

## *IYDP (International Year of Disabled Persons) at Abu-Dhabi*

Following a modern educational principle which affirms that light cases of mental retardation among children need not be isolated from other normal children, the Ministry of Education in Abu-Dhabi Emirate opened in 1979, five classes each including nine children suffering from mild mental retardation, incorporated in five government schools. They were taken care of by specialists who applied recent methods of rehabilitation and succeeded in preparing those children to join the classes of their fellowmates.

A specialist in the education of abnormal children in the Social Affairs Department of Abu-Dhabi, Mrs. A. Haidar, asserts the existence of three types of mental retardation which may be identified by referring to a responsible committee of psychiatrists the cases of abnormal behavior among children. The mild type is

easily detectable and curable. Students belonging to this category should not be isolated from the group. Those of the second type, who show moderate symptoms of retardation should also be kept in ordinary schools and be made to join courses that fit their mental capacities especially those which prepare them for manual occupations.

Finally, the severe cases of mental retardation need special treatment given in institutions created for them and provided with trained specialists and modern therapeutic equipment.

The successful results achieved by those in charge of mentally disabled children in Abu-Dhabi testify to the progressive attitude adopted by this Emirate in the field of social welfare.

*From: Zahrat-ul-Khaleej, a weekly  
women's magazine, Abu-Dhabi, no. 81  
Oct. 1980, pp. 22-25.*

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## *Marguerite Yourcenar, First Woman Member of the French Academy*

Following the admission of Yvonne Choquet-Bruhat as a member of the Academy of Sciences<sup>(1)</sup>, the French Academy decided last March 1980, to elect Marguerite Yourcenar as its first woman member in replacement of the late Roger Caillois. The inauguration ceremony took place on January 22, 1981, at the palace of the «Institut de France», in presence of the President of the Republic, the Ministers, the representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and members of the five classes of the French Institute.

Daughter of a French father and a Belgian mother, Marguerite Yourcenar did not settle in France nor in Belgium but decided to travel between Greece, Italy and Switzerland and finally settled in a mountain island on the northeastern coast of the United States. Deeply versed in Greek culture, she wrote a series of biographies and novels inspired

from historical erudition as well as from her travels and her diverse culture.

In his welcome speech, Jean D'Ormesson, one of the 40 academicians, presented an evaluation of Yourcenar's works, emphasizing her contribution to universal values as shown by the following quotation from her biography of the Roman emperor Hadrian: «I never felt that I completely belonged to one particular place, not even to my dear Athens, nor even to Rome. Everywhere a stranger, I never felt isolated anywhere.»

To her, he said, we may apply the definition given by Jorge Luis Borges of a true intellectual: «A cosmopolitan who feels at home in any country and sees in any religion a possible form of worship.»

In conclusion, he suggested the following as the best description of her literary achievement: «It joins the magic of expression to erudition.»

*(Condensed from Le Figaro,  
Jan. 23, 1981, p. 28)*

(1) See Al-Raida, Aug. 1, 1980, Vo. III, No. 13, p. 11.