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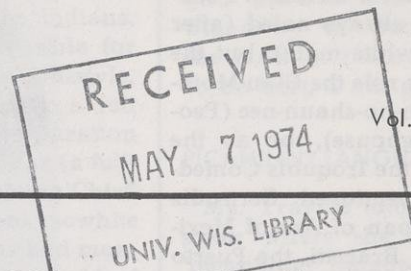
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Interracial Books FOR CHILDREN



MARY POPPINS REVISED: AN INTERVIEW WITH P.L. TRAVERS

by Albert V. Schwartz

Did you know that there is a new version of *Mary Poppins*? This popular piece of children's literature, once described by the *Christian Science Monitor* as "whimsical, philosophic, and strong in the principles of good thinking," has been revised so as to mitigate its racism.

When I first made this discovery, I called the juvenile department of the publisher, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, to find out how these changes had come about. I was told that certain portions of the original text had been revised in the 1972 paperback edition at the request of the author.

What had caused the author to make these changes? The editor said she did not know but she put me in touch with P.L. Travers herself, who is living in New York. I promptly called her and was delighted to hear that she was willing to grant me an interview.

I met Ms. Travers in her apartment on a rainy day. How appropriate to be arriving with an umbrella in my hand and rubbers on my feet! When we sat in her living room, I found I was face to face with the stern, bright, sharp "Mary" of my readings.

We talked for a long time before Ms. Travers would let me begin taping the discussion. She interviewed me almost as much as I her. I told her that the Council on Interracial Books



Michael dances with Robinson Crusoe's Man Friday in *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*.

for Children had been receiving more and more complaints about her stereotyped presentation of Africans, Chinese, Eskimos, and American Indians in *Mary Poppins*, most particularly in the chapter "Bad Tuesday."

Sitting tall and tense, Pamela Travers was aware of every word as she spoke: "Remember, *Mary Poppins* was written a long time ago [1934] when racism was not as important. About two years ago, a schoolteacher friend of mine, who is a devotee of *Mary Poppins* and reads it constantly to her class, told me that when she came to that part [i.e., the trip to Africa in "Bad Tuesday"; see accompanying box] it always made her shudder and squirm if she had Black children in her class. I decided that if that should happen, if even one Black child were troubled, or even if she were troubled, then I would have

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10 Quick Ways to Analyze Books for Racism and Sexism

Both in school and out, your children are being exposed to many books that convey racist and sexist attitudes. These attitudes—expressed over and over by books and other media—gradually distort their perceptions until stereotypes and myths about minorities and women are accepted as reality. It is difficult for a parent or a teacher to convince their children to question society's attitudes. But if you can show a child how to detect racism and sexism in a book, the child can proceed to transfer that perception to wider areas. The ten guidelines below are a starting point.

These fall into two parts. Part I is designed to help you detect racist and sexist bias in story books—children's picture books, primers, fiction, etc. Part II deals with school books—social studies, civics, history texts and other reference works. These same con-

cepts can also be applied to adult books and any written material.

These guidelines are followed by a list of things you can do to combat the racism and sexism you find.

PART I: ANALYZING PICTURE AND STORY BOOKS

(1) Check the illustrations.

- Look for stereotypes. A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, which generally carries derogatory implications. In the box on page 6 are some "famous" stereotypes. While you may not always find them in the forms described, look for variations which in any way demean or ridicule characters because of their race or sex.

- Look for tokenism. If there are non-white characters, are they just like the white faces but tinted or colored in? Do all minority faces look stereotypically alike or are they depicted as genuine individuals?

- Look at the lifestyles. Are minority characters and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with an unstated norm of white middle class suburbia? For example, minorities are often associated with the ghetto, migrant labor, or "primitive" living. If the story does attempt to depict another culture, does it go beyond oversimplifications of reality and offer genuine insights into another lifestyle?

(2) Check the story line.

Civil Rights legislation has led publishers to weed out many insulting passages and illustrations, particularly in stories with Black themes, but the attitudes still find expression in less obvious ways. The following checklist suggests some of the various subtle forms of bias to watch for:

- Relationships: Do the whites in the story have the power and make the decisions? Do non-white people function in essentially subservient roles?

- Standard for success: What does it take for a character to succeed? To gain acceptance, do non-white characters have to exhibit superior

Continued on page 6

Textbooks and the Invisible Woman

by Janice Law Trecker

Within the last half dozen years, there has been an increasing interest in women's history and women's studies on the college and university level. The resulting new scholarship and material have, however, barely penetrated the secondary level. Despite such promising developments as new supplementary texts on women's history, new resource and audiovisual materials and a growing concern about the quality of education for women and girls, the amount of women's history taught on the secondary level remains extremely small.

American history textbooks reflect a mythic rather than an historical view of women. Their basic assumption is that history is masculine, and their characteristic belief that society, culture, politics, art, science and economics are all male domains leads to the wholesale omission of women and to the distortion and minimization of those females who do appear. The clearest evidence for this viewpoint is the fact that 51 per cent of the population is usually "covered" by about one page of text.

Of course, the typical textbook is not totally devoid of women's names. There are always a few women too important or too unique to be completely excluded. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Harriet Tubman, Sacajawea, Phillis Wheatley, Clara Barton, Dorothea Dix and Susan B. Anthony are among the small and exclusive circle of women who are found deserving of a sentence or two.

While there has been a recent no-

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Native Americans Counter Traditional Stereotypes

The Association on American Indian Affairs (432 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016) has published an important contribution aimed at correcting, or at least redressing, the ways in which young readers perceive American Indian culture. The AAIA has just issued a selected bibliography, "American Indian Authors for Young Readers," compiled and with an intro-

duction by Mary Gloyne Byler. Ms. Byler is an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina and editor of *Indian Affairs*, the AAIA newsletter. The bibliography has a complex history, and Ms. Byler discussed it the other day with a representative of the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

In 1968, in response to requests for booklists that AAIA was receiving from parents, teachers and librarians, Ms. Byler compiled, and AAIA published, a list of books deemed "acceptable" for Indian children. Publishers' lists and bookstore and library collections were screened. Indian readers, both adults and teen-agers, were asked to read the books and to determine, among other things, which the books made them "feel good" about being Indian.

Well over 600 books were examined. "I was appalled by the quality of the books we reviewed," Ms. Byler said. "Even the well-intentioned books were not good; if anything, they were worse. The illustrations were especially shocking—painted naked savages

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Mary Gloyne Byler, compiler of "American Indian Authors for Young Readers"

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INVISIBLE WOMAN

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ticeable shift to include some history of minorities, the pattern of excluding minority women is evident and what is presented is still a male-only view. Women like Sojourner Truth, the founders of Black educational institutions like Lucy Laney and Mary Bethune, and Fannie Lou Hamer, a founder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, are never included. Pocahontas is almost always noted (after all, she saved a white male), but the vital and complex role the Clan Mothers in the Hou-den-no-shaun-nee (People of the Longhouse), or as the French called it, the Iroquois Confederacy, is rarely mentioned. Gertrudis Bocanegra, "the Joan of Arc of Mexico", and Mariana Bracetti, the Puerto Rican leader in the El Grito de Lares revolutionary movement—who usually is credited only for sewing its first flag—are invisible heroines in our texts marred by sexism and racism. Lola Rodriguez de Tió, the nineteenth-century feminist, and Juana Colon, the twentieth-century union organizer of women laborers, are but a few examples of the serious omissions that continue to scar our history textbooks.

Their presence, however, only points up the deficiencies in the overall conception of women's place in history. A few "great names" accompanied by a factual statement—without explanation or any analysis—would never qualify as a proper historical treatment for any but "women's issues."

TOKENISM IS THE RULE

Tokenism is the rule in the texts' treatment of women, because only females who distinguish themselves in a masculine hierarchy are considered bona fide historical characters. Women who act outside the normal male channels of power—or most of the significant women in America before the twentieth century—are automatically suspect. If they are controversial, they are simply ignored along with whatever cause they may have championed, as are women like Margaret Sanger, Emma Goldman, Ida B. Wells, Mother Jones, Alice Paul and Rosa Parks.

If, however, it appears to masculine sensibilities that a woman was simply eccentric, she is sure to be included. Providing comic relief is the function of at least half of all so-called women's history in these books. The need for a few light touches insures that hatchet-wielding Carrie Nation will be preferred to the brilliant and influential organizer Frances Willard in discussing temperance, and that the Gibson Girl and the Flapper will displace the social reformer or feminist in tracing the evolution of the modern woman. By and large, authors prefer to write sparkling discussions of skirt lengths and hair styles rather than to dig into such serious topics as the exploitation of female labor, the treatment of



Reflecting textbooks' concern with women and fashion, The Bloomer Girl is shown in *The Impact of Our Past* (McGraw Hill)

women in slavery, or women's role in mass education. A little wit, so conspicuously absent in the other 99 per cent of the average school history, is seen as the best way to avoid sticky questions like women and sex mores, or the long and disgraceful history of organized religious opposition to women's rights and opportunities.

