"Across the country 6,340,000 non-white children are learning to read and to understand the American way of life in books which either omit them entirely or scarcely mention them."

The All-White World of Children's Books

By NANCY LARRICK, former President of the International Reading Association, and well known writer about children and their education.

"WHY are they always white children?"

The question came from a five-year-old Negro girl who was looking at a picturebook at the Manhattanville Nursery School in New York. With a child's uncanny wisdom, she singled out one of the most critical issues in American education today: the almost complete omission of Negroes from books for children. Integration may be the law of the land, but most of the books children see are all white.

Yet in Cleveland, 53 per cent of the children in kindergarten through high school are Negro. In St. Louis, the figure is 56.9 per cent. In the District of Columbia, 70 per cent are Negro. Across the country, 6,340,000 non-white children are learning to read and to understand the American way of life in books which either omit them entirely or scarcely mention them. There is no need to elaborate upon the damage—much of it irreparable—to the Negro child's personality.

But the impact of all-white books upon 39,600,000 white children is probably even worse. Although his light skin makes him one of the world's minorities, the white child learns from his books that he is the kingfish. There seems little chance of developing the humility so urgently needed for world cooperation, instead of world conflict, as long as our children are brought up on gentle doses of racism through their books.

For the past ten years, critics have deplored the blatant racial bias of the textbooks. Last August, Whitney Young, Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, attacked the trade books as well. In a nationally syndicated column, he berated American trade book publishers for omitting Negroes from their books for children. As an example, he singled out a Little Golden Book, entitled A Visit to the Zoo, which pictures New York's Central Park Zoo in realistic detail except that no dark face is shown. "The entire book-publishing industry is guilty of this kind of omission," charged Mr. Young.

Are the publishers guilty as charged? To find the answer, I undertook a survey of more than 5,000 trade books published for children in 1962, 1963, and 1964. Surely the effect of Little Rock, Montgomery, and Birmingham could be seen by this time, I reasoned.

As a start, I turned to the seventy members of the Children's Book Council who published trade books for children.
"Across the country 6,340,000 non-white children are learning to read and to understand the American way of life in books which either omit them entirely or scarcely mention them."

The All-White World of Children's Books

By NANCY LARRICK, former President of the International Reading Association, and well known writer about children and their education.

WHY are they always white children?

The question came from a five-year-old Negro girl who was looking at a picturebook at the Manhattanville Nursery School in New York. With a child's uncanny wisdom, she singled out one of the most critical issues in American education today: the almost complete omission of Negroes from books for children. Integration may be the law of the land, but most of the books children see are all white.

Yet in Cleveland, 53 per cent of the children in kindergarten through high school are Negro. In St. Louis, the figure is 56.9 per cent. In the District of Columbia, 70 per cent are Negro. Across the country, 6,340,000 nonwhite children are learning to read and to understand the American way of life in books which either omit them entirely or scarcely mention them. There is no need to elaborate upon the damage—much of it irreparable—to the Negro child's personality.

But the impact of all-white books upon 39,600,000 white children is probably even worse. Although his light skin makes him one of the world's minorities, the white child learns from his books that he is the kingfish. There seems little chance of developing the humility so urgently needed for world cooperation, instead of world conflict, as long as our children are brought up on gentle doses of racism through their books.

For the past ten years, critics have deplored the blatant racial bias of the textbooks. Last August, Whitney Young, Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, attacked the trade books as well. In a nationally syndicated column, he berated American trade book publishers for omitting Negroes from their books for children. As an example, he singled out a Little Golden Book, entitled A Visit to the Zoo, which pictures New York's Central Park Zoo in realistic detail except that no dark face is shown. "The entire book-publishing industry is guilty of this kind of omission," charged Mr. Young.

Are the publishers guilty as charged? To find the answer, I undertook a survey of more than 5,000 trade books published for children in 1962, 1963, and 1964. Surely the effect of Little Rock, Montgomery, and Birmingham could be seen by this time, I reasoned.

As a start, I turned to the seventy members of the Children's Book Council who published trade books for children
in each of these three years. Sixty-three of them—90 per cent—completed my questionnaire; many gave anecdotal information as well.

