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The need for *Reading and Teaching with Diverse Nonfiction Children's Books: Representations and Possibilities* emerges partially from the policies and mandates that ask teachers to incorporate informational texts into their K-8 classrooms. The tensions that make this collection necessary and timely are the current attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, religious freedoms, and the promotion of anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation. Edited by Thomas Crisp, Suzanne M. Knezek, and Roberta Price Gardner, this collection brings together a powerhouse of children's literature scholars to provide a valuable tool for teachers and librarians navigating the wide world of nonfiction for young readers. Each chapter offers readers thoughtful guiding questions, practical strategies, and a variety of resources, including recommended titles, book award information, and online resources. A foreword by Kathryn H. Au and a coda by Stephanie R. Toliver bookends this collection. Both detail their educational pasts to highlight two significant themes that resonate throughout each chapter of this book. First, educators might unknowingly prescribe Eurocentric views of history. Second, educators should offer broad perspectives of historical events and resist categorizing nonfiction simply as truth. The book is divided into two sections: "Part I" provides a helpful framework for evaluating power in children's nonfiction, and "Part II" contains the bulk of the collection, with each of the ten chapters focusing on specific underrepresented or minoritized groups. The editors argue that with a commitment to culturally relevant nonfiction resources, "educators are uniquely positioned to help children become critical consumers of all media" (xviii). The collection offers the historical context and tools necessary to support educators and help students develop critical literacies.

The opening chapter, "A Critical Multicultural Analysis of Power Relationships in Selected Nonfiction Picturebooks," by Vivian Yenika-Agbaw, provides a framework for

evaluating nonfiction texts. Yenika-Agbaw describes Critical Multicultural Analysis (CMA) as a framework that centers issues of power embedded within children's nonfiction texts. While she mentions four tenets of CMA, her analysis in this chapter centers one: unequal power relationships. To illustrate how reading children's nonfiction through a CMA lens might look, the author analyzes four picturebooks. Her critique of Ian Graham's 2017 picturebook *Trains* is one such example. Yenika-Agbaw utilizes CMA to better understand whose perspective is missing from this picturebook and how those missing perspectives can lead to a Eurocentric viewpoint. Within *Trains*, little discussion exists about how the railroad industry developed globally. She also notes that the contributions of Chinese immigrants to American railroad transport are entirely absent, and the impact the railroad had on Indigenous communities is also missing (10-11). The author notes that while her critique of the four titles focuses on power relationships, the titles do contain helpful information. Educators must seek to uncover silenced voices with discussion and supplemental resources. The chapter concludes with various questions and activities educators might share to implement CMA in the classroom.

Despite the slowly growing body of diverse children's nonfiction, the authors of chapters 2-6 of this volume demonstrate the urgent need for critical analysis of titles representing diverse racial and ethnic communities. These chapters discuss historical misrepresentations and exclusions and offer criteria for evaluation and potential ways to engage with nonfiction in the classroom. They also relay the importance of language in evaluating nonfiction for young readers and how language can significantly impact our understanding of history and the present. For instance, Debbie Reese and Betsy McEntarffer, in their chapter, "Indigenous Nations in Nonfiction," offer language as a valuable way to evaluate resources that share Indigenous histories. For example, the authors mention the use of *nation* as opposed to *tribe* to indicate the

sovereignty of Native nations better (48). Language is also important for evaluation and conversation in Noreen Naseem Rodríguez and Esther June Kim's chapter, "Beyond the Model Minority and Forever Foreigner: Asian American Children's Nonfiction." They mention the distinction between "internment" and "incarceration" and share that internment is a term that should only be applied to foreign nationals. "As two-thirds of the Japanese Americans who were forced to live in camps were US citizens, internment is a euphemism that denies domestic civil rights violations during World War II" (62). This example is significant in their argument about how the insidious "model minority" narrative finds its way into nonfiction by muting Asian American experiences of racism and their subsequent anti-racist activism. In addition to more fitting word choices, awareness of language use in dual language materials can play a significant role in engagement with a text. Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Ruth E. Quiroa note in "Exploring the World of Latinx Nonfiction Children's Literature" that, at times, English-centric texts might include Spanish words inaccurately or to ill effect "as in the literal (word-for-word) English translation immediately following the Spanish word(s), causing textual redundancy for bilingual readers" (27). Language use offers teachers and librarians a clear avenue for evaluating texts and potential avenues for dialogue with students.

