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Libraries Are the Homes of Books

WHITENESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT: The bibliographic instructional work, *The Children's Book on How to Use Books and Libraries*, issued seven times between 1937 and 1973, utilized the metaphor of the library as the "home of books." That "home" was constructed as a private, white, middle-class space in which children, who are invited guests, not residents, were expected to behave according to white, middle-class social norms and cultural values. The children depicted were uniformly white, able-bodied, and middle class as well. American cultural values such as individualism, competition, and pragmatism and utilitarianism were celebrated. This work critically analyzes the whiteness of the presentation, including the subtle ways in which white culture is promoted and supported as an institutional norm.

KEYWORDS: Whiteness, school libraries, children, race, information literacy instruction

Introduction

This article will examine the ways in which the library was constructed as "white" for elementary school children from 1937 through 1973 in the bibliographic instructional work *The Children's Book on How to Use Books and Libraries*.¹ First issued in 1937, it was revised and reissued seven times, in 1948, 1955, 1961, 1964, 1965, 1968, 1970, and 1973. It was also translated into Chinese in 1961 in Taiwan and into Dutch in 1964.² The authors, Carolyn Mott and Leo B. Baisden, were affiliated with public schools in Sacramento, California, Mott as a teacher-librarian and Baisden as assistant superintendent of schools. The 208-page text and its accompanying workbook, *Children's Library Lesson Book*, were designed to serve as "a guide for children in learning the techniques essential to effective use of books and libraries."³ It did so within the metaphor of the library as the "home of books." As will be demonstrated, that "home" was constructed as white and middle-class and American. It was

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constructed as a private physical space and the children as invited guests who were expected to behave according to those social norms and cultural values.

Literature Review

The professional literature on bibliographic instruction is focused solely on applications, primarily describing various programs and reporting on their use through anecdotal data.⁴ Scholarly literature on the topic also has almost exclusively evaluated the efficacy of various bibliographic or information literacy instruction programs and methods, although more modern writings develop and analyze the programs from theoretical and methodological perspectives, including inquiry-based instruction, and also explore the impact of different instructional methodologies on learning.⁵ These works construct information literacy instruction as objective and neutral, uninfluenced by the social context within which the library exists. As far as can be determined, there has been no examination of the ways in which these bibliographic or information literacy instructional programs construct the purpose, role, and use of the library and its materials and how that construction might affect children's perceptions of the library and their relationship to it.

Current researchers in the area of race and the American public library have challenged scholars to examine the history of American libraries utilizing critical race theory, which "questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law."⁶ They argue that research on librarianship in the United States, despite having adopted the rhetoric of diversity and multiculturalism, "lacks a critical perspective in regards to the issues of race and racism." They charge that researchers have adopted, instead, a "benign liberal multiculturalism that celebrates difference and promotes 'cross-cultural understanding' empty of critical analyses of race and racism." These new researchers employ critical race theory to effectively explore the foundations of the library and demonstrate persuasively that American "libraries have historically served the interests of a white racial project by aiding in the construction and maintenance of a white American citizenry as well as the perpetuation of white privilege in the structures of the field itself."⁷ The call today is for "a social and color consciousness in our field in order to account for racist and other oppressive practices and the experience of disenfranchised people" and a "critical or revolutionary multiculturalism . . . that re-centers the importance

of race, as well as other social axes of domination, in the analysis and practice within the field.”⁸

