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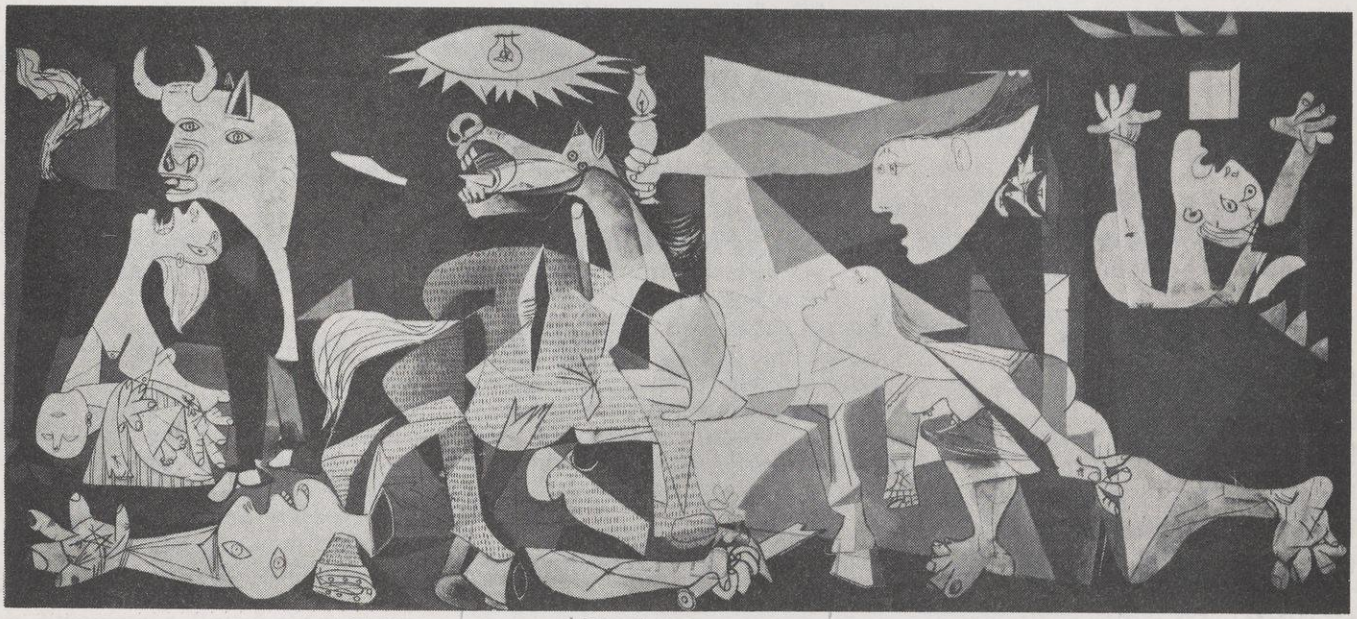
INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

BULLETIN

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 8, 1976



Art and Reality in Children's Books

Ageism in Picture Books

Two Cultures, Two Kinds of Literature

"Roots" Comes to Television

INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

BULLETIN

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ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER

Pablo Picasso's famous 1937 painting, "Guernica," was inspired by the artist's outrage at the fascist bombing of the town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. The work, an artistically brilliant and passionate political statement, is an excellent example of art's interaction with reality; see the article beginning on page 3. (Cover photo of Pablo Picasso's "Guernica," oil on canvas, 1937, 11'5½" x 25'5¾", on extended loan from the estate of the artist, collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

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In a recent speech to the national convention of English teachers, a CIBC staffer discusses the Council philosophy

ART AND REALITY:

A Meeting of the Ways in Children's Books

In a speech delivered at the convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, held in Chicago, November 22 to 27, 1976, CIBC staff member Jean Carey Bond discussed children's book writing as an art form and explained the Council's anti-racist, anti-sexist approach to children's books in terms of the interaction of art with reality.

Ms. Bond spoke on a panel entitled "Children's Books: Conflicting Beliefs." Also on the panel were Judith Krug, director of the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee, and Lillian Gerhardt, editor of "School Library Journal." Ms. Bond's speech spearheaded the CIBC's successful drive for adoption of the Racism and Sexism Awareness Resolution at the membership meeting November 27. The full text appears below.

There is a unity that exists between art and life which, in earlier periods of history, was taken more for granted than it is today. Our modern industrial environment, with its layers of complexity and commercialism, has not destroyed or even undermined that interplay of art with life; rather, it has obscured the relationship. We view the creations of our own and other cultures in artificial arrangements, frozen under glass in museums. We regard as mere beautiful artifacts African sculptures which, in their indigenous settings, were part and parcel of the belief systems and lifestyles of the people who forged them.

One result of this obscuring of the relationship between art and life is that it has given rise to false controversies. The concept of art for art's sake is pitted against the concept of political art or propaganda art. Some feel that art, to be entertaining and aesthetically satisfying, should not be "tainted" with politics or social relevance. These controversies are false because they assume that a natural, inevitable antagonism exists between art and the so-called real world when, in fact, art *is* politics and vice versa. (Here, I mean politics defined as "the total complex of interacting and conflicting relations between people living in society.")

Art Is Communication

Art is a medium of communication, and all art communicates *something* in the way of values. All art speaks to us and is instructive in some way. In a special elaborate language, works of art—a novel, a play, a painting—can affirm and illuminate basic truths about the human condition. They can tell us about ourselves and about others, about the games people play, about our cruelties, our loves, our struggles, our beliefs, our styles of living, our rituals of death, our will to control, our desire to be free. They can do all of this by synthesizing, in inventive ways, the elements of form and content.

What does all this have to do with children's books? Children's books are components of an art form and, as such, should be judged by standards at least as serious as those by which we judge works for adult consumption. Writers must take very seriously the writing of books for children and not adopt the attitude that it is "easier" than writing for adults. Moreover, since learning is the very center of childhood experience, the quality of instruction that is given, the values that are affirmed or challenged in children's books, should especially concern us.

Less Rigorous Standards

The sad fact is, I think, that while we parents, educators and writers recognize on one level the art of children's book writing, we then proceed to apply less than rigorous standards to judging the products of that particular sphere of artistic activity. Reviewers of children's books are at fault here too. Too many children's book reviews merely summarize the story-line of a book, briefly comment on whether the book is "exciting" or "action-filled," offer a few words on the art work, and that's it. Why should that be when reviews of adult books invariably comment on the author's message or statement as the reviewer perceives it, on the author's manipulation of character, event and structure to convey that message and, finally, on the quality of the message: is it profound, superficial, misanthropic, compassionate, relevant? Children's books, too, have more than one dimension; they, too, convey messages of one kind or another; they, too, make statements about life and about human interaction, and their messages also vary in quality.

I submit the following: That all of us—parents, educators, writers,

reviewers—are to some degree guilty of denying the personhood of children and of misreading our children's needs and capacities. Partly out of laziness, partly out of insecurity about our own capacity to contend with life's challenges and partly out of our own desire to avoid confronting the substantive issues of human existence, we saddle our children with books that are perhaps pretty and superficially entertaining but that often contain bankrupt messages, demeaning images of people and that affirm harmful myths instead of truths.

A Captive Audience

Critics of the Council's approach to children's books (which I'll describe to you in a moment) have stated that children "love" many books we've questioned. But I think we adults are a bit like the TV moguls who defend their questionable programming policies on the grounds that the ratings show people want what they are getting. Writing in the October issue of *Television International*, Gary Grossman states that "the American audience, largely a captive audience, watches what it is given. If there would be a greater diversity in programming, the audience would respond accordingly. Today, the networks offer violent programs; the public tunes them in, and the ratings suggest the country wants violence." Like TV viewers, children are captives in a way. They take what we give them and have very little choice in the matter. When we adults decide that children "can't handle" this or that subject or this or that concept, we should perhaps ask whether it isn't we who, for various reasons, don't want to present the subject or concept to them. We should also ask whether our laziness and/or confusion are not limiting their education and hindering their development as thinking and effective human beings.

In-Depth Analysis Needed

All books, for children or adults, cannot and should not be monumental in quality and focused only on the burning issues of our time. Some books are good and modestly useful. Many are lousy. A few are extraordinary. The point is that more in-depth analysis and criticism of children's books in general can enrich this art form and can generate the development of high standards for the creation of children's books.

Since its founding ten years ago, the Council on Interracial Books for Children has sought to stimulate the improvement of children's literature through various means: 1) by conducting an annual contest for unpublished Third World writers since Third World people's talents, perspectives and experiences have had severely limited exposure; 2) by sponsoring conferences and university courses aimed at raising the consciousness of educators, publishers and parents about the deficiencies of many trade and instructional materials; 3) by publishing our *Bulletin* as a vehicle for critiquing the available literature based on an evolving set of criteria; and 4) by offering strategies and lesson plans teachers can use in the classroom to turn what we feel are defective materials into positive learning tools. We also have a regular book review section in our *Bulletin* and have put out several special critiques—of *Little Black Sambo, Dr. Dolittle, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and other so-called classics.

Focusing on Content

We focus primarily on the content of children's books—specifically on the values implied in the content. To some degree, this is a flawed approach because form and content are integral and should be considered as a whole. However, we feel that the "message" dimension of children's books is such a neglected area of concern and scrutiny that we must magnify that dimension in order to provoke thought. Likewise, we often apply our criteria in a "nit-picking" way—again, to induce a significant reorientation in our readers' thinking about children's books.

In analyzing the content of books, we are especially concerned about the portrayals of Third World people and of women. Do those portrayals reflect assumptions of white superiority or of male superiority? In other words, are they racist or sexist? We are also concerned about portrayals of older people. Are they shown as being useless or incompetent because of their age?

Here, we are getting into a very controversial area. Some people are confused, others are angered by our strong condemnation of books that contain elements of racism or sexism or ageism. They feel that racism and sexism are ideas which, however invalid or repugnant, should have free expression. Our position is that to put a person down because he or she has an opinion one doesn't approve of is one thing; but to put someone down, overtly or subtly, because he or she is a certain color or a certain sex or a certain age is another thing entirely. The latter constitutes an assault on a person's very condition of being—a condition which is involuntary and irrevocable. Children who are Black cannot turn white because someone has told them Black is inferior, nor can a girl change her sex or people change their ages. Therefore, we say that the "right" of an author to depict characters in children's books in a racist, sexist or ageist manner is superceded by the birthright of all children to encounter images of themselves in children's books that are unbiased and non-stereotypical.

Examining Values

We also examine whether books promote certain other values, among these elitism, materialism and conformism. Our concerns have evolved to embrace these other "isms" because they contribute to the overt oppression endured by Third World people, as well as hinder the full realization of many white children's potential. We look to see whether competition, an environmentally conditioned behavior, is depicted as being natural and always legitimate, or whether it is shown as being productive in some situations and dysfunctional in others.