Analysis of the replies and examination of several hundred books led to the discouraging conclusion that the vast majority of recent books are as white as the segregated zoo of Golden Press. Of the 5,206 children’s trade books launched by the sixty-three publishers in the three-year period, only 349 include one or more Negroes—an average of 6.7 per cent. Among the four publishers with the largest lists of children’s books, the percentage of books with Negroes is one-third lower than this average. These four firms (Doubleday, Franklin Watts, Macmillan, and Harper & Row) published 866 books in the three-year period, and only 4.2 per cent have a Negro in text or illustration. Eight publishers produced only all-white books.

Of the books which publishers report as “including one or more Negroes,” many show only one or two dark faces in a crowd. In others, the litho-pencil sketches leave the reader wondering whether a delicate shadow indicates a racial difference or a case of sunburn. It would be easy for some of these books to pass as all-white if publishers had not listed them otherwise.

The scarcity of children’s books portraying American Negroes is much greater than the figure of 6.7 per cent would indicate, for almost 60 per cent of the books with Negroes are placed outside of continental United States or before World War II, an event as remote to a child as the Boston Tea Party. There are books of African folk tales, reports of the emerging nations of Africa, stories laid in the islands of the Caribbean, biographies of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis and historical stories about the Underground Railroad. Most of them show a way of life that is far removed from that of the contemporary Negro and may be highly distasteful to him. To the child who has been involved in civil rights demonstrations of Harlem or Detroit, it is small comfort to read of the Negro slave who smilingly served his white master.

Over the three-year period, only four-fifths of one per cent of the children’s trade books from the sixty-three publishers tell a story about American Negroes today. Twelve of these forty-four books are the simplest picturebooks, showing Negroes in the illustrations but omitting the word Negro, and in several the characters tackle critical issues stemming from school integration, neighborhood desegregation, and nonviolent demonstrations. But these books are usually so gentle as to be unreal. There are no cattle prods, no bombings, no reprisals. The white heroine who befriends a Negro in high school enjoys the support of at least one sympathetic parent and an admiring boy friend.

Several books do have outstanding literary merit. Among them are Roosevelt Grady, by Louise Shotwell (World), the story of a Negro boy whose parents are migratory workers; I Marched with Hannibal, by Hans Baumann (Henry Z. Walck), a boy’s report of the brilliant Carthaginian general; Forever Free: The Story of the Emancipation Proclamation, by Dorothy Sterling (Doubleday); The Peoples of Africa, by Colin M. Turnbull (World); and The Peaceable Revolution, by Betty Schechter (Houghton Mifflin), a beautifully written report of three phases of the nonviolent revolution as seen in the work of Thoreau, Gandhi, and the American Negro today.

But these notable titles are the exceptions. “Really fine books are still scarce,” says Augusta Baker, coordinator of Children’s Services in the New York Public Library. Most of the books depicting Negroes are mediocre or worse. More than one-third have received unfavorable reviews or been ignored by the three major reviewing media in the juvenile book field—The Horn Book, School Library Journal, and Bulletin of the Children’s Book Center of the University of Chicago.

How well do recent children’s books depict the Negro? To answer this question, I enlisted the help of four Negro librarians who work with children in New York, Chicago, and Baltimore. They rated 149 of the books “excellent” and thirteen “objectionable” in their portrayal of Negroes either through illustration or text.

Among those listed as “objectionable” are three editions of Little Black Sambo. Another is The Lazy Little Zulu, which a reviewer in School Library Journal rated as “Not recommended” because it “abounds in stereotypes.”

The identification of Negro stereotypes in adult fiction is vividly spelled out in the unpublished doctoral dissertation (1963) of Catherine Juanita Stake at Teachers College, Columbia University. By analyzing the work of popular American novelists of the past hundred years—from James Fenimore Cooper to James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison—Dr. Stake shows how the Negro in fiction has changed from the ridiculous stock character to the emerging individual who is first a human being and second a Negro.