Yet nothing more clearly illustrates the paucity of research and information that typify these texts than discussions which take the upper class Victorian matron (or the Gibson Girl or the Flapper) as the American woman of her time. While a minority may have sipped tea and embroidered flowers, the majority of American women toiled on the nation's farms or in the textile plants. Immigrant women wore out their lives in domestic service or in sweatshop tenements; slave women worked like cattle to bring in the cotton, rice and indigo of the Old South. Chivalry, decorum and all the trappings of the familiar "pedestal" of the nineteenth-century lady were no part of their lives. But their history, touching as it does on the heart of the country's economic, social and cultural life, is omitted in favor of a few platitudes or silence.

THE HOUSEWORK FALLACY

Textbooks' treatment of women reflects cultural ideas of female inferiority as well as the notion that women's lives and interests are basically dependent upon those of some favored male. The implication is that women have never had any activities of interest or importance outside of traditional male preoccupations; within the male hierarchy, they have, of course, occupied mostly inferior positions.

There is a basic problem with this assumption: it is incorrect.

To illustrate this, let me select one area—some aspects of American economic history—and point out some of the facts, issues and events ignored by the current population of textbook authors.

If you were to ask students what most American women have done during our history, I suspect that the answer would be "housework." That would be correct, yet what we today consider housework bears little resemblance in either extent or importance to the multitude of tasks performed by the colonial and frontier housewife, and indeed by the rural woman well into the twentieth century. In the colonies, on the frontier and for the earlier part of the nineteenth century, most Americans lived on subsistence farms. Their families made almost everything they needed, and in the usual division of labor, the women of the family were responsible for the manifold manufacturing processes

needed to turn all raw materials of the farm into useable goods. This included everything from turning raw flax into clothes, processing all foods (including making butter, cheese, sausages and preserving meats) to soap- and candle-making. The kitchen garden and livestock were also their responsibility. When this work was added to the laborious routine of cleaning, washing and cooking, and to the burdens of maternity, nursing and general child care, it is easy to see woman's economic importance. It is also easy to see why numbers of women were prepared to farm and homestead independently. According to historian Robert Smuts, probably the largest group of nineteenth-century female proprietors were women who claimed and worked their own land in the West.

The economic importance of the American woman was altered by the developments of the industrial revolution. The mechanization of home processes in the clothing industry, and later in baking, canning and cooking, led to the devaluation of a woman's labor. Housework was suddenly worthless, and women and their children followed "woman's work" out of the home and into the mills and factories.

FRAGILITY AND THE 14-HOUR DAY

There the "weak and fragile" creatures of Victorian sentiment were worked as long as 14 hours a day in cold, ill ventilated, unhealthy barns, foul with dust, fibers and chemicals. The old ideas of female inferiority now justified the lower wages of women operatives, with the result that they undercut men's wages, as their own were undermined by the pitiful salaries of the factory children. The availability of women and children for factory work was one of the important stimuli for industrialization in the East, and low wages and the long hours demanded of these operatives in effect subsidized the early industrial revolution in America.

The impact of the change in the locus of female labor, the conditions of the early industrial revolution, the rationale for employing female and child labor and the efforts of women as well as men to humanize the industrial system are all topics of real historical relevance. Yet if these changes receive as much as a paragraph, the author has been atypically generous.

Much of the widespread ignorance about the modern economic position of women may be traced to a similar disinterest in the later history of women in the labor force. Such changes as the rapid increase of women employed outside the home in the twentieth century, the mobilization of female labor during both world wars, and the beginnings of ideas about economic equality for women have had a vast impact on our economic structure. The history of women and work, including the trade union movement, and the social and cultural consequences of the American



Detail from illustration in *Building the United States* (Harcourt, 1971) captioned: "Many American women read the popular fashion magazine, 'Godey's Lady's Book,' to find out what the latest fashions were."

habit of using women as a pool of cheap expendable labor are certainly subjects properly in history texts and in materials prepared for social studies programs.

The economic aspect is not the only neglected facet of women's history. It is hard to get a complete picture of any topic in our history when half of the population is omitted from discussion. In addition to disregarding economic issues concerning women, the historical omissions and inaccuracies of the history textbooks usually encompass women's legal history; female contributions to art, science and culture; ideas and theories about women; the women's movement; and birth control and changing sexual standards. While serious from an historical point of view, these distortions and omissions have another, perhaps even more important, impact upon students' views of women. It is a striking illustration of assumptions of female inferiority when publishers, writers, teachers and parents accept materials that downgrade or ignore half or more of the consumers of text materials.

The treatment of American women in history texts is only one small facet in a pattern of sexism and racism. However, the history texts might make a real contribution to changing the image of American women and to improving the self image of female students. It is hard to see how one can accept the idea that women are weak and frivolous after learning about the suffrage movement, the role of women in the industrial revolution, the tasks of frontier women or the development of education for women of all races. It is very hard to see how women can be labeled "uncreative" and intellectually dependent after learning about the evolution of modern dance or of women's contributions to the performing and the visual arts. It is hard to imagine that students would uncritically accept the myths about women's intellectual capacities or personality after studying the pseudo-scientific theories marshalled to support them or the social, cultural and religious prejudices which sustained the inferiority of women. If demanding that the nation's textbooks stop purveying myths and stereotypes in place of history cannot, by itself, alter ideas about women, at least textbook changes could prevent the transmission of blatant sexism and racism to another generation of American young people.

SUGGESTED READING

I think that the very best introduction to women's history is Eleanor Flexner's *A Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the U. S.* (Harvard University Press, 1959 and in paper, Atheneum, 1968). It has a very good bibliography. Gerda Lerner's *The Woman in American History* (Addison-Wesley, 1971) was designed for high school use; it's short, concise and comprehensive.

There are some excellent collections of documents, too. I like Aileen S. Kraditor's *Up from the Pedestal* (Quadrangle, 1968). I wrote a more complete critique of textbooks that appeared in "Social Education," March, 1971. The article goes over what is omitted in textbooks, topic by topic.

There are also several good special works, such as Robert Smut's *Women and Work in America* (Schocken, 1971); Julia Cherry Spruill's *Woman's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Russell & Russell, 1969); and Mary Elizabeth Massey's *Bonnet Brigades* (Knopf, 1966), which deals with the Civil War.

About the Author

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Racism Reissued: The Time-Life History of the United States

by Deborah Stead

The *LIFE History of the United States* released the first of its weekly installments in January—an event accompanied by strident TV commercials in 60 "market areas" across the U.S. The series is being released in 65 weekly installments in a paperback-bound magazine format and is readily available by subscription, at supermarkets and at newsstands.

The series is now being issued by Marshall-Cavandish U.S.A. Ltd.; it was first published in 12 hardcover installments by Time-Life, Inc. in 1963. Since historical analysis must change as new information about—and new perspectives on—the past emerges, history books can, if not revised, themselves become "documents" of misinformation about the past. But this series has not been rewritten or revised, merely reissued.

FIRST VOLUME ANALYZED

Part 1 of the *History*, covering North America just before and after "discovery," reflects the racism which forced the ideas of the last ten years to emerge; it is a commentary that ignores oppression of Native Americans and their resistance, that fails to describe at all adequately the non-European culture existing on the continent, that glorifies the values of dominance and conquest, and that refuses to chronicle the slaughter which ensured that conquest.

The history begins with the Native American: a brief discussion of their origins and their locations on the North American continent is followed by a cursory description of each group's "way of life"—which tribe fished and which hunted, who were nomads and who settled in a given territory to farm, which group was communal, which was not. Weaving through this perfunctory survey is the implicit message that many of them were inherently violent, and the explicit message that they were incapable of political or military organization.

"In temperament they ranged from the peaceful Pima of Arizona to the belligerent Iroquois of New York," the test breezily asserts. Here is how the groups are described: the Muskogean are "warlike" and "quarreling" (especially the "bellicose Chickasaw"), the Apache and Navaho, "fierce pomads." And, "in the eyes of the white men who first met him, a puzzle. [He] was generous. He was cruel and he dearly loved merciless war."

... Indians thought in non-economic terms. The young Dakota dreamed of captives and scalps that would bring him fame and glory in the tribe. So he fought Indian, white settlers and dashing General Custer. . . . (p. 22)

In short, Native Americans were war-loving. They did not do battle among themselves for survival or with whites in resistance, but for sheer pleasure because of their temperment and the desire for glory.

