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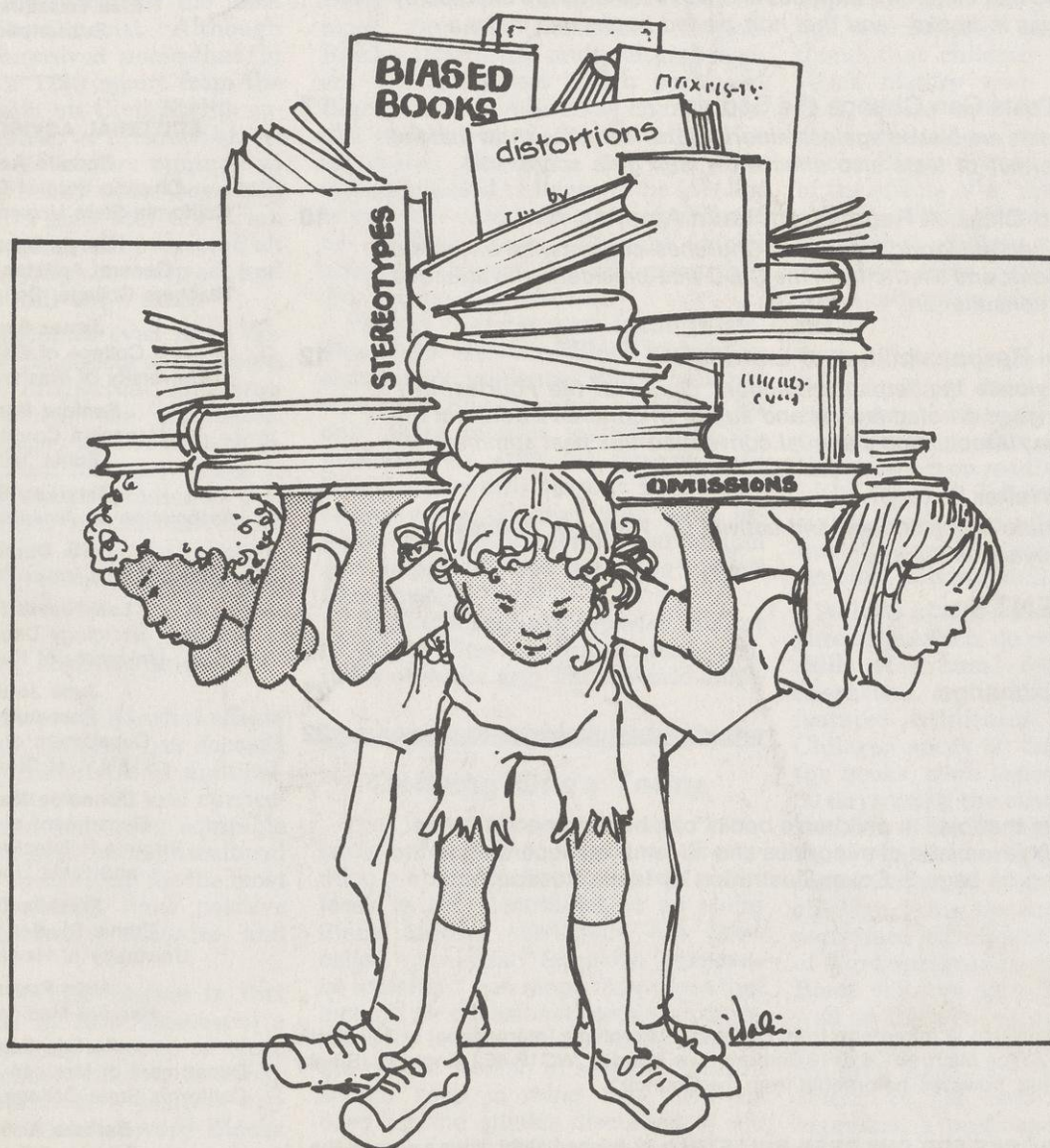
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INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

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How Books Influence Children: What the Research Shows

COOPERATIVE CHILDREN'S BOOK CENTER
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INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

BULLETIN

Volume 11, Number 6

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Research shows that children's attitudes and achievements are affected by race and sex bias in books—and that non-biased books can make a difference

How Books Influence Children: What the Research Shows

By Patricia B. Campbell and Jeana Wirtenberg

At home and at school, the books that children read are, for the most part, sexist and racist. Although books have improved somewhat in recent years, a 1980 report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights entitled *Characters in Textbooks: A Review of the Literature* reminds us that in many books white boys still dominate, white girls still cry a lot, minority boys must still overcome all odds before they can be accepted, and minority girls still don't exist.

This news becomes even more disquieting when the effects of the books on children's intellectual and emotional development are considered. Even though many believe that children's books do not transmit values to young readers, research indicates that books may indeed "indoctrinate children in societally prescribed behaviors," as the National Education Association has indicated.¹

Multicultural vs. All-White Books

Most of the research on what effects books have on children has focused on comparing the effects of multicultural or non-sexist books and curriculum to more traditional, less equitable materials. Research on multicultural materials has found that, for the most part, these materials have positive effects on children's attitudes and achievements.

One of the earliest studies in this area was done in 1944. Researchers found that exposing a group of white junior high school students to books portraying Blacks in a positive way caused their attitudes toward Blacks to become more favorable than those of a comparable group not exposed to the materials.²

Twenty-five years later, two other

researchers found that white and Black children developed markedly more favorable attitudes toward Blacks after using multicultural readers. Using readers which portrayed Blacks with middle-class characteristics (worked hard, dressed nicely) in integrated situations for only four months caused children to be less apt to exclude—and more apt to feel closer to—children from different racial groups than were a control group that did not use the readers.³

Similar changes were found in studies of the effects of Black history on elementary students. Black children who used Black studies materials for only three months significantly improved their attitudes toward both Black and white people;⁴ in another study, white children who were exposed to a Black heritage curriculum also improved their attitudes toward Black people.⁵

Other studies have reported similar findings. One confirmed that attitudes of white and Third World child-

ren toward themselves and each other improved after studying racial heritage and culture,⁶ and another study found that children who read about Black history were more convinced that Blacks and whites were equal than were those who had not read about Black history.⁷ Another study of the effects of a "multiracial" curriculum on white primary grade children found that children using the curriculum had more positive attitudes toward minorities than those who did not.⁸

There is evidence to indicate that the content of books affects achievement too. Although one 1977 study found that a multiracial curriculum had no effect on reading achievement,⁹ earlier studies indicated that multiracial materials did affect achievement, including reading comprehension and problem solving skills.

A 1963 study done in Detroit compared the effects on children's reading skills of a basal reader with white characters and settings to one that featured multiracial neighborhoods. Children spent 30 days using one of the books, were tested, spent another 30 days using the other book and were retested. Even though the two books were similar except for the racial composition of the characters, *all* children using the multicultural book performed significantly better on tests of word recognition and oral reading. Black children performed particularly well on the word recognition test after using the multicultural book. The children liked the multicultural text better: 76 per cent of the students expressed a preference for the multicultural book and were more interested in reading it.¹⁰

A later study of the effects of incorporating Black studies in a social

Defining One's Terms

The terms "non-racist" and "non-sexist" are often loosely used. Everything from books that have a few brown faces in the illustrations to an entire Black Studies curriculum has been called "non-racist." Similarly, "non-sexist materials" can range from those that include an occasional female protagonist to a comprehensive reappraisal of the role of women in society. Readers should keep in mind that materials used for the studies discussed in the accompanying article may or may not meet stringent criteria for non-biased materials.

studies curriculum also showed achievement gains. A predominantly Black group of children given the Black studies curriculum made significantly higher achievement scores than a similar group of students who did not use it. Boys, particularly, taking the Black studies curriculum progressed unusually well and expressed motivation and interest that were not typical of their normal school behavior.¹¹

While most research has focused on Blacks and whites, some work has looked at such other minority groups as the Inuit people and American Indians. Reading and discussing six stories that portrayed American Indians positively caused non-Indian participants to become significantly more positive toward Indians.¹² In one of the few studies to look at both the negative and positive effects of books, one group of children read positive stories about Inuit people while another group read negative stories about them. Students who read the positive stories developed more favorable attitudes toward Inuit people; students reading the negative stories became more negative in their attitudes.¹³

Sexist vs. Non-Sexist Books

Most of the research on non-sexist books indicate that these, too, have positive effects on children. Several studies have found that reading non-sexist stories had no effect on child-

ren's attitudes; however, these were either very short-term efforts involving only one or two stories or the stories used were simply role reversals, keeping the same stereotyped characteristics and plot and merely changing the sex of the main character.¹⁴ As the authors of one such study noted: "Simply changing the names and pronouns or changing illustrations or adding occasional non-traditional materials may not be powerful enough to effect attitude change."¹⁵

Studies of a more sustained use of non-sexist stories or of books that were more positively non-sexist (*i.e.*, books that go beyond changing the sex of a character to portray the joys and problems of non-traditional lives and choices) showed more positive results. A study of the effects of the Council on Interracial Books for Children's own anti-sexist intervention curriculum, "Winning 'Justice for All,'" found that the material appeared to enable students to reduce their sex-role stereotyping and to increase their understanding of the dynamics of institutional discrimination.¹⁶

Hearing stories about working mothers caused kindergarten girls to increase the number and type of jobs they thought were appropriate for women,¹⁷ while reading a series of stories with female main characters in active roles caused both female and male third and fourth graders to increase their beliefs that both boys

and girls could succeed in doing the activities featured in the stories.¹⁸ (Before reading the stories, most children felt that "only boys" or "mostly boys" could succeed in the activities.) Reading about people who successfully fought sex discrimination in non-traditional jobs caused both female and male elementary school children (first through fifth grade) to have less stereotypical attitudes about the jobs and activities mentioned in the stories.¹⁹ For example, reading about a male nurse who successfully fought sex discrimination changed children's attitudes toward who "can" or "should" be a nurse, but it did not affect their attitudes about who "can" or "should" be a school teacher or truck driver. While these studies showed attitude changes only in very specific areas, another study, giving children five 30-minute reading sessions with non-stereotyped books, resulted in more general changes: children's attitudes about both peer and adult activities and personality characteristics became less sexist.²⁰

Sex stereotyping in books has also been shown to have an impact on children's preference and recall. One study had girls read stories about female letter carriers and ballet dancers while boys read about males in those careers. The study found that preschool children preferred stories in which the characters demonstrated sex-stereotyped behavior. However, both girls and boys remembered the same sex, *non-traditional* story longer and in more detail than they remembered the same sex, *stereotyped* story.

That study also found that a large majority of lower-class boys disapproved of the story about the male ballet dancer; they labeled it "stupid" and refused to listen. Middle- and upper-class boys, on the other hand, seemed to accept the story. In contrast, girls of all classes were much more positive and accepting about the female mail carrier.²¹

Studies on the impact of sexist and non-sexist materials on achievement are revealing. In one study, a sample of preschool children was divided into three groups: one group heard a story depicting achievement-oriented behavior by a male character, another heard a similar story about a female, and the third group heard a story with no achievement-related behaviors.²² The children persisted longer in a task after hearing the story depicting same-sex achievement behavior

Books Aren't the Only Influence

Books do influence children, but that influence can be strongly affected by other factors. For example, children, like adults, tend to interpret what they read in light of their own attitudes and biases. In addition, the amount that a child already knows about an issue can affect a book's impact; frequently, the less a person knows about an issue, the more influential a book on that issue will be.