What we are really evaluating in children's books is how or whether authors deal with certain realities. For example, the reality is that men are not inherently superior beings. White people are not inherently more intelligent or more capable of leadership than Third World people. Euro-American culture is not superior to Black American or Asian American or Chicano culture. Each of these has its own integrity and worth. We analyze books to determine whether they convey those realities or whether, instead, they convey myths and stereotypes about human behavior. We at the Council believe that to continue to serve up discredited myths to children is to miseducate them. To continue to serve up stereotypes rather than fully drawn characterizations of Third World people is to damage the self-images of children

who belong to those groups. Those same myths and stereotypes also harm the self-images of white children, in that they give white children a false sense of superiority, which is increasingly dysfunctional in the world we live in.

The Council is devoted to fostering a children's literature that turns the diverse raw material of life into artistic products which, among other things, celebrate the dignity and worth of people and their cultures. But in addition to books that are non-biased, we would also like to see some books that are positively anti-bias. We're talking here about books which expose destructive practices such as racism and sexism for what they really are. To explore and comment—in artistically rich ways—on the realities of human experience and human potential is to empower children, to make them feel that through understanding and commitment they can impact on the society in which they live.

Promoting Change

Clearly, we are for change in children's books. Because we are for change in American society. We are asking that authors who are for change try to invest the children's books they write with that spirit so children may learn this lesson: That the way things are is not necessarily the way things have to be or will be in the future; that people of different races and cultural backgrounds *can* struggle together and *can* share the same space in a climate of mutual respect and cooperation.

Lastly, we would urge teachers to seek out materials by and about Third World people, feminists, working people, etc. for use in your classrooms. In addition to consulting the excellent NCTE book selection guidelines, also check out the criteria developed by Third World and feminist groups for evaluating trade and textbooks. Often these groups cover important areas that you may not have thought about. Finally, we would urge you to use whatever opportunities present themselves in your classrooms to stimulate critical thinking in your students about racism, sexism and other destructive practices and attitudes—using *whatever materials are available.* The most blatantly racist, sexist or otherwise negative material, given a little imagination, can be turned into a constructive learning tool. □

Ageism in Picture Books, Part III

The final section of the author's definitive study of ageist stereotypes in children's books; sections I and II appeared in Vol. 7, No. 6 of this Bulletin

Old Age as a Concept

By Edward F. Ansello

Older men are shown as productive, cooperative and concerned for others in Josephine Aldridge's Fisherman's Luck *(Parnassus, 1966).*

About a year ago, I visited a first grade classroom as part of my research on children's literature and volunteered to read aloud Barbara Borack's *Grandpa*—a fairly positive, imaginative portrayal of old age. "Yech!," one girl replied, "old people are so boring!"

How did this child, and so many like her, come by such a negative impression of aging—and at the tender age of six years? Upon reflection, one discovers that prevalent social values equate old age with loss and inactivity. The child had successfully internalized that concept.

Old age is a concept. Like the concepts of permanence of objects, of volume, of femaleness and of the other aspects of "the real world," the concept of old age is learned early in life. Concepts are summaries derived from associations with the world; they are learned slowly both through concrete experiential examples and later through more abstract symbolic experiences. For example, the basic concepts of number are learned this way, first through manipulating numbers of objects like blocks or apples and then through symbols, digits and signs which stand for the objects. In short, the child learns both a concept and the associations which "belong" with it.

Learning the concept of old age has special difficulties today since the first step in concept development, that of concrete experiences, is lacking for many children. (Hence, the second step, abstract indirect experience, must fill a larger function.) Despite wholesale demographic changes in our older population, despite the fact that in this century the older population has grown over two times more rapidly than the population as a whole, fewer and fewer children have direct experience with older persons.

In 1900 there were 3.1 million persons over 65 and 4.9 million over 60; today there are 22.4 million and 31.6 million persons respectively in these categories. Yet research with children ages three to eleven, conducted through our Center on Aging, demonstrates that less than 22 per cent of the children were able to identify an older person they knew outside the family unit. Moreover, even though these children had virtually no contact with older persons the overwhelming majority stated they preferred not to be with them, categorizing them as *sick, tired* and *ugly.* (Documentation for this research by my colleagues will appear in an article titled "Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly: Educational Implications," to be published in the February issue of *Educational Gerontology.*)

One of the reasons for this negative correlation is that, without direct concrete experience, children's *vicar-*

One of the most positive depictions of old age is the main character in Burt Dow, Deep Water Man *by Robert McCloskey (Viking, 1963). Characteristically, though, his sister is an undeveloped part of the story.*

ious experience with old age becomes significantly more important in shaping concepts and attitudes toward growing older. Books, of course, are vehicles for vicarious experience. Unfortunately, children's books most often merely reflect the prevailing social values, derived from our attitudes toward aging. These attitudes, doubly unfortunately, have most frequently been ambivalent, and often negative.

A recent Harris poll, "The Myth and Reality of Aging in America" (commissioned by the National Council on the Aging in 1975), surveyed the attitudes of 4,000 young and old people in the U.S. The public's perception of old age was shown clearly to be negative and, as well, to differ sharply from older people's perceptions of themselves: 67 per cent of the public think older people "spend a lot of time watching television," while only 36 per cent of older people think they do; 62 per cent of the public think older people "spend a lot of time sitting and thinking" vs. 31 per cent of older persons who think so; 39 per cent of the public see people over 65 as spending "a lot of time sleeping" vs. 16 per cent of those over 65 who feel that way; and 35 per cent of the public think older people "spend their time just doing nothing," while only 15 per cent of older people agree.

In short, negative attitudes toward aging exist in spite of the capability and achievement of older persons. The same Harris survey showed that about two-thirds of those over 65 see themselves as "very bright and alert," as "open-minded" and as "good at getting things done."

As already mentioned, children's books (the instruments of vicarious experience with old age) most often convey not the positive, growth-oriented picture of aging the majority of older persons maintain but the negative, constricted image the "real world" has fostered.

The extent of this discrepancy and the methodology of this investigation were covered in Parts I and II of this series of articles (see Vol. 7, No. 6). That research covered 549 books. Now, after completing an analysis of *656* books, comprising 27,000 pages and 22,000 pictures, the degree to which this important socializing medium reflects ageism (the denial of full human potential through age stereotyping) can be recognized.

Summaries of the data are provided in four tables. It should be noted that in this body of literature racism, sexism and ageism go hand in hand. The unreal underrepresentation of older females, and the severe omission of appreciable numbers of minority older people—there are almost exactly *five times* more whites than all racial minorities combined—create from the start an artificial atmosphere in these books which does not correspond to life. And significantly, this atmosphere does not provide meaningful vicarious experiences with old age for young readers.

The underrepresentation of minority older persons is so profound (*i.e.*, there are so few minority elderly whose characteristics can be tabulated) as to make comparisons by race of older characters extremely tenuous. Consequently, the data focus only on differences in behavior and on physi-

Older Characters' Behaviors

Rank and Type of Behavior (with examples)	Percent of Total Behavior	Percent of Male Behavior	Percent of Female Behavior
1. Statements of information (non-evaluative observations)	21.07	(1) 21.58	(1) 20.05
2. Directive (initiating, directing, demonstrating)	11.79	(2) 12.39	(4) 10.55
3. Routine-repetitive (walking, rocking, turning on light)	11.44	(3) 10.88	(3) 12.53
4. Nurturant (helping, praising, serving)	10.79	(4) 8.03	(2) 16.29
5. Social-recreational (games, greeting or visiting someone)	6.42	(7) 6.24	(5) 6.80
6. Physically exertive (lifting heavy objects, chopping)	6.37	(5) 7.85	(10) 3.40
7. General verbal (listening, asking questions, looking)	5.65	(6) 6.78	(10) 3.40
8. Aggressive (hitting, kicking, verbal abuse)	4.87	(8) 4.99	(6) 4.65
9. Expressions of emotion (crying, laughing, shrieking)	4.75	(9) 4.90	(7) 4.47
10. Constructive-productive (building, sewing, magic acts)	3.98	(10) 4.09	(8) 3.76
11. Passive-supportive (non-active involvement, complying)	2.91	(12) 2.85	(12) 3.04
12. Problem-solving (producing idea, unusual combinations)	2.43	(11) 2.94	(15) 1.43
13. Statement about self (overall)	1.90	(13) 2.40	(16) 0.88
(positive)	0.90	0.98	0.71
(negative)	0.53	0.80	0.00
(neutral)	0.47	0.62	0.17
14. Fantasy activity (silliness, daydreaming)	1.54	(16.5) 0.62	(10) 3.40
15. Self-care (dressing, washing, shaving)	1.36	(14) 1.78	(18) 0.53
16. Conformity (conveying rules, norms, expectations)	1.13	(15) 0.80	(14) 1.79
17. Passive-exertive (unwilling part of other's actions)	0.95	(18) 0.26	(13) 2.32
18. Avoidance (run away, stop trying)	0.65	(16.5) 0.62	(17) 0.71
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Sex and Racial Composition of Older Characters in Percentages

Sex	
Male	55.17
Female	41.38
Indeterminate	3.45
	100.00
Race	
White	65.52
Black	3.45
Asian	3.45
Arabic/Mid Eastern	3.45
Hispanic	2.07
Native American	0.69
Animal	12.41
Magical	4.14
Other	4.82
	100.00

cal and personality characteristics between older males and older females.

As suggested in the previous articles, one of the primary forms of ageist stereotyping is omission. Of the 656 books examined for the final report, only 16.46 per cent contain any older character at all. Thus five-sixths of the books suggest, by implication, that older persons are not interesting or not capable enough to warrant inclusion in stories. When older characters do appear, we find their most frequent relationship to the main character to be that of "stranger" (22.07 per cent). The most frequent occupational role is "indeterminate" (53.10 per cent), meaning that one could not discern any vocational function related to this character. Being a stranger with no apparent function symbolizes the peripheral nature of the older character. Significantly the next two most frequent occupational roles—farmer/farm wife (7.59 per cent) and nautical (sea captain/fisherman, etc.; 6.90 per cent)—are occupations outside of the probable world of most children.

As already pointed out, when older characters *do* act in these books, their behaviors are restricted; they perform routine actions, such as walking or answering questions; they are nurturant, helping, and at times catering, to the needs of others; and they tell others to do things. Seldom are they emotional, except to cry; seldom do they solve others' problems—often they either create the problem and/or have it solved by a child. Females are substantially more nurturant, less physically exertive, less self-disclosing, sillier, and more the victims of others' actions.

Females are also more stereotyped as "ill," "tired" and "sick" physically, although the single word "old" accounts for approximately three-fourths of all physical descriptions of both male and female older characters. Again these characters are not descriptively developed in physical aspects or in personality.

