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AN EXAMINATION OF THE LITERARY
QUALITY OF TWO READING SCHEMES

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NIGEL BRUCE WATERS
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ABSTRACT

Learning to read is one of the most crucial life tasks that the young child must acquire whilst in primary school. In modern society, much of what one does is dependant on having the ability to read. While a great deal of research has focused on how children learn to read, relatively little attention has been paid to the literary quality of the material the children are exposed to whilst learning to read.

In the past few years I have become increasingly concerned with the number of teachers who use material designed for teaching children to read without being aware of the literary quality of the material. While numerous teachers are aware of the issues surrounding the learning to read debate and use up to date materials to teach reading, far too many accept the material supplied by the school without questioning its literary merit and its impact upon the young reader.

This piece of research is an attempt to evaluate the literary quality of two reading schemes currently in use in Cape Education Department schools. The chief conclusion of the research is that the schemes examined fall far short of the standards required for them to be considered good literature. Although the research is limited to two reading schemes, it is hoped that a teacher using other schemes could use the framework supplied in this study to examine the literary quality of the material she is using.

Furthermore, the final chapter offers suggestions as to how to replace material of poor literary quality with books of a higher literary standard.

On the basis of the above findings it is suggested that there is a need for individual teachers, schools, teacher training institutions and the Cape Education Department to examine the literary quality of reading schemes and books that are used in the process of teaching children to read. It is hoped that this piece of research will create a greater awareness amongst teachers of the literary quality of reading materials and prompt further research into such materials that will be of benefit to the central character in this study; the young child learning to read.

CHAPTER ONEBACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

"It is not difficult to make reading impossible."

(Smith F. 1978 p. vii).

Introduction.

One of the main concerns in the junior primary departments of schools, must be that of teaching the pupils to read. Exactly how each school goes about performing this task leads to a myriad of different ideas, approaches and schemes, varying from strictly schematised and controlled systems to highly individualised and open systems. Considerable debate exists about which approaches are the most effective in teaching children to read, as well as the merits and demerits of particular reading schemes. The phonics and look/say approaches for example, have been seriously questioned by researchers such as Southgate V. and Roberts G. 1970; Fry E. 1977; Smith F. 1978; Bennett J. 1979; Farr R. and Roser N. 1979; Flesch R. 1981; Wade B. 1982 and Wolcott P. 1982. (For an interesting summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the various approaches refer to Annexure One).

It is suggested however, that there is no simple authoritative solution. Most approaches have some value. Most claim they are

successful in achieving the immediate goal of teaching children to read. As Frank Smith points out:

"In the two-thousand year recorded history of reading instruction ... no-one has devised a method of teaching reading that has not proved a success with some children ... no method succeeds with all children ... in some circumstances therefore all methods can interfere with reading ... nothing could possibly be invented that is significantly better than or even different from the methods and materials we have always had available."

(Smith F. 1978 pp. 4-5).

Roger Farr and Nancy Roser add that "no one knows a best way." (Farr R. and Roser N. 1979 p. 15). Reading cannot be confined to a particular approach or reading scheme. John Hughes states that "it is the teacher's responsibility" to have a knowledge of "various methods in order to choose and use the most appropriate", (Hughes J. 1975 p. 13) while Donald Moyle concludes:

"In our present state of knowledge there is no known correct or perfect way to approach the teaching of reading."

(Moyle D. 1976 p. 25).

The implications beyond the immediate goal of learning to read are vast. Although each approach may argue that they have found the best way of teaching children to read, one needs to examine what else that approach teaches children about reading. In the

words of Margaret Meek:

"What the beginning reader reads makes all the difference to his view of reading."

(Meek M. 1982 p.11).

The concern of this study, then, centres on the literary quality of the text used by the beginning reader. Two reading schemes, Janet and John and Kathy and Mark, will be examined in terms of whether their text is of a literary quality that is likely to promote reading. The quality of the books used by the beginning reader is seen as a critical factor. Finding and presenting the right books to the children is important. As Margaret Meek points out:

"If you like books and reading, you will help your child to learn. Begin by believing that he or she will learn if you can find the time and the books. It is as simple as that and as difficult."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 7).

One would hope that three of the four factors stated by Meek could be accepted as given when applying the above statement to junior primary teachers. That is, the teachers should like books and reading, should believe that the children are capable of learning to read, and should have the time to guide and assist them in this very important process. That leaves the fourth factor, the central and crucial issue, the books. This raises

the question of which books will be the most effective in assisting the child in the process of learning to read. One also needs to consider which books will continue to interest the child in reading and literature beyond the beginning stages. Most reading schemes adopt the view that they provide the framework or aids for the teacher and that it is the role and function of the teacher to teach the child to read. I feel that this may be a misnomer in view of the fact that although it is vital for the teacher to equip the child with skills necessary to the reading process, the reading book should capture the child's imagination and interest. The problem may be that teachers stress skills, rather than concern themselves with the literary quality of the text. As to why this is so, Smith speculates that:

"... the training of teachers often seems to assume that the problem is instruction - that teachers should be told what they should do rather than what they should know."

(Smith F.1978 p. 2).

Chall indicates that teacher's manuals further emphasize the instructional aspects of a reading approach and poses the question, "does the teacher herself need so much guidance in teaching?" (Chall J. 1967 p. 260). It follows that if one wants children to become readers, they must be exposed to books of literary quality, rather than dwell on the dull mechanics of a contrived, stereotyped scheme. The reading material provided is central, the foremost purpose of reading being enjoyment, followed by incidental skill learning and consolidation. Frank

Smith sums up this line of argument by stating:

"Two basic necessities for learning to read are the availability of interesting reading material that makes sense to the learner and an understanding adult as a guide."

(Smith F. 1978 pp. 5-6).

A teacher with an understanding of how children become readers, will have a great advantage over a teacher solely equipped with reading instruction skills. Bonnie Smith Schulwitz, in an article headed The teacher : fostering interest and achievement, indicates that the teacher's role is largely that of supplying "motivation and creating and sustaining interest in reading." (Smith Schulwitz B. from Ollila L. (Ed.) 1977 p. 54). Children should be exposed to relevant, interesting and exciting reading material. A teacher cannot presuppose that a child with a sound knowledge of the mechanics of reading will become an avid reader. It could be that this type of reader is able to follow the text but without understanding. The desire to read must be inculcated in the children with the provision of high interest and relevant reading material, suited to their reading level and psychological development. Anne Baker, in an article entitled Developing reading with juniors, summarizes the role of the teacher in the reading process:

"An important part of my role is to make available written language that is meaningful to the children and to help them to get to know it by sharing it with them ... (and) to create time and space for the children to read."

(Baker A. from Moon C. (Ed.) 1985 p. 16). (Italics mine)

The teacher makes it possible for the children to learn to read rather than try to 'teach' them to read.

An examination of the schools context.

(a) The official viewpoint.

It will be shown in a small sample of Eastern Cape schools that the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes are used. The Cape Education Department (hereafter abbreviated to C.E.D.), would appear to allow schools a choice of reading approaches and schemes. In the foreword to the 1984 Cape education department teachers' guide for English (first language) junior primary phase, the then Director of Education, Mr H. A. Lambrechts describes the child's learning to read as being "miraculous". (C.E.D. Guide 1984 p. 1). Although one can ascribe the use of

the word to the tradition of erudite language in the foreword to C.E.D. handbooks it is necessary to question the extent to which C.E.D. policy aids the 'miracle' of learning to read. One of the specific aims in the introduction to the Guide states as follows:

"To develop in the pupil an ability to read with understanding of what he reads, so that reading may become a source, not only of profitable information, but of real pleasure."

(C.E.D. Guide 1984 p. 3).

It is heartening to note the emphasis on the principle of reading for pleasure, but to what extent does the reading section of the Guide allow for the fulfilment of this specific aim? The Guide is positive in its approach, leaving much of the decision making up to the junior primary staff of each school. This point is emphasised by the Director of Education, in his statement that:

"Far from this Guide being prescriptive it is hoped that it will stimulate our teachers and students to fresh thinking, to experimentation, to refining or discarding and that ultimately it will lead to a fresh sense of fulfilment in the teaching of English in the Junior Primary Phase."

(C.E.D. Guide 1984 p. 2).

The section of the Guide dealing with reading appears to indicate that no specific reading schemes have to be used. (It will be noted on pages 13 and 14 of this study that schools are not free to do this in terms of the official approved list of books). However, the Guide does focus on specific content to be covered, which may also inhibit the school's free choice. The reading skills of word identification, phonics and syllabification have to be taught. The teacher may then choose from three different approaches, namely, the language experience approach, pictures with limpet labels approach and a pre-determined language progression approach. Although the Guide recommends that other approaches be tried where a pupil experiences difficulty with an approach being used, the school often does not have the resources available to use more than one approach. The freedom allowed in the language experience approach using the Breakthrough to literacy apparatus is deceptive because C.E.D. policy limits the reading material available to the pupils. The Guide states that the school must be "committed to providing an abundance of easy reading material" (p. 65), but little of this "appropriate, unstilted reading matter" (p. 65) appears on approved booklists. (See page 14 for further details). As a result, financial considerations force the schools to use approved books, usually from reading schemes or their supplementary readers instead of 'real' children's literature. As a consequence the Guide cites the use of Kathy and Mark as a source of "good evaluation material" (p. 67). Thus, though the concept of providing 'easy reading material' is a good one, when it comes to reading books, the C.E.D. approved

lists lead to the use of uninteresting, stereotyped reading scheme books in the place of 'real' books. The second approach mentioned in the Guide, namely the use of pictures with limpet labels, has a similar background and structure to the approach mentioned above. Thus the problems outlined above with regard to the availability of suitable reading material beyond the beginner stage are analogous in both approaches.

The third suggested approach recommended in the Guide is the most limiting in that it requires specific reading material from the very beginning of the pupils process of learning to read. The predetermined language progression reading schemes, in particular Kathy and Mark and Janet and John, form the basis of this study. It is my contention that much of the content of such schemes is outdated, stereotyped, mundane and irrelevant to the pupils and that the C.E.D., far from condoning the use of these outdated schemes, should actively be encouraging a move towards either more realistic, relevant and up to date schemes or individualised reading. Yet the C.E.D. attitude is strangely ambivalent. While recognising the inadequacies of such schemes, the Guide and other C.E.D. publications continue to recommend the use of such material. In the introduction to The teaching of reading section in the Guide, one of the major factors mentioned which may retard or inhibit reading is that of the "lack of book involvement". (p. 52). The Guide states that many children are not exposed to books, read to, and have no pleasurable associations with books. The next comment made in the Guide

seems contradictory:

"Emphasis is often placed on acquiring reading skills and reading becomes a task. The enjoyment of the story and the excitement of decoding is overlooked. Today's child is growing up in a milieu of exciting visual media - colour television, beautifully illustrated books and magazines, colourful advertisements. By contrast school readers are often dull in appearance and in content."

(Italics mine)
(p. 53).

Yet the C.E.D. continues to recommend the use of these dull, unexciting readers, despite their own acknowledgment of the scheme books major shortcomings. Additional limitations of scheme readers are indicated elsewhere in the Guide. The Guide admonishes the teacher to:

"... be mindful of the fact that all the material pertaining to such of a series consists of language that has been distorted to fit the vocabulary ... there is a clear distinction between the language in these books and that of the independent story book."

(p. 71).

And again:

"... children only learn to read by reading and the limitations of these texts have a restricting and harmful effect on the learner if he is exposed to no other."

(p. 72).

The insistence on the use of readers that by the C.E.D.'s own admission are likely to have a harmful and restricting effect on the learner, is incomprehensible, even if the C.E.D. states that:

"... the teacher must ensure that pupils gain experience from texts other than those composed of 'reading book language'."