In her work on the effects of media on children, Maccoby has drawn some interesting and relevant conclusions: she notes that in "value areas where the parents have strong, explicitly stated views, and where the parents serve as models for their children's actions, the media will have little effect." On the other hand, "the values and attitudes which should be most vulnerable to media influence should be those concerning which the significant people in the child's life have not taken a stand." Furthermore, "children in homes where parents do not interact frequently with their children should be more susceptible to media influence than children whose relationship with parents is more intense."¹

These theories are appealing, but much more research needs to be done on them before they can be regarded as fact. In the meantime, we need to remember that while books can make a difference in children's lives, so can we.

¹E.E. Maccoby, "Effects of the Mass Media," *Review of Child Development Research*, Vol. 1, ed. M.L. Hoffman and L.W. Hoffman (New York: Russell Sage Foundation: 1964), pp. 323-348.

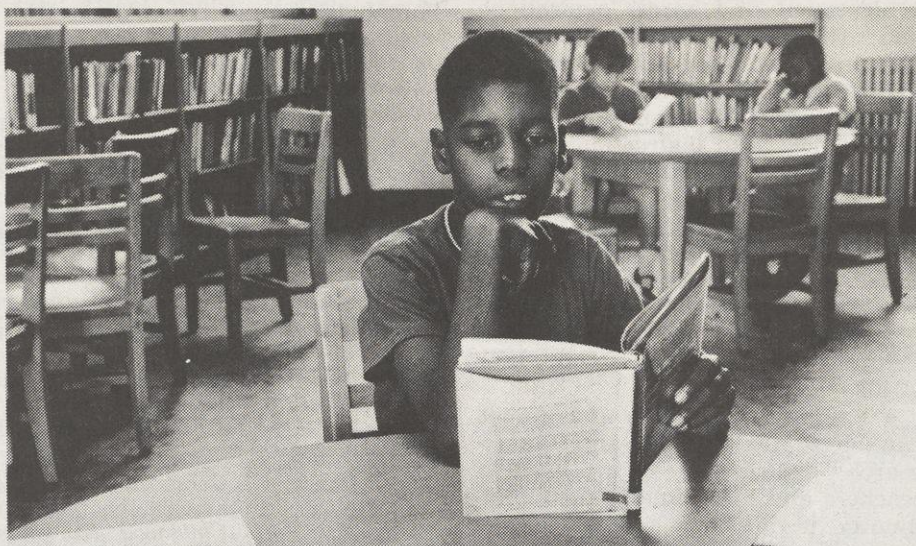
than after hearing about an opposite-sex character. In addition, the more children recalled about the story of achievement by a same-sex character, the longer they persisted in the task. Finally, after hearing the story about female achievement-oriented behavior, children were more apt to view a girl in another story in a different situation as being achievement-oriented than they were if they heard the story about the male. Based on the results of their study, authors McArthur and Eisen drew a conclusion that seems to hold for all the work done on sexist and non-sexist materials:

... if one wishes to promote more equal representation of men and women in achieving roles in our society, a change in the representation of females in children's books may be a useful step forward. Admittedly the effects of story-books on achievement behavior measured in the present investigation were only short term, but so was the exposure to these stories. Thus ... it does not seem unreasonable to expect that young girls' prolonged exposure to stereotypic children's books may contribute to their lower levels of adult "achievement" as compared with men.²³

In the study cited above the changes in behavior were only short term; however, so was the treatment. There seems to be some indication that the amount of time children spend on materials influences the extent to which they retain the attitudes and values of those materials.

A study examining the effects of a sexist reading program wherein the 20 consonants were represented by boys and the six vowels by girls found this to be the case. The longer a group of children were exposed to this program—which included such comments as "A girl. A girl. Oh, go away: A girl's no good for work or play"—the more their attitudes became sex stereotyped and the longer those attitudes were retained. Children who used the materials regularly had more stereotyped attitudes than those who used it intermittently and were in turn more sexist than children who had not used the series at all.²⁴

The implication of these two studies is that the effects of books need to be periodically reinforced in order to be long-lasting. However, the extent to which positive school materials can counteract negative influences outside the school—as well as negative peer influences within the school—remains unclear. In her book *Print and Preju-*



Research shows that race and sex bias in books do affect children's attitudes and achievements. (Photo by Freda Leinwand)

dice, Zimet concludes that while it would appear that much of the long-term influence of reading depends upon its reinforcement in the home and community, the potential for changing a point of view has been demonstrated by the immediate effect books do have on children's beliefs.²⁵

Research indicates that multiracial books and non-sexist books can have a positive influence on children, but the influence of books that are *both* non-sexist and non-racist has yet to be examined. As in many other areas, research looks at racism and sexism separately. Many of the multicultural series that have been tested are just as sexist as the all-white series which preceded them. Too often the changes from all-white to multicultural were similar to those made by Harper & Row when they revised a basal reader, *Around the Corner*, in 1972: Mark and Janet became Pedro and Maria, but the dialog remained the same—"Look at her, Mother, just look at her. She is just like a girl, she gives up."²⁶

Like most traditional all-white textbooks, Black studies curriculum materials emphasize male accomplishments and male history with few female role models.²⁷ As a result, both Black and white boys frequently experience more positive effects from multicultural materials than do girls.²⁸ And just as non-racist stories are often sexist, stories with non-sexist themes are often racist: minority characters play minimal or no roles, or

they are depicted in a stereotypical fashion. The need for books to be both non-sexist and non-racist has been ignored by authors and researchers. It is a rare book and even rarer study that deals with both racism and sexism, and the books and research suffer as a consequence.

Research to date indicates that books *can* make a difference—and that they can be an effective tool in reducing racism and sexism in society. However, the existing research is not enough. Educators must update, expand and, most important, disseminate the work that has been done. It is painfully obvious that the existing research is not widely circulated; most of the people writing, publishing or purchasing children's books are unfamiliar with the findings discussed in this article—and therefore would not be inclined to act on the implications of these findings.

Below are several ways this information can be more widely circulated.

- We could let our professional organizations know of our interest and encourage them to support and publish work in this area.

- Teachers and librarians can do further work on the effects of non-sexist and non-racist books and let their colleagues know about the results. Two recent publications of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights can be extremely useful: *Characters in Textbooks: A Review of the Literature* discusses the effects of textbooks on students' attitudes, personality development and behavior, academic

achievement and career aspirations and attainment; *Fair Textbooks: A Resource Guide* contains more than 1,500 materials that can be used to promote greater sex and race fairness in textbooks and instructional materials. (Both books are available for free while the supply lasts from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Warehouse, 621 Payne St., Alexandria, Va. 22314; in the future, they can be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.)

- Parents, individuals and groups can share this article—and the research articles cited in it—with teachers and librarians in their community, urging them to consider the implications of this research when selecting children's materials.

- Publishing personnel can circulate the studies among their colleagues, asking that the findings be considered when selecting and/or editing children's literature or school materials.

- These findings can be shared with textbook selection committees on the state and local levels. Bias-free school materials should be a priority of all community action groups concerned with quality education.

- Foundations and federal and state funding agencies should be encouraged to support additional research on the effects of books on children, and people developing non-sexist and non-racist materials should be encouraged to test the effects of their materials on children. □

Discussion Can Help!

The greatest attitude and behavior changes occur when the use of non-sexist and non-racist books and materials are supplemented with discussions to help children clarify misconceptions and share relevant experiences and feelings. Obviously, the nature of the discussion and the extent to which the parent, teacher or librarian is perceived as being free of prejudice are crucial. Moreover, many children may tailor their responses to please an adult, especially if the adult's own attitudes are presented in an overforceful manner. To avoid this, adults may want to use non-judgmental questions to allow for introspection and retrospection on the part of the children.

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We know that tests are biased against minorities. Now studies show that the content and format of tests also affect how well girls score

Non-Biased Tests Can Change the Scores

By Patricia B. Campbell and Elois Scott

Just as the sexism and racism in books affect student performance, so too may the racism and sexism in other reading material, particularly tests. When one considers that in 1972 alone over two hundred million achievement tests were used in the U.S.¹ and that test performance affects all facets of our lives from preschool through adulthood, the influence of sexism and racism on test performance takes on new and frightening dimensions.

Research shows that sexism in the content of tests affects performance. Gloria Milton found that females did better on test problems dealing with matters considered appropriate to the female role than they did when the problems were about a stereotypically "masculine" area.² This finding has been substantiated in other studies which found that girls tend to do better on questions dealing with human relations and that boys tend to do better on questions dealing with science and economics.³ (For example, girls would have a tendency to do better on a math or reading comprehension question dealing with patterns of child rearing, while boys would have a tendency to do better on similar questions dealing with patterns of sound waves. The same skills would be needed to answer both questions, but the content affects whether the item is answered correctly.)

The number of females and males appearing in a test item can also be influential. A 1977 analysis of four of the most widely used achievement tests found that adolescent girls were more apt to get an item correct if it mentioned more girls than boys or an equal number of girls and boys.⁴ That is, if an item mentioned three girls and one boy, the girls had a greater tendency to answer correctly. Dr. Thomas Donlon of the Educational Test-

ing Service has stated that although males score about 40 points higher than females on the math section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, this difference could be cut at least in half by including more subject matter that is familiar to females.⁵

The influence of test content on performance seems to affect primarily

It's a Man's World

In testing, it's a man's world. A 1974 study¹ found that some achievement tests have over 60 mentions of males to every mention of a female. Over 70 percent of the characters in the California Achievement Test, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Stanford Achievement Test were male—even when the use of the generic "man" was not counted. And except for isolated cases such as the Metropolitan Achievement Test, which was revised in 1978 to include equal numbers of females and males, the current situation is much the same as it was in 1974.

When females are shown, it is usually in stereotypic roles. Women are shown almost exclusively as homemakers or in the pursuit of hobbies. Young girls are shown doing "female chores," while boys play, climb, hike and assume roles of responsibility and leadership. Girls help with the cooking, buy vegetables and take a back seat to stronger, more qualified boys.

This stereotyping does not improve in tests for older students. In fact, it gets worse. And, as students get older, they encounter fewer and fewer test items with females in them.

¹C.K. Tittle, K.A. McCarthy and J.F. Steckler, *Women in Educational Testing* (Princeton: Educational Testing Service and the Association for Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance, 1974).

adolescents and adults. To date, research on young children has been mixed; findings range from some or no effect⁶ to the case of a study of Black sixth graders which showed a reverse effect—girls doing better on math items with a traditionally masculine content and boys doing better on traditionally feminine items.⁷ More work is needed in this area, particularly for younger children, but the argument for equitable test content is compelling since content has been found to influence the test scores of older students.