Early novelists called the Negro “goilla-like,” gave him a name that ridiculed his servile status (Emperor, Caesar, or Brutus, for example), and made his dark skin and thick lips the epitome of the ludicrous. The Negro mother was described as uncomely and ungraceful, clothing her stout body in gaudy calico. Concurrently there were protest novels which showed the “counter stereotype”—the Negro of unsurpassed grace and beauty, poetic language, great wisdom, and unaltering judgment.

In the 1920s The Saturday Evening Post was building circulation on the Irvin S. Cobb stories of Jeff, the comic Negro menial. Twenty years later, the Post was still doing the same with stories by Octavius Roy Cohen and Glenn Allan, who wrote of Negroes who ridiculed themselves and their race.

Perhaps the public opinion which applauded this kind of adult fiction in the forties was responsible also for the 1946 Caldecott Medal award to The Rooster Crows: A Book of American Rhymes and Jingles, illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham and published by Macmillan. Apparently the librarians who selected this book as “the most distinguished American Picture Book for Children

--From New Boy in School (Hastings House).

“In spite of Southern opposition, favorable reviews made this book a ‘best seller.’"

—From Snowy Day (Viking Press).

“Many of the simplest picturebooks show Negroes in the illustrations but omit the word from the text.”
published in the United States" in 1945 were not bothered by four pages showing Negro children with great bunyonfeet, coal black skin, and bulging eyes (in the distance, a dilapidated cabin with a black, gun-toting, barefoot adult). White children in this book are nothing less than cherubic, with dainty little bare feet or well-made shoes. After eighteen years enough complaints had been received to convince the publisher that the book would be improved by deleting the illustrations of Negro children. In the new edition of The Rooster Crows (1964) only white children appear.

The 1984 Caldecott Award went to The Snowy Day, written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats and published by Viking. The book gives a sympathetic picture of just one child—a small Negro boy. The Negro mother, however, is a huge figure in a gaudy yellow plaid dress, albeit without a red bandanna.

Many children's books which include a Negro show him as a servant or slave, a sharecropper, a migrant worker, or a manial.

On the other hand, a number of books have overtones of the "counter stereotype" observed by Dr. Starke—the Negro who is always good, generous, and smiling in the face of difficulties. The nine-year-old hero of Roosevelt Grady is one of these. Cheerfully and efficiently he looks out for the younger children or works alongside his parents in the fields, does well at school when there is a school to go to, never loses his temper, and in the end finds a permanent home for the family. The book won the Nancy Bloch Award for the Best Intercultural Children's Book for 1963, although it includes no whites except the teacher, the social worker, and the owner of the trailer camp. Only the pictures indicate that the Grady's and their friends are Negroes.

When the Cleveland Board of Education recommended Roosevelt Grady for children's reading, a Negro newspaper deplored this choice because one picture shows a work-gang leader grappling with a fat knife-toting Negro who has threatened a young boy. "This is a gross stereotype," was the objection. "But the main story shows beautiful family life among Negroes," was the reply, and Roosevelt Grady remains on the Cleveland list.

It is not unusual for critics to disagree as to the effectiveness of the picture of the Negro in a book for children. For example, one of the librarians who helped me gave Tolliver, by Florence Means (Houghton Mifflin), a rating of "excellent" for its picture of the Negro. Another criticized it as a modern story set in Fisk University as it was twenty-five years ago. "There has been a revolution down there since then," she wrote. "As a result the book seems somewhat condescending."

Whispering Willows, by Elizabeth Hamilton Friesmo (Doublay), also brought mixed response. It tells of the friendship of a white girl who is a high school senior in the class of 1911 and a Negro girl who works as a domestic in a white home. One librarian gave the book top rating. Another objected to the stereotype of the gentle Negro serving girl who "knows her place."

These divergent opinions point up the dilemma faced by publishers of children's books. As Albert R. Levinthal, president of Golden Press, explains it, "Golden Press has been criticized from both sides. . . . Almost every time we reissue Little Black Sambo we receive mail deploring it. When it is not available in our Little Golden Book series, we have had letters asking why we do not keep this classic in print."