A central concept of critical race theory is “whiteness,” which refers to the historical construction of Western society as an identity that is performed by those who identify as “white,” rather than a skin color. The term “refers not only to racial and ethnic categorizations but a complete system of exclusion based on hegemony . . . the privilege and power that acts to reinforce itself through hegemonic cultural practice that excludes all who are different.”⁹ This concept challenges the notion that what has been constructed as “American society” is neutral, nonethnic, nonracial, and normative. “Whiteness” as such incorporates white, middle-class Western European norms and values, including modes of dress, speech, grooming, and behavior as well as artistic and cultural objects and choices. It is an unconscious acceptance of such norms and values as “natural” and absolute, rather than understanding them as cultural and arbitrary. Many of these norms are codified in books of etiquette and employer and school dress codes. For example, what types of hats are worn and by whom and under what circumstances? What constitutes formal, informal, and casual dress and when is each type worn and by whom? What are the duties of hosts and guests? What styles of shoes can be worn by whom in what circumstances? Others are unspoken, unconscious assumptions and expectations. What length and texture and style of hair is acceptable on women and on men? Is makeup worn and, if so, how much, by whom, and under what circumstances? What defines a bed and how many people can sleep in it together, and of what ages and sexes? Why are some hair, jewelry and clothing styles labeled “ethnic” while others are not? Why is some art called “primitive” or “ethnic” or “folk”? Why are some traditional tales called “folktales” and others “legends” and still others “classical literature”?

Whiteness includes a socially constructed hierarchy of race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and gender that privileges white, middle-class, straight males. Claims of “color blindness” posit whiteness (“no color”) as the default standard and ignore the unconscious racism that “is embedded in our thought processes and social structures. . . . Only aggressive, color-conscious efforts to change the way things are will do much” to overcome systemic racism.¹⁰ A related concept is intersectionality, the idea that one’s position in the social hierarchy is defined by the intersection of one’s “race, sex, class, national origin and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings.”¹¹ Individuals exist at the intersection of all of those vectors and each must be addressed in order to achieve full equality.

Only a handful of scholars have yet examined whiteness in the field of library and information science. The initial studies were conducted in the academic library by academic librarians and examined the ways in which (1) collection development policies and practices privilege traditional mainstream American publications and publishers, (2) academic culture perpetuates white, male, middle-class Western cultural values and norms, and (3) cataloging practices and standards reify white culture and its hierarchy of power and status.¹² They utilized discourse analysis to critically analyze racism and the culture of whiteness in space, staffing, and reference service delivery.¹³ Later studies have examined whiteness in libraries in general, in early children's services, and in archives.¹⁴ None have looked at whiteness as it is expressed through bibliographic or information literacy instruction or in the depiction of the school library. Just as children need to see themselves and their lives depicted in works of literature in order to engage with the text and be motivated to become readers, so they need to see themselves and their lives depicted in instructional works, including information literacy, in order to engage with that text and be motivated to learn and use the skills being taught, and that depiction goes beyond skin color to encompass all aspects of their lives.¹⁵

The Children's Book on How to Use Books and Libraries

The Whiteness of the Library Users

Treating the work as a primary historical document and utilizing Glaser's grounded theory induction method of allowing the concepts and categories to emerge through multiple readings, the first and most obvious way in which the work privileges whiteness is seen in the illustrations. All three editions of the book are heavily illustrated with stick figures of humans and other creatures and simple line drawings of objects, selected parts of which are colored in red, blue, green, or brown. With one or two minor exceptions, they do not change through nearly four decades. More illustrations are colored in the revised and third edition than in the first, but the drawings are the same. All of the human characters are white, despite the large Hispanic and Asian populations of northern California dating to the nineteenth century and earlier. Some of their clothing and hair is colored. Female figures whose hair is colored have either black or brown hair, most styled in a pageboy, although a few have long, Shirley Temple-style corkscrew curls or a bun, while the male figures all have a spiky black crewcut or wear a baseball cap or hat, but only outside a building. The males all wear slacks or shorts and the females A-line

dresses or skirts; their upper bodies are straight lines. All of the humans are able-bodied. None even wear glasses; only the elderly man in the frontispiece uses a cane (see fig. 1). The boy and man in the illustration are both carrying books, implying that the library is for all ages. The boy is whistling, a behavior considered rude in some cultures, but readers who understand the cultural activity in American terms know that he finds going to the library and getting books fun and enjoyable.