Format can also affect the performance of females and males. One study found that switching from essay or fill-in-the-blank questions to more objective items such as multiple choice produced higher scores for males. This was found to be true across a wide range of subjects, including those that boys traditionally excelled in like math and those that girls traditionally excelled in like reading comprehension.⁸

According to Dr. Carol Dwyer, also of the Educational Testing Service, test makers are aware that "sex differences" can be created or eliminated through the selection of items to be included in a test." A test can be slanted toward either sex or balanced to assure sex equity through format (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, essay) or item content (stereotypically feminine, stereotypically masculine or neutral) selected to make up the test.⁹

While all tests can be "balanced" to show little or no sex differences, few are. Those that are "balanced" are generally IQ tests whose developers operate on the given that females and males are equal in intelligence and then design a test to substantiate that given. That is, the content and the item tests are selected and refined until the sexes score approximately

equal. Thus, when studies report that females and males are approximately equal in intelligence, it may be that all they are reporting is that the test did what it was designed to do—i.e., support the assumption that males and females—as groups—are equal in intelligence. It is interesting to note that no such assumption has been made about the equal intelligence of minority and majority people—as groups—and tests are not developed and refined to fit that assumption. In other words, tests are not “balanced” for race equity as they are for sex equity. Perhaps one way to combat the effects of bias in tests is to avoid trying to construct “culture fair” or “culture free” tests—goals that most test publishers have acknowledged to be impossible—but rather to construct tests in such a way that children of color as groups score equally with white children as a group.

The effects of racism in testing are fairly well known. The disproportionately high number of minority children classified as “slow” or “retarded” and the disproportionately low number of minority children classified as gifted all bear evidence to these effects.¹⁰

Racism in tests occurs primarily because tests are the products of the majority culture. Their language, content, illustrations and even scoring procedures are all drawn from a culture that is foreign or at least less familiar to many minority children. Cultural background, geographic isolation and low socio-economic status often combine to provide a minority child with a frame of reference very different than those envisioned and expected by test developers.¹¹

Many minority children face the obstacle of unfamiliarity with the settings and concepts used to test a wide variety of skills from reading comprehension to problem solving. For example, Native American children in the Dakotas who are geographically isolated because of the poverty so often caused by racism will have little experience with the ocean or with concepts concerning the ocean. Chicano and Indian children in the Southwest isolated for similar reasons may be unfamiliar with concepts related to icy, cold winters. Test items on questions dealing with these and other concepts which may be unfamiliar to groups of children immediately put these children at a disadvantage.

In addition, minority children suffer



Test results influence many facets of our lives. (Photo by Marion Bernstein)

because of the difference between the language they speak and the language in which tests are written. Since tests are written in so-called standard English, their language structure and syntax are unfamiliar to many test takers.¹² Also, many words have different connotations in different cultures. For instance, in Black English, “the Hawk” means the wind, while in standard English it is a large bird. Taking a test based on a language structure and syntax different from one’s own, even though the language is the same, negatively affects performance. And, of course, if the test taker and the test developer—or scorer—have different definitions for the same word, then the test taker’s score will suffer.¹³

The problems for children whose native language is not English are even greater. In addition to differences in language structures and cultural concepts, there are many words in English that look similar to words from the child’s primary language, but whose meanings are very different. For example, the English word “embarrassed” is very close to the Spanish word *embrazada*, which means pregnant, and the English word “magazine” resembles the French word *magazin*, which means shop or store. Such vocabulary can easily confuse the test taker whose primary language is not English and cause scores to be lower. Both minority children whose language structure and syntax differ from standard English and those whose native language is not English have trouble with plural and tense markers, particularly in irregular forms of nouns and verbs (for example, the plural of fish is fish, not fishes, and the past tense of go is went, not “goed”).

The testing procedure itself can also be prey to racial or cultural bias. Most standardized tests are based on the concept of speed—the more items one can do, the higher one’s score tends to be. Children whose cultures stress careful consideration and the values of a slow, well thought out response (as do Native Americans) have been found to score lower on “speeded tests” than children from cultures that value a quick response.¹⁴

Research has found that even with the changes in testing in the past ten years, minority characters are still underrepresented in test items,¹⁵ and minority cultures are still being devalued or ignored. This reinforcement of the myth that minority cultures are not to be valued can have a negative effect on minority children’s self-concept and sense of worth. And as research has shown, this lack of self-worth is directly related to reduced achievement.¹⁶

In testing, as in so many other areas, there is an interaction of racism and sexism that has an especially negative effect on minority females. The minority female suffers from the same testing obstacles as the minority male, but in addition she is also affected by the sexism that plagues the majority female.

There is a final issue to be considered. As Dr. Carol Tittle, a long-time researcher in testing and measurements, has concluded, “[W]hether or not biased content is reflected in performance is irrelevant to the larger issue of fairness of representation.”¹⁷ In a society that professes educational equity as a goal, equitable, non-stereotyped test content is a simple matter of justice. □

Footnotes

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⁶R. Montemayor, "Children's Performance in a Game and Their Attraction to It as a Function of Sex-Typed Labels," *Child Development*, Vol. 45 (March, 1974), pp. 152-156.

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⁷P. King and H. Blount, "The Influence of Sex-Typed Math Test Problems on Performance of Sixth Grade Students" (Paper presented to the National Council on Measurement in Education, Washington, D.C., 1975).

⁸R.C. Murphy, "Sex Differences in Examination Performance" (Paper presented to the International Conference on Sex Role Stereotyping, Cardiff, Wales, 1977).

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¹⁰A.A. Burke, "Placement of Black and White Children in Educable Mentally Handicapped Classes and Learning Disability Classes," *Exceptional Child*, Vol. 41 (March, 1975), pp. 438-439.

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¹⁴J. Peterson, *Early Conceptions and Tests of Intelligence*, Measurement and Adjustment Series (New York: World Book, 1925).

¹⁵L. Miller, *Testing Black Children* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

¹⁶Samuda, op. cit., p. 149.

¹⁷C.K. Tittle, *Sex Bias in Testing: A Review with Policy Implications* (Princeton: ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement and Evaluation, 1978).

About the Authors

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EVALUATING TESTS FOR BIAS

Sex Bias

1. Are there approximately equal numbers of females and males in the items?
2. Are males and females portrayed in a variety of roles and occupations, not just in stereotypic ways?
3. Do test items include approximately equal numbers of questions on areas traditionally considered of feminine interest and on areas traditionally considered of masculine interest?
4. If the answer to either 1, 2 or 3 is "no," has work been done to insure that these biases do not cause the scores of one sex to be inflated?
5. Are the same norms (comparison scores) used to assess the performance of males and females, rather than having one set of norms for females and another for males?
6. If a test is recommended for use with females and males, have both sexes been used in the studies which measure the test's validity (if the test measures what it says it does) and reliability (if the test measures consistently)?
7. If the test is used for selection, is the predictive validity (how well the test predicts performance) equally accurate for females and males?

YES NO

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Race Bias

1. Are members of different racial and cultural groups portrayed in the test items?
2. Are minorities portrayed in ways that are positive and representative?
3. Are the test items either written in the test takers' language system or written so as to exclude words whose meaning in standard English may be different than their meaning in the language systems of the children being tested?
4. If the answer to either 1, 2 or 3 is "no," has work been done to insure that these biases do not cause the scores of minority group members to be lower?
5. Are test items and answer materials positioned and spaced in a manner that is familiar to children from the different cultures to be tested?
6. Have proportionate numbers of minority group children been used in the studies which measure the validity (if the test measures what it says it does) and the reliability (if the test measures that consistently) of the test?
7. If the test is used for selection, is the predictive validity (how well the test predicts performance) equally good for majority and minority group members?

YES NO

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Adapted from "Sex Bias in Educational Testing" by Marlaine Lockheed, a paper presented at the International Symposium on Educational Testing, The Hague, July, 1973, and from "References: Issues in Instrumentation" by the Center for the Study of Evaluation, a paper prepared for the Women and Minorities Training Program, Mills College, California, August, 1980.

Findings of the second World Council of Churches' consultation on racism in children's books, and a letter from the CIBC vice-president who attended the week-long consultation

Race, Sex and Class: A Report from Latin America

By Irma Garcia

"Class and Race in Latin American School Texts" was the topic of a week-long consultation held in San José, Costa Rica, March 10-14. This was the first spin-off of the World Council of Churches 1979 conference on children's books and school textbooks, held in Arnoldshain, FRG (*Bulletin*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2). CIBC Vice-President Irma Garcia represented CIBC at the consultation; her report on the conference appears below and is accompanied by a summary of the conference findings.

Being in Costa Rica as a Latin woman representing a U.S. organization affected me more than I expected. It dramatized many of the contradictions of colonized people. I guess I needed this, but it is hard and draining. I even got an indecent lobster-red suntan from just walking around in San José. As you know, no self-respecting Latina would accept even to herself that she is that "white."

I have been trying to write an article about the experience but it doesn't come out. I've decided to write this letter instead, sharing with you some of the thoughts that have come out of this conference.

There was a beautiful exposition of the limitations of theories and struggles based *only* on racism by a Haitian scholar, Gerard Pierre-Charles, who is presently in exile in Mexico. (He is an expert on the Caribbean and on the immigration of Caribbean peoples to the U.S.)

His analysis was accepted by almost everyone at the conference, so the document that came out of the workshop states, in essence, that the

struggle against race and class oppression requires an understanding of the entire Latin American situation—including its historical, economic and social context. Because some bourgeois intellectuals propose limited solutions such as "negritude" and "indigenismo" (Black and Native American cultural nationalism), without confronting the entire social and economic system which undergirds racism, their analysis and solutions are incorrect and their movements cannot lead to liberation.

The struggle against racism has to be undertaken in the context of the struggle for national and social liberation of the people of Latin America, and therefore it has to emphasize the totality of the socio-economic system that sustains racism.

There was a small group that originally opposed this position—two or three Panamanians and Costa Rican Blacks and one Native American from Bolivia. Their objections resulted in a dialog that brought into the open the interrelations between classism and racism.

Adding Sexism

Several of the women present made a practice of adding sexism to the discussions of class and race. We did not push this because we wanted to focus on the first two issues at this particular conference. However, Bertha Vargas—one of the organizers of the conference and a member of the World Council of Churches—is very active in women's groups in Latin America. She was urged by all the women present to include sexism in the next conference.

Another important contribution was made by Quince Duncan. He's the only published Black author in Costa Rica. (That country, like Puerto Rico, is sometimes referred to as a "Show Case of Democracy" in the Caribbean.) Duncan was very concerned with the issue of bilingualism and cultural penetration. (Most people were concerned with these issues—particularly Native Americans.) Since most of the Blacks in Costa Rica and Panama originally come from Jamaica, they and the Native Americans see Spanish, not English, as the language imposed by the state. Weird world! They were all very interested in learning about bilingual programs in the U.S. and in engaging in progressive dialogues around this subject. It is so complex that even separating the many issues involved would be of tremendous help. These were also the people most concerned with textbooks and children's literature.

Most of the papers presented dealing directly with textbooks had a more complex approach than CIBC takes. Most papers told about groups that had started by doing work like ours at CIBC and then took the analyses further. For instance, a Mexican woman, Dr. Eufrosina Rodríguez, from the Department of Education at the Universidad Nacional de Mexico, presented an analysis of the sort of pseudo-scientific constructs coming from educational establishments like the University of Chicago and Teachers College and from individuals like William Shockley which are imported by Latin America and used as a basis for education programs there. Dr. Rodríguez participates in a study group with her colleagues. They

are doing work similar to the CIBC's, particularly in identifying sexist stereotypes. Apparently there are several such groups in Mexico. One of them has published an analysis of sexist caricatures by the radical cartoonist Ruiz, which is being sent to me. (This might be useful in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.) From conversations with Rodríguez it seems that her group's history is very similar to that of CIBC. However, for the last several years they have been discussing the interrelationship of racism, sexism and classism.