One irate Mississippi mother (white) denounced a Little Golden Book of Mother Goose rhymes in a long letter to the Jackson Clarion-Ledger. She was aroused by the old rhyme, "Three babes in a basket/And hardly room for two,/And one was yellow and one was black/And one had eyes of blue."

"I bought one of the Little Golden Books entitled Counting Rhymes," she wrote. "I was horrified when I was reading to my innocent young child, and, behold, on page 15 there was actually the picture of three small children in a basket together. . . . and one was a little Negro! I put my child and the book down and immediately called the owner of the drugstore and told him he would not have any more of my business (and I buy a lot of drugs, for I am sick a lot). If he didn't take all the rest of his copies of that book off his shelves."

The illustration shows the Negro baby looking down at a mouse. Determined to get the whole truth about basket integration, the Mississippi mother said she got in touch with the author, presumably Mrs. Goose herself. She said the author gave this explanation of the black child: "He was aware he didn't belong there, and he was looking down in shame because somebody (a symbol for the outside meddling Yankees) has placed him in the same basket with the white child, where he didn't really want to be. Also he was looking down at the mouse as if he recognized some kinship to animals."

It's an amusing story. But the sad fact is that many publishing houses are catering to such mothers of the South and of the North. As one sales manager said, "Why jeopardize sales by putting one or two Negro faces in an illustration?"

Caroline Rubin, editor of Albert Whitman, tells of three books brought out in the 1950s: Denny's Story, by Eunice Smith, which shows Negro children in illustrations of classroom activity; Than in for Chris, by Blossom Randall, with Negro and white children playing together; and Nemo Meets the Emperor, by Laura Bannon, a true story of Ethiopia. "The books won favorable comment," writes Mrs. Rubin, "but the effect on sales was negative. Customers returned not only these titles but all stock from our company. This meant an appreciable loss and tempered attitudes toward further use of Negro children in illustrations and text."

Jean Poindexter Colby, editor of Hastings House, faced similar opposition in 1959 when she told her salesmen about plans for A Summer to Share, by Helen Kay, the story of a Negro child from the city who visits a white family in the country on a Fresh-Air-Fund vacation. "Galleries on the book had been set and art work was in preparation," Mrs. Colby wrote in the April 1965 issue of Top of the News, published by the American Library Association. "I told the salesmen present about the book and immediately encountered such opposition that I felt we either had to cancel the book entirely or change the book to an all-white cast. I wrote apologetically to the author and artist, explaining the situation. They were both cooperative and the racial switch was made." A Summer to Share came out in 1960 with the Negro child turned into another white one.

Mrs. Colby's experience with New Boy in School, by May Justus (1963), was quite different. This is a simple story for second and third graders about a Negro boy who enters an all-white class. "We had a great deal of trouble (Continued on page 84)
All-White World

Continued from page 65
saying New Bay in School in the South," she writes. "Ed Jervis, our southern salesman, reported that one big jobber would neither stock nor sell it. Another one would only fill special orders." But then favorable reviews began to come in—from School Library Journal, the New York Times, the Chattanooga Times, the Savannah News, the Raleigh Observer, and the Tulsa World, among others. "Now it is a real best seller!" she reports.

Mrs. Colby is also feeling pressure from those who deplore a story that shows the Negro as a slave, a servant, a railroad porter. "Slavery has been prac-ically taboo for many years now as a subject for children's literature," she writes, "and depicting the Negro as anything but perfect is not welcome either. White children and adults can be bad, but Negroes cannot. So my job has been to tone down or eliminate such people and situations. But when can we lift the shroud from the truth?"

Not all editors speak as frankly as Mrs. Colby. One, who asks to remain anonymous, says it took her two years to get permission to bring out a book about children in a minority group. Another reports a leading children's book club rejected a 1961 book "especially because Southern subscribers would not like the way this heroine tackled the problem of prejudice." Although no other publisher commented on book-club selection, this is undoubtedly an important influence in editorial decisions.

