

trips with her family and shopping tours with her children for which she will sometimes use buses and trolleys mainly to acquaint the youngsters with various types of vehicles used in public transportation. Otherwise, her interests are in the home, and the efficiency she displays at the different jobs is nothing less than uncanny. In short, she is the perfect mother and housekeeper.

There are usually no more than two or three children in the Textbook Town family, with the age spacing among them fairly close. No adult brothers or sisters are ever seen, nor is Mother ever pregnant, though at times there appears an infant who is referred to simply as "Baby." Each child, like his parents, is clean, neatly dressed, robust, and happy. Each sleeps in his own bed, or may even have his private bedroom. As might also be expected, the Textbook Town youngster fills much of the day with play, inviting his brother or sister as well as other children in the neighborhood to join with him and share the use of a large assortment of toys and sports equipment. These friends never come from color or ethnic groups since Textbook Town is populated exclusively by white American families.

In addition to indulging in play activities, the children are often seen helping Father and Mother as best they can in various simple chores. Their relationships with their parents are extremely happy. The family will play together, surprise one another with birthday gifts, and generally enjoy each other's company. There are brief instances when gloom intrudes upon this otherwise happy atmosphere, especially on those occasions when the family's beloved pet dog disappears, but these frustration spans are painlessly short for the reader. As for the possibility of graver causes of anxiety, such as sickness and inadequate food supply, there need be no fear on that account. Nothing is ever allowed to interfere seriously with the spirit of joy, security, and cooperativeness that dominates family living in Textbook Town.

*Conclusions with reference to the general character of reading materials in use*

From the foregoing data there can be no doubt that Textbook Town resembles most closely an upper middle-class community and as such fails by a wide margin to typify the environments of most primary grade pupils, particularly children from the lower-class. It is probable too that the lower-class child's everyday life realities are derogated by comparison to what he sees in his "reader." Yet it is precisely this world of "sweetness and light" wherein he is expected to seek familiar allusions to his out-of-school experiences and proceed from there to a better understanding of his adjustment needs at home and in the community.

One might reasonably suppose that many schools accept the illustrations as giving a child's-eye view of his world. Teachers need to understand the child's mental image of his environment as a starting point for organizing a Social Studies program, and the reading texts help vivify it for them. To be sure, this impression is gained by the teacher from a great many sources, and not from the illustrations alone. But perhaps no other single instrument crystalizes it as clearly and faithfully for both teacher and pupil as the illustrated reading text. Need we wonder then, why the lower-class child is so feebly motivated toward a Social Studies program that is built upon such unreal premises? No structured reference could possibly be so unrelated to his familiar surroundings as the graceful veneer of community life he sees in his reading text.

Even the middle-class child is not likely to find much value in reading about Textbook Town, for he too sees little realism in the illustrations and even less adventure in the narrative. Whatever interest he may display in studying his text is probably stimulated more by the hope for approval from parents and teachers than by content alone.

*Suggestions for the achievement of "cultural fairness"*

How, then, might story material be developed to symbolize real and meaningful experiences for elementary school children? Possibly the classroom teacher can best do the job since she is in the most strategic spot to know her reading audience. This understanding of the group involves more than just a random anticipation of its reading tastes. It is based rather upon a deep, sympathetic insight into the individualities of her children, each with his special cluster of needs and interests. Especially in the case of the lower-class child, whose cultural disciplines are so vastly different from her own, she must learn something about his physical surroundings at home and in his neighborhood; the system of social values and behaviors that are adaptive in his culture; and also the unique language interpretations he brings with him into the classroom. Having gained this knowledge, she is able to establish a basis for communicating with him