Everyone seemed interested in studying readers and history text books. Some of the Native American nations, Kuna, for instance—have the bizarre experience of having to learn Spanish first so that they can read their own language, because the only written system of their own language is that used by the Spanish missionaries who transcribed their language into Spanish phonics. Therefore they are interested in bilingualism and the racist, sexist and classist content of the readers used to teach Spanish.

The Issue of Tourism

I became friendly with several of these Indian people. In addition to bilingualism, one of their concerns is the whole issue of tourism and its toll on the national ego. There were moving accounts of this selling of one's heritage, so to speak, represented not only by their performances for the tourists in San Blas (Panama), but also by their trips to perform for New Yorkers. This is so much a part of their daily reality that they see it as a grave omission in textbooks and children's literature. The issue of tourism and all it entails is complex because, in many instances, it is the peoples' only means of survival. Very little is known in the U.S. about Latin American Indians, and a network between them and U.S. Hispanics of Indian origin might result in important explorations into issues of Indian identity.

Besides promoting an awareness of the deep and complex relationship between race and class, the conference called for forums, communal activities and discussions on these issues. The conference also recommended that work around these problems be carried out in interracial groups. Theoretically, this is very sound, but I do not know how feasible it is. I think that this should be

tried, grouping those people interested in working on the interrelations of the big three issues—race, sex, class.

The other recommendations that came out of the conference are in line with what CIBC already does—identifying stereotypes, involving members of the same group in analysis of their literature or the literature concerning them, re-evaluating school

and national holidays. (They are doing similar consciousness-raising work around October 12—"Discovery of America Day"—that the CIBC has done around "Thanksgiving Day." □

About the Author

IRMA GARCIA, vice-president of the CIBC, taught Puerto Rican Studies at Lehman College.

Summary of the Findings of the Costa Rica Consultation

Colonial and imperialist domination has shaped all of Latin American social, economic, cultural and political structures. All of these structures have been developed and maintained to service the needs of outside countries, plus a small, wealthy segment of each country's population that benefits from this system. Racism is one structure which is used, in conjunction with others such as class, to maintain the overall system of oppression and to justify the continuing poverty of the peoples of the continent.

Because racism is interlocked with class and political power, the struggle for liberation must include a struggle for economic and national liberation, along with the cultural liberation usually thought of as linked to racism. Movements which merely strive for Black power or Indian power and ignore the nationalist and economic struggle against imperialist domination cannot effectively bring about change.

In Latin America, as elsewhere, racism is deliberately used to divide the Indian, Black and mestizo people—who are the majority of the population—in order to weaken opposition to those now in power. This explains why school textbooks generally distort or ignore altogether the historical struggles of Indians, Blacks and mestizo people to overcome their oppression.

Textbooks present the viewpoint and culture of the present dominating groups. They demean the indigenous peoples and cultures as being "primitive" and they present the European colonizers as being superior beings to be imitated by the Latin American children. The history of slave revolts and their contribution to national liberation movements is disregarded. History is presented as moving ahead, the result of the individual efforts of a few "great men," the standard-bearers of a superior order—a march to civilization led by whites. And people who live in climates warmer than that of Europe or the U.S. are presented as lazy, backward, in need of guidance.

Educators generally follow the ideology of their state, which results in an authoritarian and elitist approach to teaching.

The Church historically was allied to the colonialists. Church literature identified the Gospel with Western civilization, ignoring the religions and cultures of the local people. Recently, some local churches have begun to change their loyalties and to identify with the oppressed.

Recommendations

Educators should: Study the textbooks for evidence of racism and publicize their findings. Develop schools which do not support the status quo. Insist that all students be taught in their own language. Develop among their students an understanding of race and class issues.

Churches should: Design and promote new educational programs to raise people's awareness of their oppression. Stimulate their churches to practical commitments against racism. Analyze their ecclesiastical texts for evidence of race and class bias.

Media should: Develop greater awareness of race and class bias. Remove symbols, language or viewpoints which are racist.

Governments should: Allocate funds to Indian peoples to prepare their own textbooks and educational programs.

Biased books violate the "equal protection" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, argued a noted lawyer and author of children's books at the American Library Association's annual convention this past summer

Constitutional Responsibilities of Librarians

The Racism and Sexism Awareness Resolution, which CIBC introduced to the American Library Association in 1976, continues to play a highly positive role in the affairs of the ALA. At the Association's annual convention this summer, the Resolution was the topic of a joint program of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table and the Social Responsibility Round Table, drawing a capacity audience and lively discussion. The program centered on the interrelationship between the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution: freedom of speech (First Amendment) and freedom for equal protection of minorities and women (Fourteenth Amendment).

The Racism and Sexism Awareness Resolution has been consistently opposed by the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), which is part of the staff organization of ALA. The director of OIF has worked to undermine the Resolution on the grounds that its mandates would lead to a violation of the First Amendment and would place librarians in an educational and advocacy role. Following extensive debate since 1976, that position has been repudiated by various ALA groups, including ALA's own Intellectual Freedom Committee (see the *Bulletin*, Vol. 9, Nos. 4 & 5). The OIF director's position was further contradicted (and hopefully laid to rest) at the above-mentioned program when a spokesperson for the American Civil Liberties Union added ACLU's weight to a favorable interpretation of the Racism and Sexism Resolution by finding that its mandates are indeed compatible with the First Amendment.

Discussion of the issues was taken a significant step further at the same program when lawyer Howard N. Meyer proposed that the Resolution was needed to implement the equal

protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Mr. Meyer presented the gist of his arguments in an article

that appeared on the Op Ed page of *The New York Times*, July 24, 1980. That article is reprinted below.

Neutralism Isn't Neutral

By Howard N. Meyer

Librarians have been debating a 1976 policy statement of the American Library Association [ALA] called "Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness." Those who drafted it were not content merely to denounce racism and sexism. They wanted librarians to take remedial action.

The debate, which surfaced again at the recent New York ALA convention, centered on a paragraph urging public and school librarians to "develop a program to raise the awareness of library users to the pressing problem of racism and sexism." Some have resisted, urging that librarians should be neutral and not get involved in social causes.

The objection should be overruled. I reject the notion that support for the United States Constitution is a mere controversial social cause. Librarians are not supposed to be neutral on 14th Amendment matters such as racism and sexism any more than a policeman is supposed to be neutral when he sees a thief stealing.

Librarians in tax-supported institutions are subject to the 14th Amendment, which, among other things, directs, "No State shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The State, for 14th Amendment purposes, includes every level of tax-supported activity from dogcatcher to governor.

When the Supreme Court unanimously outlawed segregated education, it did so because that long standing evil was found to violate the 14th Amendment by generating among minority children in tax-supported

schools "a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their minds and hearts in a way unlikely ever to be undone." The promotion of feelings of inferiority or false feelings of superiority by state-supported school libraries or children's libraries must be reviewed in the light of that decision.

Considering at the very least the damage inflicted on many who are now adults by the "all-white world of children's books," to use the phrase of Nancy Larrick, the children's author and reading expert, it does not seem farfetched that librarians should develop forms of affirmative action that would "raise the awareness of library users to the pressing problem of racism and sexism."

About a decade ago, *Publishers Weekly* had a piece called "Book Publishing: A Racist Club?" prepared by the Council on Interracial Books for Children. There has been increasing acknowledgment in the industry of the correctness of two Council positions. One was that books produced by a social order influenced for generations by racism and sexism would reflect and have a tendency to perpetuate such isms. The other was that when such books dominated libraries used by children, they inflicted injury that required remedial action.

Many publishers made efforts—not herculean but sufficient to be an acknowledgment of error—to meet the objections and to remedy the faults found by the Council and others.

Some publishers prepared guide-

lines on how to avoid injuring the self-image of a minority child or implanting false notions of superiority in the non-minority group. The Council also developed guidelines. One reaction was the emergence of a group that used the banner of intellectual freedom to denounce the guidelines concept and contended that the publication and selection of books for libraries, even children's libraries, should be immune to public discussion. The word censorship, incessantly applied as a pejorative, was the tool to arouse sentiment against change.

The censorship bugaboo is unwarranted. It rests on a looseness of terminology that disregards the standard definition based on the word's very roots: interference by government agencies. The effect of using the word is to avoid debate by evoking negative images among the literate.

The validity of particular guidelines may fairly be questioned. But misusing the repugnant label "censorship" to reject the whole concept of such guidelines is incompatible with the exercise of the First Amendment rights of those propounding them.

As a writer, I reject the notions, maliciously purveyed by some, that the literary imagination is cramped or that the free flight of fancy is grounded if a writer raises his or her consciousness with guidelines on which elements of style are the pernicious products and vestiges of slavery [and racism and other forms of bias].

One noted authority made very clear the distinction between "private pressure"—which he called a First Amendment right—and government interference. "Purely private nongovernmental pressure" was defended by Morris L. Ernst, a lifelong libertarian, in his book *Censorship* as an exercise of free speech. "In a society such as ours, where ideas are supposed to prove their value by free and open conflict," he wrote, "it is the duty and function of individuals to project their points of view so long as they act responsibly and with due regard for the rights of others." □

About the Author

HOWARD N. MEYER is an attorney and arbitrator of New York City and is the author of *The Amendment That Refused to Die* (Beacon Press, 1978), a history of the Fourteenth Amendment for the lay reader, in addition to several children's books. Mr. Meyer is a former special assistant to the U.S. Attorney General.



Illustration by Martin Kozlowski from *The New York Times*, July 24, 1980.

A Tribute to Walter B. Rodney

During the "Consultation on Racism in Children's and School Books" held in West Germany in 1978 (*Bulletin*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2), representatives of CIBC worked closely with the writer, historian and activist Walter B. Rodney. It was with profound shock and sorrow that we learned of Dr. Rodney's murder on June 13.

We reprint below an editorial tribute that appears in the current issue of *Race and Class*, an excerpt from Dr. Rodney's book *The Groundings with My Brothers*, and an annotated listing of his major works.

Walter Rodney 1942-80

At 8 P.M. on Friday, June 13, Walter Rodney was blown up in his car by the assassins of the Guyanese state. As a founding member of the WPA [Working People's Alliance] Dr. Rodney had been in the frontline of the struggle against the increasingly corrupt and totalitarian regime of Forbes Burnham and his PNC [People's National Congress]. What marked Rodney out for assassination was not that he was one of the foremost radical thinkers of the day. That he undeniably was, as his work as a revolutionary historian and Pan-Africanist testifies. But he was also that rare being who combined a penetrating socialist analysis with unrelenting commitment to the working-class struggle in Guyana and the Caribbean.

"To be a revolutionary intellectual," wrote Rodney, "means nothing if there is no point of reference to the struggle of those who are more directly involved in production." After obtaining his Ph.D. in London in 1966 he went to teach in Tanzania for a year, returning to the Caribbean as a lecturer in the University of the West Indies. There, in the gullies of Jamaica, he found groundings with his brothers and came to identify himself with the cause of the oppressed and the exploited. But on attempting to return from the Black Writers' Conference in Montreal in October, 1968, Rodney was banned by the Shearer regime. He then went back to teach at the University of Dar-es-Salaam and, in the space of a few years, helped to develop it into a leading centre for the analysis of African politics and history, writing his now famous *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. In 1974 he returned to Guyana to take up a post at the University there, but was kept from it by the Burnham government. He refused all offers of employment abroad and remained in the country to continue his political work among the Guyanese people while writing at the same time a people's history of Guyana. In 1974/75 he helped to form the WPA, a federation of left-wing groups, which—through its active opposition to the repressive apparatus of the state and the divisive politics of race—has, in the last two years, burgeoned into a mass, working-class party and a major threat to the PNC. Attempts to silence the WPA—through attacks on its meetings, arbitrary arrest and detention of its members, the use of trumped up charges against its leaders—have met only with

increased resistance. Rodney's assassination was the last resort of a desperate and bankrupt regime.