(C.E.D. Guide 1984 p. 72).

Surely the harmful aspects of reading scheme books remain, despite the 'real' books supplement to the young child's reading diet? The contrast between the two types of book reinforces the idea that scheme readers are not 'real' books and yet the pupils are required to read them. This approach could very easily lead to a lack of interest in reading as the child is forced through a series of readers before 'real' books are allowed to be read. Linda Ashworth, in an article entitled Teaching infants to read, expresses the view that:

"Literature is a great motivator. Adults and children alike love a good story ..."

(Ashworth L. from Moon C. (Ed.) 1985 p. 12).

Without good literature there is little motivation to continue reading. A young reader can be lost to reading for life without ever having been exposed to a good story.

However, the learning to read debate cannot be seen merely as a reading scheme versus 'real' books issue. Within the reading scheme category there is a vast range of schemes. The date of publication, place of publication and content all influence the topicality and interest levels of the books in the various schemes. Often the framework in various schemes is similar:

"These reading schemes normally encompass a serial type story of a family with a mother and father, sisters and brothers and often a cat and a dog."

(C.E.D. Guide 1984 p. 67).

With a stereotyped framework these books cannot hope to match 'real' books. (See Chapter Three for more detail of character stereotypes). It is the intention of this study to show that the language is contrived and frequently meaningless. The focus of attention in the look/say approach is on the child learning certain words by repetition rather than gaining meaning from the text. The following incident from the Kathy and Mark scheme serves as an example:

"See the ball.
It can go up.
See it go up.
The ball is up.
It is up and in."

(Kathy and Mark Book One 1966 pp. 18 - 19).

Yet the Guide clearly states that:

"Unless the reader is gaining meaning from the print, he will be unable to assimilate the (contextual) cues the text provides."

(C.E.D. Guide 1984 p. 79).

How can the child possibly gain meaning from passages such as the one cited above?

Two of the schemes that have been used extensively in C.E.D. schools in the past decade are Janet and John and Kathy and Mark. These schemes exhibit classic stereotyped characteristics found in so many of the readers. I have chosen to focus on these two schemes because they are still used in schools today. One needs to examine why they are used, both from the C.E.D. viewpoint and the viewpoints of the various schools - the viewpoints not necessarily being concomitant.

The C.E.D. viewpoint can only be gleaned from official documents, since definite reticence is shown towards issuing comment on C.E.D. policy. In the official C.E.D. Guide, Janet and John and Kathy and Mark are the most frequently mentioned predetermined language progression approach reading schemes. Departmental approval of certain schemes is indicated in the C.E.D. List of approved books. Individual schools purchasing reading scheme books that appear on the List of approved books can do so from the funds in the school's yearly text-book allocation. Purchasing reading material not on the

List of approved books has to be paid for out of school funds. Wherever possible, schools purchase books on the List of approved books because of financial considerations and the system of C.E.D. approval. The Kathy and Mark scheme, together with the schemes supplementary readers appears on the C.E.D. List of approved books, but the Janet and John scheme has recently been removed. (See Annexure Three). The removal of Janet and John implies a withdrawal of C.E.D. approval of the scheme (though no official comment on the move could be obtained). This has little bearing on the schemes existing and continuing use in the classroom. The only way to eradicate the use of such a scheme is for the C.E.D. to declare it outdated and redundant and insist on its removal from use in the classroom.

(b) In the classroom.

Although C.E.D. views influence classroom practice, financial considerations and decisions about reading policy, made up to three decades ago, dominate the approach to reading in junior primary classrooms. Due to the official attitude of the C.E.D. towards classroom research, it is difficult for any meaningful large scale research into reading policy in C.E.D. schools to be done, as the C.E.D. choose to conduct any research of this nature internally. In the school in which I teach we are presently investigating the reading policy in order to improve upon the approaches used. To this end, I sent a letter to twenty three

C.E.D. schools in the Eastern Cape to ascertain which reading schemes are being used in the English medium schools. (See Annexure Two for a copy of the letter). While the responses to the letter cannot be seen as representative of all C.E.D. schools, it does give some idea of the types of schemes used and the motivations for the use of such schemes. Given the limitations, it is nevertheless clear that the Janet and John scheme is still in use despite withdrawal from the List of approved books.

The intention of the letter was to ascertain which reading schemes schools were using and why they were using them. For without some knowledge of the fact the Kathy and Mark and Janet and John schemes are used in classrooms in C.E.D. schools in the Eastern Cape, an examination of the relevance of these books becomes little more than an academic exercise. The schemes in use in the sixteen schools that returned the letter can be seen in Table One:

TABLE ONE

READING SCHEMES IN USE IN A SAMPLE OF ENGLISH MEDIUM C.E.D. SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE:

<u>NAME OF SCHEME</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WHO USE IT AS THEIR MAIN SCHEME</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WHO USE IT AS A SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEME</u>
Janet and John	1	6,25	5
Kathy and Mark	8	50	1
Happy Venture	3	18,75	5
Beacon	1	6,25	2
Ginn Reading 360	1	6,25	-
Wide Range	-	-	4
Lady Bird	-	-	1
Breakthrough	-	-	2
Gay-Way	-	-	3
Individualised	-	-	3
Link Up	1	6,25	1
Beehive	1	6,25	1

Letter sent to 23 schools.
Number of replies received : 16

From Table One it is clear that Janet and John, Happy Venture and Kathy and Mark feature prominently in the lists of schemes used. Although Janet and John is only used as the main scheme in one school, it still features strongly as a supplementary scheme. Thus despite removal from the C.E.D. List of approved books, Janet and John continues to be used fairly widely. Kathy and Mark is used as a main scheme by eight, or half of the

schools that replied to the letter. The next most popular main scheme is Happy venture, used as the main scheme in three schools. It is interesting to note that the Ginn Reading 360 scheme, the most modern and topical of the schemes presently approved by the C.E.D., is only used in one of the C.E.D. schools that replied to the letter. As far as I was able to ascertain from various C.E.D. authorities, this school is the only school in the Cape using Ginn Reading 360, although others are in the process of purchasing and implementing the scheme.

Of more significance and interest than the statistics of which schemes are in use, are the reasons why the schools use specific schemes. From the replies received, it is obvious that academically sound educational criteria do not necessarily have precedence when choices are made about which reading schemes to use. A number of schools use schemes that were purchased many years ago. When the decisions to purchase these schemes were made, it is fair to assume that the schemes purchased were justifiably chosen on sound educational grounds. However, schemes that were considered up to date and relevant twenty years ago, could very well be considered outdated now.

One school emphasized this aspect in their reply. In giving reasons for the use of the Kathy and Mark and Janet and John schemes, the school stated that "they seemed the best choice at the time". Unfortunately, in most cases, too much time elapses before more modern and up to date schemes are considered. A

number of schools indicated the specific reason for not revising their reading policy was that of finance. Comments such as "If funds allowed ...", "No funds to change ..." and "If costs permitted ..." are disturbing in that they are indicative of the financial considerations that dominate modern educational policy. It is unfortunate that finance can play such a central role in determining the content of courses that involve the crucial life task of learning to read. An allied, and just as disturbing, factor mentioned by three heads of junior primary departments was that of having their hands tied by decisions taken before their arrival at the schools. Frustration, and perhaps indifference, is evident in comments such as "Scheme in use when I started here ...", "It was in use in the school ..." and "Were in use in the school ...". The reasons for using certain reading schemes, as mentioned above, can be considered, at least in part, beyond the individual teachers' ability to change. However, one must believe that it is within the power of a dynamic head of department to change the reading policy at a school, should it be deemed necessary to do so.

Of more concern are those teachers who unquestioningly accept the validity of the schemes in use. Although the suitability of many of the schemes can be questioned, focus of attention will be restricted to Janet and John and Kathy and Mark, since these are the two schemes that will be examined in greater detail at a later point in this study. Two schools saw the Kathy and Mark scheme as being "Bright and modern" with "Interesting themes for modern pupils". A further three schools considered

Kathy and Mark to be "a good basic scheme" as it has "a simple text and lots of repetition of new words". Janet and John is used largely as a supplementary scheme, but is also considered by some as "suitable for very weak pupils" and is used by another school for evaluation purposes. A further school uses the scheme as individualised readers. The value of these schemes to the beginner reader, for whichever of the above purposes they are used, seems not to be questioned by the schools. The possibility that the schemes may be outdated or lack relevance in the modern South African setting is not entertained. Despite the above responses, the validity of these schemes is questionable. The wide use and acceptance of both the Kathy and Mark and Janet and John schemes in Eastern Cape, C.E.D. schools demands an examination of the literary merits and the validity of the approach to reading used in these schemes.

Suggestions will be made in the next section as to the criteria to be examined when assessing the literary merits of children's fiction. This is to be followed by a brief rationale of why the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes were chosen as the basis for this study. Chapters two, three and four deal with specific criteria for the examination of children's literature. In the final chapter the practical implication of this study will be investigated in greater detail.

What constitutes good literature for children? The criteria.

"Reading is learned by reading."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 11).

"Mediocre books build laziness in young readers."

(Carlson R. in Norton D. 1983 p. 78).

Having established that Kathy and Mark and Janet and John are in fairly general use in Eastern Cape C.E.D. schools and having outlined official C.E.D. policy in this regard, I now undertake to examine these schemes. The essence of this investigation is not one of whether the two schemes can be considered good in terms of the phonics vs. look/say debate, but whether they have a recognisable intrinsic quality in terms of criteria that may result in a child experiencing a measure of delight that is likely to result in that child wanting to read books outside the reading schemes. If it is found that the scheme does not have these qualities, and it is the only or main instrument being used by a teacher to introduce a child to reading, it remains for other researchers to consider the outcome of this situation.

When examining what constitutes good literature for children, certain universal standards apply. Interpretations differ and views on whether a specific book can be considered good

literature could rage on endlessly. Nevertheless, certain recognisable, intrinsic qualities make a good story what it is. How does one universalise and clarify these qualities into generally acceptable criteria by which all children's literature can be judged? Charlotte Huck begins to answer this question by stating that two questions need to be considered. Firstly, "What is literature?" and secondly, "What literature is appropriate for children?" (Huck C. 1976 p. 4). Huck answers the first question in the following manner:

"Literature is the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language. The province of literature is the human condition; life with all its feelings, thoughts and insights."

(p. 4).

To define what constitutes children's literature based on this broad definition becomes a more complex task. Huck illustrates the very blurred distinction between children's literature and adult's literature in the simplest possible terms:

"... a child's book is a book a child is reading, and an adult book is a book occupying the attention of an adult."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 5).

Since the beginning of the 20th century more and more books have been written specifically for children. In recent years, the communication and resultant knowledge explosion has influenced

the type of books written for children to a large extent:

"Children today are more sophisticated and knowledgeable than any other generation of their age has been ... the mass media has brought him the vicarious and daily experiences of crime, poverty, war, sex, divorce and murder."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 5).

While such exposure has led adults to re-examine what can be considered appropriate literature for children, the content of children's literature must always be aimed at the experience and understanding of children. Literature must not hide truth from children but rather expose them to the truths of life within the realm of their emotional, psychological and intellectual capabilities. Good literature for children conveys an understanding of who the child reader is. Glazer and Williams quote Peter Abbs' suggestion that:

"In writing for children an author must return to the child in himself. He must reexperience the world as if anew, with all the vulnerable freshness of a child, all the simplicity and uncertainty of a child and with an openness to the unconscious..."

(Abbs P. in Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 22).

An author of children's literature needs to be as skilled as an author of adult literature. The fundamental elements of excellence in writing remain the same, the only variation being that in children's literature, the subject matter needs to be

adapted to fit within the child's frame of reference. Despite the universality of all literature, children's literature can be seen as unique in that it addresses a specific audience, the child.