The stereotyping of older characters is, in one way, rather subtle. We found no actual instances where they were described as "ugly." And portrayals of older females as witches were less than one per cent. Such overt stereotyping would probably be easier to redress. Rather, the stereotyping is much more insidious: In the first place, most books simply omit older characters, thus implying that old age is not interesting or dynamic. In the second place, those books containing older characters most often fail to develop them, thus confirming in the child's mind that old age is boring.

If demographic trends continue (and the projections are that they will), we will assimilate ever increasing numbers of older people into the society. Yet unless wholesale intergenerational programming is initiated to bring young and old together meaningfully, the prospects are that fewer and fewer children will know much more about old age than the constricted portrayals contained in their books. Ageism in children's literature, then, becomes all the more intolerable. □

Most Frequent Physical Descriptions

Rank	Adjective	Percent of Total Descriptors	Percent of Male Descriptors	Percent of Female Descriptors
1.	old	74.33	72.24	78.52
2.	little	5.36	5.35	5.37
3.	elder	4.24	6.35	——
4.	ancient	2.01	2.68	0.67
5.	small	1.56	1.34	2.01
	*misc.	12.50	12.04	13.43
		100.00	100.00	100.00

*Other adjectives, each representing 1% or less of total descriptors.

Most Frequent Personality Descriptions

Rank	Adjective	Percent of Total Descriptors	Percent of Male Descriptors	Percent of Female Descriptors
1	poor	17.30	14.46	22.00
2	sad	6.77	4.82	10.00
3	wise(est)	4.51	4.82	2.00
4	dear	3.76	1.20	8.00
	angry	3.01	1.20	4.00
	good	3.01	2.41	4.00
6.5	kind	3.01	3.61	2.00
	pleased	3.01	4.82	——
	crazy	2.26	3.61	——
	happy	2.26	2.41	2.00
11.5	nice	2.26	1.20	4.00
	foolish	2.26	3.61	——
	rich	2.26	1.20	4.00
	smart	2.26	3.61	——
	*misc.	42.06	47.02	38.00
		100.00	100.00	100.00

*Other adjectives, each representing less than 2% of total descriptors.

About the Author

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The U.S. and China are very different societies, and so are the values their children's literature promotes

Two Cultures, Two Kinds of Children's Books

By David and Dorothea Cole

As part of a general program by the People's Republic of China aimed at exporting its ideas and culture, English translations of children's literature from that country (published by the Foreign Languages Press in Peking) are becoming increasingly available in the U.S. Their unambiguous messages based on Maoist doctrine, combined with the traditional didactic style of Chinese children's literature, provide a very clear picture of the ideals for thought and conduct held out to the children of contemporary China.

Much evidence exists to confirm that the stories available here in English are representative of those found within the PRC. Friends of ours who have travelled in the People's Republic report having seen some of the stories analyzed for this article in use in Chinese schoolrooms. Moreover, the ideals promoted in the stories jibe with the ideals recent visitors to the PRC have seen being practiced in classroom activities.

In addition, the stories' themes parallel themes found in adult stories and literature (such as *The Red Detachment of Women*) now available here from the PRC.

From a careful analysis of these stories, we get not only a clear picture of contemporary Chinese values but also a background against which the values and ideals implicit in the children's literature of other societies, including our own, may be more sharply contrasted.

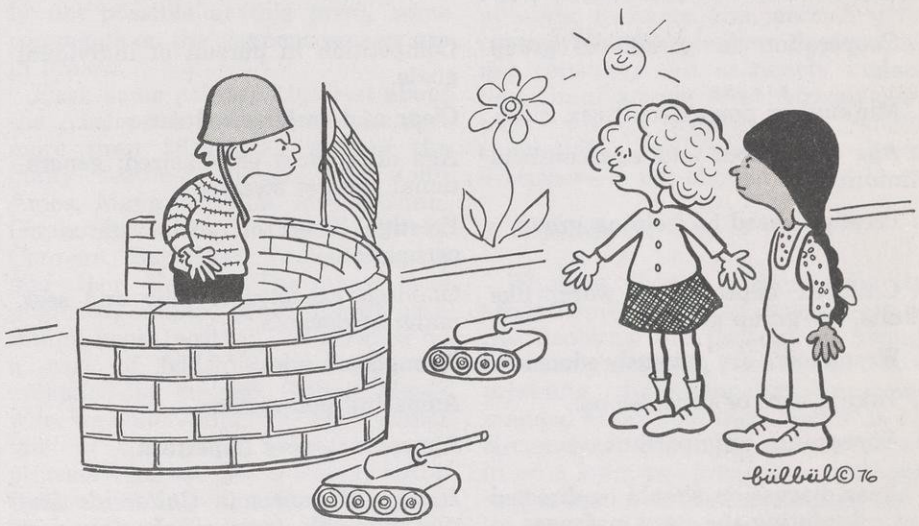
Method of Study

We did not undertake this study with any well defined set of expectations. Most of our exposure to travellers' observations about the PRC and to Maoist writings has come after the study was conducted.

As far as we know, we worked with all of the stories available in this country as of the summer of 1975, studying 44 stories in 21 books or booklets altogether. The stories run from a few pages to 55 pages in length. They range from stories for approximately five- to twelve-year-olds by U.S. standards. After studying a small sampling, we established 114 categories into which story elements could be classified according to the nature of the action and the relationships between characters. We worked on clarifying our criteria until, independently, we would agree on 90 per cent or more of our categorizations for a given story. We then analyzed each of the 44 stories independently, compared analyses, noted our instances of disagreement and reconciled these. By tallying the frequency with which the various categories had been used in the 44 stories, we were able to determine the major themes outlined below.

Major Themes

1. **Helpfulness and cooperation in pursuit of group goals.** This is by far the dominant theme in the stories: 38 of the 44 stories were scored specifically for cooperation between persons. Competition was only scored once, and we questioned our scoring in that instance. Striving for individual success does not appear in the stories. Personal gain and personal comfort are spurned in pursuit of the common good. Group involvement is taken for granted. Difficulties arise



Couldn't we think of this playroom as our space – rather than your territory?

when physical obstacles block group goal attainment, or when ignorance born of immaturity prevents a person—temporarily—from perceiving the relationship between his/her behavior and the goals of the group. The only persons who consciously seek to prevent group goal attainment are either Japanese invasion forces or indigenous political reactionaries in stories set in an earlier historical period.

As will be seen, this major theme of mutual cooperation for group goal attainment is so pervasive that it is frequently an integral part of other major themes.

2. **Minimizing of roles defined by sex, age or social prestige.** In half of the stories, the chief figure is female. In 25 per cent, the chief figure is male. In the others, it is either impossible to identify the person who could be considered as the leading figure, or the sexes share leadership. Wisdom, courage, leadership, indeed all virtues, are shared equally by the two sexes. The male is as likely as the female to be the one who is slow to understand or who momentarily hesitates in the face of adversity. There is no job or social role differentiation between the sexes.

Similarly, age-related roles are not stressed. Children sometimes instruct older people. Parental roles are minimized. While there is much evidence of adult concern for children, it is a concern shared by the entire community and not restricted to, or even more salient in, the parents. When a child is in danger, the entire adult community comes to his/her aid, and all rejoice when the child is saved—the parents no more so than the others.

Persons gain prestige in the community by acting to assist group goal attainment, not by virtue of their occupations or education. Among the 28 stories where the occupation of the central adult is clear, the breakdown is as follows—peasant/farmer: 15; soldier: 8; teacher: 2; party leader: 2; mail carrier: 1.

3. **Early introduction of children into adult roles.** The stories clearly expound the theme of duty before pleasure. Play has very little place, always follows work and/or school and is sometimes portrayed as characteristic of only the very young, who have yet to learn their expected roles in society. Children frequently function in ways which are identical with adults. Children are expected to show great courage and perseverance in pursuit of the same group goals shared by all. Children, like adults, are portrayed as showing great creative resourcefulness when confronted with barriers to goal attainment. Goal attainment brings lavish praise, but in only one instance was it followed with a material reward, and then jokingly. The highest achievement is to have proven oneself true to the ideals of the revolution and, thus, to stand as an inspiration for others.

4. **Error as ignorance.** When figures in the story err, it is by failing to see the implications of their actions for the attainment of group goals. This failing is seen as a form of ignorance calling for re-education, not punishment. There is no instance in any of the stories of a person being ridiculed by another member of the group or threatened with exclusion from the group. The task of instructing a child who has failed to see how his/her actions may be detrimental to group goal attainment frequently falls upon an older sibling rather than upon an adult.

5. **Political themes.** Stories were considered "political" if they included any reference to Mao, the revolution, the army or the Red Guard. By this standard, 50 per cent of the stories have a discernible political element, although it is not always a major theme.

6. **Care of personal and group possessions.** Although occurring in only 25 per cent of the stories, this theme is frequent enough to merit attention. While acquisitiveness is never presented as an ideal, taking care of what one owns or what the group owns is a recurrent concern.

A Classroom Project: Counting Values in Children's Books

To adopt the methodology of the Coles' study to an examination of U.S. children's books by any group of elementary through college level students, we suggest the following:

Tell your students who the Coles are and about their study of themes in children's literature from two widely different cultures. (Do not inform students of the study's results at this point, so as not to dampen their own initiative.)

You can list some of the major themes—and their counterparts—which the Coles found to be recurrent in the books they examined, adding others which interest you, if you wish. To guarantee productivity, divide the students into groups, with each group taking five different fairy tales or children's "classics" to study. Groups should try to reach a consensus on their evaluations and then report their findings to the entire class. Here are some of the themes the Coles explored:

1. Cooperation in pursuit of group goals.	Competition in pursuit of individual goals.
2. Minimal or non-existent sex roles.	Clear and emphasized sex roles.
3. Age differences and age conflicts minimized.	Age differences emphasized; generational conflict stressed.
4. Prestige based on helping group.	Prestige based on social status or occupation.
5. Children expected to work, like adults, for group goals.	Children expected to play and seek material rewards.
6. Wrongdoers are patiently educated.	Wrongdoers are punished.
7. Taking care of possessions.	Amassing possessions.
8. Appearance unimportant.	Appearance very important.

Class discussion should be directed toward relating the story messages to adult behavior in our society today. As an additional aid, you might wish to receive a complete lesson plan on *Hidden Messages in Children's Stories* available from our Racism and Sexism Resource Center, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. The price is $1.50.

Conspicuous consumption is conspicuously absent.

NOTE: Because children's literature in the U.S. is highly varied in source and emphasis, no one source seemed an appropriate base for comparison and contrast. We did review 25 of the *Little Golden Book* stories, selected for inclusion in the anthology *A Treasury of Little Golden Books.* In contrast to the Chinese stories, these stories frequently reflected individual achievement/striving and marked sex-role differentiation, and the heros were often in at least temporary conflict with adults.