The assertion is made that Native Americans were hopelessly "unorganized." Their diversity (linked with

"fragmentation" in the text's framework) is treated as though it set the stage for some inevitable defeat; similarities are viewed as merely ironic if they did not culminate in political allegiance.

Even the Iroquois tribes' political structure, "superior to anything ever created by the other Indian peoples of the Northeast," presumably had problems which led "to the inevitable end of weakening the external power of the Iroquois confederation" (p. 14). This "weakness," in fact, is offered as one of the few things North American Indians shared:

What they had in common were fatal deficiencies . . . their worst liability was ineffective political organization. Most of them could not unite, which meant that an organized invader could immediately put them in peril. (p. 12)

A case for political chaos among them—a situation deemed a "handicap of their own making"—is in this way constructed. Presumably, we are to see it as a certain kind of inferiority—one which justified the oppression from "organized" invaders, and one which precluded any meaningful resistance.

About other dimensions of Indian life and culture, the *History* presents a grimly familiar point of view. There is a racist perspective on the illustrations of artifacts and in the inevitable anthropological "look" at ceremonies. A statue created by prehistoric Native Americans is captioned a "crude effigy"; one dressed for war is described as "gaudily painted." In contrast, the Spanish invaders are singled out for the "cultural heritage" they bequeathed. Indian religions—complex, rich, and mystical—are ridiculed by the "explanation" accompanying a drawing of an Apache medicine man's ritual shirt:

... the spell appears to have failed; this shirt was captured in Arizona by an officer of the U.S. Cavalry in the 19th century. (p. 26)

The picture the text presents is completed: the American Indian had a fixed "temperament," a somewhat baffling lifestyle, ridiculous religions, and no effective political structures. The white Europeans are introduced as "adventurers," who had "driving energy," and, in the case of Columbus, "colossal self-confidence, stout determination" and "superb nautical skill. . ." (p. 29).

On the eve of Columbus' arrival, the patterns of their life may have seemed to the Indians fixed and unalterable, the barriers to alteration impassable. But in time, every barrier would yield to the driving energy of the settlers. Nothing would stop the white man once he had secured beachhead in the New World. He would climb over, swing around or thread through all geographical obstacles. He would drive the Indians into a long westerly retreat. And he would take over the American land to make it uniquely his own. (p. 15)

Thus repression, displacement, slaughter of the Indian—as well as the rape

of the land—assume a heroic dimension and are transformed into inevitable steps toward some manifest destiny.

When cruelty and oppression are explicitly admitted, they are justified by the implication that they are somehow in response to qualities in American Indians which are at least as bad, but probably worse. So, early 16th century settlers are described as "cruel and war-loving," but only to explain why some of them esteemed the "cruelty" of the American Indians. Europeans are held responsible for the destruction of their lifestyle, but this comes directly after a full paragraph describing the preparation of an American Indian for war (a full-page illustration of a "Fighting Chief" is provided, too): ". . . it took the white man 300 years of little sins and monstrous crimes to destroy the world of the Indian." One would think it was an annoying but necessary chore.

When not implicitly justified, white oppression of Native Americans is glibly chronicled, devoid of any sense of outrage, described in order to provide a "background" against which European figures emerge. A drawing of Hernando de Soto bears a caption which tells us that he was said to be "fond of this sport of killing Indians," and that he was "handsome."

The *Life* discussion of slavery is equally distorted. The enslavement of Africans and the growing slave trade that emerged only 50 years after Columbus' arrival are lost in a discussion of European rivalry in the "new world."

The first stage of worldwide maritime rivalry introduced the "sea dog" or privateer. . . . John Hawkins was one of the early sea dogs. . . . At the same time that he was systematically raiding Spain's Caribbean ports, he was bringing African slaves to sell to the Spanish sugar planters there. . . . (p. 36)

Columbus' rule of Hispaniola (what is now the Dominican Republic and Haiti) is summed up with equanimity. The mass murder and oppression carried out during Columbus' reign (it has been estimated that Hispaniola's population decreased from 500,000 to 500 in 50 years) are dealt with coolly:

Columbus' reputation is . . . marred by his shortcomings as an administrator (emphasis added). During his rule of Hispaniola, the natives were cruelly exploited and his personal character was tarnished by rapacity. (p. 31)

And, of course, resistance is not mentioned, as it was similarly omitted from the "history" of the North American continent.

The kind of overt racism that produced the *LIFE History* of American Indian culture has pervaded "official" history for centuries. Judging from Part I of this series, it is once again available, this time backed by the prestige of *Life* magazine and the reputation of Time-Life, Inc.

The Life History of the United States, published by Marshall-Cavendish, U.S.A. Ltd., is available by subscription, or at supermarkets and newsstands. 65 weekly installments; 95¢ per copy.

About the Author

DEBORAH STEAD, a former teacher, is research-compiler for the Foundation for Change.

MARY POPPINS

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to alter it. And so I altered the conversation part of it. I didn't alter the plot of the story. When the next edition, which was the paperback, came out, I also altered one or two things which had nothing to do with 'picaninny' talk at all.

"Various friends of mine, artists and writers, said to me, 'No, no! What you have written you have written. Stand by it!' But, I thought, no, if the least of these little ones is going to be hurt, I am going to alter it!"

PICANINNY LANGUAGE

Ms. Travers told me that she didn't know where she had picked up the "picaninny" language since, she said, she had known no Black people at the time she wrote *Mary Poppins*. However, she had read *Uncle Remus* and still knows *Little Black Sambo* by heart.

I said that it was fortunate that she had also eliminated the references to watermelon and shoe polish. But when I asked why she herself still used the term "picaninny," she replied: "To me, even now the word 'picaninny' is very pretty. I've used it myself time and time again to children. Not to Black children because life hasn't brought me very much in contact with Black children, but I've used it time and again to small children."

When asked what language the Black characters used in the revised version, Ms. Travers said: "Formal English, grave and formal. Now that I've met Black people from time to time, they speak a formal English."

Many of my comments about other parts of *Mary Poppins* displeased Ms. Travers. "I refuse to be arraigned for what I wrote," she declared at one point. "You're overstressing from the point of view of racism, which is something I don't accept. I have no racism in me. I wasn't born with it. And it's never happened inside of me. And therefore I feel perfectly at ease and at home no matter what color anybody's skin is. I was brought up in a family and in a world where there was no hint of racism of any kind. And not because my family was liberal or because they had liberal friends. I was brought up by large-minded people who never had any sense of racism at all. I grew up in a rarefied atmosphere. I loved *Little Black Sambo* as a child . . . I only came across racism since I came to the United States."

IMAGINATION VS. SOCIOLOGY?

"If you grew up without racism, with parents who had no racism, then how do you explain that racism appears in your books?" I asked.

"Literature and imagination are my world. I don't like being pulled out of that world and being forced to live in a sociological world of which I am not a native inhabitant. Imagination is a pure thing. It is envisaging. Imagination does not depend upon the sociology of the time. More functional books do; imagination does not. Imagination goes whither it will. *Mary Poppins* is not a contemporary book. It is a timeless book, and probably it goes back a good deal to my own childhood."

"I am not really convinced that any harm is done," she continued. "I remember when I was first invited to New York by a group of schoolteachers and librarians, amongst whom were many Black teachers. We met at the New York Public Library. I had thought that they expected me to talk to them, but no, on the contrary, they wanted to thank me for writing *Mary Poppins* because it had been so popular with their classes. Not one of them took the opportunity—if indeed they noticed it—to talk to me

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"The Plains Indians had pleasures, even quite sensual indulgences" reads the text referring to this illustration of Crow Indian men bathing.



THE BOOKSHELF

FANNIE LOU HAMER by June Jordan, illustrated by Albert Williams. T.Y. Crowell, 1972, \$3.75, 42 pages

During the 1960's the protests of the Civil Rights Movement challenged the segregationist tradition in the South. One of the important fighters in the Movement was Fannie Lou Hamer, a Black woman from Sunflower County, Mississippi.

Fannie Lou Hamer was the youngest in a family of 20 that sharecropped on a cotton plantation. She attended school only when the crops were harvested, but she became knowledgeable about the culture of her people and recited poetry for the pleasure of others.

In the summer of 1962, college students and Black leaders came to Mississippi to assist in the Mississippi Voter Registration. Mrs. Hamer was the first to register to vote in the town of Ruleville, after a Black man had been murdered for attempting to register. As a result, she was forced to leave the plantation and, for a time, her husband.