When the directors of eight chil- dren's book clubs were questioned about the books they have distributed since September 1962, they listed only a tiny fraction that includes Negroes. Four hard-cover book clubs offered 230 books of which only six mention Negroes. Four paperback book clubs distributed 1,345 titles with Negroes included in fifty-three.

Not one of the fourteen Negro books on the ALA list of Notable Children's Books in 1962, 1963, and 1964 won the more lucrative award of book-club selection.

In the two Negro books distributed by the Weekly Reader Children's Book Club—Long Lonesome Train, by Virginia Oomsby (Lippincott), and Skinny, by Robert Burch (Viking)—the Negro characters are Aunt Susan, her son Matt, a fireman, and the handyman, Roman. Richard R. Repass, director of this hard-cover book club, says, "These I would consider neither germane to the plot, nor particularly flattering to our Negro citizens. The main reason why there are not more books with Negro characters among our book club selections is the general dearth of good candidates."

It should be explained that the hard-cover book clubs send the same book to every child while the paperback book clubs ask each member to choose one title from a list of ten to a dozen. Perhaps for this reason the paperback clubs have distributed certain titles which the hard-cover book clubs would not take a chance on. One of these is Mary Jane, by Dorothy Sterling, published by Doubleday in hard cover and given a two-star rating by School Library Journal. It also received the Nancy Bloch Award for 1959. This is the realistic story of a Negro girl who is the first to enter an all-white junior high school that bristles with prejudice.

Mary Jane has not been selected for hard-cover book club distribution. But after several years of deliberation, the Arrow Book Club, one of the paperback clubs, offered Mary Jane to its fifth- and sixth-grade members. By December 1964, 159,995 copies had been sold. "Only six letters of complaint were received," reports Lilian Moore, Arrow Book Club editor, "all from adults in the South. And many warm messages have come in from the children who read Mary Jane."

By March 1965, Mary Jane had been published in Swedish, Dutch, Czech, German, and Russian editions. According to Publishers' Weekly, the Children's Literature House of Moscow reports 100,000 copies of Mary Jane have been printed there and are stirring up "lively interest."

Obviously not all children's books can or should include Negroes. The story of a family in Plymouth Colony or in modern Sweden would be distorted if Negro faces were shown. Certainly no author or artist should be required to follow any formula for integration.

But, consciously or unconsciously, most writers and artists have long been following the formula for pure white books. Some of the distortions caused by this formula are ludicrous. For ex- ample, We Live in the City, a simple picture-book by Bert Ray (Childrens Press, 1963), tells of Laurie and Gregg looking over the city of Chicago—a city that apparently has no Negroes.

Only white people appear in Your Brain, by Margaret O. Hyde (McGraw-Hill, 1964). In books of science experiments, it is usually a white hand that holds the thermometer, a white arm reaching for a test tube, white children feeding the guinea pig. In books of poetry it is a white face smiling over the first stanza.

While making a survey of G. P. Putnam's books of the past three years, Putnam's juvenile editor Tom MacPherson came upon an illustrated novel about professional football, with not a single Negro player among the professionals. "That embarrassed us considerably," he wrote.

SEVERAL juvenile editors expressed similar concern. "I was surprised," wrote Virginia Fowler, editor of Knopf's Borzoi Books for Young People, "to realize how few books we have on our list that accept an integrated society.

... as I look at my titles and think of the books [I realize] in many instances they could easily have been books about a Negro child or could have been shared books of child and friend."

Executives at Golden Press analyzed the Little Golden Books of 1962, 1963, and 1964 and decided that thirteen of their all-white books could have included Negroes in a perfectly natural, realistic way. One of these is A Visit to a Children's Zoo, cited by Whitney Young, Jr. ("He is certainly right," said the Golden Press editor, "a missed oppor- tunity for a natural handling of the situation.")

In the meantime, the Negro market has expanded to at least $25 billion in consumer purchasing power, according to John H. Johnson, publisher of Ebony. The Negro school population and the number of Negro teachers are growing rapidly, particularly in the large urban centers. With vastly increased funds available through government sources, a huge economic force is building up for integrated schools and integrated reading materials.