Evaluating children's literature.

Huck emphasizes the necessity of extending the child's discriminatory powers beyond the emotional level, although the child's initial response to the literature will be from within the affective domain. Children need to discover what constitutes a well written book and to differentiate between a well written and poorly written book. Norton elaborates:

"If merit rather than mediocrity is to be part of the literature experience, both children and adults need opportunities to read, discuss, discover, and evaluate literature."

(Norton D. 1983 p. 78).

Specialized criteria need to be applied to different types of literature and as Huck says, it is important for the "children to identify the kind of book they are reading in order to apply the appropriate criteria for evaluation." (Huck C. 1976 p. 6). A core of generally agreed upon criteria apply when evaluating children's fiction. (See Glazer J. and Williams G.

1979 pp. 22 - 33; Tiedt I. 1979 p. 18; Heeks P. 1981 pp. 49 - 52; Norton D. 1983 pp. 78 - 101; Moon C. (Ed.) 1985 p. 61; Chambers A. 1985 pp. 14 - 33). While there can always be some debate as to the inclusion of certain criteria in this list and the exclusion of others, such a debate is not the purpose of this dissertation. For want of means of assessing whether the books in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark reading schemes are likely to entice a child into the world of literature, I will be using Huck's criteria as set out below:

"The basic considerations for the evaluation of fiction for children are a well constructed plot that moves, a significant theme, authentic setting, convincing characterization, appropriate style and attractive format."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 15).

It is worth noting that much of the literature published concerning learning to read and reading schemes does not entertain the question of literary standards. (See Munro R. 1954 pp. 1 - 19; Hughes J. 1975 pp. 96 - 98; Moyle D. 1976 pp. 142 - 144; Ollila L. (Ed.) 1977 pp. 71 - 74; Farr R. and Roser N. 1979 pp. 422 - 493). The focus of attention is frequently on the readability of various schemes, dealing largely with print size, readers age and ability, sentence levels, discourse levels, language, syntax, semantics and other non-literary criteria. The above criteria obviously have a role to play in determining what good literature is, but they do not focus on the story line as such. Even the authoritative work Reading - which approach? by

Southgate and Roberts (1970) focuses on the production, scope, structural and functional competence and cost of the materials for reading schemes. The question of literary excellence is raised, but unlike other issues discussed in this work, no framework is provided to guide the teacher to assess the literary standards of the scheme. (See Southgate V. and Roberts G. 1970 pp. 91-97). The focus of attention in this type of literature is on the scheme which leads to comparisons between schemes, but rarely between scheme books and other fiction for children. The impression often created is that reading scheme books can be absolved from meeting the standards of literary excellence simply because they are scheme books. The overriding criterion in the compilation of these schemes is that of teaching the child to read, rather than interest, motivation and literary standards. It is this type of narrow approach that has led to much criticism being levelled against reading schemes in general.

Claims that many reading schemes are outdated, irrelevant, contrived, stereotyped, restrictive, mechanistic and lacking in interest abound. Jill Bennett, for example, introduces her booklet, Learning to read with picture books by levelling a wide-ranging criticism at the reading scheme approach:

"As I see it, reading is not about look-say, word-by-word decoding, phonic analysis or a progression from one boring non-story to another through a reading scheme whose controlled vocabulary must be slavishly followed."

(Bennett J. 1979 p. 5).

Margaret Meek follows the same line of argument, stating that reading is learned by reading:

"The biggest mistake we make is in giving the five-year-old the notion that you learn to read by a series of exercises, like scales in music, and then you are rewarded with a 'real' book or 'real' reading in another form."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 11).

The implication of the above statement is that the graded reading schemes are not 'real' books or 'real' reading material. Despite the fact that the more recently published schemes have a greater variety of content, higher interest levels and not especially contrived language, Meek says:

"... there is little virtue in most reading scheme books, as books. No child would dream of reading book three more than once, and no one would keep it as a book to possess and return to. At the best, the reading scheme is to be passed through and forgotten."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 67).

And again:

"Literature makes readers in a way that reading schemes never can. But teachers are still reluctant to trust their instincts in this because the weight of school pressures actually forces them to believe that beginners are to be given texts that no self-respecting author would ever compose."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 68).

Meek clearly believes that reading scheme books do not match up to the criteria for good literature. Critics of the reading scheme approach argue that the child is well aware of the difference between scheme books and 'real' books. Heather Somerwill, in an article entitled Reading for real, cites Rebecca as an example:

"Rebecca, whose mother is a teacher, tells us in no uncertain terms. Her mother wanted to 'check' her progress. So Rebecca dutifully read several scheme books successfully then asked 'Can I read a proper book now mummy?!'"

(Somerwill H. March 1986 Child education p. 43).

Criticism of specific reading schemes too, has been widespread in recent years. Janet and John and Kathy and Mark in particular have had the attention of some scathing criticism. However, much of this criticism tends to be of a general nature, with little reference to specific criteria, such as Huck's, for the evaluation of children's literature. Betty Root, in an University of Reading publication, Learning to read, lists and comments on the contents of twenty three reading schemes. With reference to Janet and John she says:

"... very dated and extremely middle class. Almost all the books use a contrived language and a story line is totally absent in all the main readers ... Janet and John is just history now."

(Root B. Learning to read undated p. 14).

Though Janet and John is 'just history' in Britain, it still seems to be very much part of the present system in C.E.D. schools in South Africa. Where it is now acknowledged that Janet and John was not the complete answer to a reading scheme, Root indicates that the Kathy and Mark scheme has not succeeded either:

"Although twenty years separates Kathy and Mark from Janet and John the former is as dated now as the latter. All the readers lack imaginative stories thus making the task for the young reader particularly arduous and also by implication suggesting that early readers have to be boring and repetitive."

(Root B. Learning to read undated p. 14).

Root and Jack, in another University of Reading publication, A survey of reading schemes (1983), state that Janet and John became the dominant look/say scheme in Britain by the late 1950's. Elizabeth Goodacre's survey of reading schemes in use (1969), confirmed that Janet and John was being used by more than eighty percent of infant schools. Root and Jack quote Margaret Peters statement that:

"... , 'as vehicles of meaning these schemes (look/say) were a complete failure; as stimulants to literacy they were disastrous.' And yet they survive to this day."

(Root B. and Jack A. 1983 p. 9).

Despite these forceful arguments against the use of reading schemes by the likes of Smith, Bennett, Root and Meek, much confusion still surrounds the selection of suitable reading material for the beginner reader. No statistics are available for South Africa, but in Britain, a recent survey (1987) of Child education readers has indicated that sixty percent of British schools still have a mixture of reading schemes, while only fourteen percent use the individual approach. (February 1987 Child education pp. 10-11). Whether the situation is the same in South Africa is open to conjecture. From the brief survey of Eastern Cape, C.E.D. schools, it is evident that no schools use an exclusively individual approach, although a number use it in conjunction with various reading schemes. The reasons for not changing to an individual approach will be investigated in the final chapter, but it is clear that there are problems, be they real or imagined, with the use of an individual approach. The confusion surrounding the selection of reading material is epitomised in this account of a situation observed by Margaret Meek:

"In a corner, a man on his own is taking books off the shelves and putting them back with barely a glance. Two young assistants try to help, but can't get into contact. A third, more steadfast, asks him the age of the child he is choosing a book for.

'Ten,' says the man, 'but he's not a good reader. I'm looking for something to help him.'

The assistant selects The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe from a shelf of paperbacks.

'All ten-year-olds seem to like this.'

The man looks at a few pages.

'Isn't it a bit long and old-fashioned?'

'Well this then?' The assistant offers Silver's Revenge.

'I don't think he's even read Treasure Island. Anyway, he couldn't manage that!'

'Oh, I thought you were going to read to him.'

'Not really. I want him to learn to read. They don't seem to be doing much about it at school and he never brings a book home. Have you got a book that would tell me what to do to help him?'

'You mean a reader? Or a book about learning to read?'

The assistant and the customer pass on to a shelf marked 'reading schemes'. A small volume is chosen, approved and bought."

(Meek M. 1982 pp. 12-13).

The confusion is obvious. Certainly a glance through reading scheme material generally tends to reinforce the views of the critics. Although schemes may meet the requirements of grading, language suitability and other non-literary criteria, as good literature they have many serious flaws. It is nevertheless necessary to systematically analyse such schemes according to the criteria for good literature if claims against such schemes are to be justified.

The choice of schemes to be examined.

The first part of this study has discussed aspects of reading and reading schemes in general. For reasons outlined in the preceding sections, I have considered it necessary to investigate the specific content of schemes in order to determine their level of literary excellence. The two schemes come from the same publisher, Nisbet, which allows for an investigation into whether the more recently published scheme has changed with the times. Kathy and Mark was first published in an educational era when the reading scheme approach was being questioned. The manner in which the authors and publishers have reacted to the criticisms of reading schemes, in terms of concrete changes to content, needs to be investigated, as compared to the earlier publication, Janet and John.

The 'Janet and John' and 'Kathy and Mark' reading scheme philosophy.

The purpose of this section is to examine the authors/publishers philosophy behind the schemes, in order to establish what they consider the literary value of the schemes to be. This philosophy can best be obtained from the Teacher's manual for each of the two schemes. Both teacher's manuals are written by Rona Munro, although the dates of publication are some twenty four years apart. (Munro R. 1954 and Munro R. 1978). The

purpose of the Teacher's manual for Janet and John is best explained by Munro:

"The manual is written, like a handbook for a piece of machinery, to explain what the different parts are, what they are meant to do, and how they fit together to make a working whole."

(Munro R. 1954 p. v).

The manual was published in conjunction with the publication of the complete reading scheme and thus any claims made by the manual must be seen in the light of the date of publication. The initial copyrights for Janet and John and Kathy and Mark were published in 1949 and 1966 respectively. However, the publication of the respective schemes took place over a number of years after the initial copyright date and many of the books have been reprinted over the years.

The layout of the two teacher's manuals is very similar with one important exception. While the focus of attention in both manuals is on the scheme itself, the Kathy and Mark manual contains an introduction indicative of an awareness of changing approaches towards the teaching of reading. The Janet and John manual on the other hand, has a single introductory page of axioms and aims of the scheme and then moves straight into a discussion of the scheme material. The introduction in the Kathy and Mark manual is entitled Reading. This chapter deals with various approaches to the teaching of reading and then on to

the advantages of using a graded scheme. Munro is scathing in her attack on new methods of teaching reading and one can speculate as to why this is so:

"In the past ten years a great deal of attention has been focused on the teaching of reading ... bizarre innovations and passionate criticisms have appeared to carry more weight than is justified. Established, trusted, long-term methods are not very newsworthy ... although they have been responsible for teaching the vast majority of people to read ... many of the adverse criticisms of existing methods come from people about to launch a new scheme or method of their own."

(Munro R. 1978 p.1).

Munro goes on to say that the experienced teacher is "too sure of the facts to be unduly upset by propoganda" (Munro R. 1978 p. 2), but expresses concern for the insecure and confused newly qualified teacher who may be misled by new approaches. The strong wording of Munro's rebuttal of new approaches smacks of the very propaganda she accuses others of using.

Munro argues that a scheme provides the ability to measure standards of success that other approaches do not. She states that:

"The knowledge that Johnnie, who was reading Book 2, is now reading Book 3 gives comforting reassurance that he is making progress."

(Munro M. 1978 p. 3).

Meek, on the other hand, considers this line of argument for using a reading scheme as spurious. She says:

"Teachers use these materials not because they believe they teach reading, but from a need to be able to demonstrate a child's progress in some way that reassures everyone - the teachers, the parents and, in turn, the child."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 67).