Mrs. Hamer went on a speaking campaign, urging Blacks to register to vote. Her efforts proved fruitful and she continued in spite of harassment and intimidation. In 1963 she was arrested, jailed and brutally beaten by two Black prisoners who were ordered to do so by the police. Speaking of this police brutality to newsmen and government officials, Mrs. Hamer went on to mobilize support for her efforts. In addition, she was one of the members of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party which participated in the 1964 National Democratic Convention and stimulated many people to work for social change.

Mrs. Hamer never forgot the years of hunger which she and many others suffered. She yearned for a farm that would produce crops for the poor, and with contributions from white high school students in Chicago, she formed the Freedom Farm Cooperative where 5,000 people, both Black and white, work the land and share the harvest.

June Jordan, poet, editor and teacher, has written a comprehensive biography of Mrs. Hamer. The book is valuable not only for its historical content; more important, it shows Mrs. Hamer's love for humanity, which gave her the resilience to challenge a whole system of oppression. The book does not create a fantasy in relating the life of a Black leader or present historical inaccuracies.

This is reading material appropriate for children from four to nine years old. If youngsters have not reached this reading level, the story should be read to them.

— N. R.

I AM written and illustrated by Sonia Lisker. Hastings House, 1973, \$3.95, 31 pages

GIRLS CAN BE ANYTHING by Norma Klein, illustrated by Roy Doty. E.P. Dutton, 1973, \$4.50, 28 pages

I CAN BE ANYTHING YOU CAN BE! by Joel Rothman, illustrated by Susan Perl. Scroll Press, 1973, \$5.50, 30 pages

These books explore children's career fantasies. In *Girls Can Be Anything*, Marina and Adam come to grips with traditional notions about roles. Marina declares that she can become

almost anything she chooses to be; Adam cannot understand this since he has been taught that girls are limited to certain roles. The book does not put the two friends in competition with each other, and in the end they work out their dilemma.

The child who reads *Girls Can Be Anything* can identify with the children, who have names and personalities. This is not the case with *I Am* and *I Can Be Anything You Can Be!* In *I Am* there are two nameless children and in *I Can Be Anything You Can Be!* a different child on every page. The forced cleverness of *I Am* seems geared more toward older children (or adults) and not meaningful to young children. The book is fast-paced, illustrated with black and white line drawings, and each situation is seen through the eyes of several participants.

I Can Be Anything You Can Be! has an "I'll show you" attitude which is disturbing. Each two-page spread shows a set of children—one boy and one girl—with the boy stating that he can be something that the girl cannot. She defends her right to be any of the things he challenges her on. The illustrations and the dialog reinforce the competition between the children.

At no time in this book does one child smile at another—unless it is with a smile of triumph. This book was written by a man; though he claims to espouse the concept of equal opportunity for women, he does so with such competitiveness that his motivations are questionable!

— S. K.

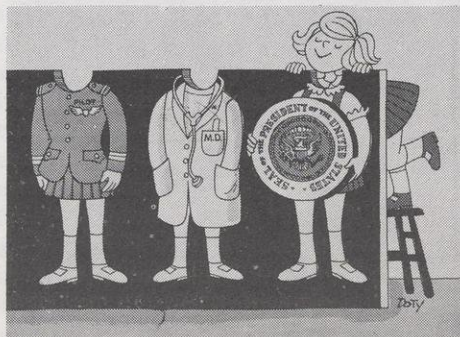
PUERTO RICO: ISLAND OF CONTRAST by Geraldo Rivera, illustrated by William Negron. Parents' Magazine Press, 1973, \$3.97, 64 pages

It is the Council's concern to encourage minority writers. However, in this case, because the author is so well known as a TV reporter that the viewpoints expressed in the book are likely to gain wide attention, we feel that a criticism is in order.

Puerto Rico: Island of Contrasts is a book full of slurs against Puerto Ricans. It is written as a supplementary history book for children from seven to ten years old, but it is simplistic and the tone is condescending. The text is a chronicle of failure after failure.

Consider this sentence, for example. "You see, Puerto Rico isn't really a country, but it's not really part of the United States of America either." This is the beginning of a pattern which states the history of Puerto Rico in negatives. In the same chapter, Puerto Rico is referred to as "only a stepchild" in the family of nations. Mr. Rivera's account chronicles acts of domination by foreign powers but unfortunately leaves the impression that each conqueror brought progress.

Cover illustration of *Girls Can Be Anything*



Since this is a children's book, one should examine its sensitivity to children's needs. After reading *Puerto Rico*, a Puerto Rican child would feel much confusion and possibly shame; he would certainly not come away with any sense of national pride. Could a child develop a positive identification with Puerto Rico from the following: "What is a Puerto Rican? Now don't laugh. That question isn't as silly as it sounds." This strange comment begins Chapter 7. Suppose that passage were read to a class in El Barrio? The book depicts progress in terms of "shiny, new apartment buildings." The models of individuals with economic power are taken from the annals of "successful American business." Not only does the author glorify American business and tourism, but he notes proudly that even "their" national game is "borrowed from the U.S." On page 42, in connection with horse racing, he says that "they love to bet."

The author constantly apologizes for Puerto Ricans. "Only about one out of every ten can speak it [English] perfectly. But if you stay in one of the big hotels almost everybody there speaks English." The message here is that English is a more valuable asset than Spanish.

Finally, *Puerto Rico: Island of Contrasts*, in addition to being a collection of misconceptions, is written about THEM, the Puerto Ricans. Mr. Rivera's perspective is that of a tour guide taking Americans through an "underdeveloped" country. Puerto Rico, Mr. Rivera apologizes, is finally being put right by American inventiveness.

This book is *not* for Puerto Rican children learning about their heritage and *not* for non-Puerto Rican children learning about other people.

— R. G.

GOOD, SAYS JEROME by Lucille Clifton, illustrated by Stephanie Douglas. E.P. Dutton, 1973, \$5.95, unpagged

DON'T YOU REMEMBER by Lucille Clifton, illustrated by Evaline Ness. E.P. Dutton, 1973, \$4.95, 28 pages

Good, Says Jerome and *Don't You Remember?* are two excellent picture books by Lucille Clifton that touch on important areas in the experience of all children, and that are particularly relevant to Black children.

In *Good, Says Jerome* Jerome is anxious about moving to a new home, meeting new friends, and having a new teacher. He also wonders, "What is Black?" Desire Mary Tate, the independent young girl in *Don't You Remember?*, faces the problem of a family that too often forgets their promises to her.

Both books portray warm, supportive family situations. Jerome's older sister answers his probing questions with sensitivity; Desire's older brother cares for her while their parents work and, in the end, her entire family justifies her faith in them by fulfilling their promises to her.

Since the situations described in these books are experienced by many children, they can be used by parents or teachers to help children verbalize and explore their fears and feelings. Jerome and Desire Mary Tate are both engaging and believable.

The illustrations in *Good, Says Jerome*, done by Stephanie Douglas, complement the text and can be used to stimulate discussions. The illustrations in *Don't You Remember?* are imaginative but sometimes confusing to a child.

— E. W.

Reviewers for this issue were Roberto Gautier, Linda Mead, Sandy Kavanaugh, Norma Rogers and Elaine Williams. The Bookshelf will be an on-going department; your comments and contributions are welcome.

MARY POPPINS

Continued from page 3



An illustration from *Mary Poppins in the Park*; the caption is, "Let me go, you savage!"

about what you've mentioned in 'Bad Tuesday.'

Another question I had for P.L. Travers regarded the insulting use of the term "street arab." Miss Lark, a character in *Mary Poppins*, calls to her dog to get away from the other dogs: "Andrew, Andrew, come in my darling! Come away from those dreadful street arabs."

Pamela Travers laughed at the question. "Is that a pejorative term? 'Street arab'? There are 'street arabs' in Morocco, aren't there? Little boys running around asking for hashshish? Are you trying to arraign me for that? Because I shan't be in any way arraigned or put in a witness box. I used it! Very well, then. That's what it meant to me at the time, and there it is. I never thought of changing it. If anybody said it made them squirm I would have changed that too. But I don't think that any normal person would squirm at that term."

Pamela Travers agreed that Mary Shepard's illustrations for the chapter, "Bad Tuesday" were stereotypes but said that she was not responsible for them. (The editors at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich later said that when revisions of the book were considered, at no time was any thought given to changing Mary Shepard's illustrations, which often show stereotyped Third World people.)