Lacking good children's books about Negro history, many school libraries are purchasing the $5.95 adult book, A Pictorial History of the Negro in America, by Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzer (Crown). Boards of education in both New York and Detroit have written and published their own paperback Negro histories for young readers.

The integrated readers produced by the Detroit Board of Education and published in 1964 by Follett for in-school use are now being sold in paper-

—from Roosevelt Grady (World).

"Only the pictures indicate that the Grady's and their friends are Negroes."

SR/September 11, 1965
back in the bookstores—where parents are reported to be buying eagerly.

The market that most publishers are avoiding is being cultivated by—of all corporations—the Pepsi-Cola Company, which has produced an excellent LP recording Adventures in Negro History. This has been made available to schools through local soft-drink distributors. The first pressing of 10,000 copies was grabbed up almost immediately, according to Russell Harvey, director of Special Market Services. After a year, 100,000 copies had been distributed and a second record is being made. (The first record, filmstrip, and script may be purchased for $5 through the Special Markets Division of Pepsi-Cola, 500 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.)

What about the children's books coming out in 1965? According to reports from editors, about 9 per cent of their 1965 books will include one or more Negroes. This is 1.5 per cent above the average for 1964.

In addition, there will be a continuing trend to up-date or reissue earlier books that include Negroes. Among those reissued in the past three years: My Dog Rinty, by Ellen Tarry and Marie Hall Ets (Viking); Black Fire: A Story of Henri Christophe, by C. Newcomb (McKay); Famous Women Singers, by Ulrich (Dodd, Mead); The Story of the Negro, by Anne Royer (Knopf); and The Barred Road, by Adele DeLeeuw (Macmillan). Ladder to the Sky, by Ruth Forbes Chandler (Abelard), which went out of print for several years, has returned in 1965.

This year Doubleday is launching its new Zenith Books, "to explain America's minorities." These books are planned for supplementary reading in high school English and social studies classes. The accompanying Teacher's Manual puts them more definitely with textbooks than with trade books.

Many juvenile editors who state determination to present a completely fair picture of Negroes in our multiracial society add the reservation: "where it seems natural and not forced."

"We don't set about deliberately to do these things," writes Margaret McEl- derry, editor of children's books at Harcourt, Brace & World, "but take them as they seem natural and right."

"We plan to continue to introduce Negroes where it can be handled in context and illustrations in a normal way," says Margaret B. Braxton, vice president of Garrard Publishing Company. "Artificial books forcing the racial issue are not a part of our future plans."

"Most publishers are eagerly looking for manuscripts that deal with integration and the problems faced by Negroes in our country," writes Mrs. Esther K. Meeks, children's book editor of Follett Publishing Company. "If we found two as many publishable books that included Negroes in a natural and sympathetic manner, we should be happy to publish them." South Town, by Lorenz Graham, winner of the Follett Award of 1958, is one of the few books for young people that tells a realistic story of the violence resulting from racial prejudice.

Fabio Coen, editor of Pantheon Books for children, makes this comment: "A book even remotely discussing racial problems has to deal with the subject with the same spontaneity and honesty that is basically required of any book. To my mind, it is therefore impossible to commission one."

The newly formed Council for Interracial Books for Children operates on the principle that, given encouragement, authors and artists will create good children's books that include nonwhites, and that given the manuscripts, publishers will produce and market them. The Council, sponsored by a group including Benjamin Spock, Ben Shahn, Langston Hughes, Mary Caver, Alex Rosen, Har- old Taylor, Harry Golden, and Sidney M. Gruneberg, will offer prizes for outstanding manuscripts and will negotiate with editors for their publication.

The crisis that brought the Council into being is described by one of its organizing members, Elmer Sinnette, district school librarian for the Central and East Harlem Area of New York: "Publishers have participated in a cultural lobotomy. It is no accident that Negro history and Negro identification have been forgotten. Our society has contrived to make the American Negro a rootless person. The Council for Interracial Books for Children has been formed to relieve this situation."

