materials are also available in Spanish. For a price list, write WIRE Service, 2700 Broadway, Room 7, New York, N.Y. 10025.

"Learning Disabilities: Problems and Progress" provides an overview of various learning disabilities and suggests what parents and teachers can do to help children. The 26-page pamphlet is 50¢ from Public Affairs Pamphlets, 381 Park Ave. South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Callaloo publishes short stories, articles, plays, interviews, book reviews and reports on **Black art and culture.** Contributors include Mari Evans, Ernest Gaines, June Jordan, Ntozake Shange, Alice Walker and Margaret Walker. A one-year subscription is $6, two years, $10. A sample issue is $3. Write Charles H. Rowell, Editor, *Callaloo*, Department of English, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky. 40506.

Penny Power is a **consumer information** magazine designed for grades 4-6. It features articles on child-oriented subjects such as buying bikes and jeans, evaluations of fast foods and electronic games, directions for making costumes and stuffed toys, etc. The 30-page magazine is published by Consumers Union six times a year, September through June. Class subscription rates (minimum of 10): $4.50 per subscription; individual subscriptions: $7.50 each. Write Consumers Union, 256 Washington St., Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10550.

"Women: A Journal of Liberation" is a magazine that deals with such issues as raising children, work, sexual discrimination, women's struggles in other countries, etc. Subscriptions are $6. for individuals, $15. for institutions. Back issues on a variety of topics are still available for $1. To subscribe or to obtain a list of back issues, write the magazine at 3028 Greenmount Ave., Baltimore, Md. 31318.

The **Asian American** Bilingual Center of the Berkeley Unified School District is sponsoring the Third Summer Institute of Educational Research on Asian and Pacific Americans on July 9-24 in Hawaii. For additional information, contact Saulim Tsang, The Asian American Bilingual Center, 1414 Walnut St., Room 9, Third Floor, Berkeley, Cal. 94709.

The University of Denver's School of Education is sponsoring a program on "Studying **Multicultural Education** in the British Setting: A Cross-Cultural Approach." June 8-12 will be spent on the Denver campus, June 13-16 in England. For more information on the program, write Dr. Edith King, Professor of Educational Sociology, University of Denver, University Park, Denver, Col. 80208.

The **Langston Hughes** Study Conference will be held March 13-14 at Joplin, Miss. The colloquium will assess the status of Langston Hughes in contemporary U.S. literature. For information write Henry L. Harder, Professor of English, Missouri Southern State College, Joplin, Miss. 64801.

"People Have Rights! They have Responsibilities, Too" is a study guide for the UN's Universal Declaration of **Human Rights** for use in the upper elementary grades through high school. The 30-page paperback is $2.50 for 1-9 copies, $2. each for 10 or more plus postage. Write the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Wayne State University, 5229 Cass Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48202.

A provocative filmstrip from the CIBC Resource Center

Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes

Mona is Pawnee-Osage. She talks about the reasons she feels insulted by ABC *books that say, "I is for Indian," and by illustrations of animals dressed-up as "Indians" or by children "playing Indian."*

Meet Lance, who is Mohawk and has lots to tell about some old traditions and some new pollution on his reservation in upper New York State where "Trees are dying and cows' teeth are rotting out."

An engaging method for your students to learn many new facts about Native Americans—past and present—while they "unlearn" many common stereotypes about "Indians."

Native American children discuss the harm done by the stereotypes in many children's picture books. They reveal their own perspectives on history and discuss their own cultures, viewpoints and dreams. The children also debunk many common stereotypes—including those dealing with traditional styles of housing and clothing, such as the headdress. They explain why some Native people see little cause to celebrate Thanksgiving Day or Columbus Day. Contemporary and historic visuals combine with an informative and appealing audio-tape to provide your students with an enjoyable experience. The filmstrip will assist them in unlearning stereotypes about "Indians" picked up from movies, TV and books, while learning many things about the reality of Native Americans.

The filmstrip was prepared in cooperation with Native American educators and other classroom teachers. Part of the sales proceeds will go to the We Will Remember Survival School on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

The accompanying 48-page handbook features a major, in-depth study of stereotyping in 76 popular children's picture books. It offers teachers and librarians discussion pointers for the filmstrip; many classroom activities, including role-play formats; ten dos and don'ts for teaching about Native Americans; historical background information; a Native American perspective on why Thanksgiving, Washington's Birthday and Columbus Day are not their days for celebration. Student handouts to accompany the film are also provided. All this, and more, add up to an exciting and unique teaching unit on Native Americans to use in one to ten classroom periods.

15-minute, 130-frame, color-sound filmstrip and 48-page elementary teaching unit (grades 2-6). **$32.50**

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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.