Walter Rodney was a gentle man, a warm and unassuming person. He will be missed. But his death has lit the fires and Guyana is aflame.

"Through the manipulation of this media of education and communication, white people have produced black [sic] people who administer the system and perpetuate the white values—'white-hearted black men,' as they are called by conscious elements. This is as true of the Indians as it is of the Africans in our West Indian society. Indeed, the basic explanation of the tragedy of the African/Indian confrontation in Guyana and Trinidad is the fact that both groups are held captive by the European way of seeing things. When an African abuses an Indian he repeats all that the white man said about Indian indentured 'coolies'; and in turn the Indian has borrowed from the whites the stereotype of the 'lazy nigger' to apply to the African beside him. It is as though no black man can see another black man except by looking through a white person. It is time we started seeing through our own eyes."—*The Groundings With My Brothers*

Listing of Major Works

A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800. This is Walter Rodney's honors-winning doctoral thesis published by the Oxford University Press in 1966. It is a definitive study of importance to scholars. The book has just been reprinted by the Monthly Review Press (62 W. 14 St., New York, N.Y. 10003) and is available from them or from the Liberation Bookstore* for \$7.95.

The Groundings with My Brothers, Bogle L'Ouverture, London, 1969, \$2.95. Accounts of Walter Rodney's major lectures at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, in 1968, and of his highly political educational work with university students and Rastafarians. The excerpt in the box above was the kind of effective consciousness-raising among youth that led the Jamaican government to fear him and to eventually ban him from teaching posts at the University.

How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Bogle L'Ouverture, London, and Howard University Press, Washington, D.C., 1972, \$4.95. Fills a serious void in the study of Afro-European relations and, in the words of Prexy Nesbitt of the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism, it is "the book that identified [Rodney] as one of the most profound Third World thinkers to analyze African history from the perspectives of the colonized countries themselves."

Guyanese Sugar Plantations in the Late Nineteenth Century, Release Publications, Guyana, 1979, \$4.50. This consists of documents of contemporary descriptions edited and introduced by Rodney; it is his last published book. A manuscript he completed before his murder, a history of the Guyanese people, will be published posthumously by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1982.

*All of the books listed above are available in the U.S. from the Liberation Bookstore, 421 Lenox Ave. (131 St.), New York, N.Y. 10037.

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

Sequoyah, Cherokee Hero

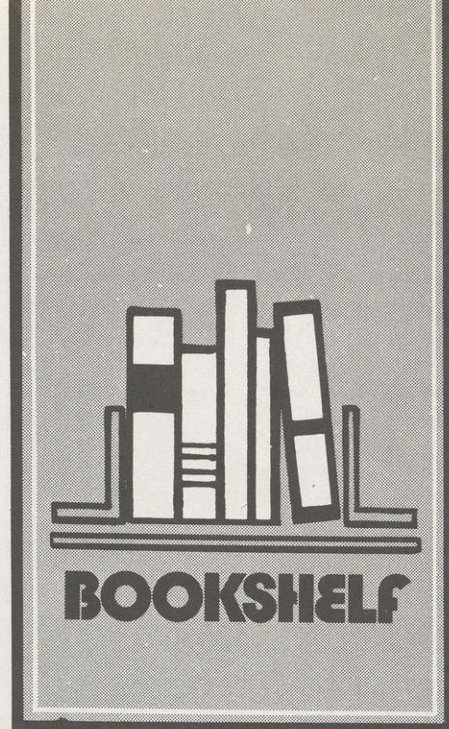
by Joanne Oppenheim,
illustrated by Bert Dodson.
Troll Associates (320 Rt. 17,
Mahwah, N.J. 07430), 1979,
\$4.89 (library binding),
48 pages, grades 3-7

This book about Sequoyah is unremarkable except for its similarity to other children's books about him. Everybody involved—author, editor, illustrator and publisher—apparently tried very hard to produce a “good” book, but patronizing attitudes, like Dr. Strangelove's compulsive arm, keep popping up.

Sequoyah and his mother are alone because his father, “a trader,” has gone back to live with “his own people.” (The readers must guess that “his own people” means white folks because it is not explained.) Poor little Sequoyah has to do “women's work.” Later, Sequoyah, a silversmith, is “proud” when white traders ask “who had made such beautiful things” (as if Sequoyah needs a white trader to validate the quality of his work). When Sequoyah marries, he and his wife (a Cherokee woman, the author informs us lest we assume otherwise) have a house that “was neat, and their garden was full of vegetables and flowers.” What has the condition of a house and garden to do with Sequoyah's achievement? In addition, the information implies that this was not usual for Native peoples and is therefore notable.

Indians, we are told, could not read the white men's “talking leaves.” Nor could a lot of white men, one wants to add. Indeed, it is probable that at that time the literacy rate in English among the Cherokees was higher than that of the “settlers.”

Sequoyah's stunning achievement was a syllabary, a series of symbols which represent the basic sounds of the Cherokee language. It enabled most of the Cherokee population to



learn to read and write their own language. In a society that glorifies and defends the sanctity of the written word beyond any consideration of what is written, it is understandable that Sequoyah and his syllabary (or alphabet, as it is often improperly called) received a lot of attention. Its true importance is often misrepresented, however. This author, for instance, attributes the preservation of “the old stories and ways” to Sequoyah's invention. However, relatively few documents in the Sequoyah syllabary have survived, so the preservation of the “old stories and ways” is actually due to the Cherokee people themselves, their oral tradition and to individuals who recorded the material in English.

This book has other flaws. Its reasoning is often a bit hard to follow. For instance, the Cherokees call the “talking leaves” magic. “It is no magic,” Sequoyah says. “Look, I will make marks for Cherokee words. Then we will have the same magic.” Isn't that saying the Cherokees will have the same non-magic? And what is one to make of such statements as, “In spite of the spirit of understanding the Cherokees received through the gift of Sequoyah, they suffered terrible hardships in the troubled years that followed.” In addition to being illogical, this statement avoids placing the blame for “the hardships” where it belongs—on the whites who persecuted the Cherokees. Although a

postscript tells us the Cherokees were forced off their lands, this is not made clear in the book itself.

Sequoyah, Cherokee Hero is just one more misrepresentation of Native American history. [Mary Lou Byler]

Women in Sports: Records, Stars, Feats and Facts

by Louis Phillips and Karen Markoe,
illustrated by Paul Frame.
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979,
\$2.95, 174 pages, grades 7-up

What is the women's world record for the shot put? Who was the 1960 women's figure skating champion? *Women in Sports: Records, Stars, Feats and Facts* provides the reader with the answers to these questions and more. This easy-to-read reference book provides a variety of facts, anecdotes and vignettes about past and current women in sports.

Starting with a short overview of “How It Used to Be,” the book gives a concise but accurate picture of the obstacles that women have had to overcome in order to become active in sports. There are brief profiles of 35 women in a “Gallery of Stars.” Although some Third World women—Althea Gibson, Wilma Rudolph, Nellie Kim and Nancy Lopez—are included, most of the women are white. The women come from a variety of sports, but the traditionally “feminine” sports of ice skating, golf and tennis provide most of the “stars.” The profiles are usually interesting, but they are only an introduction and leave the reader wanting to learn more. Surprisingly there is no more, because the book offers no further sources of information about the athletes.

Another section on women in various sports is more comprehensive, yet the individual pieces are extremely brief. Thirty-one sports, including such non-traditional sports as auto racing, power lifting and boxing, are covered with an emphasis on the roles that women are playing in these sports.

The final section deals with records and statistics. It is dry reading, but does provide much information about the extent to which women have

improved their athletic performances through the years.

In general, the book is a compendium of bits and pieces—all appetizers with no main course. This, of course, is a perennial problem with reference books, although usually there is more emphasis on providing the reader with further sources of information. The book tries to be nonstereotypic, but it tends to focus on the athletes' "small size" and their "attractive looks." It also misses good opportunities to be anti-sexist. For example, it refers to drag racer Shirley Muldowney as "Cha Cha" and does not explain that after Muldowney won the championship, she informed people that her name was Shirley, not Cha Cha, and that she would be called Shirley.

Women in Sports: Records, Stars, Feats and Facts should not be the mainstay of anyone's book shelf, but for \$2.95 it does provide information and statistics that supplement the more personality oriented books on women in sports. [Pat Campbell]

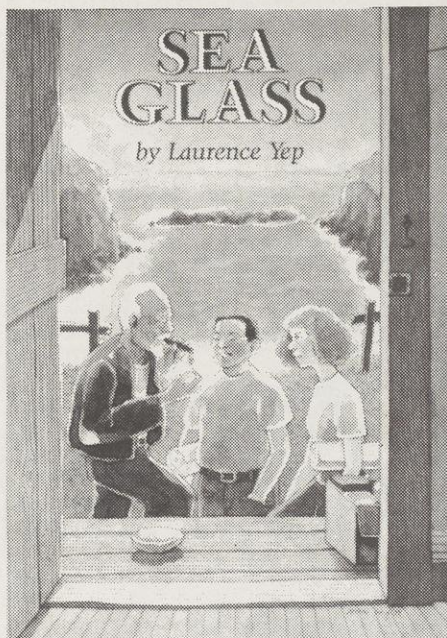
Sea Glass

by Laurence Yep.
Harper & Row, 1979,
\$7.95, 213 pages, grades 7-up

Laurence Yep's *Sea Glass* is a thought-provoking book about an "average" child who, like most children, is not one of the superstar, trophy-toting, beautiful people. Craig is one of the many who remain seated when awards are given out and who seem to get greatest recognition for their mistakes. Aside from being "average," Craig is also Chinese American. He has just moved, with his parents, from San Francisco's Chinatown to a small town named Concepcion where only a handful of Asian Americans live.

Sea Glass takes the reader through the conflicts, realizations and changes Craig must undergo in dealing with real-life barriers: his competitive, sports-oriented father, his snobby, hip "American" cousins, his sometimes stubborn uncle, and his aggressive but moody school mate Kenyon.

They are a cast of "outcasts" in many ways. Though Craig's Dad



excelled at all sports, he never quite made it; he now attempts to make ends meet with a small grocery store. Uncle Quail is the "eccentric old man" that no one cares to associate with. Stanley and Sheila are two obviously Chinese cousins who strive to be "assimilated" Americans in order to fit in. Kenyon is the girl with the "frizzy red-gold hair" who tries to look like all the other girls (at least from the neck down) but really does stick out; her witty, caustic jokes insure her friendship with other kids. Somehow they, like Craig, are all people whose differences are sore points in their lives.

In dealing with questions of identity, Laurence Yep focuses on people's potential for being incredibly complex beings with much to offer once they acknowledge who they are. Craig becomes a pivotal point around which the characters either deal with their own identities or assume some other façade. Through the changes that occur for the different characters, Yep effectively counters many of the rigid race, sex and age biases that exist in other books. Craig's competitive, athletic father harbors a skill and love for growing plants. Uncle Quail, an elderly recluse, becomes Craig's swimming instructor with a perspective on life that is a constant stimulation for Craig. His mother is a pro at shooting baskets, and Kenyon, Craig's female "demon" friend, is an independent,

abrasive yet sensitive person whose comments on racial identity help Craig understand his cousins.