The emphasis in Munro's approach is on the child making progress through a graded scheme. However, Smith F. (1978), Bennett J. (1979), Meek M. (1982) and others have questioned the value of working through a scheme, claiming that the scheme books are not 'real' books and that "no child would dream of reading book three more than once." (Meek M. 1982 p. 67). The debate hinges on whether scheme books can be considered good literature or not.

Munro goes on to discuss various methods of teaching reading, and concludes that it is the most successful and widely used method "that is advocated for the Kathy and Mark scheme." (Munro M. 1978 p. 6). In the final part of the introduction, Munro deals with the advantages of using a graded scheme. The emphasis in this section is placed upon controlled, graded and sequential development. (Munro R. 1978 pp. 6 - 8). At this point, reference to literary standards in scheme material is yet to be made.

As is to be expected, the manuals are designed to inform teachers about the schemes and how to use them. Very little is said about the content of the books and the literary value thereof. In the small section in each manual on content, the emphasis is placed on graded development and a progressive widening of interests.

To summarize, the basic philosophy behind the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark reading schemes is that of a carefully controlled and graded approach to the teaching of reading. Although some alternative methods are discussed briefly, Munro expresses the view on numerous occasions, that their method is the only right way to teach reading. This absolute conviction comes across with a dogmatism that does not allow for the possibility of success with any other method.

CHAPTER TWOPLOT, SETTING AND THEMEPlot.

Plot is, in essence, the plan or outline of events, the storyline. In Huck's words:

"The plot is the plan of action; it tells what the characters do and what happens to them. It is the thread that holds the fabric of the story together and makes the reader want to continue reading."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 6).

Plot must be considered in assessing children's literature as "children often identify a book by its plot, by what happens." (Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 23). Books need a good plot if they are to capture and retain the interest of children. As Donna Norton explains:

"Children want a book to have a good plot: a good story means action, excitement, some suspense, and enough conflict to develop interest. It also allows them to become involved with the action, to feel the conflict developing, to recognize the climax when it occurs, and to respond to a satisfactory ending."

(Norton D. 1983 p. 78).

The age group and reading ability levels for which the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes are written must obviously be borne in mind when assessing the plot because of the restriction these considerations place on language that can be used. Nevertheless, even at this very basic stage, books with an exciting plot have been written. (See Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 pp. 96 - 101, 130 - 139; Heeks P. 1981 p. 70; Sutherland Z. et al 1981 pp. 114 - 123; Heale J. 1983 pp. 7 - 18; Norton D. 1983 pp. 186 - 193; Moon C. and B. 1984 pp. 8 - 10 for comprehensive lists of books for early readers that demonstrate effective plot).

The first two levels of the Janet and John books, have no real storyline whatsoever. A series of unrelated incidents are strung together in no specific order into book form. In the introductory book of the scheme, entitled Here we go, virtually every page leads to a change in emphasis. On page 11 'Little Dog' is introduced and in the next few pages the dog is the focus of attention, albeit contrived:

Page 12	"Come, little dog. Come Come and look.
Page 13	Janet, Janet. Come and look. See the little dog.
Page 14	Run. Run, little dog. Look, Janet. See the little dog.
Page 15	Look here.
Page 16	Come here, John. Come here. See the little dog."

After three pleas to 'See the little dog' one must assume that Janet and John have at last seen the dog. The focus of attention moves away from the dog on the next page to:

Page 17 "Look, John.
Look down here.
Look down."

At last something of interest for the child. What are Janet and John going to find down there? (The accompanying illustrations provide no clues as to what may be attracting the children's interest to look down). Nothing, unfortunately, as the next page switches attention to:

Page 18 "Janet, look.
Look up.
Look up here."

(Here we go 1949 pp. 11 - 18).

Nothing could be further removed from Huck's definition of a well-constructed plot:

"A well-constructed plot is organic and inter-related. It grows logically and naturally from the actions and decisions of the characters in given situations."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 7).

In this scheme very little of what happens from page to page is inter-related. The characters, rather than making decisions based on their given situation, behave like marionettes, manipulated by the authors' need to repeat a group of pre-selected words a given number of times within the scheme book. The story is far from credible, coincidence and contrivance forming the mainstay of any development of plot. I pick up on page 19 with Janet and John looking up:

Page 19 "Come here.
Come and see.
See the aeroplane.
Janet, look.
Up, up, up."

On the very next page John has a model aeroplane ready and available to demonstrate techniques of flight to Janet:

Page 20 "See my aeroplane.
Up, up, up.
Look, Janet.
See my aeroplane.
Down."

(Here we go 1949 pp. 19 - 20).

The next ten pages see the amazing appearance and in order to make way for the next object/animal, the convenient disappearance, of three kittens, a dog, a ball, hoop and skipping rope and finally a pond, complete with bathing costumes for Janet and John and an inflatable horse. Such contrived episodes do not match up to the "series of actions that move in a related sequence to a logical outcome" (Sutherland Z. et al 1981 p. 44)

that forms the basis of plot as described by Sutherland et al. How very different is the treatment of objects in books such as The cat in the hat by Dr Seuss. The cat keeps two bored children occupied on a rainy day by balancing an ever growing list of items on the extremities of his body:

"Look at me!
 Look at me!
 Look at me now!
 It is fun to have fun
 But you have to know how.
 I can hold up the cup.
 And the milk and the cake!
 I can hold up these books!
 And the fish on a rake!
 I can hold the toy ship
 And a little toy man!
 And look! With my tail
 I can hold a red fan!
 I can fan with the fan
 As I hop on the ball!
 But that is not all.
 Oh, no.
 That is not all"

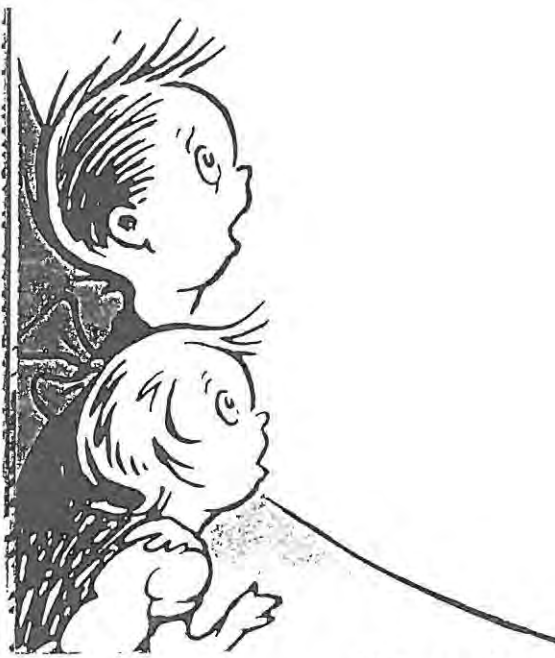
(Seuss Dr. 1957 p. 18).

The complexity of the cat's feat is clearly indicated in the illustration:



(Seuss Dr. 1957 p. 19).

The plot develops in such a way that it holds the young readers attention within the accepted absurdity of it all. Seuss appeals to the child's sense of humour as the plot builds to a climax. Excitement grows as the young reader wonders just how long the cat can continue adding items to his balancing act. The objects serve some purpose in developing the plot which captures and holds the readers interest in much the same way as the two children in the story are enthralled by the cat's antics:



(Seuss Dr. 1957 p. 18).

The same cannot be said for Here we go.

The lack of plot is not restricted to Here we go. Books One and Two continue a series of unrelated and improbable happenings. Assisting mother and father in the garden becomes playtime with the dog and kittens, followed by the sudden arrival of Janet and John at the harbour, then the airfield and then the playground with no adult supervision or explanation of how they got from one place to another, their purpose there, or how they managed to change their clothing from one venue to the next.

The next three books in the scheme, Off to play, Out and about and I went walking suggest an improvement on the material already discussed, in that the titles at least suggest some cohesion or relatedness in the material included. Unfortunately the impression created by the titles is inaccurate, as the title serves merely as a means to include a series of superficial and contrived incidents together under a single cover.

The final group of books in the scheme, Through the garden gate, I know a story and Once upon a time are subdivided into short stories, each with their own title and characters, although Janet and John still feature strongly in most of them. These more advanced books bring no advancement in plot. In a story entitled John finds Janet in Through the garden gate, John discovers that his sister is missing. The stage has been set one would think, for an exciting, if not original adventure in search of Janet. Although there is a logical series of happenings the story moves along far too easily, reminding one of the predictability of the more advanced series books such as the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew, who never fail to solve a mystery, albeit in a rather amateurish and infantile form. "These (Hardy Boys-type) books move rapidly from one improbable happening to another," (Huck C. 1976 p. 7) which is exactly what happens to John and his friend Peter. A series of clues, including a green ball, Janet's red coat and cap, John's blue boat, Janet's puppy and John's blue aeroplane lead John and Peter to Peter's house. All the clues are found too easily to allow for any build up to a climax, and the possibility of a climax is utterly destroyed by Janet's reaction to Peter's comment on finding her:

"'There is Janet,' said Peter
 "'We have found her.
 She is playing with my train.'"

This is followed by Janet's comment:

"'Come and help me,' said Janet."

(Through the garden gate 1949 p. 22).

And this is the end of the story. What a let down for the reader.

Some twenty years later Rona Munro and Mabel O'Donnell, the authors of Janet and John, wrote the Kathy and Mark scheme. In a more up to date time period, one would imagine that the lessons of Janet and John would have been learnt, that the plots in the various books would have been more credible, plausible and original and that the Kathy and Mark scheme would contain good stories that would capture the readers interest. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case. The Kathy and Mark scheme retained much of the structure of the earlier Janet and John scheme in a regurgitated and slightly more modern form. A significant plan of action is still lacking in the books. While there is a more sequential pattern to the stories, they still lack a plot. Each 'story' has a title, but often the title is merely an indication of new words to be encountered and mastered within the 'story'. Titles such as Come and see, Up and down, Down here, and Jump in (Kathy and Mark Book One 1966) would never be used by an author of 'real' children's literature as they reflect the 'incident type' nature of these 'stories'. There is no thread to hold the book together, yet Norton points out that:

"Following the plot of a story is like following a path or a thread winding through it, allowing the action to develop naturally."

(Norton D. 1983 p. 78).

But in the Kathy and Mark scheme books, a series of incidents without cause and effect are manipulated to fit the vocabulary requirements deemed necessary for the young readers by the authors. The following extract is very similar to Janet and John's efforts to 'come and see the little dog':

Page 6 "'Come here, Mark.
Come here.'
Page 7 'Come here, Mark.
Come and jump.
Come here and jump.'"

(Kathy and Mark Book One 1966 pp. 6 - 7).

The focus of attention may have changed from the little dog to the trampoline, but the total insignificance of the incident remains.

By Book Three, the 'stories' are longer but still contain no significant development or climax. In A cake for Daddy, Kathy pleads with her mother to be able to bake a cake for her father. After much effort, Kathy presents the cake to her father. One would expect the father's response to be the climax of the story. However, the authors handle the situation in such a way that there is no climax. Can you imagine a father ever responding to his daughter's first efforts at baking a cake in the following manner? Munro and O'Donnell write:

"'I like this cake, Kathy.
 It is a good one.
 This is my cake.
 You made it for me.
 But Mother and Mark like cake.
 Can they have cake too?'"

(Rides and slides 1966 p. 4).