The only nonwhite humans appear on page 89 of all three editions, in a chapter giving instructions on Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) numbers relating to foreign travel and literature, in this case for China (fig. 2). The characters are illustrating “Chinese,” and so are symbols rather than people. They are also the only characters not wearing stereotypical Western clothing. The clothing and rickshaw in the image make it dated even for 1937 and it was unquestionably biased by 1973. It is an exoticization of the Other in general and of Asia in particular, presenting the inhabitants of other countries as foreign curiosities and their cultures as archaic if not primitive. It also suggests that the only place for non-Whites in the library is between the pages of the books.

Gender must also be considered. Although there is a balance between the number of pictures of boys and girls in the library, and they are shown engaging



Figure 1

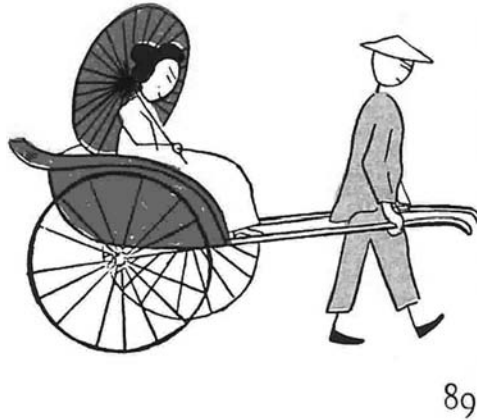


Figure 2

in many of the same types of activities and are about equally successful and unsuccessful, the final sequence of illustrations that demonstrates a child successfully implementing all of the bibliographic instruction skills and receiving public recognition and praise for it features a boy, “Fred.”¹⁶ Fred is shown as active, assertive, and confident, all qualities valued by white American society. He volunteers on his own initiative to write a report on the white, male European explorer and conquistador Vasco Núñez de Balboa, an appropriate adventurous topic for an American boy. (It can be fairly assumed that the report does not touch on Balboa’s brutality toward the native populations of Panama.) He undertakes and completes the entire effort on his own rather than as a member of a team. Most of Fred’s actions take place in the drawings without accompanying explanation beyond references to specific chapters in the book, which Fred remembers rather than consults. Children are being challenged to recall what those chapters discuss and to recognize what Fred is doing and which materials he is using. The librarian is conspicuously absent; Fred, the model of the successful library user and student, obviously does not need any assistance. At the end of the story, Fred’s report is so well received by his class that they decide to turn it into a play and perform it for the entire school. The ideal library user is not only a white boy, but he is also proactive, completely independent, and fully competent in his use of the materials in the library.

Students are not only encouraged to learn how to use the library independently, but they are shamed if they cannot. “If you are not able to do this lesson after you have read it two or three times, you may get help from

your teacher, the librarian, or a boy or girl who understands the plan. *It is, of course, much better to think out a lesson by yourself*" (64; emphasis added). Asking for help is a sign of failure. Teamwork is inferior to individualism and competition is prized above cooperation. In a statement with overtones of the nineteenth-century "white man's burden," successful students are told that "if you can pass Test A satisfactorily, the teacher may want you to help others who are not quite so familiar with the library as you are." However, even that altruism is qualified with "*When you help others, you also help yourself*" (119; emphasis added). Competition was further promoted in multiple illustrations in which one child expresses difficulty and another smugly provides the answer or declares, "I'm not having any trouble" (153, 163, 176).

Boys are shown as proactive in other situations, including two boys climbing a mountain, linked together with a rope, illustrating the concept of a guide; a boy "teaching the ants their A,B,C's (After Pinocchio)"; reciting the alphabet while asleep alone in bed; hanging onto a tree limb, shouting "Hold, bear!" to a bear below him, while an adult male approaches with a rifle or shotgun, telling him, "Hold on, m'boy," demonstrating the concept of homonyms (see fig. 3); two boys in a boat rowing across the International Date Line accompanied by a talking fish; and a drawing of a boy putting a letter into a street-corner mailbox.¹⁷ Including the frontispiece, there are five pictures of boys actively engaged with the outside world in culturally biased activities and settings utilizing culturally specific objects. Understanding the concepts illustrated relies on a familiarity with such activities and objects as mountain climbing, the book *Pinocchio*, rowboats, and street-corner mailboxes rather than those found in apartment buildings or at the end of the driveway in rural areas. The use of the