"FRIEND MONKEY"

The subject changed to Ms. Travers' latest book, *Friend Monkey*, also published by Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich. She was annoyed that I had not yet read *Friend Monkey*, and she began to read to me from the book:

"Miss Brown-Potter was a female explorer, who now lived in retirement. Once on a trip to Africa, she had rescued a baby from a crocodile on the banks of the River Tooma. He belonged, she had learned, to the Fan tribe, and since his family seemed not to want him—perhaps because the child was deaf—she had brought him back to England with her and named him after two famous explorers."

I asked Ms. Travers if she didn't think that having a Black family reject a child and feed him to crocodiles because he is deaf would be offensive to Black parents, especially in a children's book? She avoided my question by stating that this was an actual practice of the Fan tribe in Africa. [To the Council's best knowledge, the only Tooma River is in New South Wales—it should be noted here that Ms. Travers, who is considered an English author, was born and reared in Australia. Records consulted by the Council indicate that Fan is a variant spelling for the Fang of Gabon, in West Africa. However, the Council could find no substantiation for the assertion that the Fang leave handicapped children on river banks.]

"BAD TUESDAY" BEFORE AND AFTER . . . AND OTHER EXTRACTS

The original passage from the chapter "Bad Tuesday"—still in the hardcover edition generally found in schools and libraries—is as follows:

Beneath the palm-tree sat a man and a woman, both quite black all over and with very few clothes on. But to make up for this they wore a great many beads—some hung around their heads just below great crowns of feathers, some in their ears, one or two in their noses. Beads were looped about their necks and plaited bead belts surrounded their waists. On the knee of the negro lady sat a tiny black piccaninny with nothing on at all. It smiled at the children as its Mother spoke.

"Ah bin 'specting you a long time, Mar' Poppins," she said, smiling. "You bring dem chillun dere into ma li'l house for a slice of watermelon right now. My, but dem's very white babies. You wan' use a li'l bit black boot polish on dem. Come 'long, now. You'se mighty welcome."

And she laughed, loud happy laughter, as she got up and began to lead the way towards a little hut made entirely of palm-trees.

Jane and Michael were about to follow, but Mary Poppins held them back.

"We've no time to stay, unfortunately. Just dropped in as we were passing, you know. We've got to get round the world—" she explained to the two black people, who lifted up their hands in surprise.

"You got some journey, Mar' Poppins," said the man.

However, the description of the Black parents is still grotesque stereotyping; and the image of the mother's childish simplicity is unchanged: "She laughed again as if this, and everything else in the world, were one huge happy joke."

Nor have other racist elements in "Bad Tuesday" been touched. Two of the four visits (to the North and to the East) are just long enough for Mary Poppins to be recognized and welcomed—and for the briefest stereotyped image of an Eskimo and a Chinese Mandarin to register on the reader's imagination. In the fourth visit, to the American West, an encounter takes place—or at least begins to take place. Michael, the little white boy, is challenged by Chief Sun-at-Noonday, to "test his strength against my great-great-grandson, Fleet-as-the-Wind." Fleet-as-the-Wind easily outruns the two visiting children, but "Michael was angry now and set his teeth and fled screaming after Fleet-as-the-Wind, determined not to be outrun by an Indian boy." Michael, who is probably not more than seven years old, automatically assumes the "white man's burden" and has to prove his superiority to "an Indian boy." However, Mary Poppins interrupts the chase by whisking the children back to their own home.

The final scene of "Bad Tuesday" begins when Michael secretly takes the magic compass for his own use.

A noise behind the chair startled him and he turned round guiltily, expecting to see Mary Poppins. But instead, there were four gigantic figures bearing down towards him—the Eskimo with a spear, the Negro Lady with her husband's huge club, the Mandarin with a great curved sword, and the Red Indian with a tomahawk. They were rushing upon him from all four quarters of the room with their weapons raised above their heads, and, instead of looking kind and friendly as they had done that afternoon, they

now seemed threatening and full of revenge. They were almost on top of him, their huge, terrible, angry faces looming nearer and nearer. He felt their hot breath on his face and saw their weapons tremble in their hands.

With a cry Michael dropped the compass.

"Mary Poppins, Mary Poppins—help me, help me! he screamed, and shut his eyes tight.

This racist nightmare in which Third World people turn—without the slightest provocation—into monsters to punish a white child remains unaltered in the new version of *Mary Poppins*. Viewed as the product of a cultural fantasy, as an expression of racist fears of retribution, this scene may make perfect sense; but if this view is accepted or not, it is clearly irresponsible to teach children to identify their fears of punishment with Third World people.

MORE EXAMPLES

A closer look at all the Mary Poppins books—*Mary Poppins* (1934), *Mary Poppins Comes Back* (1935), and *Mary Poppins in the Park* (1952)—shows that Mary Poppins and other adults in the stories consistently use non-white peoples to symbolize "improper" or "wrong" behavior.

From *Mary Poppins*: (Page 203) Michael's mother says: "You will not behave like a Red Indian, Michael."

From *Mary Poppins Comes Back*: (Page 64) Mary Poppins: "Not one step will you go out of this room this afternoon or I'm a Chinaman." (Page 132) "Then they became Red Indians with John and Barbara for squaws. 'Walk beside me, please, like a Christian.'" (Page 215) Mary Poppins: "'I would rather,' she remarked with a sniff, 'have a family of Cannibals to look after. They'd be more human.'" (Page 219) Mary Poppins: "A Zulu would have better manners."

From *Mary Poppins in the Park*: (Page 60) Mary Poppins to the grimy children: "You look like a couple of Blackamoors!" (Page 132) Mary Poppins: "May I ask what you think you're doing, Jane? And you too, Michael! Let go that policeman! Is this a garden or a Cannibal Island?" (Page 146) Mary Poppins to an upset and excited Michael: "I understand that you're behaving like a Hottentot!" (Page 196) Mary Poppins with a disapproving look at the children: "A pair of Golliwogs—that's what you are!" (Note: Webster's New World Dictionary of the English Language definition of Golliwog: "A grotesque black doll used in illustrations by Florence K. Upton for a series of children's books; hence a grotesque, ugly person.") (Page 120) Illustration showing a caricature of an Indian; caption: "Let me go, you savage!"

From *Friend Monkey* (a recent book—published in 1971): (page 16) Stanley Livingston Fan (an African child) meets an escaped zoo monkey in the London park: "The black and the brown hugged each other as though they were long lost brothers."

Later in the story, in chapter 15, Part II, the African child and the monkey are playing in the park. This leads to a supposedly hilarious scene in which the onlookers are unable to tell the difference between the Black child and the monkey.

Publishers Unresponsive To Community Needs

For top-ranking members of the Association of American Publishers to meet with education officials and concerned community representatives to discuss publishers' responsibilities for the quality of public education seems to promise open dialogue. That was the stated goal of a meeting held January 31 and February 1 under the auspices of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Representatives of the AAP met with several members of the California Curriculum Commission, professional educators representing several disciplines, and with representatives from a broad range of community organizations—women's organizations, "ethnic" organizations, district goals review committees, and district PTA and advisory boards.

But the promise for open dialogue was not fulfilled. For the community organizations, the meetings only confirmed the belief that the publishers are dominated by their concern for profits; blinded to the realities of non-Anglo cultures by their complacent ethnocentrism; and insulated by their own elitism from the needs of the communities they serve.

The publishers invited the community to share their assessment of the "situation": the sudden discovery that some of the books in some of the schools contain things which do not satisfy—or are even offensive to—some elements of the population; that publishers are good guys and are distressed if anyone is less than happy with their efforts; that publishers' problems are so great that changing the nature of their product must be a slow process and, inevitably, one that lags behind the demand for change; that the publishing world is so complex that no one outside the industry can hope to appreciate or understand it; and that the content of textbooks is, in any case, not the publishers' responsibility, since publishers do not create curricula.

These propositions did not receive the support of the community representatives present—especially not that of the women's or ethnic groups. Each group maintained that, on the contrary, distortions and omissions are so long standing and so prevalent that they amount to characteristics of U.S. textbook publishing and that publishers do indeed bear a responsibility for the accuracy or bias of the material they publish.

RESOLUTION BY ASIAN AMERICANS DISMISSED

The publishers' reaction was generally defensive. For example, when a representative of the Asian community tried to read her group's prepared statement she was interrupted by two publishers who stated that their firms each employ one Asian American in a responsible position. Other statements from publishers were: "If we weren't concerned we wouldn't have taken all the time to come all the way here to talk to you. I have other things I could do with this time, you know," and "Sure there are some problems, nobody is perfect, but you act as if you don't appreciate at all what we are trying to do for you."

Someone at the conference told of one principal who has refused new books and is, instead, banking the saved money against the time when good books appear. This is a legal option in the California school system. (Few of the community representatives knew of this option—and they expressed considerable enthusiasm for it.)