The final two books in the Kathy and Mark scheme conform to a greater extent to Huck's criteria for plot than any of the others, but there are still a number of inherent weaknesses. The stories could give some enjoyment to the reader as they have a logical sequence of events and have a storyline that develops. However, the plots tend to lack originality. Absolute predictability is another weakness. Colin's holiday in Book Eight is a typical example. When Colin's plans to go on holiday with his dad are dashed by his falling out of a tree and breaking his leg, the whole gang keep him entertained. Colin is depressed because he cannot go on holiday, but inevitably a solution to Colin's problem is found. The local newspaper contains a puzzle competition. Finding the solution keeps the children occupied, the completed puzzle is entered in the competition and as is to be expected, Colin wins the competition. Incidentally, the prize just happens to be an aeroplane trip for Colin and his dad. The problems posed work out too logically and easily for these books to conform to the criteria for a good plot. For, as Huck points out, "in books of substance, obstacles are not quickly overcome and choices are not always clearcut." (Huck C. 1976 p. 7). This is certainly not the case in the Kathy and Mark books, and young readers soon lose interest. As Sutherland et al note:

"Children want characters who have obstacles to overcome, conflicts to settle, difficult goals to win. It is the vigorous action in pursuit of these goals that keeps the young readers racing along from page to page to find out how the central character achieves his or her ends. But achieve he or she must, in some way or other."

(Sutherland Z. et al 1981 p. 44).

It is this very lack of achievement of goals through 'vigorous action' that undermines the development of plot and limits the young readers interest in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark scheme books.

Setting.

The setting of a story is the place and time in which the plot develops. The overall structure of the story is dependant on the two key features of plot and setting. They provide the framework to allow for the development of themes and characterisation. The variations in time and place provide an endless number of settings for fiction of all types. The past, present or future can be used, or a combination thereof. The action can take place anywhere in the world or outer space, in a specific locale or in a vague and generalised setting. The setting can play a significant role in making a story unique, special and appealing to the reader, as well as conveying the emotion or mood of the story in a way that is subconsciously absorbed by the reader, allowing greater insight into the characters. Glazer and Williams warn that setting should:

"... never intrude. Place and time enter gently, often with references to what is seen, heard, tasted, touched, or smelled by the characters in the story."

(Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 26).

Both the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes opt for the most predictable of settings, the universal present in a typical middle class Anglo-Saxon family. This setting in itself does not preclude these books from conforming to the criteria for good

literature. Many successful stories are set in the present within a typical middle class Anglo Saxon family. However, in order to accommodate the contrived language progression, Munro and O'Donnell have made the storyline and the setting mundane and predictable. In these scheme books the behaviour of the characters is so unrealistic that it undermines any value that the recognizable setting could hold for the child. In the Kathy and Mark teachers manual, Munro makes the point that:

"The home background is the one most familiar to the child, and he supplies the interest himself to the environment he knows best - his home, his parents and playmates, his toys and pets."

(Munro R. 1978 p. 18).

Munro's line of argument is a sensible one, and is supported by Sutherland's statement that:

"... books for younger children are most comprehensible when their settings are familiar and within the child's limited experience."

(Sutherland Z. et al 1981 p. 41).

Munro's statement is, however, based on the premise that the setting provided in the scheme books is a similar environment to the one in which the reader finds himself/herself. Since affluent British middle class wealth, norms and values can be most closely approximated by the small group of wealthy financiers and industrialists in South Africa, the environment in the scheme

books is not a generally familiar one to the average C.E.D. school child. Both schemes have been severely criticised for being "extremely middle class" (Root B. Learning to read undated p. 14). Without impinging on characterisation, which obviously plays a large part in creating the typical middle class families portrayed in these schemes, it is possible to see that setting also plays a role in creating the all-pervading middle class atmosphere. Huck indicates that the "setting of a story can do much to create the mood and the theme of a book" (Huck C. 1976 p. 8). The setting permeates every aspect of the story.

The setting for the introductory book in each scheme is the garden of the family home. Although nothing is said about these families' status in the community, the picture immediately indicates an affluent middle class setting. The Janet and John introductory book, Here we go begins with two pictures which introduce the children in a specific setting. Both pictures tell the reader a great deal about Janet and John.

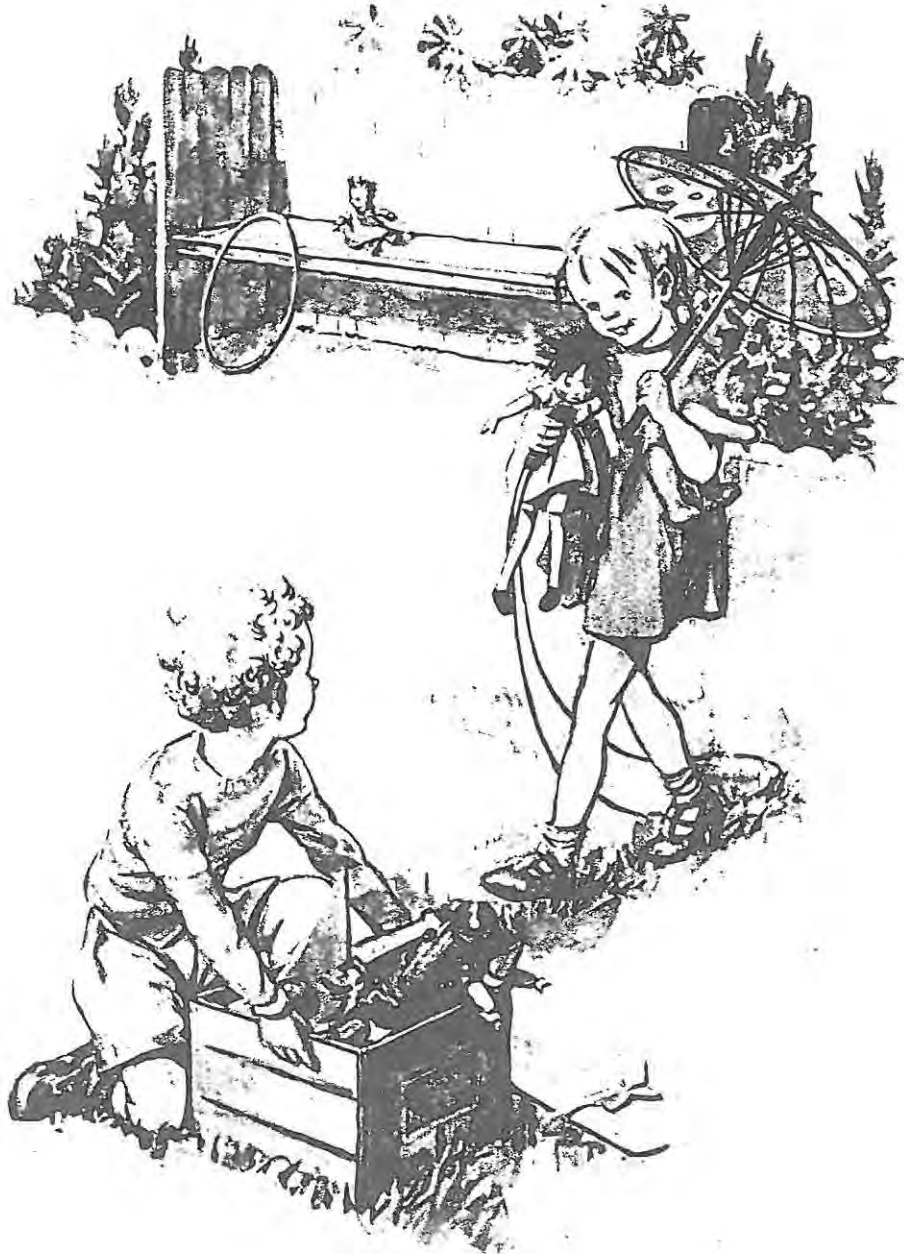
In the first picture, Janet and John are having a picnic:



(Here we go 1949 p. 2).

The lack of adult supervision and the presence of a dog and three kittens would suggest that the picnic is taking place within the confines of the property on which the children live. This being the case, the size of the property is indicated by there being no sign of the house or boundary fences and that the children are sitting under a large willow tree. The picnic basket and its

contents are indicative of a certain middle class level of wealth and leisure. The model aeroplane and doll suggest a family who have the financial resources to provide their children with toys. This view is confirmed in the next picture of the children playing with their toys in the garden:



(Here we go 1949 p. 3).

Once again, spaciousness is indicated by no sign of the house. A garden bench, encompassed by neat flower beds, forms the background to this picture. The abundance of toys indicates middle class affluence. Janet carries all she is capable of holding; a doll, teddy bear, skipping rope and a parasol. In the background on the bench another doll and a hoop are to be seen. John's toy box is filled to overflowing. The impression created is that he has far more toys than the model aeroplane, train, sailboat, duck, ball and doll that are visible. Thus before a single word is written a very strong impression of the setting for the book, and indeed the whole series of books, has been created. The stereotypes created in terms of the toys each child has will be discussed in a later chapter. One wonders how the child living in a working class tenement building in England, or South African children, would identify with the scene painted in these two illustrations. This type of home background would certainly not be familiar to them, which reveals another flaw in Munro's argument that children supply interest from the environment they know best. How can they, if their environment is not the same as the one presented in the scheme books?

In Out and about, Janet and John's home is focused on:

Page 6 "This is Janet's home.
This is John's home.
It is a green house.

Page 7 Look at the green house.
Father is in it.
It is Father's home too.

Page 8 There is Mother.
She is in the green house.
She can see us.
Let us run to Mother.

Page 9 Here we come.
Here is John.
Here is Janet.
Here we come, Mother.

Page 10 This is the green house.
Mother and Father are there.
Janet and John play there.
They are at home."

(Out and about 1949 pp. 6 - 10).

Since most of the action in the Janet and John books revolves around the family and their home, the detailed introduction of the home at this early stage is significant. The image presented is of a secure large double-storied house set in a park-like garden. In both word and picture, this setting permeates all of the action in the Janet and John books.

In the more recently published Kathy and Mark series, the setting is a very similar, though updated, version of the Janet and John setting. The emphasis is once again upon an affluent middle class family. In Book One, this affluence is revealed through the children's possessions. (Kathy and Mark Book One 1966 pp. 5 - 28). The passage of time between the writing of the two schemes has dictated a change in the types of toys the children have. Larger, more expensive toys are more common. Book One

shows us Kathy and Mark on their trampoline, Mark riding his bicycle, Kathy and Mark playing basketball (the shooting board and hoop are attached above the garage door) and the children swimming in their swimming pool. Book Two continues to indicate the changes. (Kathy and Mark, Indoors and out 1966). A television set is introduced on the first page. On page 34 the family home is introduced for the first time. A single level home set in a smaller garden, in a more modern urban setting is shown. Time has necessitated changes, yet the setting is still clearly an affluent middle class one.

JANET AND JOHN'S HOME



(Out and about 1949 pp. 8 - 9).

KATHY AND MARK'S HOME

(Indoors and out 1966 p. 34).

Although the setting can be considered successful in that it has a direct influence on the action and the characters, it is at the same time restrictive. Firstly, the setting is so specifically British middle class and nuclear family oriented that it prevents the stories in these schemes from transcending the setting. The implication is a severe limitation on the universality of these books for children. The second restrictive aspect of the setting is that of time. Although the action is set in the present, it revolves around specific middle class attributes and possessions which change rapidly with time. The preoccupation with material possessions that are replaced on a regular basis leads to the setting becoming dated. As Root points out, "although twenty years separates Kathy and Mark from Janet and John, the former is

as dated now as the latter." (Root B. No date p. 14). The setting limits the potential readership of these schemes by means of the preoccupation with middle class possessions and the subsequent dating of material. As a result, the setting in these scheme books does not conform to the criteria for a good setting as stated by Sutherland et al:

"The setting of the story should be clear, believable, and ... authentic."

(Sutherland Z. et al 1981 p. 41).

Theme.

The third of Huck's postulated criteria is that of theme. The theme of the book "reveals the author's purpose in writing the story" (Huck C. 1976 p. 8). Sutherland et al summarize the theme as being "the main idea of the story." (Sutherland Z. et al 1981 p. 45). Huck continues:

"Theme provides a dimension to the story that goes beyond the action of the plot ... The theme of the story should be worth imparting to young people and be based upon justice and integrity. Sound moral and ethical principles should prevail."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 8).