Figure 3

word “hold” to mean “stop” is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, an archaic usage, which may have been current in 1937, but not 1973.¹⁸

Girls are shown as more passive and less confident. There is only one picture of a girl in the outdoors and then it is an urban environment (see fig. 4). She is standing at a street corner, wearing rollerskates, confused about which way to go, and is accompanied by a dog.¹⁹ Again, familiarity with white, middle-class culture and cultural objects is necessary to understand the image, and such whiteness is being presented as the norm. Children who have never seen rollerskates will not necessarily understand why she is apparently standing on four circles or balls. They will not infer the implied narrative of skating alone along the city streets and losing one’s way. Understanding the other figure to be a dog, let alone her pet and not a dangerous stray, also relies on specific cultural knowledge. Dogs are considered ritually unclean by most Muslims, for example, and are valued in other cultures as working animals, not as pets, such as sheepdogs in Scotland or sled dogs among the Inuit.

Finally, the street names, “E. 15th Ave.” and “N. 10th St.,” will only make sense to children with a specific city-planning experience. Compounding the problem for suburban and rural children, the chapter itself uses the American city grid system as a metaphor for teaching latitude and longitude.

The other four times that girls are shown outside of the library they are in the home with one or both parents, and once with a brother. He is answering questions asked by their mother, while his sister is confused by his answers. In another, a girl is sitting at the dinner table with her parents and no other children, explaining that she learned all of the uses of the dictionary in school. In a visual joke, she is sitting on a large book labeled “Dictionary” to reach the



Figure 4

table (93, 143). We are to infer that the inhabitants constitute a nuclear family with, at most, two children, a boy and a girl.

The home in which the children are shown proclaims itself white and middle class and unequivocally American. It is furnished with upholstered armchairs, individual beds for each child, tables with chairs for everyone, and includes, at the very least, an unabridged dictionary. Children are also told that if they want to own a book they have borrowed from the library or want to give it as a gift, “You may be able to buy the book from your local bookstore or you can buy it by sending a letter to one of the offices of the publisher” (46). The expectation is that the children have money of their own to spend as they like.

Two illustrations in the final chapter present home life in 1888 and 1937. In the first (fig. 5), the furnishings evoke a nineteenth-century American room, with a large area rag rug and Federal-style drop-leaf secretary desk with glass-fronted bookcase, possibly a family heirloom from colonial New England. A woman sits on a three-legged stool, while a boy sits on the rug in front of her. The second (fig. 6), labeled “Today,” includes an upholstered armchair with matching ottoman. An elderly man sits in the chair and a young girl on the ottoman facing him. In the background is a modern (1930s) fireplace and bookshelves built into the wall that contain many books and art objects (199, 200). The implied narrative is that the boy in the first picture has grown up to be the man in the second picture, likely the man in the frontispiece, and is reading to his granddaughter, continuing a heritage of literacy.

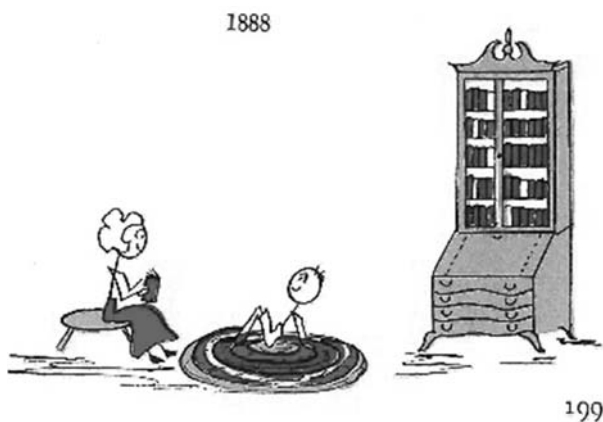


Figure 5



Today

Figure 6

He has also enjoyed upward mobility, now living in a larger home with more and modern furnishings.