Conclusion

A study such as this provides a striking example of what a critical function literature plays in inculcating a society's preferred values and ideals in its children. □

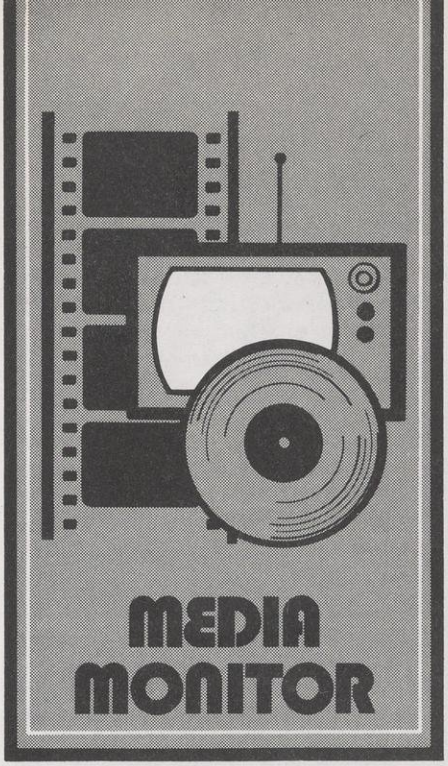
Chinese Children's Books Studied

(anonymous), *In a Rainstorm,* 1974.
Chang Mao-Chiu, *The Little Doctor,* 1965.
Chao Fu-hsing, *Hunting with Grandad,* 1965.
Chiang Nan, *Brave Little Shepherd Chaolu,* 1964.
Chun Li, *Stories from Lui Hu-lan's Childhood,* 1966.
Hao Jan, *The Call of the Fledgling and Other Children's Stories,* 1974.
Ho Yi, *The Adventures of a Lead Pencil,* 1964.
Hsieh Chi-kuei, *Hello! Hello! Are You There?,* 1965.
Hua Shan, *The Shepherd Boy Hai Wa,* 1974.
Kao Sha, *Secret Bulletin,* 1965.
Kuo Hsu, *Commander Yang's Young Pioneers,* 1965.
Ku Yu-tseng, Chang Chih and Li Jui-sheng, *Little Ching and Hu Tzu Guard the Cornfield,* 1974.
Li Ju-ching, *Observation Post 3,* 1967.

All books were published by the Foreign Languages Press, Peking. They can be ordered from China Books and Periodicals, 125 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003.

About the Authors

DAVID COLE is Professor of Psychology at Occidental College, Los Angeles; DOROTHEA COLE is a former elementary teacher. The authors are husband and wife.



"Roots" Comes to TV—But Where's It Coming *From*?

"Roots," Alex Haley's much-heralded saga of his family's history from West Africa in the 1700's through slavery and emancipation in the U.S., will be presented in a 12-part series on ABC-TV beginning on January 23.

CIBC staff members had the opportunity to view a two-hour screening of the series' first episodes. While a full evaluation of the program is obviously not possible at this point, some comments on the segment we saw are in order.

First, some points of interest about the ABC production. The series cost more than $6,000,000. Among the many featured players are John Amos, Maya Angelou, Moses Gunn, Cicely Tyson, O.J. Simpson, Chuck Conners, Burl Ives, Leslie Uggams and Ben Vereen. The show was produced, adapted (from Haley's best-selling book), written and directed by a cast of white males—with the exception of director Gilbert Moses who, we understand, was hired rather late in the game in response to protests against the allegedly unintentional exclusion of Blacks from the production staff.

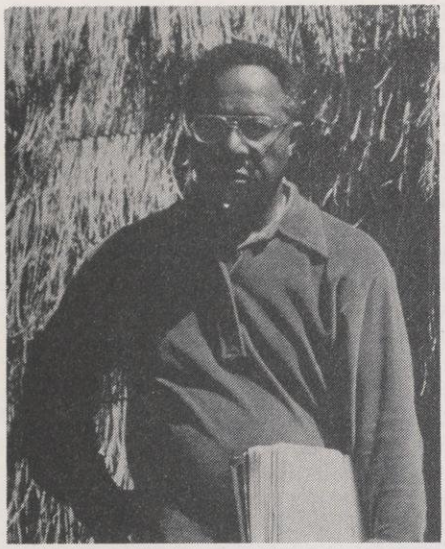
The segment we viewed opens in a setting identified as The Gambia, West Africa. (Actually, the setting is the densely wooded Skidaway Island in Savannah, Georgia, where a village was constructed for the film.) There are shots of African wildlife and barebreasted women with items on their heads moving through the forest (shades of *National Geographic),* followed by the depiction of Cicely Tyson giving birth to Kunta Kinte, the story's hero.

As events unfold, the scene shifts back and forth from the village to the voyage of a North American slave ship bound for West African shores. The ship is commanded by a God-fearing, conscience-ridden New Englander who never ceases to remind us that he is mightily disturbed about the enterprise in which he has become involved. His portrait is juxtaposed with that of a callous first mate who is as poor in Christian spirit as Captain Davies, we are told, is rich (the mate equates the Africans with dogs and opines that they're better off for having been taken from their cannibal-infested homeland).

Inauthenticity reigns. The Afro-American actors speak a stilted, "exotic" English matched by awkward, mannered gestures (for which the directors must take full responsibility). In one scene, Kunta Kinte's father is shown asking a respected villager's advice about a name for his son. The man's proverbial reply (something like "since it is your son, it is your problem") reminded us of all those "Confucius-says" that Asians and their descendants have had to suffer the proliferation of down through the ages. Kunta's dad is then shown taking his baby into the woods at night to name him, according to custom; yet the previous day's naming ceremony—an extremely important ritual among West African peoples, which involves the whole community and which the book describes—is not shown.

A "Sensational" Rite

What *is* shown later on—for its sensational value, we suspect—is a rite denoting the passage of young boys into manhood. With Moses Gunn presiding, the youngsters are commanded to take out their "fotos" to be circumcised. Here, the camera closes in on a long, two-pronged instrument as it is drawn with great flourish from its sheath. During the same rite, an elder blesses the boys with what appears to be—would you believe?—a spray of plastic leaves! When the rite is over and the boys return to the village, Cicely Tyson informs her



Alex Haley, author of the best-selling Roots, *now a TV "special."*

man-son that, having come of age, he must now move into his own "hut." When have Africans ever called their dwellings huts—a discredited term popularized by European anthropologists in their studies of "primitive" peoples? Yet incongruously, these same Africans call the slave ship "the white man's canoe *house*." Why wouldn't they use the word house to describe their own houses? And wouldn't the word boat have made more sense than "canoe house"? But sad to say, the book laid the foundation for these particular inappropriate stylistic touches.

So much for African civilization. Lack of depth and subtle distortion combine to produce images that are not even pale reflections of the rich texture of West African cultures. By contrast, Haley's book is full of cultural detail. For example, the author describes the area's extensive education system, as well as a wide range of daily activities and customs in Kunta's village. A more thoughtful selection of elements from Haley's narrative could have resulted in a more substantive portrayal of life in The Gambia.

Generally speaking, the villagers are depicted as having accepted quite passively the intrusion of slave-hunting foreigners into their midst. During the manhood rite, the boys are warned by their elders not to venture alone into the forest lest they be captured. But that's about it. Subsequently, a small monkey is shown by the camera as being more alert to the hunters' presence in the forest than is Kunta—who is happily checking out a log for drum-making when he gets snatched. And when Kunta's capture is discovered by the villagers, they merely return, grief-stricken, to their homes. No meetings are held to discuss the problem or to plot resistance. No forays to the coast to find out what's going on are planned. No look-outs are posted. No nothing.

The image conveyed is of a noble and dignified, but none-too-bright, folk who have virtually no comprehension that a world exists beyond their immediate environment or that actions—however doomed to failure—might be taken in response to a threat. (In all fairness, it must be said that this image is slightly altered by the character of a *very* handsome village wrestler who, in the screening's final moments, is inciting rebellion among his companions in the hold of Captain Davies' ship. Hoping to transcend the language barrier imposed by the Africans' different descents, he says powerfully, "Men who are chained together are brothers." We anxiously await future episodes to see if this character will be pressed into stud-service on some Carolina plantation—that is, if the scriptwriters have allowed him to survive the middle passage, which we doubt.) Here again, the book has a rather different tone. Haley discusses the slavers' activities and delineates the Gambian people's awareness of those activities. He also discusses African slavery and, unlike the film, explores the motivations underlying some Africans' collaboration with Europeans in the enslavement of their own people.

Motives Not Explained

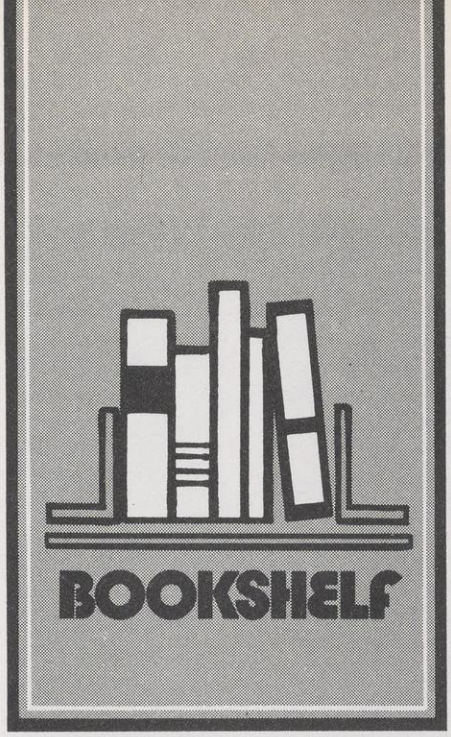
Regarding the last point, the film partially explains European motives but merely shows Africans involved in slaving expeditions and alludes to chiefs selling members of their communities into slavery without giving the first hint as to the basis for such behavior. Thus, "equal" responsibility for the slave trade is implied without Africans being given equal time to explain themselves. (Shades of the BBC/PBS series-in-progress, "The Fight Against Slavery." How did BBC writer Evan Jones put it in the prologue? "All of the whites were not guilty and all of the Blacks were not innocent"—something like that.)

And what about the European slavers? In the segment we viewed, much attention is given to Captain Davies (whose gentle nature we cited earlier) and his foul-mouthed first mate. A goody and a baddy. One searches the book in vain for the likes of these two characters, who were apparently invented by the filmmakers, first of all, to secure the interest of white viewers who might have resented the Black point of view's predominance and switched channels. Secondly, the prominence of these characters serves to obscure (once again) the true nature of systematic oppression by inferring individual, as opposed to societal, responsibility. How poorly represented is the truth of history: That for more than three centuries the slave trade was a major preoccupation of Western civilization; indeed, this exceedingly profitable business attracted the participation, directly and indirectly, of millions.