The overriding theme of the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes is that of idealistic middle class values and principles of behaviour. The scheme books are written in such a way that they break down into a number of separate stories and incidents each with its own theme. However, all of these mini-themes fall within the category prescribed by the pervading middle class values theme. (Dixon refers to the theme of Janet and John as being the "overwhelming middle class tang" in the stories. Dixon B. 1977 p. 56.). Thus while some of the mini-themes may seem to be 'worth imparting' to the reader and 'based upon justice and integrity', they are perhaps not of as much value when seen in the light of the greater scheme of things. Glazer and Williams point out that:

"Over centuries, books for children have often turned into tracts. Themes have often popped out like messages in a fortune cookie, surrounded by hollow characterization and a dry plot."

(Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 30).

Munro would argue that the theme of the two schemes is that of exposing the young reader to the familiar in his environment and then extending his range of interests in a number of sequential steps. (Munro R. 1978 p. 18). The theme is however, blatantly middle class in values and beliefs and thus not the readily identifiable and familiar world of all the readers. Certainly British middle class values can only be equated with a very small percentage of South African families. (See p. 53 of this study). Thus, the theme in the scheme books is so explicitly middle class that the books are 'turned into tracts'. The plot and characterisation in these books contribute to the heavily biased theme. By contrast, Glazer and Williams state that:

"Good books are based on complex and important themes, presented with subtlety through plot, characterization and setting."

(Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 32).

In the Kathy and Mark Book Four, entitled Something to see, the emphasis is placed on "the urban and suburban scene" (Munro R. 1978 p. 19). The authors purpose in writing the stories in Something to see is to "bring a new dimension to the background of the stories" (Munro R. 1978 p. 19) by introducing buses, cars, parking meters, escalators and street cleaners. In what

way does this recurrent theme 'provide a dimension to the story that goes beyond the action of the plot'? One could argue that the placing of Kathy and Mark in new situations and their behaviour within those situations provides an example 'worth imparting to young people'. These are the mini-themes I have referred to. However, if we examine the individual stories it is possible to see the theme of overriding middle class values stated implicitly, and frequently explicitly, in virtually all of the stories. A story entitled A jacket for Mark in Something to see serves as an example. "Daddy and Mark go to the department store to get Mark a new jacket" (Munro R. 1978 p. 19) is Munro's summary of the story in the teacher's manual. The story contains a number of middle class values and assumptions. The fundamental assumption on which the story is based, is that the old is to be replaced with the new. This theme is established right at the beginning of the story:

"'Mark,' said Daddy.
 'Look at your jacket.'
 'This is an old jacket,' said Mark.
 'I play in it.
 But I do need a new one.
 Mother is going to buy me one.'"

(Something to see 1966 p. 22).

Disapproval of old or damaged material possessions is indicated in the father's words to Mark. There is no suggestion that the jacket should perhaps be repaired. Mark's response indicates that despite his young age, he has already been well trained to accept middle class values and lifestyle. One could argue that

his use of the word 'need' could very easily be replaced with 'want'. Mark's statement is indicative of middle class affluence; the ability to afford to buy material possessions without considering financial implications. Examples of purchasing power abound in these schemes. Of the four stories in Something to see, three focus on new possessions; Kathy and Mother get new shoes, Mark gets a new jacket and Father gets something (sic) for the car. In the final story, the father arrives home from a business trip with expensive gifts for Janet, John and Mother. Back to A jacket for Mark; Mark and his father set out for the shops in their car. Immediately justification is given for another of their material possessions, the car they are driving in:

"'Daddy,' said Mark.
'This is a good little car.
I like red cars.
They go fast.'

'Yes, Mark,' said Daddy.
'I like it too.
It is not too big to park.'"

(Something to see 1966 p. 26).

The line of argument is justified a few pages later when they see a blue car that is too big to get out of its parking place. The appropriateness of their vehicle is emphasized again as Mark says, "... this car is not too big." (Something to see 1966 p. 34). Once in the department store, the father goes to the boys' jackets, but Mark ignores his father and goes to the holiday jackets section:

"'Come over here,' said Mark.
 'This is the one I want.'"

(Italics mine)
 (Something to see 1966 p. 32).

The jacket is no longer the one Mark 'needs' but the one Mark 'wants'. Father consents to what Mark wants immediately:

"'We will buy that one.
 You may keep it on.'"

(Something to see 1966 p. 33).

And off they go as father has "to get something too."
 (Something to see 1966 p. 33). Upon arrival at home, approval of the new jacket is sought and found. Mother says:

"'I like your new jacket, Mark.
 I like the badges.'"

(Something to see 1966 p. 36).

It is thus possible to see that this seemingly innocuous story, with its theme of exploring new situations by means of a visit to the department store, is infused with middle class values. The focus of attention throughout the story is on Mark buying the jacket. The message imparted to the reader is that of being able to purchase what you want. Nothing is said of other shoppers that one would normally meet in this new situation. The impression created is that Father and Mark have the shop to themselves. Whether these middle class values expressed in the

theme are worth imparting to the reader is highly questionable. Particularly, if the readers do not come from a British middle class background themselves.

Much of the material in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes is indicative of a danger that Huck warns against in children's books. That is "that the theme will override the plot" (Huck C. 1976 p. 9) or in the case of these scheme books where the plot is virtually non-existent, that the theme will dominate the characters and their actions:

"Authors may be so intent on conveying a message that the story or characterization may be neglected. Didacticism is still alive and well in the twentieth century. It may hide behind the facade of ecology, drug abuse or alienation ..."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 9).

In the case of the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes, the facade behind which the middle class message is hidden is that of the very schemes themselves. The desire to present a typical family in a typical setting leads to an idealistic and very class bound interpretation of the characters in the stories. The limitations the authors place on themselves in terms of grading of words, repetition and simplicity, contribute to the theme overpowering the story. The themes are not "real-life" (Munro R. 1954 p. 3) as the authors claim them to be, but rather idealistic portrayals of what the authors see as the positive aspects of

middle class values. The authors undermine their own claims of realism with statements such as:

"Great care has been taken in the early books that situations suggesting horror, fear and anger should not be included. On the odd occasion when a mishap occurs, as when Janet breaks her doll, the remedy and happy conclusion follow immediately."

(Munro R. 1954 p. 2).

Though one need not go to the other extreme, it is necessary for early readers to be exposed to the bad as well as the good aspects of life. Examples abound in literature for children; one only needs to look at nursery rhymes, so popular with children and yet with some horrifying stories. On a more realistic level, books such as the Althea series deal with some of the less happy aspects of modern life in a way that young children can understand them. Titles in this series include I have diabetes, I use a wheelchair and Visiting the dentist. (Braithwaite A. 1981). The aim of such books is to calm children's fears about potentially worrying situations by explaining what is likely to happen. To my mind, this is a far better way of handling this type of situation, rather than actively ignoring the possibility of such events occurring, as is the case in the scheme books. The dominance of theme is further contributed to by the authors insistence on the avoidance of "humdrum everyday things children have to do" (Munro R. 1954 p. 2), with a focus on "the delightful things that most children would like to do." (Munro R.

1954 p. 2). Such "happy, carefree incidents" (Munro R. 1954 p. 2) are not, contrary to the authors claims, found in the lives of most children to the exclusion of problems, fear and humdrum activities. Thus the theme of idealistic middle class values dominates the action because of the authors failure to portray the characters and the setting in a realistic manner. Moralizing, of a class conscious type, overpowers the already tenuous storyline.

What then, should the theme of children's stories be and do without dominating the plot and characterisation? Norton expresses the view that the theme should be "worthwhile for children." (Norton D. 1983 p. 89). Paul Hazard neatly encapsulates the role of theme in children's books:

"... books that awaken in them not maudlin sentimentality, but sensibility; that enable them to share in great human emotions; that give them respect for universal life - that of animals; of plants; that teach them not to despise everything that is mysterious in creation and in man ... I like books that set in action truths worthy of lasting forever, and inspiring one's whole inner life. In short, I like books that have the integrity to perpetuate their own faith in truth and justice..."

(Hazard P. in Huck C. 1976 p. 8).

Clearly the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark books do not match up to the requirements of good children's books as expressed by Hazard.

CHAPTER THREECHARACTERISATION

Characterisation is perhaps the central criteria by which the schemes can be judged to be good literature or not. It is the area too, in which the most wide-ranging criticisms of the schemes have appeared. The hallmark of true characterisation, says Huck, is that:

"The people portrayed in children's books should be as convincingly real and lifelike as our next-door neighbours. The credibility of characters will depend upon the author's ability to show their true natures, their strengths and their weaknesses."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 9).

Glazer and Williams pose a number of questions that need to be considered when assessing the main characters in children's fiction:

"How does the author tell you about them? Do they emerge naturally from what they do, think and say? Do they show weaknesses as well as strengths? If they change in the course of the book, is the pace of change believable? At the end of the book, do you know them enough to imagine what might happen if the book continued? Do you care about them?"

(Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 28).

Neither of the teacher's manuals mention the choice of characters or their development through the scheme. They do, however, claim that the themes are "real-life themes" (Munro R. 1954 p. 3) which implies real life characters. Welleck and Warren, in Theory of literature, point out that realism is a style or convention of writing:

"The distinction is not between reality and illusion, but between differing conceptions of reality, between differing modes of illusion."

(Welleck R. and Warren A. 1942 p. 213).

The characters need not be, indeed cannot be 'real', if the author attempts to portray the typical, universal or idealistic. In order to attain a certain level of realism the story must offer a "case history - an illustration or exemplification of some general pattern or syndrome" (p. 214). The characters and their world need not be "patterned or scaled like our own" (p. 214), but must contain recognisable, comprehensive, deep and central development of character. However, Munro and O'Donnell, in attempting to construct widely recognizable fictional characters, having misconstrued the relation of fiction to life, and have created the shallow and stereotyped.

The base on which the characters in the schemes are built is the initial flaw in the presentation of these flat and stereotyped characters. This base is the typicality of the characters family unit portrayed. In Janet and John the main characters are

Janet, John, Mother and Father and the only distinction in Kathy and Mark are the names of the two children. The manner in which the children are introduced is indicative of their unrealistic portrayal throughout the schemes. The lack of depth in the illustrations prevents the creation of a strong statement of character and personality. In the first Janet and John book, Here we go, pictures accompanying the names of the characters serves as an introduction:



Janet



John

(Here we go 1949 pp. 4 - 5).

The Kathy and Mark scheme uses an identical approach:



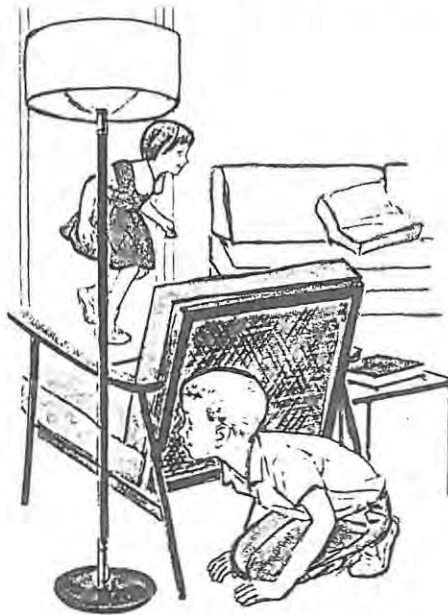
Kathy



Mark

(Book one 1966 pp. 2 - 3).

However, it is taken one step further by placing the two central characters together:



Kathy and Mark

(Book one 1966 p. 4).