The Whiteness of the Collection

The library depicted contains all of the necessary reference materials in the necessary quantities, including such nonbook items as globes, maps, a vertical file, magazines, and tables and chairs. All of the materials are in good condition, current, and complete. A full seventeen of the fifty-four chapters describe the different types of works that should be found in the reference section—six chapters on dictionaries and how to use them, five on encyclopedias, and another six on the various types of atlases and globes. This ideal, fully funded school library is presented as typical.

The books that inhabit this home are “worthwhile books.” They are factual and useful. They can be used for homework, for writing reports, and for locating information. They are organized by the DDC and include a table of contents, an index, a bibliography, preliminary matter, and other important sections as depicted in the three chapters (22–24) that describe the signs of a worthwhile book. Certain magazines are also worthwhile, such as *Child Life*, *American Girl*, *Boy’s Life*, and the *Junior Red Cross News* (56). While fiction

is permissible, it must be a Newbery Medal or other award-winning work, which will make it worthwhile. The rules for choosing a worthwhile book run to four pages and privilege current nonfiction written by established authors and illustrators that has been well reviewed in standard library journals (101). The rules do not include an interesting cover, recommendations of friends, or popularity. All of this ensures that children will read only acceptable works that have been approved by adult white society for their consumption. Children who do not find approved books “interesting” or, even worse, find books that do not meet these tests “interesting” are lacking in judgment or intelligence and must read books that do not interest them or not read at all.

After reading the selected book, students are to apply five tests for determining whether it really was worthwhile, including whether the book was interesting or enjoyable, left clear pictures in the mind, taught something new, featured realistic characters, and was well written (102–4). Although whether it was interesting or enjoyable is one of the criteria, that is not nearly enough. Only books that are descriptive, educational, and realistic are “worthwhile” and, by extension, only those books should be found interesting and enjoyable. This emphasis on the moral value of books applies even to indexes, which are judged “worthwhile” rather than accurate or even merely useful (53–54).

Works that are mentioned by title are all recognized American or European classics by acknowledged American and European authors, including the aforementioned *Pinocchio*, *King of the Wind* by Marguerite Henry, and books by Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Louisa May Alcott, and Lucy Fitch Perkins, among others. Recent winners of the Newbery and Caldecott medals are also listed and provide some small measure of diversity as they include works such as Elizabeth Yates’s *Amos Fortune*, *Free Man*, *Secret of the Andes* by Ann Nolan Clark, Joseph Krumboltz’s *And Now Miguel*, Ezra Jack Keats’s *Snowy Day*, and Leo Politi’s *Song of the Swallows* (106–7). Children would look in vain for any mention of popular genre fiction of the time, such as the numerous series of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, comic books, or fairytales (not even the Brothers Grimm merit inclusion), let alone ethnic folklore or original works by authors of color such as Virginia Hamilton, whose *House of Dies Drear* won the Edgar Award for Best Juvenile Mystery in 1969. Nor do the authors incorporate diversity into the illustrations even in the third edition, maintaining what Bonilla-Silva calls “racial boundaries,” continuing to suggest that people of color are admitted to the library only within the pages of books, and only the pages of books that are judged “worthwhile” by recognized white authorities.²⁰ Or, possibly worse, that “white” encompasses all races.

