

However, it is generally felt that the use of textbooks, library books, and instructional materials which meaningfully portray minority racial and ethnic groups is restricted in certain areas of the country. It is important to note that such control is not limited to the South.

Control is often maintained in subtle ways which may be difficult to substantiate. Books dealing with minority groups may simply not be included in State-approved lists. Experts in the field are also aware that publishers have been known to offer alternate editions of texts, in which the titles and formats are identical but the nature and extent of attention to minority groups are different. It may be difficult to determine from State and local lists which edition is in use. The Virginia Council on Human Relations has stated:

In the case of these dual editions it is usual for the publisher or his local representative to offer to a school system only the version he thinks will be most acceptable; the other edition is not mentioned and the catalogs do not clearly indicate the existence of two varieties.

This same council has published a "List of Intercultural Textbooks and Readers" which shows how the alternate editions may be identified. As a general principle, it makes good sense that those selecting books should be aware of all the choices.

The strongest control over what our children are allowed to read is exerted in the local school district, where pressures from groups outside the school system, or the fear of such pressures, may lead selection committees to be wary of books which could be considered controversial. The same desire to avoid controversy all too often obscures the reasons why certain books have been rejected for use in the schools.

The choice of library books for use in schools is, in many cases, similarly restricted. Although we have no objective data on the exclusion of books involving relationships with members of minority groups, many times such books simply fail to appear on school library shelves. Exclusion becomes tacit policy. Development of multi-ethnic materials can have little impact on attitudes if censorship prevents their reaching children's hands.

PROBLEMS OF CONTENT

But what are the multiethnic materials? This leads to my second area of concern—content. Does adding a picture of Jackie Robinson or darkening the shade of a face in an illustration make a book "integrated"? I say it does not. Minority group treatment in children's books means much more than this. It means relevance—relevance to the life of the minority group child of today, relevance to his experiences and his sensations and his interests.

The world of "Look, Jane, Look" is usually a white suburban world. Daddy goes off to work each morning and returns each evening; mother stays home with her children and her pretty house and her well-kept green yard. What relevance does this scene have to the child of the city whose mother works outside the home, whose "yard" is the street? The world presented is completely alien; its elements bear no relationship to everyday existence in the city.

Similarly, how many children learn anything at all about Africa or Asia when they study world history? Most history books are Europe-oriented, and world history usually jumps from Greco-Roman times to the days "when knighthood was in flower." Whole continents