In the first book of both schemes, no further characters are revealed. The children are shown to be involved in normal, though sequentially contrived, childhood activities. The language of these first readers lends little to an understanding of the characters. One has to rely almost totally on the pictures to understand what activities the children are involved in. The authors' intention of creating characters that are real and lifelike, is dashed by the language of the first books. Real children, engaged in a game of basketball, do not speak to each other in the following manner:

Page 18 "'Look, Kathy.
Look, Socks.
See the ball.
It can go up.
See it go up.'

Page 19 'The ball is up.
It is up and in.
The ball is in.
Come down, ball.
Look, Socks.
See it come down.'

Page 20 'See me, Mark.
Here I go.
See the ball go up.
Is it in?
No, no.
It is down.'"

(Book One 1966 pp. 18 - 20).

Wade emphasises the difference between the language of good literature for children, and that of reading scheme language as in the example above:

"The texts of these (good children's literature) stories are meaningful, structured and pleasure giving. Their language is linked to action and experience and their rhythms and repetitions are those of spoken language."

(Wade B. 1982 Children's literature in education Vol. 13 No. 1 p. 37).

The action and excitement involved in shooting a basketball through a hoop in a real life situation would not lead to stylised, sequential and repetitive use of key words. Instead the language would probably consist of monosyllabic shouts of joy or dismay at the success, or lack thereof, of shooting baskets. Wade elaborates:

"'Hop, hop, hop to the golliwog shop' from a hopping game may seem similar to 'See Spot. Run, Spot, run' from a reading scheme, but the resemblance is superficial: children actually say the first; no child would say the second other than in the context of reading aloud from a scheme."

(p. 37).

Thus the restrictive language of the reading schemes is one of the factors that leads to lack of character development within these books.

The other major characters in each of the schemes are the mothers and fathers of the children. The parent's actions and behavior are as unrealistic as those of their children. In both schemes,

the parents are introduced in the second book. Janet and John's parents are introduced on pages four and five of the second book.

Page 4 "'See Janet, Mother.
See Janet and the can.'
Page 5 'This is Father.
See John and Father.'"

(Book One 1949 pp. 4 - 5).

There is no further mention of these adult characters in the book. Revealing the characters of Mother and Father at this stage appears to be a contrived means of introducing new words as the characters play no significant role in the rest of the book, which consists of a series of adventures undertaken by Janet and John. In the second Kathy and Mark book, Indoors and out, Mother and Father are introduced in a more realistic and incidental manner. They are first seen on page eight when Kathy drags her mother down to the waterside to look at the ducks. The accompanying picture shows Father and Mark playing with a ball. Although Father continues to play an important role in the background, pushing Kathy on the swing and taking photographs of the children, he is only introduced into the written aspect of the story on page twenty nine. Again, the introduction is more natural than the Janet and John scheme. Kathy and Mark want to ride on the 'little train'. They see their father approaching:

"Here comes Daddy.
Look, Daddy.
Look at the little train.
We want to ride in it.
It is a good train."

(Indoors and out 1966 p. 29).

The more natural introduction can be attributed to the setting, action and the use of more appropriate language. Mark calls his father 'Daddy', which is less formal and archaic than 'Father'. Despite the more convincing introduction, the mother and father in Kathy and Mark are as unlikable as their counterparts in the Janet and John scheme. Sutherland et al state that:

"The characters must be both believable and ... convincing. (They) should develop naturally and behave and talk in ways that are consistent with their age, sex, background, ethnic group and education."

(Sutherland Z. et al 1981 pp. 43 - 44).

The speech patterns of the parents in both schemes are not consistent with their age and intellectual capabilities. The mothers response to her husband's gift in Kathy and Mark Book Four serves as an example:

"'It is a clock,' said Mother.
'Thank you, Daddy.
I like this clock.
I will put it up here.
We need a clock here.
Now we can all see it.'"

(Something to see 1966 p. 54).

Where have the authors gone wrong in their portrayal of the characters? I have already indicated that their attempts to create generally identifiable characters have led to the creation of stereotypes. More specifically, the characters are neither convincing nor credible because the authors do not reveal

the true natures of the characters. The authors attempts to write the stories in a way that no 'horror, fear or anger' is included, leads to a focus on the characters strengths and a virtually complete avoidance of their weaknesses. (See Munro R. 1954 p. 2). In most cases, no cause is given for character behaviour. Characters are placed in situations in which they play the perfect part expected of them and then disappear, only to reappear in the next situation, fresh and ready to portray all that is good and idealistic yet again. Henry James said that "incident should serve as an illustration of character." (James H. in Welleck R. and Warren A. 1942 p. 216). In these schemes the setting is contrived to the extent that it provides no insight into character. The characters actions too, are not dependant on context, but are rather manipulated behaviour to illustrate the authors moral viewpoint, in which the setting is merely incidental.

Stereotyping is perhaps the most serious allegation that has been levelled against the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark scheme books. As these books become more dated, evidence indicating the stereotyping increases. Townsend suggests an interesting point in saying that such evidence is on the increase as a result of the "disappearance of old assumptions about the infallibility of parents and the duty of children to toe the line." (Townsend J. 1965 p. 277).

There have also been significant changes in thinking with respect to the family unit and duties within that unit, as well as sex and class stereotypes. Such fundamental changes in human philosophy have led to an increasing awareness of stereotyping in children's literature. (Dixon B. 1977 p. 1). The fact that the views presented in the Janet and John books were more widely agreed upon forty years ago, does not make them morally acceptable. Evidence of stereotyped behaviour in the Kathy and Mark scheme can be regarded in an even stronger light as the books were written and published in an era when general awareness of stereotypes and bias was on the increase. Nevertheless, the authors of scheme books continued to aim at presenting characters that they saw as being typical and widely recognisable by the readers. These characters are developed by the authors focusing on only those qualities that they believe the majority of people share with each other. This leads to an elimination of the attributes of individuals that make them different from each other. These characters become "a fantasy version of a popular cliché" (Nodelman P. 1981 Children's literature in education Vol. 12 No. 4 p. 178), people so typical that they lack reality. The families in the reading schemes are a "paradoxical summation of everybody's clichés" (p. 178), as reality and individuality are replaced with typicality. Such an approach has led to criticism from the general public as well as the critics. The following extract is taken from a popular South African women's magazine:

"At first homework is very pleasant. But in time, evening readings from the school book can be less enjoyable ... This is mainly because it is very easy to develop a loathing of the fresh-faced, shinily polite and eager-reading children who never seem to muddy a training shoe or drop a tomato-sauce encrusted chip on to the carpet. Their mother always has the tea ready on time and the house sparkling clean, and their father is always ready to fix fences, mend toys and walk the dog without a mutter of complaint. Who are these unreal people? And why should teaching my children to read make it necessary for them to enter my life and make me feel inadequate?"

(Morris A. January 1987 Survivors guide to school days in Living and loving pp. 70 - 71).

Books that claim to be real and yet do not reflect social reality in their character portrayal, "cannot hope to make their readers accept reality, since they contain no reality." (Nodelman P. 1981 Children's literature in education Vol. 12 No. 4 p. 183). Yet, the danger of such books is that they present a guise of reality that influences the lives of the reader. Tucker makes the point that the years between six and eleven are an important time for learning the basic role-taking skills. (Tucker N. 1984 p. 129). Much of the childrens' behaviour is assimilated from the material they read. If they read reading scheme material full of unreal characters behaving in a stereotyped manner, one must assume that they copy this behaviour. Grobler quotes Sharpe in this regard:

"In learning to read ... 'the child struggles slowly towards literacy, staring at pictures, repeating words and sentences over and over, vocalizing and unconsciously absorbing any sexism' contained in them."

(Sharpe in Grobler H. 1987 p. 3).

Grobler adds that:

"Barry, Bacon and Child (Oakley 1976 p. 60) in a cross cultural survey based on ethnographic literature in 110 societies, found that socialisation of children is influenced by their reading matter. School readers ... have a very special place in the process of socialisation. These school readers ... convey official approval, are bought with state money, and are used in all public schools which are attended under state compulsion until a certain age is reached."

(Italics mine)
(Grobler H. 1987 pp. 3 - 4).

The role reading scheme books play in the socialisation process can be summarized as follows:

"Through the readers, society says, 'This is what we would like you to be'."

(Sharpe in Grobler H. 1987 p. 4).

The way in which young children assimilate reading scheme language and ideas is particularly evident in their creative writing. The following story was written by a Sub A child in a creative writing lesson in the school at which I teach:

"One day Winkie went to see Lolly. Lolly was sick in bed. I like Lolly. Lolly likes me. Lolly is nice to me. Winkie is nice to me. Lolly I want to play with you."

(Penny, Victoria Primary School, Sub A 1987).

The similarity of style and language usage between this piece and reading schemes such as Janet and John and Kathy and Mark is apparent. Upon further investigation I discovered that this child had been taught to read using the Kathy and Mark reading scheme. The implications in terms of how character stereotypes affect the readers thoughts and actions are disturbing. Tucker elaborates:

"Childhood ... is an impressionable period when children pick up and acclimatise themselves to the different values, norms and attitudes of their own culture. Some of the messages that have come through to children from books as part of this process may have an important formative effect later ..."

(Tucker N. 1984 p. 191).

How evident are character stereotypes in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark reading schemes? An assessment needs to be made of the family unit as portrayed in these scheme books, as well as the individual characters interaction within the family unit. Of the family unit portrayed, Meek says:

"... the white middle-class family of Janet and John is no longer the typical one."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 175).

The family, as portrayed in the Janet and John scheme, is an ideal middle class view of what a family should be; a father, a mother, a son and a daughter. Already the characters can be seen to be contrived. Add the following: a dog, three kittens and an assortment of other animals, a suburban home set in a large garden, a motor vehicle, a large motorised boat and plenty of money to afford frequent vacations and other expeditions, plenty of clothing, toys and other material possessions. The authors have created characters that depict an utterly unreal world, cut down to the most narrow stereotypes. Much the same can be said for the Kathy and Mark scheme characters, although the setting and possessions have been updated. The characters are placed in repetitive, ever-predictable situations such as an aeroplane ride, a boat ride, a pony ride, a trip to the sea, a trip to the shops; the list is endless. The world in which the family lives is a safe and secure one, full of friends, pets, friendly taxi drivers, milkmen and postmen with no hint of hostility or the problems with which average family lives are fraught. There are no criminals, vehicles which break down, aeroplanes which don't run on time or even grumpy or offhand people. In short, it is an unrealistic portrayal of family life.

Of more significance in terms of impression created on the child reading the scheme books, is the stereotyped behaviour of the individual characters. Much of the action centres on family activities and in particular the incidents that occupy the lives of the two pairs of children. The children are perfectly behaved and obey their parents instantly. Janet and John get on with each other amazingly well, especially if one considers that they are each others constant companions. Kathy and Mark lead similarly exemplary lives. There are, however, three 'incidents' in the eight books that comprise the Kathy and Mark scheme. In Indoors and out Mark disrupts Kathy and Ann who are skipping, by skating between them. Order is soon restored, the story ending with Ann and Kathy skipping happily together. In Real and make-believe the two children argue over who discovered a ten cent piece first. Mother immediately stops the argument:

"... stop that at once
and come into the house."

And solves the problem:

"... I know what we can do.
Give me the ten cent piece."

Kathy and Mark realise what Mother has done:

"There are two five cent pieces,
so we get one each.
Mother will keep the ten cent piece we
found."

(Real and make-believe 1966 pp. 14 - 16).

Incidentally, the children go off to Mr Green's shop where they are given the option of buying a bag of sweets, an ice-cream or a little pie with their five cents. Eventually they buy a slab of chocolate each. This is certainly not 1987! The third incident is in the first story in Around the corner, entitled As cross as a bear. Mark was cross and nasty to everyone, including his sister Kathy. Mother sends Mark to his room. He sulks for a short while and then decides to paint some pictures. His mother comes into the room and looks at the pictures. She comments:

"'I like your idea,' she said.
 'Next time I feel cross I shall paint a
 picture of you.
 Perhaps it will make me feel better.'"