Public Library

The construction of the school library as the home of educational materials is understandable in a guide to school library use, as their mission is to support the curriculum. We might expect, then, that fiction would play a larger part in the description of the public library collection given in the chapter “In the Public Library.” However, that single chapter includes only one sentence about fiction, when it notes that the public library contains “interesting story books, picture books for the little readers and reference books for older boys and girls.” That sentence is replaced in the revised and third editions with “Did you know that quite often the librarian has a particular day when she reads stories to the children?”²¹

The public library collection is described as containing newspapers, telephone books and city directories, magazines about “health, education, art, schools, boating, forests, dogs, travel, buildings, character, aviation, radio, books, languages, nature stories, occupations, safety” (196–97), art works, and, in the reference room, encyclopedias, indexes, maps, globes, and atlases. It also includes Braille and Talking Books for the blind and visually impaired, the only time that services for the disabled are mentioned. Nothing beyond “interesting story books” is said about the large collections of picture books, easy readers, chapter books, and juvenile fiction that a public library contains. The only valid use of the library, whether school or public, is for educational purposes. Recreational reading is for “little readers” and for “children” (which no elementary school student will admit to being!).

White House Rules

It is not enough to learn to use the materials. Children must also observe the proper rules of behavior while in this Home of Books. Many of these rules center around the proper way to treat the book as an object, which has a very practical purpose, but presupposes that the library has hardback books that are in good condition and the facilities to repair them or that “you are given a new book as a birthday present, as a Christmas present, or as a school book” (23). The second chapter gives instructions on how to open a book in order to avoid breaking the spine, while chapter 5 details how to straighten shelves, instructing children to “Be VERY CAREFUL and use TWO HANDS” (38).

There are rules about how to find books and serendipity is not one of them. Browsing the shelves is not permitted. Five chapters are devoted to the intricacies of the DDC and another eight to the structure of the card catalog. The chapters on the DDC imply that students should memorize at least parts

of the system. Chapter 4 is four pages of “the classes which are most often found in elementary schools” (34), and students are instructed that “first way to choose a book” is to “find the subject . . . on the Dewey Decimal System of Classification Wall Chart. *Find this class number on the shelves*” (97–98). The second, and so inferior, way is to “use the catalog” (98). Both methods require a basic facility with the English language and a cultural understanding of the system of knowledge on which the DDC is based. Finding the subject on the chart requires not only a knowledge of the correct term, but also an understanding of how it is related to broader and narrower terms. Finding a decimal class number requires understanding that the greater the number of digits following the decimal point, the smaller the number.²²

More important in terms of whiteness and performing whiteness, there are three chapters of rules about how to tell other people about books one has read (chaps. 25–27). Students are instructed to be concise, using as few words as possible. Chapter 25 forbids them to use “words like ‘swell,’ ‘keen,’ or ‘dumb’” and provides a list of fifty acceptable adjectives. Chapter 26 ends with a quiz that requires students to define “swell” and “keen” and explain why they should not say, “This is a swell/keen book,” and then to give five terms that would be acceptable, thus ensuring that any child who does use those words will feel shame—or perhaps a pleasurable sense of rebellion. Chapter 27 gives examples of acceptable book reviews written by students in the fourth through sixth grades, as well as one from *American Girl* magazine and one from *Boys’ Life*. In chapter 28 students are instructed to keep a record of what they have read for what can only be called a “worthwhile purpose,” in order to “keep a balance in your reading,” “to make yourself a more interesting person,” and to ensure that you read in different fields and formats, not to keep a record of favorites.

Revised and Third Editions

The revised edition was published in 1961 and the third in 1968. Most changes among the editions were to the titles of books used in examples and exercises, terms used as examples in the reference and cross-reference lessons, and to the DDC numbers, and had the effect of constructing the library as an even whiter, more American institution, reflecting even more strongly middle-class white culture. Titles of award-winning books were updated; catalog terms and subjects were changed to those of increased interest in white American popular culture (“Cowboy Stories” added as a subject and “978 The West (Cowboy stories and ranch life)” added to the DDC list). Such popular and long-running

television Westerns as *Gunsmoke*, *Bonanza*, and *Rawhide*, introduced in the late 1950s, attest to the popularity of the genre and the ubiquity of the cowboy as an American icon.