When the meeting ended, the publishers' position seemed unchanged, and their mood remained defensive. Community representatives had exchanged ideas and confronted the publishers, but they had failed to influence the publishers.

PAPERBACK VERSION

In the paperback edition this passage reads as follows:

"We've been anticipating your visit, Mary Poppins," she said, smiling. "Goodness, those are very pale children! Where did you find them? On the moon?" She laughed at them, loud happy laughter, as she got to her feet and began to lead the way to a little hut made of palm-leaves. "Come in, come in and share our dinner. You're all as welcome as sunlight."



Mary Shepard's illustration for the chapter "Bad Tuesday" in *Mary Poppins*

"And why is the Black boy speechless?" I asked.

"... because I do not presume to know what a Black child of the Fan tribe in 1899 would be likely to say or think, and so by an imaginary device, he is speechless."

"Why must the child be Black?" I asked. She replied that you do not

find a white child on the River Tooma in Africa, whereupon I interjected that Tarzan was a white child found in Africa.

"That is the difference between imagination and fantasy," she answered.

It was apparent that the interview had come to an end. I put on my

rubbers and raincoat, said good-bye to P.L. Travers, and left. It was still raining, hard as ever.

About the Author

ALBERT V. SCHWARTZ is Assistant Professor of Language Arts, Richmond College, Staten Island, New York.

10 WAYS

Continued from page 1

"FAMOUS" STEREOTYPES

- *Blacks*: the happy-go-lucky Sambo eating watermelon, or fat, old, eye-rolling mammy.
- *Chicanos*: the sombrero-wearing peon, sleeping under a cactus, or the fiesta-loving macho bandito with a fat wife and lots of children.
- *Native Americans*: the naked savage that scalps white people or the crafty hunter or the primitive craftsman and his squaw.
- *Asian Americans*: the sly, inscrutable, slant-eyed "oriental" or the ever-smiling, hard working, uncomplaining laundry man and pig-tailed wife.
- *Puerto Ricans*: the docile, friendly little family speaking broken English, or the strident switchblade toting teenager spoiling for a fight.
- *Women of all races*: the mother who is only portrayed in domestic situations, or the little girl in a spotless dress playing with dolls and standing on the sidelines as boys do all the fun things, or the helpless Princess rescued by Prince Charming, or the wicked stepmother.

qualities—excel in sports, get A's, etc.? In friendships between white and non-white children ("brotherhood"), is it the non-white who does most of the understanding and forgiving?

● *Viewpoint*: How are "problems" presented, conceived and resolved in the story? Are minority people themselves considered to be "the problem"? Do solutions ultimately depend on the benevolence of a white person?

● *Sexism*: Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or is their success due to their good looks or to their relationships with boys? Are sex roles incidental or paramount to characterization and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

(3) Consider the effects of the book on the child's self-image and self-esteem. Are norms established which limit the child's aspirations and self-concepts? What does it do to Black children to be continuously bombarded with images of white as beautiful, clean, virtuous, etc., and black as evil, dirty, menacing, etc.? What happens to a girl's aspirations when she reads that boys perform all the brave and important deeds? What about a girl's self-esteem if she is not fair of skin and slim of body?

(4) Consider the author's or illustrator's qualifications. Read the biographical material on the jacket flap or on the back of the book. If a story deals with a minority theme, what qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with this topic? If they are not members of the minority being written about, is there anything in the author's or illustrator's background that would specifically recommend them for this book?

Similarly, a book that has to do with the feelings and insights of women should be more carefully examined if it is written by a man—unless the book's avowed purpose is to present a male viewpoint.

The above observations do not deny the ability of writers to empathize with experiences other than those of their own sex or race, but the chances of their writing as honestly and as authentically about other experiences are not as good.

(5) Look at the copyright date. Books on minority themes—usually hastily conceived—suddenly began appearing in the mid-1960's. There followed a growing number of "minority experience" books to meet the new market demand, but these were still written by white authors and reflected a white point of view. Only very recently—in

the late 1960's and early 1970's—has the children's book world begun to even remotely reflect the realities of a multiracial society and it has just begun to reflect feminists' concerns.

The copyright date, therefore, can be a clue as to how *likely* the book is to be overtly racist or sexist although recent copyright date, of course, is no guarantee of a book's relevance or sensitivity. Note that the copyright date only means the year the book was published. It usually takes a minimum of one year—and often much more than that—from the time a book is written before it is actually published. This time lag has meant very little in the past, but in a time of rapidly changing consciousness, when children's book publishing is attempting to be "relevant," it is becoming increasingly significant.

PART II: ANALYZING SCHOOL TEXTS

(6) Determine the author's perspective. There is no such thing as a truly objective account of history. It is always from *some* point of view. History and social studies texts have traditionally been written from a white European male perspective, and this has influenced what has been included and how it has been "reported." The traditional viewpoint has led to serious omissions and distortions of history, especially concerning minorities and women of all races.

The viewpoints of minorities and women are still largely excluded from most texts. There is, however, more likelihood that a textbook will reflect the realities of a multicultural society if it is not written solely from a white male perspective.

(7) Note the copyright date. It takes considerably longer to produce a textbook than it does a storybook—often several years—and therefore texts have been even slower to reflect the growing consciousness about racism and sexism.

The Black protest movement forced the inclusion of Black history in the textbooks published during the late 1960's—in the form of inserted chapters, added paragraphs, and new illustrations. This patchwork approach was followed by efforts in the early 1970's to integrate the material into the body of the text. The situation regarding other non-white minorities and feminists has improved very little.

The first date given on the copyright page is the one that counts; subsequent revisions in the text (which later copyright dates indicate) generally fail to encompass a fundamental change in viewpoint. Even if the publisher were willing to make the costly revisions necessary, the editing out of viewpoints as pervasive as racism and sexism is virtually impossible.

(8) Examine the illustrations. The range and type of the illustrations

can serve as another indication of the textbook's viewpoint. Are Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women of different groups shown at all? Compare the number of men, the number of white women and the number of Third World men and women in the illustrations. Also note if minorities are shown in roles that are secondary to those of white males.

(9) Watch for loaded words. A word is loaded when it carries overtones of insult. Examples of loaded adjectives, usually racist, are: *savage, primitive, conniving, lazy, superstitious, treacherous, wily, crafty, inscrutable, docile* and *backward*.

Look for sexist language and adjectives that ridicule women and for the use of the male pronoun to refer to both males and females. While the generic use of the word "man" was accepted in the past, its use today is an indication of a writer's lack of awareness. A listing of sexist as contrasted to non-sexist, preferred usage appears in the accompanying box.

(10) Note the heroes and heroines. For many years textbooks showed only "safe" minority heroes and heroines—those who avoided serious conflict with the white Establishment of their time. Minority groups today are insisting on the right to define their own heroes and heroines based on their own cultures and struggles for justice. The accompanying box lists heroes and heroines who are usually omitted from textbooks or treated fleetingly or disparagingly. Check the index to see if these figures *are* included; then examine how they are treated in the text.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- **DISCUSS THE BIAS IN BOOKS.** Make a point of discussing with your children and other members of your family the hidden messages and implied values in books.
- **ORGANIZE PARENTS AND TEACHERS.** Find other interested parents and teachers to analyze library books and classroom materials.
- **HOLD CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING MEETINGS.** Plan school-wide meetings with speakers on racism and sexism and hold workshops for school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Make sure there is substantial non-white input to such meetings.
- **URGE CLASSROOM INNOVATION.** Suggest that students join with teachers to critically analyze their textbooks for bias. This in itself can be an educational classroom experience. (There is no need to censor books if teachers will openly discuss stereotypes with students.)

