

effectively, whether it be through the narrative medium, or in any other instructional experience, for that matter. She alone enjoys enough contact with her children to dip into their significant experiences and reflect them through original storybook settings, plots, and characterizations.

Involved in this personalized approach to developing story material in the elementary school is the child's own potential for working creatively in this direction. Given proper guidance in self-expression he too can produce original stories that fit his interests perfectly. Children often seek the opportunity to tell and write about their experiences and should be encouraged to do so by classroom teachers whenever possible. Through such activity they are bound to create the kind of story content that would enliven their interest in reading as well as provide the school with vital source material for its Social Studies program.

The substance for an improved children's literature is to be found, therefore, only in the child's real world. Only he can provide the leadership for selecting ideas and experiences that ought to be recorded in story and used as text. The teacher who is sensitive to the realities of his environment can structure a classroom program in which reading matter is tailor-made to suit his needs. She can make it possible to achieve the kind of reality-interpretation that is so sorely missing in illustrated storybooks for children, and in that way open up wider opportunities for bringing the child's world into the classroom. Such efforts would indeed render useless our so-called "graded readers." For Textbook Town, with its bland style of living, is nothing more than an idealized middle-class community where characters are mere shadows, and where nothing exciting or of real importance ever happens. To the lower-class child it looms as a "never-never world" that may excite in him vague dreams for attainment, but which will probably elude him forever. He finds it only slightly less improbable than the fairyland he encounters in fables, except that the plots and characters in the latter type of literature are far more memorable.

Briefly stated, then, the findings in the present study point up the need for injecting more realism into children's literature. This is, in a sense, a departure from the feelings of many teachers who seek to protect their pupils from the travails of the outside world. These well-meaning educators work on the assumption that the classroom is a place for only happy thoughts and experiences, where children whose environments afford them few childhood joys can find real contentment. Much that we see in the modern classroom evidently reflects this happiness motif.

There can be no arguing the fact that a teacher's efforts at achieving such a comforting atmosphere are sincere and oftentimes successful. Nevertheless, it would be folly to suppose that by ignoring the rougher aspects of the child's experiences we are minimizing their effects upon his personality. The child reacts in some way to all environmental pressures, whether they be good or bad, and in so doing he learns something from all of them. Indeed, the school that takes upon itself merely to shelter him from the adversities of life for a few hours in the day is not necessarily helping him face his problems. What he needs is guidance, not escape. He would welcome the opportunity for giving a true account of himself and his culture if he felt assured that the school centered its sharpest focus upon the problems of his social life. Were our schools to set their sights in this direction, it would undoubtedly result in a closer bondship between teachers and pupils and a better mutual understanding of their respective roles in the educative process. Perhaps a first step toward achieving this reality-interpretation in modern education might well come through an improved children's literature that does not filter out the social realities of the child's world in the manner of our modern reading texts.

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