In the years following the launch of *Sputnik*, the beginning of the space race, and the escalation of the Cold War, DDC numbers reflected increased American cultural and political values, in particular in the sciences and technology, with the inclusion of numbers such as , 520 Astronomy, 530 Physics, 540 Chemistry, 560 Fossil plants and animals, 621 Radar, radio, telephone, television, 629.13 Aeronautics (Aviation), 629.14353 Space and rockets, and 629.4 Space flights. Also reflected was an increased nationalism, with more references to US history (929.9 Flags, 940–970 History of Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, 973.1, 973.2, 973.3, 973.7 US History by time period). Where the first edition informs students that “probably the largest library in the world is the French National Library in Paris, France, called Bibliothèque Nationale [*sic*] (National Library). The largest library in the United States is the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.,” the revised edition reverses the order: “The largest library in the United States is the Library of Congress. There are many other very large libraries, the British Museum, the French National Library, and the Lenin State Library in Russia.” It also gives only the English translation of the names of the libraries. The third edition eliminates any mention of our enemy in the Cold War, replacing it with our ally Germany: “The largest library in the United States is the Library of Congress. There are many other very large libraries, the British Museum, the French National Library, and the State Library in Berlin” (37).

The first edition presented book ownership as a status symbol, “Books used to be so valuable that in the old libraries they were sometimes chained to the reading desks to prevent theft,” and the revised edition asked, “Did you know that books are so valuable that for many years only kings and priests had books?” (39). It went further and made book ownership a symbol of patriotism, if not a duty, noting, “But even when Abraham Lincoln was a boy, books still cost too much for him to buy. Lincoln did not live near a library and he walked many miles to borrow books.” Damaging books is shameful and wasteful and the tone becomes rather hectoring, “Have you any idea how much work goes into making a book, even with modern methods? . . . The work of more than a hundred people goes into each book.” Finally, those who damage a book are depriving others of their right to read that book, “If you handle the book carefully, many people can read it. If you damage it, the book can never really be fixed. The work of all those people is lost.” The third

edition changed the final paragraph slightly to “You are lucky to be living in modern times when people and machines work together to make so many good books” (9–10). While the purpose seems to be to encourage children to value and care for books, the unintended consequence is that children from families of restricted financial means will avoid checking out books in fear that they may be required to repair or replace them.

It is worth noting that Mott and Baisden collaborated with two high school librarians in northern California, Jessie Boyd and Gertrude Memmler, on a similar work intended for high school students, *Books, Libraries and You*. At least three editions were issued, 1941, 1949, and 1965, although only the first and third can be located.²³ The guide includes chapters on how to write term papers as well as how to use the library. The library as constructed in this handbook is also white and middle class. The first edition refers to “the hobbies you pursue, travel” and advises students not to study when tired or hungry and to minimize distractions, all of which assume disposable income, leisure time, and a room of one’s own.²⁴ The purpose of the library is, again, utilitarian. The second chapter in both editions is titled, “The Library as a Study Asset” and the third edition refers to the “importance of obtaining an adequate education . . . and the development of many skills.”²⁵ As in the handbook written for children, the single chapter on the public library highlights the utilitarian reference and other homework-related resources of public library collections.

Both editions feature photographs of high school students using the library and its materials. The first edition only has four photographs. In three of them, a young white woman is shown reading a book; it is the same woman in two of them.²⁶ The fourth photograph only shows a white woman’s hands using the card catalog.²⁷ There are no males in any of the photographs. The third edition includes fifteen group photographs taken in school libraries and public libraries in the Sacramento area, identified by name in the captions. All of the young people are dressed in fairly conservative, mainstream clothing. The young women are wearing knee-length or longer skirts and blouses or cardigans, or dresses; the young men are wearing long slacks and button-down shirts, one or two is wearing a tie. The men all have short hair and the women the bouffant or flip hairstyle common in 1965. The same African American female, with straightened hair, appears in three of the photographs, on the title page, page 56, and page 193, and an Asian female is in one photo on page 186. There are no discernible males of color in any of the photographs.