Sea Glass brings into question the whole concept of "achievement and success." Craig is not a star, yet he is a full human being who strives only for those things that make sense. *Sea Glass* is highly recommended. [Donald Kao]

Hi, Mrs. Mallory!

by Ianthe Thomas,
illustrated by Ann Toulmin-Rothe.
Harper & Row, 1979,
\$7.95, 48 pages, grades p.s.-3

This is a book about love—a love and caring and sharing which surmount traditional boundaries and extend beyond death.

Li'l Bits narrates the story of her relationship with Mrs. Mallory, an elderly woman who lives alone in a tiny house filled with wondrous things. It has floorboards "you could see right through to the ground underneath" and a potbellied stove and windows covered with cardboard on which Li'l Bits draws pictures of apple orchards and things.

Every day Li'l Bits visits Mrs. Mallory. After she picks up the mail (everything addressed to "resident" is meant for her), they eat vegetable soup or even sugar-butter bread, and Mrs. Mallory tells wonderful stories. Li'l Bits does things for Mrs. Mallory such as writing her checks now that "her hands were wrinkled and stiff." The two dogs, Lazlo and Old Shin, are included in this special friendship. They also greet Li'l Bits' daily visits with much fanfare.

One day Mrs. Mallory has a special request for Li'l Bits. She wants her to write a letter to her son who is away in the service. Of course, the little girl readily agrees and makes sure to bring two sharp pencils in her bag the next day. She is surprised when she arrives at Mrs. Mallory's house because there is no answer when she calls out. So Li'l Bits waits and waits—but to no avail.

Finally, Li'l Bits' mother comes to take her home. The dog Lazlo follows behind them in spite of being told repeatedly to stay. When they reach home, Li'l Bits' mother sits her down

and tells her Mrs. Mallory has died. Li'l Bits "cried so hard that I thought my heart was gone."

Lazlo stays—and sleeps in the bed with Li'l Bits as he had slept with Mrs. Mallory. And surely the good feelings born of this very special relationship also stay with the youngster. Through her, a part of Mrs. Mallory continues to live.

The fact that Mrs. Mallory is white and Li'l Bits Black is incidental to the story. The touching message of this delightful book is that age, race or economics need not necessarily prevent relating to one another in caring, supportive, joyous ways. It's a message this world needs. [Jane Pennington]

Like It Is: Facts and Feelings about Handicaps from Kids Who Know

by Barbara Adams,
photographs by James Stanfield.
Walker, 1979,
\$8.95, 96 pages, grades 4-up

Like It Is accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do, namely, to discuss facts and feelings about disabilities from the perspective of the disabled child. What's more, the book accomplishes its goal with sensitivity and understanding, presenting a lot of information in a clear, forthright and interesting manner.

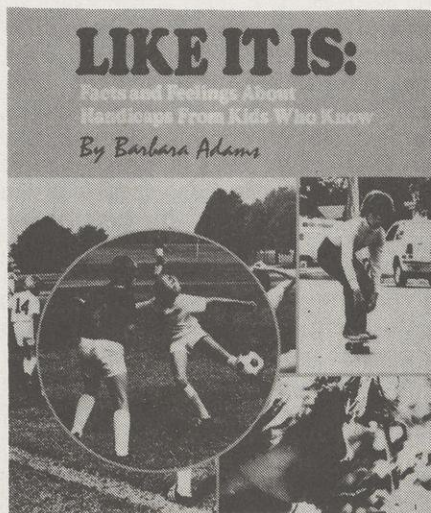
Six types of disabilities are discussed and, with the exception of behavioral disorders, the children and young teen-agers themselves describe what it means to be disabled. All are alert, articulate individuals with a positive self-image and strong sense of identity. All are depicted as leading full, satisfying lives. All freely discuss their limitations and assets, as well as the commonalities they share with their non-disabled peers. All have or seek friends. Most importantly, all are aware of and discuss the stigmas and myths often associated with their particular disability or with being disabled in general.

Sheila, a teenager who is developmentally disabled, puts it this way: "I hate the word 'retarded' because it

makes some people think I'm out of it, or crazy—a kind of monster with weird ideas. Or they think I can't be trusted. . . . [T]hat word gives a lot of people bad feelings . . . I wish they would get rid of it!" Jed, a youngster with an orthopedic disability, tells it "like it is" when he says, ". . . I'm just myself—Jed—and I've got a certain kind of problem that I've got to deal with. I just happen to talk a little better than I walk. It could have been the other way round. So what!"

Bravos to the author, Barbara Adams, for avoiding the pitfalls of describing disabled children in cloying, pitying terms and also to the photographer, James Stanfield. Without exception, all of the photos capture the person, not the disability. No attempt is made to emphasize or minimize the disability; instead, the book shows how these young people have learned to deal with their disability, be it during an awkward handshake with a new friend or the stares encountered at McDonald's.

If faults are to be found, they must lie in the absence of minority children with disabilities and in the book's overly rosy picture of full mainstreaming. Many disabled children are from minority backgrounds, and for a large percentage of this group and of non-minority disabled children, the dream of going to a "regular" school remains just that—a dream. The day when all children with disabilities will receive a "free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment" has yet to become a reality. [Emily Strauss Watson]



Daughters of Eve

by Lois Duncan.
Little, Brown, 1979,
\$7.95, 239 pages, grades 7-up

Daughters of Eve is a suspenseful novel that invalidates legitimate problems by presenting misdirected solutions. The author raises such feminist issues as wife-beating, inequality on the job, unfairness in high school athletics and the sexist dimension of male/female relationships, but the violence of her solutions implies that it may be dangerous to even recognize the issues.

Daughters of Eve is an elite high school group; its ten members are dedicated to sisterhood and sworn to secrecy. The book chronicles the lives of the young women and their new advisor, Irene Stark.

Irene is a rightfully angry woman. She was dismissed from another high school because she was blamed for a student demonstration protesting a promotion that Irene should have received but which was awarded to a less experienced, less qualified man. Furthermore, although this man was involved with Irene, he hadn't told her he'd applied for the job; afterwards, he tells Irene that he couldn't tolerate the idea that she might earn more than he did. Irene helps the Daughters see inequities in their own lives, at school and at home. There are many examples; for instance, the Daughters have traditionally dedicated their energies to raising money for male athletic teams, while the school has few women's teams. Furthermore, each of the young women in the Club is faced by a specific sexist situation. Ruth is required to return home directly after school each day to take care of her younger brother and do household chores, while her two older brothers have no responsibilities and are free to spend their time as they like. Laura, an overweight young woman with a low self-image, is secretly dating Peter, a popular high school student who is using her for sex, and who convinces her to tell no one about their relationship (he is ashamed of Laura's appearance). Fran has devised an ingenious science experiment but is afraid the project won't represent the school at the state exhibition because she is female. Both

Ann, a talented artist, and Holly's mother, a pianist, give up potential careers to raise a family. Jane's father humiliates and physically assaults his wife in front of Jane, while both parents try to minimize what is happening.

Irene encourages the club members to assert themselves and fight their oppression. At first, the Daughters' actions are reasonable—the club donates money toward school athletics with the stipulation that the funds be used to form a women's soccer team. However, as the novel progresses, Irene stands by as the Daughters get angrier and their solutions become more violent. Peter is punished for his emotional cruelty to Laura when the club members lure him into the woods and shave all the hair off his head. When Fran's project is rejected in favor of a male student's, the Daughters destroy the science lab, after Irene symbolically provides the key. And finally, at the story's climax, Jane confronts her brutal father, who has badly beaten her mother, and kills him by smashing an iron skillet on the back of his head.

The book implies that the Daughters have gone too far and that Irene's personal bitterness has caused her to misrepresent matters and incited the violence. For example, after the science lab is destroyed, it is revealed that Fran's project was rejected not because she was female but because her experiment violated state rules. The author clearly places a harsh value judgment on violent solutions, and because she provides no alternative solutions, she leaves the impression that fighting for women's rights leads to uncontrollable anger and senseless destruction.

In addition, the book contains many negative stereotypes. It is anti-fat in its description of Laura, who is too "ugly" to "get a man" and is loved only by her mother who overlooks her daughter's "weight problem" because she is overweight herself! The club is elitist in that only the "choicest of the choice" can join. An anti-gay reference is made by Ruth's father, who refuses to let his sons do household work because he's afraid they'll turn into "fags."

The book suggests that Irene is an angry woman, not because she is justified, but because she is "empty"

(note the symbolism of her last name, *Stark*). The book also implies that Irene is not a complete, or "normal" woman—she has an "unappetizing" appearance, a low voice, a harsh face and a trace of a mustache! The author subtly distorts Irene's potentially strong feminist character into that of a vindictive fanatic who manipulates and co-opts vulnerable young minds to achieve her sick revenge.

In summary, the book's deceptive interpretation of feminism plus its dangerous stereotypes make it a harmful distortion of reality. However, the book could be sensitively used to raise feminist issues as they affect the lives of adolescents. But the issues must be presented as real to women everywhere, and not as obsessions of fanatics like Irene Stark. If the book is used, it must be followed by a discussion of alternate solutions to violence, all the while stressing the validity of oppressed peoples' anger and frustration. Readers must be asked to consider what they would do when all "rational" solutions to their problems don't work. [Jan M. Goodman]

The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway

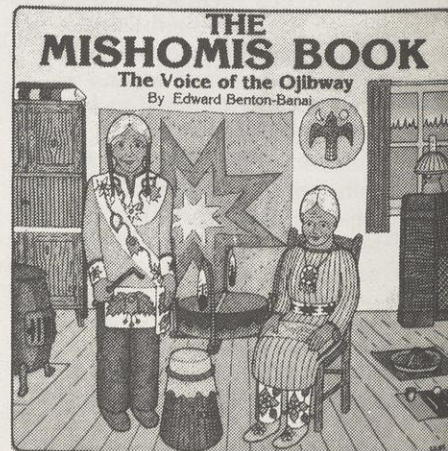
by Edward Benton-Benai,
illustrated by Joe Liles.
Indian Country Press &
Publications, Inc. (560 Van Buren
St., St. Paul, Minn, 55103), 1979,
\$8.50, 120 pages, grades 8-up

Edward Benton-Benai, Executive Director of The Red School House in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a member of the Fish Clan of The Ojibway Nation, has, out of a concern for the negative and inaccurate ways in which Native life is portrayed in this country, given us these teachings of his people. Mishomis is Ojibway for grandfather, and this is truly grandfather's book. In the first chapter Mishomis invites us to begin a journey with him, "to find what many of our people left by the trail . . . a journey to rediscover a way of life that is centered on the respect for all living things." Mishomis begins with the Creation Story, and tells how Original Man came to be on the Earth, how he learned his

name, how he found his grandmother, how he searched the Earth for his Mother and Father, and how, as Way-naboozhoo, he became a hero and a teacher for the Ojibway People.