Truths Diluted

Uncomfortable truths are further diluted through overemphasis on the character of a "good" white person—the woebegone Captain Davies. During the 300-odd years of the slave trade, there must have existed all of about two models for this character, one American and one British. The Britisher, a fellow named Newton, commands ship in the BBC series. The "Roots" entry in the tormented-Christian sweepstakes abhors not only his freely chosen occupation, but also "fornication." Hence, when the first mate brings a Black-and-comely wench to his cabin to get him through the night "just as a belly-warmer," Davies is traumatized. It is unclear whether he succumbs to the temptations of the flesh for, as the camera fades, we leave the good Captain drowning in a sea of mea culpas. (The BBC series presents a variation on this theme too. Captain Newton tells his lecherous crew that there'll be no messing with the female goods on *his* ship.)

Well, that's "Roots"—so far—according to the gospel of ABC. Will Captain Davies really sink lower into the abyss of moral rot by sleeping with his dusky cargo? Will the mutiny-minded wrestler make it to the other side? Tune in next *Bulletin* for an assessment of their—and, of course, Kunta Kinte's—latest travails. [J.C.B.]



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

Juanito's Railroad in the Sky

written and illustrated
by Vic Herman.
Golden Press, 1976,
$4.95, 60 pages, grades 8-up

This is an exciting book which inspires respect for Mexican people and their culture, as well as for aspects of the culture of Indian people in Mexico. But sad to say, it does nothing positive for the females of either group.

Juanito is the young son of an engineer who commandeers a remarkable railroad running from the coastal town of Los Mochis right through the awesome Nuranbain range of La Sierra Madre to the city of Chihuahua. The book tells the story of one trip, in which Juanito and a Tarahumara Indian boy aid the engineer as firepersons. Presented with the opportunity to prove his skill and courage to his father, Juanito does exactly that in the grand climax of many adventures, when his father is knocked unconscious and Juanito must drive the train alone.

The book is a good antidote for the stereotype of the lazy, dumb, cowardly, sneaky Mexican. Mexican culture and many of its customs are depicted as warm and humanistic (only one departure from cultural authenticity was apparent). The author's treatment of the Indians is also generally positive, although it is slightly patronizing and one reference to their living a "Stone Age" existence will have a racist effect on young readers.

Most unfortunate of all, the story is one of male exploits all the way. Juanito's mother and sister appear only as cook and helper who provide food and warm clothing for the trip but stay at home. None of the many women on the train are developed fully as characters. The author would probably justify the sexism on the grounds that the story takes place many years ago when traditional roles for women predominated. This is not acceptable, however, especially in view of the tremendous role played by women in the Mexican Revolution.

What a pity this book does not do for women what it does for the Mexican people's overall image and for young Mexican boys in particular. [Elizabeth Martinez]

Marcia

written and illustrated
by John Steptoe.
Viking Press, 1976,
$7.95, 81 pages, grades 7-up

As with his previous works for young readers, John Steptoe's first book for and about teenagers reflects his marvelous feel for the speech patterns of young Black people. The story focuses on fourteen-year-old Marcia's dilemma: To sleep or not to sleep with her first boyfriend. Unfortunately, the author presents Marcia's choices as the *only* kind of choices teenage girls ever have, and Marcia's final decision—to sleep with Danny—is clearly meant as the author's advice to all. The way the advice is conveyed is both sexist and escapist—a verdict which saddens these reviewers, who are ardent admirers of Steptoe's artistry both as a writer and illustrator.

Early on, Marcia is shown having a running feud with her classmate, Evette. They continuously exchange insults regarding each other's clothes and looks. Their dialogue is funny and real, but the basis for their relating in this way is never explained, leaving the impression that this is the way young girls naturally behave. When Marcia rejects boyfriend Danny's advances, he immediately turns to Evette who is willing to "give it up" to spite Marcia. Clearly, the author's message is 1) that boys—all boys—must "get it" somewhere—hence, Danny's behavior is justified, and 2) that girls must blame themselves, as does Marcia, if boys are impatient and insensitive.

While Marcia, the main character, is fairly well drawn, portraits of other boys and girls seem shallow. Marcia's mother, a hard-working, self-supporting woman, is shown as respecting her daughter and their relationship is warm, but she seems ineffectual in her response to The Problem. She reassures Marcia that everything will be okay because she will take her to the doctor to get a birth control device. But at no point does she discuss with her daughter aspects of female development other than love, sex and motherhood.

A fourteen-year-old girl's first sexual experience is potentially rich subject matter for a teenage novel. *Marcia,* sadly, falls far short of the mark. As for the illustrations, they are on a par with Steptoe's previous work—that is, beautiful. [Emily Moore and Jean Bond]

The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation

by Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth.
Dutton, 1976,
$9.95, 276 pages, grades 8-up

This much needed book is, unfortunately, only partially satisfying. It is valuable for its overview of how different cultures and religions treat menstruation in general and the menarche in particular. It is interesting (and sometimes amusing) in its brief history of "medical" attitudes, from Aristotle's dictum that "we should look upon the female state as being as it were a deformity," through the Victorian physicians whose prescriptions for menopause included the application of leeches, to modern

psychiatrists who consider menstruation a "monthly neurosis." Also interesting, if somewhat superficial, are the chapters on sexual taboos, advertising of sanitary products and a menstrual "hall of fame."

But while it is certainly fascinating to learn of the many factors which influence both men's and women's perception of menstruation as a "disease," one wishes the book were more positive and gave more useful "alternative" information on the subject. It is not enough, for example, after noting that "convincing evidence" linking estrogen therapy to cancer is beginning to appear, to suggest only that women "educate themselves" about the issue and have annual checkups. The brief (seven-page) conclusion, "Lifting the Curse," is an insufficient "antidote" for the abundance of negative, often misogynistic attitudes that have gone before.

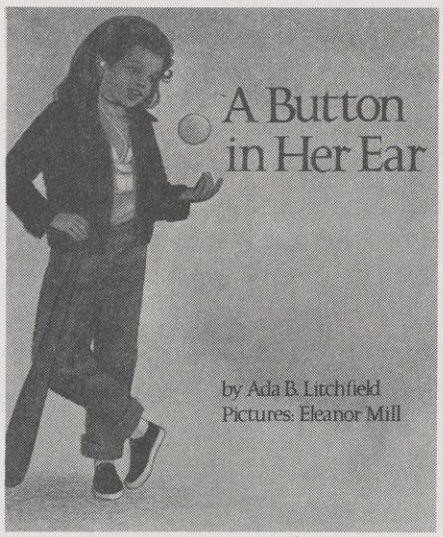
The Curse is a good consciousness-raiser for sensitizing readers to the negative myths and attitudes surrounding menstruation, but supplemental reading and/or class discussions would be necessary to counter the book's generally negative tone. [Ruth Charnes]

Two Special Cards

by Sonia O. Lisker and Leigh Dean.
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976,
$4.95, unpaged, grades k-3

Another divorce book. Hazel's parents fight. Daddy moves out. Hazel worries. However, daddy and mommy still love her as evidenced by the fact that she has *two* pretty homes, more love than before and more attention from both parents. How neat!

Lisker's pen and ink drawings depict a sympathetic and lovable big shaggy dog for Hazel, but all else in this book is bland, boring and disrespectful to children. Great tension inevitably precedes and follows divorce. This tension is apparent to children after, as well as before, the separation. And even in Storybook Land (where momma is a freelance writer or artist with no serious money problems), children deserve more truth and less pap. [Lyla Hoffman]



A Button in Her Ear

by Ada B. Litchfield,
illustrated by Eleanor Mill.
Albert Whitman, 1976,
$4.25, unpaged, grades p.s.-3

Every children's library should own and circulate this "cause" book. The subject is partial hearing loss and the "cause" is developing healthy attitudes about physical problems—one's own or those of others encountered in school or community situations. This well-handled, upbeat story manages to be anti-racist, anti-sexist, informative, humorous and interesting. At the same time, it is simple, easy to read and is complemented by appealing illustrations. [Lyla Hoffman]

Scott Joplin and the Ragtime Years

by Mark Evans.
Dodd, Mead, 1976,
$4.95, 118 pages, grades 5-up

Here is another one of those well-intentioned biographies of a famous Black musician which does more harm than good.

Scott Joplin, the pianist and composer of ragtime music, is portrayed as a hapless, tormented individual who wanted to create music that was "serious" by traditional European standards. As depicted, he placed little value on his own roots, believing in the superiority of western musical concepts, and sought recognition within a value system which by its very nature could only allow him to play "second fiddle."

Racist and elitist concepts are planted in the first two chapters, when Joplin's early environment is discussed. The author subtly puts down Black lifestyles and culture by inferring that they are "vulgar" or "coarse," or by alluding to Black people's poverty and lack of education as a way of suggesting (particularly in the case of Joplin's family) their lack of appreciation for "fine music." He implies that Joplin had to suffer this culturally barren condition in his youth until he could find an outlet for his "finer" qualities. A white music teacher, predictably, plays the savior role.

The music teacher, whose admonishing words crop up again and again like Joplin's alter ego, is not only introduced to us as the person who nourished Joplin's talent and passion for music. The author further implies that had it not been for the teacher's guidance and wisdom, Joplin would not have developed and become great. Readers thus learn that all of Joplin's innovations stemmed from what his white instructor told or taught him about music rather than from his own imagination and skill.

Moreover, by over-emphasizing Joplin's exposure to western musical concepts Evans makes it appear as if western music is the supreme and ultimate form which every musician should strive to emulate. This is reinforced by Joplin reacting to every white musician he encounters with respect or awe. When tracing Joplin's exposure to various forms of Black folk music, the author merely mentions this music without, in any satisfactory way, speculating as to how it might have influenced Joplin as a musician.

Joplin's syncopated style (derived more from Black than from white musical attitudes) caused him to be discriminated against, as well as both used and abused by white profiteers. The author, however, downplays discrimination by romanticizing the exploitation and oppression in Joplin's life as if the avarice and

material motives of Joplin's publishers were to be expected or even accepted! In general, the prevailing social and political climate is glossed over, leaving readers without a feel for the times (Late Reconstruction) and without an understanding of their effects on Black people.

In addition to all the above, the book is sexist. Belle Joplin is first depicted as devoted wife and then later blamed for the break-up of their marriage—a clear instance of stereotyping designed to arouse pity for Joplin and to further intensify the portrait of him as the tortured "artiste" on the road to insanity. This interpretation of Scott Joplin's life offers a negative role-model for young readers, particularly Black readers who would find it difficult to empathize with the Black musician who made ragtime music famous. [Patricia Spence]

Osceola, Seminole Leader

by Ronald Syme,
illustrated by Ben F. Stahl.
Morrow, 1976,
$5.50, 96 pages, grades 3-7

An Irishman living in the South Pacific, Ronald Syme apparently tried hard to be fair to Native American people in this biography of the great Osceola, a Native American patriot of the 1830's. He tried but failed.

As a casual, cross-cultural writer who is only peripherally involved or interested in his subjects, he commits several factual errors; but worse, he fails to portray events from the point of view of Osceola and his people and thus distorts their motivations and behavior.