Suggestion for Further Research

The 1961 Taiwanese edition reproduced all of the illustrations of the American edition, including the rickshaw picture, with no modifications. As far as can be determined, it included the entire text as well. It used the same book titles in the examples, even including the Roman-alphabet titles and authors' names alongside the Chinese translations. The illustrations that include words, such as cross-reference cards, catalog drawers, and encyclopedias, are still in the English language. The chapter on geography continues to describe the United States and North America. The Dutch version was heavily edited, used only a few of the illustrations, and included many of the exercises from the workbook, so retaining the original format and illustrations was not a requirement of the American publisher. By 1961 the Taiwanese government was allied with the United States and the West militarily and economically, and it would be instructive to examine whether the illustrations, titles, and so on, were retained in a deliberate attempt to westernize Taiwanese schools and school libraries along the US model and to further separate its culture from that of the communist People's Republic of China.

More research, including best practices studies, remains to be conducted in regard to how to most effectively teach information literacy in our diverse and multicultural world. Current information literacy instruction materials for school libraries, including the American Association of School Librarians' *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Libraries*, should be evaluated and examined in regard to whether and how such materials and standards promote and reinforce whiteness in school and public library information literacy instruction. Such research should extend to the high school and college library, including the Association for College and Research Libraries' current *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*.

Conclusion

For more than thirty-six years and in three different countries, *The Children's Book on How to Use Books and Libraries*, presented the American school library, and by extension the public library, as an institution designed according to the dictates of white, middle-class, American society. It did not explicitly or deliberately exclude children with disabilities, children of color, or immigrant children; it simply ignored their existence. Visually, through the illustrations, it presented library users and librarians as white and able-bodied. They wear Western-style clothing and live in middle-class homes filled with books and

modern Western-style furniture. They engage in activities that require a certain amount of disposable income and leisure time. They are affluent enough to afford to purchase books for leisure reading and to give as gifts. They are observant of the proper rules of behavior and manners of speech as dictated by middle-class white society while in the library and while talking about books. The text also celebrates American cultural values such as individualism, competition, and pragmatism and utilitarianism, and becomes increasingly patriotic and nationalistic as the Cold War heats up, marginalizing any who do not share these political values. According to the tenets of critical race theory and whiteness studies, constructing the school or public library as an institution that is designed to serve all members of the community equally requires more than merely including characters with varying skin tones and hairstyles. It requires critically analyzing the whiteness of the institution and its presentation, the subtle ways in which white culture is promoted and supported as the norm and all other races and cultures either excluded or admitted only to the extent that they assimilate into and accommodate white society. It requires that information literacy instruction librarians develop a knowledge of their communities and the social and cultural norms of those communities, in order to develop information literacy instruction programs that are inclusive and representative of those communities.

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NOTES

1. Carolyn Mott and Leo B. Baisden, *The Children's Book on How to Use Books and Libraries*, 3rd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968).

2. Chinese edition: Carolyn Mott and Leo B. Baisden, *Er tong tu shu guan xue* = *The Children's Book on How to Use Books and Libraries*, translated by Pi Zheyuan yi (Taiwan: Dong hai da xue tu shu guan, 1961); Dutch edition: Carolyn Mott and Leo B. Baisden, *De jeugd op verkenning in boek en bibliotheek*, translated by A. van der Linden-Bergstra

(’s-Gravenhage: Uitgeversfonds van de centrale vereniging voor de O.B. en de Nederlandse vereniging van bibliothecarissen, 1964).

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8. Clara Chu, “Transformative Information Services: Uprooting Race Politics,” *Proceedings of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association Conference, 19th–22nd July, 1999, Las Vegas*, 1; Honma, “Tripping over the Color Line,” 12.

9. April Hathcock, “White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS,” *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, October 7, 2015, <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/lis-diversity/>.

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17. *Ibid.*, 60, 120, 121, 134, 186, 169.

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24. Boyd et al., *Books, Libraries* (1941), 5, 7.

25. Boyd et al., *Books, Libraries* (1965), ix.

26. Boyd et al., *Books, Libraries* (1941), frontispiece, 69, 93.

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