As a child must be guided to grow in understanding, so does Mishomis take the reader from the simplest beginnings to the complexity of meaning of the Midewiwin and Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. I have not seen anything quite like this before; the only previous title for young people that might be somewhat comparable is Jamake Highwater's *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey* (Lippincott). *The Mishomis Book*, however, is a spiritual odyssey as well as an historical one, and as such, it is deeply moving. There is so much here that it is impossible to touch on half of it. Although the form is that of a children's book—and I have seldom seen one that I would rather give to a child, Mr. Benai's book is far from being "just" for children. People familiar only with the Judeo-Christian tradition will undoubtedly be surprised at the "sophistication" and the richness of the beliefs embodied in it, and the beauty of the language in which they are expressed: "Here upon the Earth is a plane . . . a place marked by time. Nowhere else in the Universe is time necessary. . . . Do not concern yourself with it. If you do, it will become an obsession and in the end you will be a slave to it."

This is not to say that the teaching is unduly heavy. Certain moments stay in the mind: Original Man going back to shore to think about what went wrong when the log on which he



was trying to cross the great water rolled over and dunked him; Wayna-boozhoo, after his encounter with Whirlwind, thinking about the blending of foolishness and seriousness in his life, and deciding that "There is a place for foolishness in the Creation." At one point, Mishomis speaks of the need for Swa-Yah-Koó-Shka-Wiñ, a balance between opposing forces, which one must reach in order to have a harmonious life. Mishomis' teachings are permeated with that balance, that harmony, a gentle and subtle humor, and, all things considered, hope.

Physically, the book is very appealing. It is printed on a soft-tan paper, and the brown line drawings by Joe Liles are full of Spirit and illuminate the power and beauty of the words.

Although *The Mishomis Book* is the stories and sacred teachings of the Ojibway, Mr. Benai has also written, "in all the teachings of different tribes there is a commonality. This sameness refers to the basic Truth that interweaves all natural ways of living," and his work could speak strongly to people of all the Nations. At the same time, the book's usefulness is not limited to those of Native American background. For one thing, it so totally confounds most of the usual Indian stereotypes that I would recommend it highly to anyone who wishes to introduce children of the dominant culture in a more realistic and truthful manner to the lives and culture of the tribal peoples of America. It is hard to imagine that anyone could read this "glimpse into the magnitude and depth of the spiritual history and heritage of the people from whom it came . . . the Ojibway Anishinabe," and not come away from it at least a little more open to the beauty and strangeness of life.

The book's final chapter is titled "Stepping Into Modern History" and tells about the Ojibway migration, the coming of the white man, and what has happened since then. Mishomis leaves us with the possibility of a future exploration of more of the traditions of the Ojibway. In the beginning of this book, Mr. Benai writes, "I do not believe in isolating myself in the memories of the past. I do believe that with the teachings of yesterday we can better prepare our-

selves for the uncertainties of tomorrow." That is a hope for all of us. [Doris Seale]

Special Friends

by Terry Berger,
photographs by David Hechter.
Julian Messner, 1979,
\$6.97, 64 pages, grades 2-5

A friendship between a young girl and an older woman is portrayed in this photographic picture book. Aunt Rose teaches the girl to dance, washes her cut knee, listens to her, laughs with her, snacks with her. As in *The Lilith Summer* (Vol. 11, Nos. 1 & 2), the girl senses Aunt Rose's sadness over lost loved ones and lost physical strength, but Aunt Rose is self-sufficient, positive and smart—and she still has relatives who care about her.

While this is a good anti-ageist book, it would be more effective with a plot line. As it is, *Special Friends* shows a relationship without developing it. Each of the photographs tells a good story, but the cover combines several photos into a busy, unappealing design. [Anne G. Toensmeier]

Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change

by Ellen Cantarow, with
Susan Gushee O'Malley and
Sharon Hartman Strom.
Feminist Press and McGraw-Hill,
1980,
\$4.96, 166 pages, grades 11-up

This is another book in the Feminist Press series on "Women's Lives, Women's Work." Oral histories are combined with background information on three feminists: Florence Luscomb—born in 1887—a white, middle-class activist in the suffrage movement who has been (and still is) involved in labor, peace and women's movements; Ella Baker—born in 1903—a Black organizer in the civil rights and human rights movements; and Jessie Lopez de la Cruz—born in 1919—a Chicana union organizer ac-

tive in farm workers' struggles.

All three are fighting women who believe that the common people, struggling together, create social change. Their own unflagging determination and belief have vastly improved the lives of thousands of people and their message is more important to young people than the message offered by the study of the life of many a President. However, because these women have been active so long and are so politically knowledgeable, the reader must, perforce, absorb a lot of information about labor, suffrage, civil rights and civil liberties history. This is a lot to ask of average high school students—the ostensible target audience for this series of books. High school teachers using the book should be prepared to work closely along with their students. At college level, women's studies classes can heartily welcome this volume.

Photographs of these three remarkable women span almost a century and add to the power and spirit of this book. [Lyla Hoffman]

Me and Einstein

by Rose Blue,
illustrated by Peggy Luks.
Human Sciences Press, 1979,
\$6.95, unpagged, grades 3-up

A book with some solid assets and at least an equal number of faults, *Me and Einstein* attempts to convey what it's like to have a reading disability through the eyes of a nine-year-old boy. In describing Bobby's "cover-up" strategies, anxieties and low self-image associated with being different, the author presents an authentic and painfully realistic picture of the social pressures and stigma associated with being unable to read. Ms. Blue also presents a realistic picture of the bind that learning disabled children often find themselves in when they realize that the only way they can get parental attention or peer acceptance is by becoming a trouble-maker. Considerable attention is paid to dispelling the handicapistic myth that learning disabled children are "dumb"; however, in doing so, the author falls into another handicapistic trap by describing children with other disabilities in a negative, stereotypic manner.

Showing Bobby and his disability as more "normal" only succeeds at a tremendous cost to children having other types of disabilities.

The cast of characters is a white, upper middle-class family in a suburban setting, and *Me and Einstein* will probably hold little or no appeal or relevance for minority children. Most dyslexic children do not have as parents an editor and librarian who have at their disposal the educational and financial resources necessary to research and pay for the highly specialized testing and private school education described in this book. In addition, because Bobby's difficulty was not properly diagnosed and remedied in the public school he attended, there are strong elitist inferences as to the validity and desirability of public education. Bobby's only option is a private, segregated educational setting, a setting that runs strongly counter to the concept of mainstreaming.

The book also contains some sexist stereotypes in its depiction of the female teachers (the only male teacher—who is the one who helps Bobby learn to read—works at the private school). Mrs. Allan, the family's housekeeper, remains a one dimensional, nurturing female who is always there to provide Bobby with a fresh cookie or warm bowl of soup.

Another major criticism must be leveled at *Me and Einstein*. As publisher of "Self-Awareness Books for Young Readers," Human Sciences Press has managed to *not* practice what it preaches; it has published a book that is *totally* unreadable by a child with even a mild reading problem. Words are scrunched onto the pages, margins are minimal, basic rules of syntax—especially important for poorer readers—are ignored and page numbers are nonexistent. In addition, although the book is described as being for "ages 8 and up," I could find only a few average/superior third or fourth grade readers willing to wade through the format even though they expressed an interest in the content. As far as its being read to a dyslexic child, I doubt that any dyslexic children having their druthers would voluntarily choose to have this story read to them, certainly not with the

plethora of colorful, high interest, low reading level material currently on the market.

A final point: the book is illustrated by drab sketches; colorful, eye-catching artwork could have contributed significantly to the book's appeal. Although *Me and Einstein* does take a sensitive look at what it means to have dyslexia, it also manages to overlook certain basic qualities of interest and appeal that are essential to any children's book. [Emily Strauss Watson]

Journey To The Bright Kingdom

by Elizabeth Winthrop,
illustrated by Charles Mikolaycak.
Holiday House, 1979,
\$7.95, 18 pages, grades 4-7

Journey To The Bright Kingdom is an adaptation of a well-known Japanese folktale—The Rolling Rice Cakes—which focuses on the relationship of a blind mother and a devoted daughter. The author's depiction of Kakure-sato, a magical underground kingdom ruled by mice, may be engrossing to young children who enjoy fairy tales and folklore, but this Western interpretation contains stereotypes.

Portrayed as an excessively devoted and obedient daughter, Kiyo is the personification of the Westerner's image of Japanese Womanhood; sexism is also evident in the fact that only Kiyo and her mother are able to visit the magical kingdom of Kakure-sato; the father is an insensitive realist who can not share the journey. The depiction of the blind mother is handicapist; the mother becomes totally despondent, saying that if she can not see, "she did not want to go on living." (She also tells her daughter "you must understand that a blind person lives in another world. Her dreams cannot always be trusted.")

There may have been moral implications in the original tale, but they are not evident in this version. The author has added a Western message—only those of strong faith and belief will be rewarded, and magically at that.

Although the illustrations are very

attractive, the book can not be recommended. Folklore should merely be translated with a minimum of alteration. [Charles W. Lee]

The Adventures of Wutz Fair and B. Justice

Wutz Fair and B. Justice in Operation Myrine

by Sylvia Spring,
illustrated by Karen Muntean.
Media Works, (R.R. #1 Galiano Island,
B.C. VON 1 PO, Canada), 1979,
32 page comics; \$1.50 each;
grades 4-6 (*The Adventures of Wutz Fair and B. Justice*) and
grades 5-7 (*Wutz Fair and B. Justice in Operation Myrine*)

Wutz Fair is disguised as a child of indeterminate sex. B. (for Blind) Justice has long golden hair, flowing Grecian robes and carries balancing scales. Together they fly through the sky alighting to help children discover how to solve problems—"fairly" and "justly," of course. Sexism is one of the things found to be unfair. The children helped by this pair differ from adventure to adventure, but they are always a multicultural group.

All situations involve decisions of individual vs. community needs and are resolved in ways which show respect for young people. Adults encountered do not have all the answers and learn along with the younger people.

The comic strips were created for teaching about legal education in Canadian schools. Children learn about the reasons for rules and for solving problems peacefully and equitably. While the teacher's guides contain some material pertinent to Canadian law, most are value clarification discussions or activities useful to any classroom. With or without the teacher guides, the comics would be a welcome addition to any elementary school.

Drawings are black and white, covers in color. Bulk rates for the comics are available; the Teacher's Guide is \$2.50 each. [Lyla Hoffman]

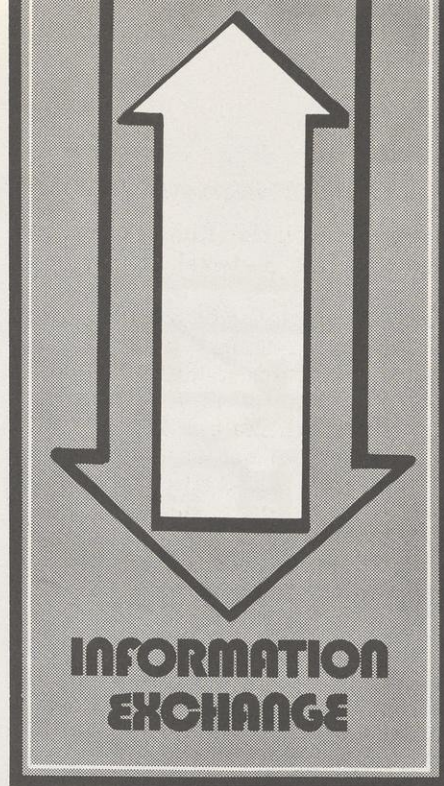
"The Elementary School Administrator's Practical Guide to **Mainstreaming**" is a handbook with chapters on major myths about disabled people, educational rights, how to involve parents and the community, and the practical steps to make a school a more accepting place for children with disabilities. The 28-page booklet is \$2.50 from Human Policy Press, P.O. Box 127, University Station, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210.