Syme follows in the tradition of writers (more than 99 per cent of the total) who look at the conflict between Native American and white in the U.S. with culturally biased perceptions. For example, murder is a major topic in the biography, but because Syme fails to break through the cultural barrier, he only describes Native Americans murdering whites, while historical facts show that there was much more murder of Native Americans by whites than vice versa. Of three murder scenes illustrated in the book, all show Native Americans killing whites. Syme also writes that Indians attacked whites on the frontier. The fact is that Native American people were defending their homeland from invaders.

The author's factual errors include the statement that the "original Indian tribe" in Florida was exterminated by the white settlers; in fact, there were several Indian nations in Florida at the time of the European conquest, although Syme, the monocultural man, lumps them together into one tribe.

In another instance, he notes that the original Seminole reservation was to be between "present-day Ocala and Leesburg" in Florida, while in truth the original (1830's) Seminole reservation included almost the whole state of Florida. Undoubtedly, it soothes the consciences of white people today to imagine that the Seminoles were only "cheated" out of a small reservation, but their reservation was actually immense.

In fairness to Syme, when his writing is compared to the majority of similar efforts he is revealed to be more sensitive to his subject than most—but not quite sensitive enough. [Dean Chavers]

Old Is What You Get: Dialogues on Aging by the Old and the Young

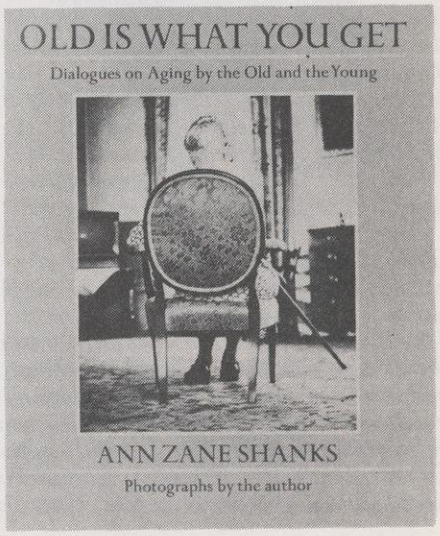
by Ann Zane Shanks, illustrated with photographs by the author.
Viking, 1976, $10,
110 pages, grades 8-up

Old Is What You Get, an effective and moving photographic essay, is the best effort to date (though far from perfect) aimed at dispelling ageist myths which are prevalent in our society.

The imaginative format works well. Using a camera and tape recorder, Ms. Shanks interviews 17 older people. Six are males (five white, one Black) and eleven are females (two Black, nine white). The subjects' socio-economic status varies, and the visuals comment beautifully on the effects money (the presence or lack of it) can have on older people's options and problems. After an introduction to the 17 subjects (sixty-seven to ninety-six years), readers meet nine young people (twelve to twenty-one years), as well as an entire class of eleven- to twelve-year-olds in an upper-class, New York City private school. A paragraph or two about each character is later followed by their comments on various subjects related to aging—health, sex, lifestyle, death, retirement, money, loneliness, etc.

By the end of the book readers have come to know and care about most of the real-life cast. Social problems, fear, lonesomeness and poverty are described, and the isolation imposed on older people by this culture is conveyed by this simple examination of a few lives. The interviews of the young people serve to make the book's issues more immediately relevant to young readers and also add needed touches of humor.

This book deserves to be included in all libraries and introduced to all classrooms as a discussion-stimulator on the entire topic of ageism. But teachers planning to use it should be aware of certain weaknesses. A prize-winning photographer, the author shows an unerring editorial sense in the way she presents and juxtaposes her vignettes—often making her case without words. But unfortunately, pathos is the overall imprint (the cover exemplifies the accent on pathos and also reinforces stereotypes about the aged). Secondly, all of the subjects live in New York City or in California



retirement villages (except for two Londoners). This limits the book for youngsters in suburban or rural settings. Another flaw is that the short section on sex only quotes women who "want none of it." That, coupled with some youngsters' "humorous" comments, tends to reinforce the prevalent stereotype of older people as sexless.

Regarding racial images, the one youngster who is identified as Puerto Rican is described as inarticulate and does seem less bright than the other young people. He should either have been omitted or other Puerto Rican teenagers who could be more favorably described should have been included so as to avoid the reinforcement of a stereotype. The one Chinese American boy is described as having "an inborn sense and an acceptance of the life cycle." Attributing culturally-induced perception to genes is deplorable in so sensitive and talented a person as Ms. Shanks.

The book concludes with a "portfolio of photographs of the aged." As with all of the camera work in this book, the photographs are marvelous and very well reproduced. Nevertheless, the fact that *only* Blacks are shown in extreme poverty misleads students to connect poverty-welfare-dirt-slums with Blacks only. In reality, millions of poor whites live in similar circumstances.

Lastly, some of the information and ideas in the preface and in the introductory interview ("We have a massive cultural problem on our hands and one which all of us very soon will have to solve.") are quite sketchy. Teachers should supplement this information by providing students with some other materials on the problems of ageism (see *Bulletin,* Vol. 7, No. 6). [Lyla Hoffman]

Billy Jo Jive, Super Private Eye

by John Shearer,
illustrated by Ted Shearer.
Delacorte Press, 1976,
$5.95, 47 pages, grades 1-4

While out riding his crime-fighter bike, Billy Jo Jive meets Susie Sunset who is sitting on a curb crying. He stops to ask why and she tells him that she has lost her brother's bike. Susie's brother is away but will return in time for the annual bicycle race to be held in two days. Together Susie and Billy Jo set out on the latter's latest adventure—The Case of the Missing Ten-Speed Bike.

Jive (as Billy Jo prefers to be called) is portrayed as a clever, strong, courageous leader, while Sunset fits neatly into the sexist stereotype of the emotional female who dissolves into tears when faced with a problem to

HOW TO OFFEND NEARLY EVERYONE. . . .

The illustrations above appear in More Riddles, Riddles, Riddles *selected by Helen Hoke (Watts). Aimed at young riddle lovers, this book's first riddle is: "What are the three quickest ways of sending a message?" The answer: "Telephone, telegraph and tell a woman." In a 1976 book? Oh, really! (When Barbara Wolfson of the Nassau [New York] Library System wrote Watts about the cannibal illustration, Howard B. Graham, president of the company, reported that the illustration had been "overlooked by our staff in the process of importing sheets from England. It certainly does not reflect the policy of this company. . . ." He also wrote that the illustration will be deleted in the second printing now taking place. Now for the rest of the changes.)*

which there is no clear or immediate solution. Of course, it is Jive, the male character, who comforts and gives Sunset the incentive to take an active part in changing her condition—and then only with his assistance.

In the course of searching for clues, Sunset questions an older woman for a description of a boy the woman had seen. When asked what the boy looked like, the woman states that she'd only seen his back and adds "my eyes get a little tired late in the day." This ageist element reinforces the assumption that older people and waning health are necessarily synonymous. The inference is particularly out of place since the children wear glasses.

Although it is Sunset's perceptions that finally lead them to the bike, it is Jive who *takes* the credit. He concedes only that "Susie Sunset sure made a good partner."

The flaws of the text are partially redeemed by the illustrations, which are lively and attractive. Using magic marker, pencil and water colors, the artist has skillfully created an urban setting with a special flair for its scenic details. [Lynn Edwards]

Who Are You? A Teenager's Guide to Self-Understanding

by Elizabeth McGough,
illustrated by Tom Huffman.
Morrow, 1976,
$6.95, 160 pages, grades 6-up

This book was reviewed to ascertain whether there has been significant change in recent years in the genre of "How-To-Improve-Yourself" books aimed at teenagers. Are they less racist, sexist and middle-classist? Less boring in their platitudes? Less simplistic in their promises of a bright future through individual will and individual control? The answer to all of these questions is, "A little, but *very* little."

All pop psych books—and many serious psych books—aim at preparing people to operate in the world as-it-is, to conform in ways which will make them "accepted" and "successful." Of course, this is never the *stated* message, but it clearly is the *real* message conveyed. None of these books encourages young people to challenge or change the status quo; thus, serious questioning of majority behaviors and values is precluded. Sexist and elitist models are invariably reinforced. Happiness, it seems, is strictly personal; destiny is controllable; social, race, sex and class distinctions are irrelevant. Society is off the hook because salvation is personal. (The final words in the book are, "Know yourself, and you'll have a realistic chance of being all that you can be.")

The author does nod in the direction of current concerns about sex-role stereotypes, but the gesture is a small one. (The male pronoun is still generally used to indicate both sexes, and while options are described, youngsters are still told of standard expectations.)

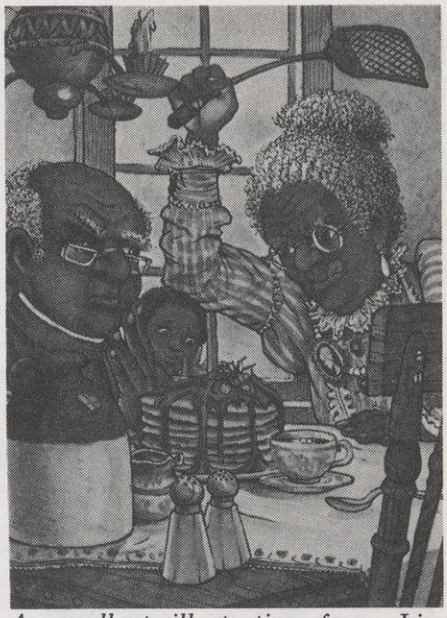
Can such a book prove useful? Maybe, because it is slickly written and amply sprinkled with quotes from scholarly studies. Teenagers are deeply in need of reassurance and guidelines for checking out their personal "normality." There is plenty of good, common-sense-advice given in a pleasant, non-judgmental style and desperate parents can pick up some (rather obvious) ideas for better communication with their teenagers. But a plea to publishers—how about commissioning a serious feminist who is concerned about class and race issues to write a book of this type? [Lyla Hoffman]

Liza Lou and the Yeller Belly Swamp

written and illustrated
by Mercer Mayer.
Parents' Magazine Press, 1976,
$5.50, unpaged, grades k-3

The whimsical title might lead one to think there is a whimsical story inside. Quite the opposite is true. What we find is essentially a nasty little rewrite of Little Red Riding Hood and Little Black Sambo combined.