Also, among the criteria for evaluation, many of the chapters mention interrupting enduring narratives and tropes that are problematic representations of marginalized racial and ethnic groups. In "Diverse African American Nonfiction for Children: The Challenge of Race, History and Genre," Ebony Elizabeth Thomas illustrates how much more common it is to see African Americans represented in history and realism. However, that representation can be skewed "because children's nonfiction is a primary means for the transmission of national histories, it is perhaps unsurprising that myths about the United States pervade historical

children's nonfiction" (81). The tensions between troubling histories and the upward trajectory of American history can often leave students feeling disconnected. She argues for both dialogue in the classroom and new vocabularies to consider complex historical topics that are engaging and help students connect in the present. The chapter on Latinx nonfiction provides a resource to support teacher efforts in combatting racist modern discourse through nonfiction texts. In the face of extreme anti-immigration discourse, Naidoo and Quiroa encourage teachers to share multiple texts in various formats and writing styles to relay the multitude of Latinx immigration experiences to interrupt mainstream distorted narratives (28). Reese and McEntarffer share the importance of understanding Native peoples as a part of the present day and being aware of how consistent erasure shows up in children's nonfiction. For example, they mention biographies of Indigenous historical resisters such as Sitting Bull and Chief Joseph. They write: "These leaders resisted invasions of their homelands. This resistance is why their respective nations are sovereign nations today, but our experience of reading these books is that biographers depict their resistance as doomed or tragic" (45). Biographies ending with tragedy leave out the present impact these leaders have had on their nations in the present. In Amina Chaudhri's chapter, "Cultural Dexterity through Multiracial Nonfiction," biographies make up many of the recommended texts about multiracial identity. Too often, multiracial identities are conflated into other racial categories, limiting our understanding of a growing number of people. These titles, she argues, might offer a rare opportunity for children who identify as multiracial to see themselves and their experiences reflected in books.

Chapters 7-9 consider what information about religion is shared in children's nonfiction. In chapter seven, "Religious Holidays in Nonfiction Literature for Young Children" by Denise Dávila and Sarah Elovich, the authors evaluate Scholastic's popular *Rookie Read-About Holiday*

series. This collection of thirty books for young readers details everyday activities featured during religious and secular holiday celebrations. They found that each book about a religious holiday in the series includes religious traditions practiced during that holiday, and all titles include glossaries, helpful phonetic aids, and images for young readers. However, some differences point to religious bias, such as which words are phonetically spelled out and questions posed to the reader (125). They encourage educators to deepen their and their students' understanding by pairing the titles in the series with additional books and resources. In chapter eight, "Jewish American Children's Nonfiction," Rachel Kamin and Michele Widdes also discuss the popularity of nonfiction books about food and holidays, especially in the early grades. Along with holiday titles, the authors mention titles about the Holocaust as the only time students might encounter the Jewish faith. As Thomas does in the section about African American history, Kamin and Widdes note how frequently those titles end in hopeful notes that, in turn, can ring false to students and obscure the truth of this historical tragedy (135). Kamin and Widdes encourage teachers and librarians to build robust collections to expand a narrow perspective of holiday celebrations and the Holocaust to include the additional contributions Jewish Americans have made to the US (140). Similarly, Karla J. Möller, Leila Tarakji, and Deborah J. Margolis, in "Muslim American Nonfiction Literature," discuss the need for a broader understanding of Muslim Americans and their contributions to the US to combat negative stereotypes and controlling images (149). They urge educators to seek out counter-narratives that show Muslims are diverse racially, culturally, and ethnically. All three chapters emphasize a need for a more comprehensive material selection that centers on the humanity and diversity of those practicing Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam.

Chapter 10, “Reflecting, Observing, Participating: Nonfiction Books Depicting Individuals with Disabilities,” by Sharon Black, Terrell A. Young, Mary Anne Prater, and Tina M. Taylor, provides readers with a great collection of recommended texts and essential criteria for evaluating texts that feature people with disabilities. They mention interactions and relationships as important criteria emphasizing the human experience and portraying mutual respect. One example the authors share that does this well is *Proud to Be Deaf: Discover My Community and My Language* by Ava, Lilli, and Nick Beese. Ava tells how friends at her school learned sign language to communicate with her. Additionally, the authors mention as criteria the importance of representing realistic experiences that share stories of self-determination and inclusion (171).

In the final chapter, “From the Sidelines to the Stonewall: LGBTQ+ Nonfiction for Early and Middle Grade Readers,” Jon M. Wargo and Joseph Madres assess how LGBTQ+ histories are told in children’s nonfiction. In the face of legislative violence, school bullying, and curricular exclusion, the authors use their analysis to consider what LGBTQ+ nonfiction can do in the classroom. Using primarily Stonewall Book Award winners as the basis of their critical content analysis, the authors note that the award introduces a broad scope of communities and people. However, they argue that the award winners are also “reifying the gender binary, narrowly portraying family units, privileging white lesbian and gay historical figures, or promoting marriage as a one-size-fits-all end result of queer liberation” (195). The authors end by echoing a common refrain that asks educators to be aware of which voices are silenced and which stories are excluded.

Overall, *Reading and Teaching with Diverse Nonfiction Children’s Books: Representations and Possibilities* contributes significantly to a body of educational resources that

support classroom educators and librarians. Throughout the text, the authors discuss how crucially important it is to confront personal gaps in knowledge and avoid perpetuating limited narratives by sharing a variety of texts and seeking out supplemental materials. Though more important than materials, the authors all note the importance of dialogue with students with urgent clarity. To conclude, the words that echo throughout each section come from the late Dr. Vivian Yenika-Agbaw's first chapter, that "dialogue affords us several opportunities to be more inclusive in our discourses and practices even if the dialogue might inflict a different kind of pain" (13-14).

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Works Cited

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