"Blow for Blow" is a film about the struggle for better **working conditions** of seamstresses in a French factory. The feature-length film, in color, is in French with English subtitles. Rental charges for one-time use in a class or study group not exceeding 100 people is \$75. plus \$5. handling charges. To order, or for information on other rental options, write Red Ball Films, P.O. Box 298, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

"A Profile of the **Chicana**: A Statistical Fact Sheet" contains hard-to-find statistics on family status, income, educational characteristics, etc. The 24-page booklet costs \$1. from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 28 Geary St., San Francisco, Cal. 94108. The organization also sponsors a Chicana Rights Project which produces other publications, undertakes relevant litigations, etc. Write for more information.

Children's News—Advocate is a bi-monthly newsletter devoted to **child care**, day care, alternatives for single parents, etc. Published by the Children's Council of San Francisco, it also contains information and news related to child care in that area. Subscription rates are \$5. for individuals, \$15. for agencies and day-care centers. Write to the Council at 3896 24 Street, San Francisco, Cal. 94114.

Women's History Research Center has an extensive collection of materials available on microfilm. Materials are available on women and health/mental health, women and the law and "Herstory." For a brochure giving details and prices, write the Center at 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, Cal. 94708.



"**Black Women**" is a three-year desk calendar covering 1981-1983. It features full-page photos and biographies of 36 Black women in literature, education, art, law and other fields, plus brief biographies of 100 other women. The 96-page calendar is 7 x 8½", spiral bound; single copies are \$6.95 prepaid from GMG Publications, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

A Child Advocate's Guide to Capitol Hill is a handbook for those interested in **legislation concerned with children**. The guide describes the process that turns a bill into law and provides descriptions with the names, addresses, and members of important committees and subcommittees that deal with children's issues. The 53-page booklet is available for \$2.75 per copy from the Children's Defense Fund, 1520 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Sex Stereotyping in Education is a series of 13 instructional modules designed to combat **sex-role stereotyping** in instructional materials. Topics covered include sex stereotyping in math, science, history, business education and other areas. The complete set of materials, including a 30-minute tape for each module plus instruction sheets and handouts for participants, is \$39. Write EDC/WEEAP Distribution Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, Mass. 02160.

"**Assaults on Women: Rape and Wife Beating**" looks at the extent of the problem, its causes and what is being done to help victims and prevent assaults. A list of resources for further information is included. The 28-page booklet is 50¢ from the Public Affairs Committee, 381 Park Ave. S., New York, N.Y. 10016.

The fourth issue of "SHARE (Sisters Have Resources Everywhere): A Directory of **Feminist Library Workers**," has just been published. Copies are available from Women Library Workers, P.O. Box 9052, Berkeley, Cal. 94709.

The Feminist Press has recently issued a new catalog covering **feminist** classics, educational materials, children's picture books, etc. Write the Press at Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568.

Great Women is a rummy-type card game containing face cards and fact cards about the lives of outstanding U.S. **women**. There are three games—Foremothers, Founders & Firsts (women who broke the sex barrier in law, medicine, etc.) and Poets & Writers. Each deck is \$6.; if all three decks are ordered, a teacher's manual is included. Write The Great Women Card Co., 310 East 46 St., Box 1, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Children at the Center is the final report of the National **Day Care Study**. It summarizes the major findings and implications for federal day care policy of a four-year study of various centers. Additional volumes with research documentation are also available. For further information, write Day Care Division, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Office of Human Development Services, Department of HEW, 400 Sixth St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024.

Tricontinental, whose films have frequently been mentioned in this column, has recently merged its library with that of the Latin American Film Project to form Unifilm. A comprehensive catalog is available free from 419 Park Avenue S., New York, N.Y. 10016 or from 1550 Bryant St., San Francisco, Cal. 94103.

Dear CIBC:

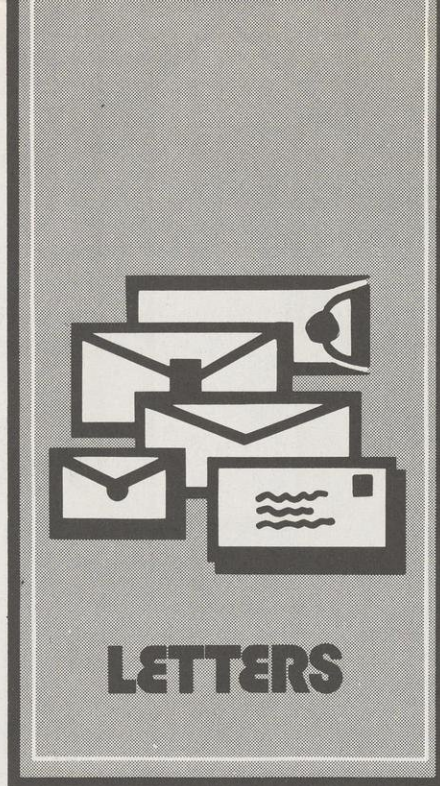
Your issue on Children, Race and Racism [Vol. 11, Nos. 3 & 4] is a much needed contribution to the field of early childhood education. In particular, I appreciated the discussion of how children of different ages and developmental levels understand racial issues. Too often I have heard Piaget's concept of egocentrism misinterpreted as a reason why children cannot understand racial issues and the impact of racism.

As a teacher of people who are entering the field of early education, I appreciate having this resource for raising the issue of race awareness. I will share it with other people I know and perhaps someday racial issues will become part of the core curriculum for new teachers in community colleges and universities.

Marcy Whitebook

Program Director, Early Childhood
Education Center
University of California, Davis

The next two letters were written to accompany the critical analysis in the last *Bulletin* (Vol. 11, No. 5) of the article "Kids in the KKK," that appeared in the April 3 issue of *Junior Scholastic* magazine. The letters could not be included because of space and time limitations. An upcoming *Bulletin* will feature a lesson plan on the Klan so that teachers can provide students with accurate information on the KKK. Teachers of all class levels are asked to submit their experiences and suggestions for informing children about the Klan.



Dear CIBC:

I felt extremely angry when I finished reading "Kids in the KKK" in the April 3, 1980, edition of *Junior Scholastic*, which my eldest daughter brought home from school.

As a parent and as a reading specialist, I realize the wide circulation of *Junior Scholastic* and the high regard with which it is held among students and educators. For these reasons, I feel that the author of any article in the magazine should be especially careful to present a realistic and unbiased view of his or her subject.

In my opinion, the article about the

KKK is not realistic or unbiased. The KKK is presented as a peaceful organization which keeps kids off the street, away from drugs, and which serves as a haven for kids who have unhappy home lives. It is presented as a panacea to troubled adolescents, not as the violent, racist organization it really is.

The author does not put the KKK in historical perspective; he does not discuss in enough depth the goals of the KKK to terrorize, kill or maim Blacks, Jews or other minorities. He does not say enough about the secrecy of the Klan or about the violence it uses to achieve its racist goals. In short, he does not arm students with the information they need to know about the Klan.

It is irresponsible to present such a controversial subject to sixth and seventh graders without discussing both sides of the issues in depth. I do not believe in censorship; however, I do believe in responsible journalism, an element which is missing from *Junior Scholastic's* "Kids in the KKK."

Anne Keating
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear CIBC:

The *JS* article obscures the true nature of the Ku Klux Klan and gives young people a false perspective of its activities and purposes. Why are articles now appearing that place the Klan in a less than odious light?

Ethnic Coalition for a Fair Mass
Media
Toledo, Ohio

The First Thanksgiving: Celebration of a Slaughter?

Thanksgiving is usually observed in schools and libraries with pageants, displays and classroom activities that supposedly commemorate the meal shared by "the Pilgrims and the Indians." The actual antecedents of the holiday may have been very different, however, according to a report in the Summer, 1980, issue of *Akwesasne Notes*:

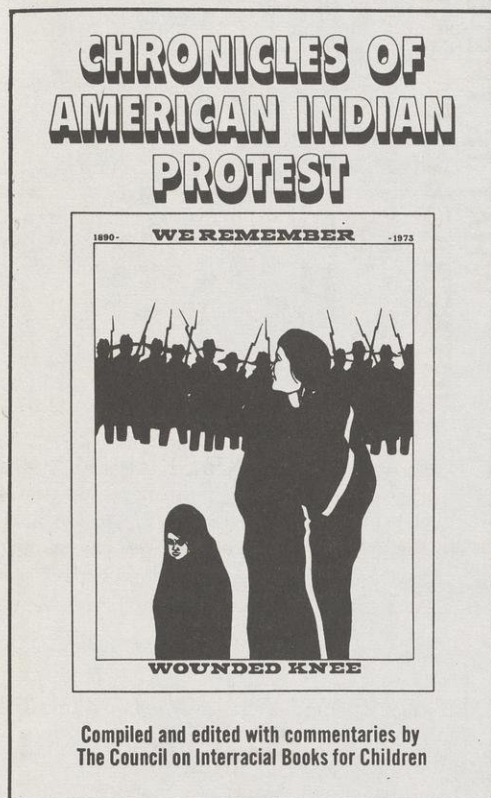
William B. Newell, a Penobscot Indian and former chairman of the anthropology department at the University of Connecticut, says that the first official Thanksgiving Day celebrated the massacre of 700 Indian men, women and children during one of their religious ceremonies. "Thanksgiving Day was first officially proclaimed by the

Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 to commemorate the massacre of 700 men, women and children who were celebrating [their] annual green corn dance—Thanksgiving Day to them—in their own house," he said. "Gathered in this place of meeting, they were attacked by mercenaries and English and Dutch. The Indians were ordered from the building and as they came forth they were shot down. The rest were burned alive in the building . . . the very next day the governor declared a Thanksgiving Day. . . . For the next 100 years, every Thanksgiving Day ordained by a governor [was] to honor a bloody victory, thanking God that the battle had been won."

Many Native Americans and others

consider Thanksgiving a "day of mourning." Teachers, librarians and others can use the opportunity to present children with a perspective on U.S. history that is often ignored. A complete Thanksgiving lesson plan designed for this purpose appeared in the *Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 6. Also useful is the CIBC filmstrip and teaching material, "Unlearning 'Indian' Stereotypes," which helps students counteract the range of stereotypic "Indian" images that surface around this holiday and provides them with a great deal of historic and contemporary information on Native peoples. Both items may be ordered from the CIBC Resource Center.

Chronicles of American Indian Protest



A revised and expanded edition of the original paperback published by Fawcett in 1971 has now been published by the Council on Interracial Books. This updated edition features 15 resistance documents (introduced with commentaries) generated by the resurgence of the Native American struggle in the 1970's, beginning with the Trail of Broken Treaties and the liberation of Wounded Knee to the historic Geneva Conference of 1977 and the "Longest Walk" of 1978.

The comprehensive collection of documents vividly recounts the Native American struggle for survival from the 17th century to the present. The fascinating documents offer an informative and much needed antidote to the distortions and omissions about Native peoples found in even the most recent U.S. history texts. The book provides excellent supplemental readings for social studies, history, ethnic studies or sociology classes. Selections and commentaries by staff of the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

Revised edition: 392 pages, paperback, **\$5.95**

Send check or purchase order to:
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1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023

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