FIGURES OFTEN OMITTED OR MALIGNED IN TEXTBOOKS

- Asian**
Daniel Inouye
Sen Katayama
Wing Luke
Mike Masaoka
Patsy Mink
Victor Nee
George Shimer
- Black**
Frederick Douglass
W. E. B. DuBois
Henry Highland Garnett
Paul Robeson
Sojourner Truth
Harriet Tubman
Nat Turner
Denmark Vesey
Ida B. Wells
Malcolm X

- Chicano**
César Chávez
Juan Nepomuceno Cortina
Rudolfo "Corky" González
José Angel Gutiérrez
Dolores Huerta
Pío Pico
Reies López Tijerina

- Native American**
Black Hawk
Geronimo
Chief Joseph
Massasoit
Osceola
Phillip
Pontiac
Powhatan
Sequoyah
Sitting Bull
Wetamoo

- Puerto Rican**
Ramón Emeterio Betances
Mariana Bracetti
Pedro Albizu Campos
Juana Colon
José de Diego
Eugenio Maria de Hostos
Lolita Lebron
Lola Rodríguez de Tió
Julio Vizcarrondo

- Women's Rights**
Susan B. Anthony
Elizabeth Blackwell
Juana Colon
Lola Rodríguez de Tió
Grimké Sisters
Fannie Lou Hamer
Patsy Mink
Lucretia Mott
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Sojourner Truth
Ida B. Wells
Wetamoo

- **SUGGEST SPECIAL TREATMENT IN THE LIBRARY.** Urge the school librarian to point out racist and/or sexist passages to students. Suggest that books which are particularly offensive be placed on special shelves and clearly identified as racist and sexist.
- **SENSITIZE THOSE WHO BUY BOOKS.** Pinpoint responsibility for book purchasing in schools and libraries and take special care to involve these people in consciousness-raising efforts.
- **WRITE BOOK PUBLISHERS.** Complain to book publishers: cite book title, page number, and the offensive passage. Send copies of your letter to the local newspaper and urge other parents and teachers to do likewise. (Citing specific examples of racism and/or sexism can be highly consciousness-raising for a community.)
- **INFORM THE CIBC OF YOUR EFFORTS.** We would like to share the actions you take and the programs you develop with other concerned parents and teachers. Please write the Council, Room 300, 1841 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023.

The Council would like to expand these guidelines into a pamphlet that will be useful to all those concerned with detecting racism and sexism in books. We would appreciate your suggestions; please write to us at the address above.

SEXIST LANGUAGE

1. forefathers
2. founding fathers
3. brotherhood; fellowship; fraternity
4. manpower
5. man-hours
6. manmade
7. the common man
8. the working man
9. the family of man
10. congressman

NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE

1. precursors; ancestors; forerunners
2. founders
3. companionship; friendship; kinship; comradeship; unity; community; oneness; peace
4. human power; human energy; workers; work force
5. work hours; worker-hours
6. manufactured; artificial
7. the average person; the ordinary citizen
8. the worker
9. the human family
10. member of Congress; Representative

Adapted from *Non-sexist Language Guidelines* by Alma Graham, Executive Editor, American Heritage Dictionary Division. For a copy of these consciousness-raising guidelines, write to the author at American Heritage Publishing Co., Dictionary Division, 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10020.

NATIVE AMERICANS

Continued from page 1

with tomahawks and all that. Of the 600 books we examined, we rejected 400 as being conspicuously offensive. A close look at the remaining 200, which we listed, showed subtle stereotypes and misconceptions. However, we wanted teachers and librarians at least to think about the books they were using for children, so we distributed about 1,000 copies of that first bibliography. Then we let it go out of print."

NATIVE AMERICAN AUTHORS

The new bibliography differs substantially from its predecessor. It includes only books by Native American authors. (It is, in a real sense, an outgrowth of a comprehensive bibliography, "American Indian and Eskimo Authors," covering books for readers of all ages, which AAIA published in 1973.) A total of 63 books are listed, by publishers in the U.S., Canada and England; by university presses; and by regional and tribal presses. Some are now available; some are out of print and worthy of republications. There are a lot of first-person narratives, some sketchbooks, reprints of columns from newspapers, legends retold, tape cassettes for classroom use, poetry, and cookbooks. Authors, past and present, from some 26 nations and tribes are represented.

In deciding to acquaint teachers and librarians with books by Indian authors only, Ms. Byler said that she was concentrating on books "from a different tradition, maybe a tradition not jazzy enough for American readers." She did not, however, include all available children's books by Indian authors. She excluded books that reflected the Bureau of Indian Affairs "line" which encourages Indian youths to leave their tribal society and join the plastic Anglo world. She excluded

books with derogatory language such as "squaw" and "papoose" and "many moons ago." She found unworthy those books which failed to identify the nation or tribe being depicted or gave characters either inaccurate names or no names at all; also excluded were folk tales that had been either oversimplified or "dressed up" for children (she finds such folk tales both poor as teaching materials and of doubtful interest to children). In judging illustrations, she ruled out the "cutesy," the culturally inaccurate, the stereotype, the cartoon.

The objective of the bibliography is to send out this word: Here are some valid alternative materials for teaching about Indians, both to Indian and to non-Indian children.

In addition to the bibliography of 63 books by Indian authors, "American Indian Authors for Young Readers" contains Ms. Byler's seven-page critique of children's books

The AAIA bibliography shown below lists 63 books by Native American authors

American Indian Authors for Young Readers
A selected bibliography



UN-MAKING MYTHS

● There is more to being an American Indian—Apache, Seneca, Hopi, or whatever tribe—than can be acquired through an act of will, a course of study, or discovering an Indian ancestor somewhere in the family tree. It is not an intellectual choice. In short, being Indian is growing up Indian: it is a way of life, a way of thinking and being. Shaped by their own life experiences, non-Indians lack the feelings and insights essential to a valid representation of what it means to be an American Indian. . . .

● Most minority groups in this country have been, and are still, largely ignored by the nation's major publishing houses—particularly in the field of children's books. American Indians, on the other hand, contend with a mass of material about themselves. If anything, there are too many children's books about American Indians.

There are too many books featuring painted, whooping, befeathered Indians closing in on too many forts, maliciously attacking "peaceful" settlers or simply leering menacingly from the background; too many books in which white benevolence is the only thing that saves the day for the incompetent, childlike Indian; too many stories setting forth what is "best" for American Indians.

There are too many stories for very young children about little boys running around in feathers and headbands, wearing fringed buckskin clothing, moccasins and (especially) carrying little bows and arrows. The majority of these books deal with the unidentified past. The characters are from unidentified tribes and they are often not even afforded the courtesy of personal names. In fact, the only thing identifiable is the stereotyped image of the befeathered Indian. . . .

● A number of authors have taken it upon themselves to establish the humanity of American Indians by presenting arguments for and against the idea. Humanness is not an arguable point. . . .

● Non-Indian writers have created an image of American Indians that is almost sheer fantasy. It is an image that is not authentic and one that has little value except that of sustaining the illusion that the original inhabitants deserved to lose their land because they were so barbaric and uncivilized. . . .

Undoubtedly it is accurate that settlers were threatened by, and afraid of, Indians, but Indians were equally, if not more, threatened by the settlers and they had much more to lose. The history books and story books seldom make it clear that Native Americans, in fighting back, were defending their homes and families and were not just being malicious. . . .

● The Native peoples of this country were not rootless wanderers drifting about the country helter skelter. Certainly, where the colonists landed, the people who owned the land did not have deeds and fee-simple titles to whip out and exhibit as proof of ownership; however, the various tribes and bands did claim sovereignty over specific areas of land, dwelling, hunting, and farming within well-established boundaries. . . . Historically and philosophically one rationalization for the seizure of Indian-owned lands is that nobody owned the land anyhow. Much book space has been, and is being, devoted to maintaining that myth. . . .

● It is time for American publishing houses, schools, and libraries to take another look at the books they are offering children and seriously set out to offset some of the damage they have done. Only American Indians can tell non-Indians what it is to be Indian. There is no longer any need for non-Indian writers to "interpret" American Indians for the American public.

From "American Indian Authors for Young Readers" (see article beginning page 1)

INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

Action for Children's Television (ACT) has materials of interest to teachers and other concerned adults. Among available items is a critical report entitled "Network Children's Programming: A Content Analysis of Black and Minority Treatment on Children's Television" which points out that for every five times that non-American and non-white cultures are referred to, four carry derogatory connotations. The report is \$5 from ACT, 46 Austin St., Newtonville, Mass. 02160.

The *American Indian Media Directory* lists more than 600 American Indian newspapers, magazines, news services, radio and TV broadcasts, film production enterprises, etc. It also includes statistics on urban and reservation Indian populations. Cost is \$15 to Indian non-members and \$25 to all others. Write AIPA, Room 206, 1346 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The Appalachian South Folklife Center has been a cultural and political bellwether in Appalachia. Under the direction of poet Don West, it has run a summer camp, organized folk festivals and played a supportive role in the coal miner's struggles. A recent fire destroyed a good portion of the Center, which included the only free library in the area and materials for a proposed museum of Appalachian history. Don West has requested contributions to help rebuild the Center and—for the library—books for children and adults. Please send books to the Center, P. O. Box 5, Pipestem, West Virginia 25979.