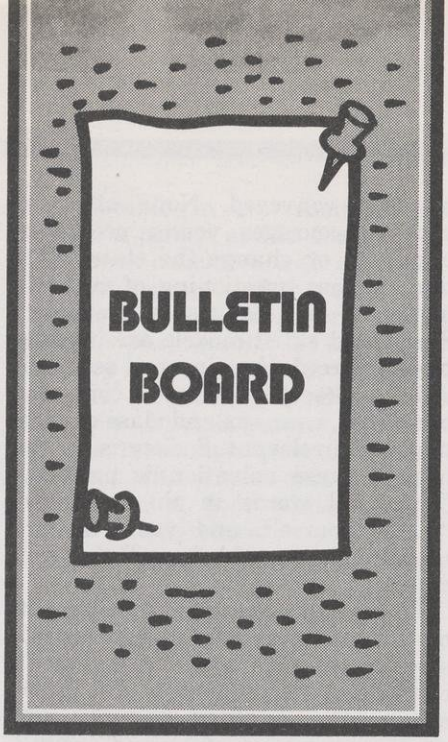
Liza Lou's mother (resplendent in Aunt Jemima attire) sends the young Liza Lou on several errands—the first, to deliver some food to her grandmother. Before each errand, she warns Liza Lou to be "especially careful when crossing the yeller belly swamp" since Swamp Haunts and Wicked Swamp Witches and Slithery Gobblygook live within. Naturally, the stalwart and brave Liza Lou encounters all of these monsters, outwitting them every one.



A repellent illustration from Liza Lou. . . . *Missing here but present in most scenes is Liza Lou's pet rat.*

On Liza Lou's last assignment—delivering a jug of molasses to the parson and his wife—an illustration shows the parson's wife preparing to swat a huge fly (a metamorphosed "swamp devil") right on top of a stack of molasses-drenched pancakes. Ugh! Others show Liza Lou accompanied on her exploits by a large pet rat. Ugh! These illustrations, despite their brilliantly detailed and colorful execution, demean Black people. So do the snatches of dialogue which are inauthentic renderings of southern Black speech.

In style and subject matter, this book reinforces several anti-Black stereotypes. Add to that its exploitation of children's fears and overall pointlessness and you have a lousy entry in the children's book sweepstakes. (Why *Ms.* magazine saw fit to reprint the story in one of its issues is beyond us.) [Ianthe Thomas and Jean Bond]



White Male Power

Reporting on nominations made by the American Library Association's Council Committee on Committees to fill two Executive Board posts, Chairperson Eric Moon (who is also ALA president-elect) made the following statement:

> In presenting the following slate, the committee asked me, because of the all-white male composition of the slate, to explain that the committee was not unaware nor uncaring concerning questions of sexual and racial balance in making its selections. The committee felt, however, that two primary concerns were: 1) to choose persons of outstanding quality, with broad experience in the work of the association; and 2) to rectify some of the obvious imbalances in the present Executive Board, particularly that evident in the geographical representation. It was these emphases which resulted in the following choices.

It's hard to believe that (1) there are NO qualified women or Third World people, and (2) geographical representation is more important than feminist or minority representation. Given the ratio of women to men in the library profession, can there be *any* geographical area without nine qualified females to every qualified male? (By the way, the two official nominees for the ALA presidency are both white males.)

English Teachers Pass Resolution Against Racism, Sexism

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has passed an anti-racism and anti-sexism resolution similar to the one adopted by the American Library Association at its annual convention last summer (see Vol. 7, No. 5). The NCTE action was taken at the organization's 66th Annual Convention, held in Chicago on November 22 to 27.

The resolution, sponsored by the CIBC, calls for NCTE to take "conscious steps to eliminate racism and sexism." Prior to passage, the resolution was endorsed by the NCTE Black Caucus, the Chicano Caucus, the Task Force on Racism and Bias, and the Committee on the Role and Image of Women. It was recommended for adoption by the Resolutions Committee, and was given unanimous approval by members at the annual business meeting, November 26.

The resolution directs the NCTE "to mount a three-year action program to increase the level of awareness of present and future NCTE members—and thereby of their students—to manifestations of and damages from racism and sexism." It directs the NCTE to develop racism and sexism awareness curricula for pre-service and in-service education of teachers and to make these curricula available in printed and audio-visual form for school use.

The CIBC was also active at the NCTE's preconvention conference, "Children's Literature and the Changing Times," held on November 23-24. In response to NCTE's invitation, the CIBC sent *Bulletin* editorial staff member Jean Carey Bond to speak on a three-person panel entitled "Children's Books: Conflicting Beliefs." (The full text of Ms. Bond's speech appears on page 3.) The other panel participants were Judith Krug, director of the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee, and Lillian Gerhardt, editor of *School Library Journal.*

More CIBC Activities

Recent Council activities—in addition to those outlined in the preceding story—have included a November 10 workshop on up-grading teaching skills for Fort Wayne, Ind., teachers (CIBC spokespersons, Dr. Beryle Banfield and Dr. Albert V. Schwartz); a workshop December 10 in Harrisburg, Pa., with the heads of departments of education and school administrators in Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (CIBC spokespersons, Dr. Luther Seabrook and Dr. Albert V. Schwartz); and a December 20 presentation on textbook evaluation to the newly formed Textbook Committee of the Education Department of the U.S. Virgin Islands (CIBC spokesperson, Dr. Beryle Banfield).

Plans for the near future include CIBC presentations to the faculty of New York City schools, a workshop with the personnel of schools in Andersonville, Ind., January 19 and 20, 1977 (CIBC spokespersons, Dr. Beryle Banfield and Dr. Albert V. Schwartz), and a workshop at the Northeast Regional Conference for the Study of Afro-American Life, February 4 and 5.

Persons interested in taking "Racism and Sexism in Children's Literature," the course conducted by the CIBC at Teachers College, Columbia University (Department of Curriculum and Teaching), are advised that TC registration is January 20 and 21.

Library Activists Ask End to Cataloging Bias

In its efforts to eliminate discriminatory practices both in libraries and other areas, Women Library Workers is acting to press enforcement of federal equal opportunity legislation which proscribes the use of sex-referent language in describing occupations.

As part of a letter writing campaign to the head of the Library of Congress's Subject Cataloging Division, the Minneapolis-St. Paul chapter of WLW wrote:

> . . . As library-users and employees . . . we find that institutions following LC's subject-heading scheme regularly catalog material on specific jobs under exclusively *masculine* heads (e.g., BOATMEN, BUSBOYS, FOREMEN, CITY COUNCILMEN, FIREMEN, FISHERMEN, LONGSHOREMEN, LUMBERMEN, STUNT MEN). This practice not only contradicts the law and violates explicit government policy, but also flagrantly insults women, clearly implying our unfitness to handle certain types of work: the traditionally "male-only" jobs. Well, we reject those stereotypes as demeaning and stifling. Thus, we ask that the Library of Congress at once undertake the systematic reform of all sexist occupational terms (e.g., replacing FIREMEN with FIRE FIGHTERS,

FOREMEN with SUPERVISORS, etc.). Let there be no mistake: This is a top-priority matter as far as we're concerned, not one that can be "indefinitely postponed."

For additional information on WLW, see the note on page 20.

Akwesasne Article Sheds Light on Imperialism

A comparison of the efforts of two groups to assist Indian victims of the 1975 earthquakes in Guatemala provides powerful insights into the workings of imperialism. The CIBC recommends an appraisal of the work of two relief teams in Guatemala, entitled "Where the Strong Trees Grow," which appears in the early autumn issue of *Akwesasne Notes.*

Booklist Highlights Common Stereotypes

The Boston Area Women-in-Libraries, a feminist group devoted to increasing resources for and about women and to improving the status of women in the library profession, has published *Tea and Muskets: A Bicentennial Booklist.*

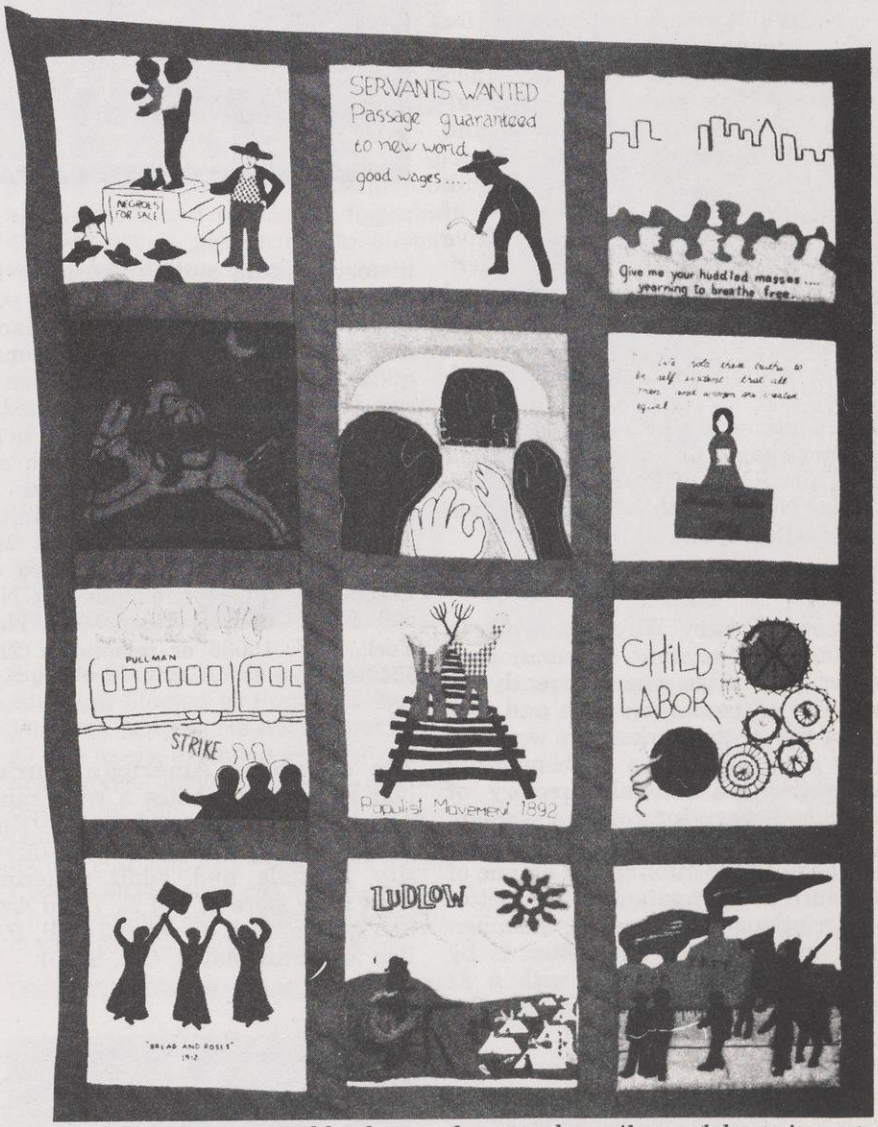
The booklist attracted our attention because, as is *not* often the case with feminist lists, its annotations reflect an awareness of racism as well as sexism. Fifty-nine titles (K-8th grade) are reviewed and rated with particular regard to their female heroes' portrayals. In addition to the three rating categories—recommended, not recommended and recommended with reservations—the list also features three white-on-black symbols denoting common stereotypes (see illustrations below).