Whether the Council gets many books into print or not, it can accomplish a great deal simply by reminding editors and publishers that what is good for the Ku Klux Klan is not necessarily good for America—or for the book business. White supremacy in children's literature will be abolished when authors, editors, publishers, and book sellers decide that they need not submit to bigots.

**Books of outstanding merit are still the exception.**

---From Benzie (Dial Press).

Socrates

Continued from page 31

integrity in action—God. Truth can be discovered by thought and conversation modeled on the dynamics of the rational order of the cosmos. This means not just the dialectic analysis of the "Socratic method" but discipline of the abiding will. The knowledge which is virtue in the famous Socratic paradox is the nurtured practice of life which the scholastics of the Middle Ages were to call "habitude."

Socrates on trial is the greatest historical exemplar of just this life process of finding out truth—a life with four cardinal virtues like points of the compass organizing it as a cosmos—prudence, courage, piety, justice. He had defined in his own person philosophy as the care of the soul—the moral integrity of the individual and as therefore a perpetual challenge to public apathy, ignorance, lack of integrity or sensibility. Conscience judges power is the meaning of philosophy. Had he given in to the compromise offered by his opponents and even by his friends, he would have betrayed the foundations of his being and the community of friends, the interrelationshiof the free and self-controlled in which those foundations were laid. He could not subvert the public order that condemned him without subverting the community that he had brought to birth out of it—like his midwife mother, as he said.

T

HE arguments for the immortality of the soul in the Phaedo are not very cogent and the myth of the future life is only an ironic pleasantry. This is not the point. The dialogue is a community prayer like a Quaker Meeting, a group meditation on the ultimate worth and meaning of existence. Watching Socrates and his friends is another world, always present at each man's elbow and acutely near in those crucial hours. Its purer beings watch us and judge us constantly. We are only the temporarily blinded members of an invisible community. In the company of that community the cardinal virtues are transformed into the transcendental ones—faith, hope, and charity—terms for the substance of the mystical confidence of Socrates in his vision.

Finally, the death of Socrates establishes a special tradition of martyrdom, the just man just unto death, which will give an abiding character of polarity and tension to Western political morality. And last of all, the dialogue ends with the familiar Socratic ironic whimsy—"I owe a cock to Asclepius, Crito. Do not forget to pay it"—the price to the god of health for a good death. The cadence is resolved in joy.
back in the bookstores—where parents are reported to be buying eagerly. The market that most publishers are avoiding is being cultivated by—of all corporations—the Pepsi-Cola Company, which has produced an excellent LP recording Adventures in Negro History. This has been made available to schools through local soft-drink distributors. The first pressing of 10,000 copies was grabbed up almost immediately, according to Russell Harvey, director of Special Market Services. After a year, 100,000 copies had been distributed and a second record is being made. (The first record, filmstrip, and script may be purchased for $5 through the Special Markets Division of Pepsi-Cola, 500 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.)

What about the children's books coming out in 1965? According to reports from editors, about 9 per cent of their 1965 books will include one or more Negroes. This is 1.5 per cent above the average for 1964.

In addition, there will be a continuing trend to up-date or reissue earlier books that include Negroes. Among those re-issued in the past three years: My Dog Ginny, by Ellen Terry and Marie Hall Ets (Viking); Black Fire: A Story of Henri Christophe, by C. Newcomb McKay; Famous Women Singers, by U. Richard (Dodd, Mead); The Story of the Negro, by Arna Bontemps (Knopf); and The Barred Road, by Adele DeLeeuw (Macmillan). Ladder to the Sky, by Ruth Forbes Chandler (Abelard), which went out of print for several years, has returned in 1965.

This year Doubleday is launching its new Zenith Books, "to explain America's minorities." These books are planned for supplementary reading in high school English and social studies classes. The accompanying Teacher's Manual puts them more definitely with textbooks than with trade books.

Many juvenile editors who state determination to present a completely fair picture of Negroes in our multi-racial society add the reservation: "where it seems natural and not forced."

"We don't set about deliberately to do these things," writes Margaret McEl- derry, editor of children's books at Harcourt, Brace & World "but take them as they seem natural and right."