Twenty-one new children's books from the People's Republic of China have reached us since our study of 80 such books published in the last issue of *Interracial Books for Children*, "Educating the Masses with Picture-Story Books." Many of these were published in the past year, and so far are available only in Chinese. These generally fall proportionately into the same categories as the surveyed books, and many were likewise created collectively by professional and amateur writers and artists. Of the new books, only one is a primer or elementary reading text. Titled *We Like Work*, it praises awareness and responsibility for day-to-day tasks which are done through voluntary cooperative effort. This is especially interesting since it has been learned that one reason for the withdrawal of *The Little Doctor*—highly praised by feminists in the U.S. during the past few years—was its emphasis on individual rather than group achievement.

The Mexican Revolution—background and events—is described in a bilingual, large-format comic book titled *Emiliano Zapata*. It provides a perspective on this era of history rarely found in U.S. school textbooks. Suitable for older children, it can be ordered for \$1 from the Chicano Communications Center, P. O. Box 12547, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105. Bulk orders receive a discount.

In connection with the annual meeting of the American Library Association in New York, July 7-9, the CIBC is planning a series of demonstration clinics to assist librarians in identifying racist and sexist stereotypes in children's books. Librarians interested in such clinics are asked to write the Council for scheduling information.

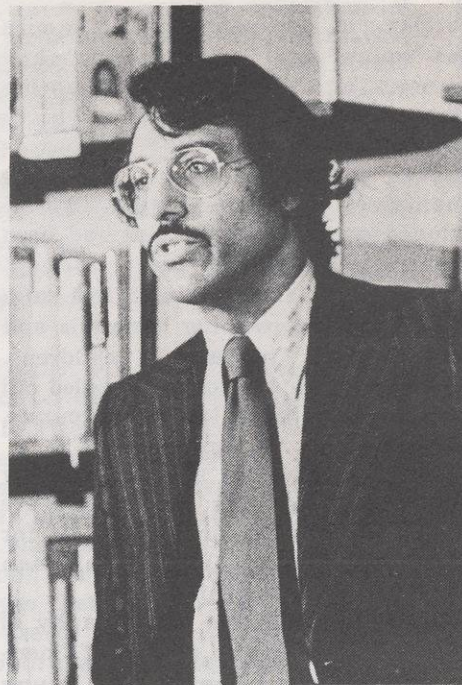
about Indians by *non*-Indian authors. The essay explains why most of the books are damaging or objectionable, and it may be used to advantage by teachers, parents and librarians to point out to young readers the kind of stereotypes and distortions they should be aware of in their own reading. Excerpts from this essay appear in the accompanying box.

The Association on American Indian Affairs is now actively dealing with the social consequences of the stereotypes reinforced by these books by non-Indians, especially as they affect the Indian family. For years social workers have been placing Indian children in non-Indian adoptive homes, and Ms. Byler estimates that this has happened to more than 25 per cent of Indian children. The AAIA has begun a national campaign to (1) return Indian children to their own homes, (2) to get Indian children from broken homes adopted by other Indian families, or (3) to make the Indian community solely responsible for determining the fitness of Indian parents.

Ms. Byler concludes her essay: "Only American Indians can tell non-Indians what it is to be Indian. There is no longer any need for non-Indian writers to 'interpret' American Indians for the American public."

In the interview, she modified this statement a bit: "There have been some books about Indians—a few—by non-Indians that Indians can accept. But of necessity, these non-Indian writers are writing from their own points of view. We want to encourage publishers to develop Indian writers—that's the real way to develop a meaningful Indian literature for all children."

AAIA is willing to assist publishers in developing such a meaningful literature, but with an important proviso: that the publisher be sincere in asking for assistance. In this regard, AAIA, having provided expert manuscript evaluation in the past, has often been burned by publishers who have either (1) paid no attention to the counsel that the AAIA secured for them or (2) have published books with notes that the books have been checked by AAIA or AAIA-affiliated experts even though AAIA's suggestions have been ignored. "If a publisher disagrees with our report," Ms. Byler says, "let the publisher come back and we'll discuss it together. But we can have no respect for publishers who just want blurbs for their book jacket from us." ("American Indian Authors for Young Readers" is available, at \$1 per copy, from Interbook, Inc., 545 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018.)



Winners of the Council Contest, clockwise from top left, are Dorothy Tomiye Okamoto, Mildred Taylor, Jack Agüeros, Nanabah Chee Dodge, and Michele Robinson.



contest, and his book *Sneakers* was published last year by E.P. Dutton.

In its five-year history, the Council contest has resulted in the publication of 17 new books, among them *Sidewalk Story*, by Sharon Bell Mathis (Viking Press) and *Jimmy Yellowhawk* by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (Holiday House). The latter is the first published children's book of fiction by a Native American author. In addition, four of last year's winning manuscripts are scheduled for publication in 1974 by Howard University Press; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; and Dial Press.

The sixth annual contest is now under way. Writers who are unpublished in the children's book field and who are Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, American Indian or Asian American may obtain contest rules and application forms from the Contest Committee, CIBC, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. The deadline for submission of manuscripts is September 16, 1974.

NEW YORK CITY'S FIRST ALTERNATIVE BOOK FAIR

Over 200 small presses—including minority and Third World publishers—will display their tradebooks, textbooks and other materials at the first New York Book Fair, to be held July 7-9 on three floors of the New York Cultural Center at Columbus Circle, 59th Street and Broadway. This fair will coincide with the annual meeting of the American Library Association (ALA) in New York City. The event is expected to attract 12,000 librarians from across the U.S. The Book Fair is being co-sponsored by the Social Responsibilities Round Table, a subcommittee of the ALA, and the Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers (COSMEP) which will also be holding its annual meeting at this time.

Minority and Third World Publishers, Please Take Note: Display space at the Book Fair is running short but is still available at low rates: \$50 a table; \$25 half a table. A limited number of free spaces are left. For \$5, a publishing house may have its material displayed in a combined book exhibit. To apply, write to: Friends of Books and Comics East, 60 Remsen St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, or call Jackie Eubanks at (212) 780-5652 (work) or (212) 624-2290 (home).

5 THIRD WORLD WRITERS WIN COUNCIL CONTEST

Five \$500 prizes for unpublished children's book manuscripts by minority writers were presented March 6th by the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

The competition, now completing its fifth year, encourages unpublished minority writers to prepare manuscripts for children that portray the lives of minority groups without racist or sexist stereotypes.

The winning manuscripts were selected from more than 200 submissions. While entrants in previous years of the Council contest have come largely from the Northeast, this year most were from the West and Southwest, and this year's winners are from New York, California, Arizona and Montana.

Winners were in these categories: American Indian, Black, Asian American, and Puerto Rican. While in last year's contest there was no winner in the American Indian category, in this contest two American Indians won prizes.

Michele P. Robinson, of Butte, Montana, won her award for a manuscript entitled "Grandfather's Bridge." It is a story of an Indian boy following the traditions of his people despite the criticisms of his white classmates. Ms. Robinson is a member of the Northern Arapahoe Tribe. Nanabah Chee Dodge, of the Navajo Nation, received a prize for "Morning Arrow," the story of an Indian child who learns that establishment trappings are not necessary for a full life. Nanabah Chee Dodge lives in Phoenix.

Mildred D. Taylor, who is a Black American and lives in Los Angeles, won a prize for her manuscript, "The Year of the Trees." Her story is set

in Depression-era Mississippi and is based on actual experiences of her parents and grandparents. The story describes how a Black family fought back and challenged the system of white oppression.

Dorothy Tomiye Okamoto, an Asian American living in Oakland, received a prize for "Eyak." This manuscript uses Japanese "collage" illustrations instead of words to show that friends need not be alike to love each other.

A manuscript entitled "El Pito de Plata de Pito," which translates as Willy's Silver Whistle, won a prize for Jack Agüeros. Mr. Agüeros is Puerto Rican and lives in New York City. His story asks: Can you be a Puerto Rican if you are born in Nueva York? Young Willy seeks an answer and finds that it is a very definite yes.

Two runner-up prizes were also presented by the Council. One was for a manuscript entitled "Wa-Ping the Swordswoman," written by Mitzi Tanaka, an Asian American from Davis, California. The other runner-up prize winner was Fatisha, who won for "Miss Lucy and the Squirrels." Fatisha is a Black American who lives in New York City.

The award-winning manuscripts are being circulated to book publishers by the Council on behalf of the authors.

The awards were announced by Council spokespersons Beryl Banfield and Mary Gloyne Byler at a reception at the Council's headquarters attended by 150 people from the children's book world. Engraved plaques and the \$500 checks were presented to the winners by previous Council contest winners Kristin Hunter and Ray Anthony Shepard. In 1968, Ms. Hunter received the first award to be presented by the Council for *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*, which was published by Charles Scribner's Sons after it won the Council award. Mr. Shepard was a winner in the 1971

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