"The Two-Suitor Syndrome": The historical plot is relegated to the romantic realm, as the heroine, possessed of insight and initiative is transformed into a confused, coy female, unable to decide between two polarized romantic figures. One suitor is generally familiar and homey; the other is foreign and dashing. The heroine invariably ends up married or engaged, her future secure.

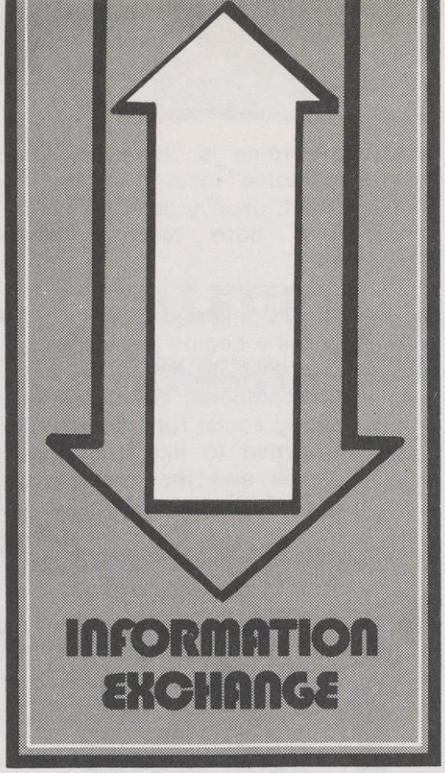
"Destined from the Cradle": Hardly any of the books neglected this kind of stereotyping. The heroine is characterized as possessing some "innate," traditionally feminine trait, usually as some kind of caretaker—a born teacher, nurse, mother, etc.

"The Converted Tomboy": The heroine begins the story as an energetic, independent individual, unencumbered by the dictates of her limiting social role. By the end, she has learned to like and accept these dictates and the rewards, i.e. marriage and/or maternity. She becomes passive, modest, soft-spoken and subservient.

The Boston Area W-I-L has approximately 25 active members (and many more associates) who meet once a month. Among them are several children's librarians who felt librarians needed to know about books containing positive female characters—hence *Tea and Muskets.* The booklist costs $2 (plus self-addressed mailing label) and can be obtained from Boston Area W-I-L, Box 476, W. Somerville, Mass. 02144.



Women of diverse races and backgrounds created a quilt to celebrate important struggles ignored by the commercial bicentennial. Events depicted include the Trail of Tears, the United Farm Workers movement and the internment of Japanese Americans (detail above). An informative 64-page booklet on the quilt is available for $3 plus 35¢ postage from UP Press, 1944 University Ave. Rear, East Palo Alto, Cal. 94303.



"Everywoman's Almanac 1977," an appointment calendar and handbook, provides information, brief essays, photos and more—all from a non-racist, non-elitist perspective. The calendar (which also has space for address listings) is $3.95; bulk rates available. Write directly to the producers, The Women's Press, Suite 305, 280 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada or order from either Book People, 2940 Seventh St., Berkeley, Cal. 94710 or R.P.M., 701 E. Gude Dr., Rockville, Md. 20850.

A **Native American** Calendar for 1977 has been issued by *Akwesasne Notes.* The colorful 17 x 11¼ inch lunar calendar includes relevant cultural and historical information and features illustrations by Native American artists. Single copies are $3; bulk rates available. The publishers of *Akwesasne Notes* ("the largest Native American newspaper in the Americas") also conduct workshops and other activities. Called "White Roots of Peace," the group will plan programs with community groups, colleges and universities and other organizations. To order the calendar, the newspaper or obtain information on White Roots of Peace, write Akwesasne Notes, Mohawk Nation via Rooseveltown, N.Y. 13683.

Women Library Workers seeks to "change the existing distribution of power in libraries, where currently the majority of bosses are men and four out of five of the workers are women." The group publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, an annual directory of feminist library/information workers and takes action on specific issues (see page 18 for information on one of its current campaigns). Newsletter subscriptions only are $5; membership, including the newsletter, is by donation (preferably $10, with a $3 minimum). Write WLW, 555 29th St., San Francisco, Cal. 94131.

Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños of the City University of New York is a helpful resource for information on **Puerto Ricans** and Puerto Rico. The library of the Centro contains a major collection of materials and theses, as well as a number of films (Spanish and/or English) on Puerto Rican history, culture and the struggle for independence. The Centro has published *Taller de Migracion,* an excellent study of the causes and consequences of Puerto Rican migration to the U.S., and has just published a similar study of Puerto Rican culture—*Taller de Cultura.* Both are in Spanish and English, but at present are available on a limited basis. For information, contact Ms. Nelida Perez, Librarian, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños—CUNY, 500 Fifth Avenue, Room 930, New York, N.Y. 10036 or telephone (212) 354-5410.

The **Japanese American** Curriculum Project distributes a wide range of material—from a Japanese/English ABC picture book through university journals and adult materials. Visit their store at 414 E. Third Ave., San Mateo, Cal. or write JACP, P.O. Box 367, San Mateo, Cal. 94401.

"Media Report to **Women**" carries information on "what women are doing and thinking about the communications media." It provides news on feminist publications, critiques of the establishment's coverage of feminist issues and more. Subscriptions to the monthly are $10 for individuals, $15 for institutions. Write *Media Report to Women,* 3306 Ross Place N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

"Library Services for the Aging" contains background information on the realities of aging, implications for library services, a model library program and consciousness-raising exercises. The 55-page booklet is available from the Colorado State Library, 1362 Lincoln St., Denver, Colo. 80203.

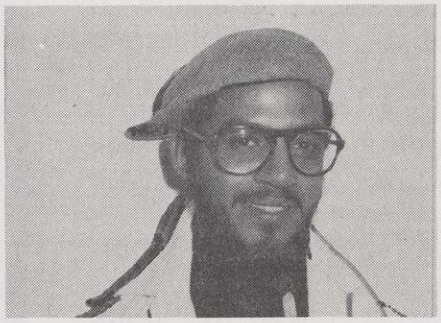
What Have Women Done?, a "photo-essay on **working women** in the United States," provides information and illustrations usually omitted from standard history texts. (This can be used as a companion to the CIBC's new book, *Stereotypes, Distortions and Omissions in U.S. History Textbooks.*) Produced by the San Francisco Women's History Group, the 58-page booklet is distributed by the United Front Press, P.O. Box 40099, San Francisco, Cal. 94140. Single copies are $2; bulk rates available.

"Senior News" is produced by the California Association for Older People and focuses on relevant news from that state. A year's subscription to the bi-monthly is $2. Write to *Senior News,* 330 Ellis St., San Francisco, Cal. 94102.

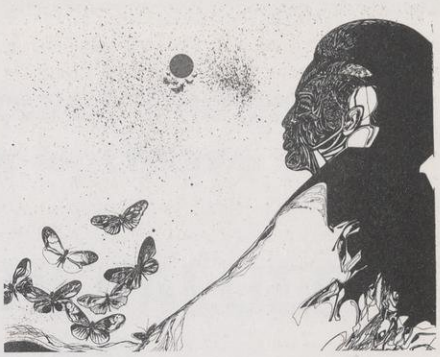
"Sampler for **Social Change,**" the newsletter of the Education for Peace Project, contains articles, notes, resources, etc. Readers will be particularly interested in the January, 1976, issue, "Learning from Native Americans." Subscriptions (10 issues a year) are $5 for individuals, $10 for institutions. The Project also maintains an information center. Write them at 3104 16th Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55407.

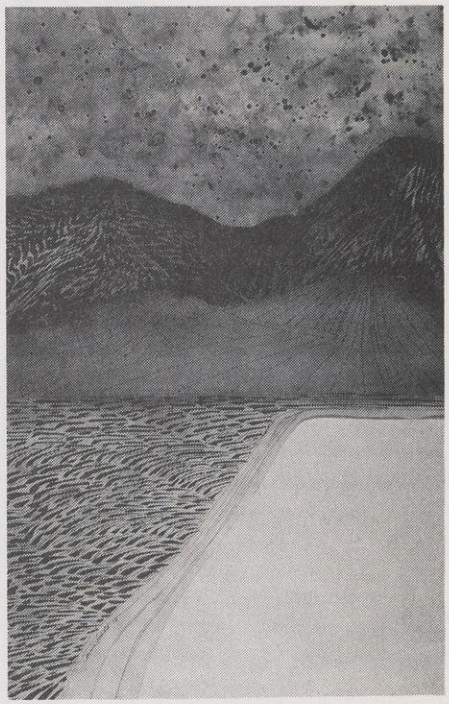
Emergency Librarian has just published a special issue titled "Kids," which includes an article and annotated booklist on children's books about **Third World countries,** and an article on **sex-role stereotyping** and children's librarians. Subscriptions to the bi-monthly magazine are $7 individual Canadian, $9 individual American, $10 institutional, $12 international and $3 student. Write Barbara Clubb, 697 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0A7, Canada.

This department brings the work of minority illustrators to the attention of art directors and book and magazine editors. Artists are invited to submit their portfolios for consideration.



Sigfrido Benitez, a free-lance artist and educator, studied at Pratt and the Art Students League. He has taught art at all age levels, exhibited at many shows and done illustration and graphic design for various Hispanic organizations, including the poster for the first annual Hispanic Arts Festival at Lincoln Center. Mr. Benitez can be reached at 77 Willoughby Ave., Apt. 3, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205; tel.: (212) 622-9597.





Connie Harold, a free-lance illustrator and designer, studied at Pratt and Columbia. She has worked at *Encore* magazine and Sterling Publishing Co. and has done assignments for Pratt, Cliff Covington Designs, *Black Enterprize* magazine, Lio Pai Associates and others. Ms. Harold can be reached at 600 West 122 St., #511, New York, N.Y. 10027; tel.: (212) 868-3330.

Index of Volume 7, 1976, *Bulletin*

The index below covers Volume 7 of this *Bulletin.* All issues **except** Number 4 are still in print and can be ordered from the CIBC. The cost is $1.35 for each regular issue and $2.50 for the double issue (Numbers 2 & 3). Bulk rates for 10 or more copies are $ .90 each for single issues, $1.75 each for the double issue. (All prices include postage.) Student rates are available upon request.

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE COUNCIL ON INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

The Council on Interracial Books for Children, a non-profit organization founded in 1966, is dedicated to promoting anti-racist and anti-sexist literature and instructional materials for children in the following ways: 1) by publishing this *Bulletin;* 2) by running a yearly contest for unpublished minority writers of children's literature; 3) by conducting clinics and workshops on racism and sexism; 4) by providing consultants and resource specialists in awareness training to educational institutions; and 5) by establishing the Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, which publishes annual reference books, monographs, lesson plans and audio-visual materials designed to help teachers eliminate racism and sexism and to develop pluralism in education.

Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.
1841 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10023

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