"We plan to continue to introduce Negroes where it can be handled in context and illustrations in a normal way," says Margaret E. Braxton, vice president of Garrard Publishing Company. "Artificial books forcing the racial issue are not a part of our future plans."

"Most publishers are eagerly looking for manuscripts that deal with integration and the problems faced by Negroes in our country," writes Mrs. Esther K. Meeks, children's book editor of Follett Publishing Company. "If we found twice as many publishable books that included Negroes in a natural and sympathetic manner, we should be happy to publish them." South Town, by Lorenz Graham, winner of the Follett Award of 1958, is one of the few books for young people that tells a realistic story of the violence resulting from racial prejudice.

Fablo Coen, editor of Pantheon Books for children, makes this comment: "A book even remotely discussing racial problems has to deal with the subject with the same spontaneity and honesty that is basically required of any book. To my mind, it is therefore impossible to commission one."

The newly formed Council for Interracial Books for Children operates on the principle that, given encouragement, authors and artists will create good children's books that include nonwhites, and that given the manuscripts, publishers will produce and market them. The Council, sponsored by a group including Benjamin Spock, Ben Shahn, Langston Hughes, Mary Gaver, Alex Rosen, Harold Taylor, Harry Golden, and Sidonie M. Gruenberg, will offer prizes for outstanding manuscripts and will negotiate with editors for their publication.

The crisis that brought the Council into being is described by one of its organizing members, Elinor Sinnette, district school librarian for the Central and East Harlem Area of New York: "Publishers have participated in a cultural lobotomy. It is no accident that Negro history and Negro identification have been forgotten. Our society has contributed to make the American Negro a rootless person. The Council for Interracial Books for Children has been formed to relieve this situation."

Whether the Council gets any books into print or not, it can accomplish a great deal simply by reminding editors and publishers that what is good for the Ku Klux Klan is not necessarily good for America—or for the book business. White supremacy in children's literature will be abolished when authors, editors, publishers, and booksellers decide that they need not submit to bigots.

---From Bernie (Dial Press).---

"Books of outstanding merit are still the exception."

---Continued from page 31---

Socrates in action—God. Truth can be discovered by thought and conversation modeled on the dynamics of the rational order of the cosmos. This means not just the dialectic analysis of the "Socratic method" but discipline of the abiding will. The knowledge which is the virtue in the famous Socratic paradox is the nurtured practice of life which the scholastics of the Middle Ages were to call "habitude."

Socrates on trial is the greatest historical exemplar of this life process of finding out truth—a life with four cardinal virtues like points of the compass organizing it as a cosmos—prudence, courage, piety, justice. He had defined in his own person philosophy as the care of the soul—the moral integrity of the individual and as therefore a perpetual challenge to public apathy, ignorance, lack of integrity or sensibility. Conscience judges power is the meaning of philosophy. By the law given in to the compromise offered by his opponents and even by his friends, he would have betrayed the foundations of his being and the community of friends, the interrelationship of the free and self-controlled in which those foundations were laid. He could not subvert the public order that condemned him without subverting the community that he had brought to birth out of it—like his midwife mother, as he said.

The arguments for the immortality of the soul in the Phaedo are not very cogent and the myth of the future life is only an ironic pleasantness. This is not the point. The dialogue is a community prayer like a Quaker Meeting, a group meditation on the ultimate worth and meaning of existence. Watching Socrates and his friends is another world, always present at each man's elbow and acutely near in those crucial hours. Its purer beings watch us and judge us constantly. We are only the temporarily blinded members of an invisible community. In the company of that community the cardinal virtues are transformed into the transcendent ones—faith, hope, and charity—terms for the substance of the mystical confidence of Socrates in his vision.

Finally, the death of Socrates establishes a special tradition of martyrdom, the just man just unto death, which will give an abiding character of polarity and tension to Western political morality. And last of all, the dialogue ends with the familiar Socratic ironic whimsy—"I owe a cock to Asclepius, Crito. Do not forget to pay it"—the price to the god of health for a good death. The cadence is resolved in joy.

S.R. September 11, 1965

85