(Around the corner 1966 p. 21).

These three examples cited are the only areas in which the behaviour of the children is less than perfect. In the first two examples, the incidents are little more than minor happenings within the story. In the final example the stress is on how a bad mood can be changed by creative and enjoyable activity. Thus, even the rare glimpses of real behaviour are glossed over to prevent them dominating or creating flaws in the perfect characters of Kathy and Mark. There is no sign in either of the schemes that the parents of both Janet and John and Kathy and Mark are less than perfect. Everything they do and say is logical and meaningful. Their example makes the average real parent look inadequate; lacking in control, poise and the

ability to run their families lives effectively.

The introductory pages of the Janet and John scheme set the mood for the characterisation throughout the scheme. On page three of Here we go, before a word is written, classic boy and girl stereotypes are introduced. (See page 52 of this thesis for a copy of the illustration). Janet clutches onto the traditional doll, teddy bear, skipping rope and parasol, whereas John has a box full of traditionally boys toys, including a sailboat, an aeroplane, a train, a ball and a soldier. The traditional toys immediately date the scheme as the toys are the anthesis of many of the toys of today, which are representative of the latest in electronic and computer technology. Of the specific stereotyping through toys attributed to the boys and girls, Dixon says:

"Toys and games reinforce these basic attitudes ... girls are more restricted than boys in physical activities ... Girls just are. Boys do ... Boys have cars, planes, cranes, mechanical toys, toy weapons of all kinds and footballs. Girls have dolls, dolls, more dolls and then everything to do with dolls ..."

(Dixon B. 1977 pp. 1 - 2).

In the next book, Off to play, Janet and Mother are shown together, watering the garden and planting flowers. Father and John are shown together mowing the lawn and raking the grass. In the next book, Out and about, Janet is shown walking with her doll and parasol, whereas John watches a train, a ship and an aeroplane and plays with his models of these three types of

transport. John and Father go for a ride in an aeroplane while Mother stands passively, watching them. No mention is made of where Janet might be. This pattern continues through the books; Janet cries because her doll is broken, whereas John is given the responsibility of pulling the snow sledge up the hill. Girls and women are generally shown to be less active and capable than boys and men. Evidence from the Janet and John scheme reinforces Dixon's statement that:

"... the male characters simply appear more frequently, both in the text and illustrations, and appear in more leading roles ... Girls tend to hold Mummy's hand, to be more attached to the house, to be standing at the bottom of the tree or looking on. Boys range further, with daddy or their friends ... and people don't bother so much if they get dirty."

(Dixon B. 1977 pp. 1 - 2).

Grobler sums up the sex role stereotypes found in reading schemes:

"... boys/men are leaders, girls/women are the followers; boys invent and girls use what boys invent; boys become engineers, doctors, lawyers, firemen, hunters, traders, engine drivers, etc and girls become mummies or nurses, teachers and secretaries; boys become presidents and girls become first-ladies - in short, boys do; girls are."

(Grobler H. 1987 pp. 2 - 3).

Despite the fact that Kathy and Mark was published some twenty years after Janet and John, much of the character stereotyping is

retained and in some instances, it is even more explicit than in the earlier scheme. The distinction between boys and girls abilities is continued as in Janet and John. In Book One Mark is shown taking the training wheels off his bicycle and then riding. Kathy looks on passively. In the basketball shooting game, Mark gets the ball through the basket while Kathy misses. Kathy plays with her doll while Mark plays with a sophisticated rocket and then gets into a space suit. Distinctions such as these run through the scheme. The more explicit statements indicating male superiority are cause for greater concern. In Rides and slides the family set off for a picnic. The distinction made between Kathy and Mark is stated immediately. Mother says:

"'Go and play ball, Mark.
Daddy will play with you.
Kathy, look into the basket.
Bring out the buns.'"

(Rides and slides 1966 p. 8).

Meek states that it is "no longer acceptable to show girls as fulfilling stereotypical roles in the home ." (Meek M. 1982 p. 175), yet in this scheme the role of the women waiting on men is perpetuated outside the home in the context of a picnic. Kathy extends the authors' emphasis on the inferiority of women. Discussing the food she says:

"'Daddy will have a big bun
Mark wants a big one.
I want the little one.'"

(Rides and slides 1966 p. 9).

She has already learnt to put the needs of men and boys first. There is no physical reason for her to have a smaller bun than Mark, as throughout the scheme pictures show her and Mark to be very much the same size. The next page reveals Mark boasting of his ability to carry the big basket to the car, while Kathy helps Mother throw away the rubbish. The story ends with another indication of female submission. Father says:

"'Jump in the car.
You can sit with Mother.
Come on, Mark.
You can sit with me.
Jump in Mark.'"

(Rides and slides 1966 p. 12).

It is taken for granted that Father will drive, and the females, not the children, are relegated to sitting on the back seat of the car - notwithstanding the fact that a child under twelve years of age sitting on a front seat is dangerous, if not illegal!

In Book Four, Something to see, Mother and Kathy go to the shops together to buy shoes for themselves. When Mark wants a new jacket, Mother tells him that Father will take him, the implication is that buying a jacket and something for the car are the things that men do. Upon Father and Mark's arrival back at the house, Mother is about to open the garage door when Mark interjects, saying "'Daddy can do that Mother.'" (Something to see 1966 p. 35). Again the implication is that Father is more

capable of opening the garage than Mother. The stereotyped roles in the reading scheme books are not limited to the children, as can be seen from the above example. Grobler summarises the sex stereotyped roles of adults as follows:

"Women are still found indoors, men out of doors; when men lead, women follow; when men rescue others, women are (generally) the rescued."

(Grobler H. 1987 p. 14).

In Just like you, blatant discrimination between male and female is to be found. In a story entitled Skates for Kathy, Kathy and Mark go roller skating. While Mark is shown to be an accomplished skater, Kathy is unable to master the skill required to skate and is ready to give up. The classic stereotype of male ability and female inability and helplessness has been set up. Mother comes to investigate what is happening and Mark gives a summary of the situation:

"'She can't skate,' said Mark.
'I want to help her,
but she will not let me.
She just sits there.
She wants to give up.
That is just like a girl
They give up.'"

(Italics mine)
(Just like you 1966 p. 63).

Although Mother immediately counters Mark's statement by saying that Kathy is not going to give up, the damage has been done. The reader has already read in explicit terms that girls give up. This idea is reinforced in the final sentences of the story:

" 'There you are,' said Mark.
 'Now you can skate.
 You can skate
 if I skate with you.' "

(Just like you 1966 p. 64).

The message left with the reader is that girls can only do things if they are assisted by boys. Kathy has been socially defined as unequal to Mark, placing her in subordination to him. The implication of such examples of male superiority/female inferiority, says Grobler, is that:

"Women are therefore conditioned to accept their inadequacy ... (The women's) experience is an experience of inequality, of specific role differentiation and identification. This system furthermore determines her concept of herself and her position in society. Through continual conditioning she eventually totally identifies with her subordinate position."

(Grobler H. 1987 p. 44).

In Book Six, Real and make-believe, the first story deals with Mark's birthday party:

" 'He wants a birthday party just for boys,' said Mother.
 'They will want to play football.
 Mark asked me to make
 a chocolate birthday cake.
 Boys like chocolate.' "

(Real and make-believe 1966 p. 9).

Stereotyped assumptions are made as to what boys like doing and eating, as well as perpetuating the myth that boys only like playing with boys. If there was less categorising and structuring of boys and girls we would find that children with the same interests would get together. Boys naturally associate with boys and girls with girls because they have been taught that they are different; that girls are 'sissies' and boys are 'rough'. (See Grobler H. 1987 pp. 39 - 40). At a later point in the book, Kathy and Mark make up stories. Both are adventure stories and both have boys as heroes, emphasizing again the passive role of females. In the final book in the scheme, All through the year, the boys all go off to the lake for the weekend and solve a mystery while the girls sit passively at home and dream of being princesses. Frequent other references are made throughout the scheme as to the different manner in which boys and girls are to be treated. The creation of such stereotypes and the biased view of females as passive and as servants of the male are serious flaws in the characters as represented in both the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes. These scheme books perpetuate fundamental cultural values that socialize the reader into traditional male/female stereotypes. In so doing, Grobler adds:

"...the child is prepared for implementing and perpetuating the traditional language and speech patterns of the traditional (and outdated) stereotype."

(Grobler H. 1987 p. 16).

However, as Dixon points out:

"There is no foundation ... for any of the fierce sex-role indoctrination we've seen in children's fiction ... There's no reason why girl's shouldn't play football, climb trees and get dirty, no more than there's any reason why boys shouldn't play with dolls if they want to and take an active interest in cookery."

(Dixon B. 1977 p. 25).

In sum, the characters are lifeless. Their actions, thoughts and statements are largely unnatural which leads to limited growth and development. While it is true that the language becomes more sophisticated to meet the demands of the scheme, there is little evidence of character growth and development on the part of Janet and John or Kathy and Mark. So too the parents remain unmoved, unaffected and unchanged by the circumstances and events surrounding them.

The test of successful characterisation, says Huck, is that of being able to recall some of the personalities in literature long after the stories have been forgotten. Huck elaborates:

"We know all these characters well because their authors created them and blew the breath of life into each one of them. They have come alive in the pages of books; and they will live forever in our memories."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 11).

The same cannot be said for Janet, John, Kathy, Mark and the other characters in the reading scheme books.

CHAPTER FOURSTYLE AND FORMATStyle.

The style of a book is the way in which the author has selected and arranged words to form a story. Glazer and Williams indicate that:

"Style permeates every sentence. It sets mood."

(Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 33).

And Huck elaborates:

"Good writing is appropriate to the plot, theme, and characters, both creating and reflecting the mood of the story."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 11).

Wade makes the point that the language of the young child is linked to action and experience and "their rhythms and repetitions are those of spoken language." (Wade B. Spring 1982 Children's literature in education Vol. 13 N o. 1 p. 37). The style of books that young readers are attracted to is that which contains strong links with their own experience of spoken language. A recognisable and comfortable atmosphere is created, but at the same time, each "author's style is individual and

unique." (Huck C. 1976 p. 11). Do reading schemes have a good style? Frequently, listening to a number of lines from a book can identify it as a reading scheme book. This occurs across virtually the whole spectrum of reading schemes. Thus reading schemes, collectively, tend to have a style of their own. The style employed in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes is poor in that it results in dull and repetitious reading for the child. The dialogue, too, is stilted and there is little variety in the sentence patterns and use of words. By Book Four, the child is supposedly no longer an absolute beginner reader, and yet meaningless repetition and stilted conversation that doesn't sound at all like real people talking, continues. In Something to see Kathy and Mother go shopping. Kathy sees a pair of shoes in a shop window:

"'Look, Mother,' said Kathy.
 'Look at the red shoes.
 Please may I have red shoes?'
 'Yes you may,' said Mother.
 'I like the red shoes.'"

(Something to see 1966 p. 8).

In the space of five lines 'red shoes' is repeated three times without adding to the meaning. Repetition, in itself, is not necessarily an element that if included, leads to poor style. As Norton indicates:

"Many of the stories enjoyed by young children contain repetition of words, phrases or sentences."

(Norton D. 1983 p. 92).

Mitchell clarifies this point:

"The ultimate test of stories and verse is whether they help children to retain their native gift of play with language and with thought."

(Mitchell L. in Wolcott P. Children's literature in education Vol. 13 No. 3 p. 124).

The above excerpt from Something to see does not match up to the repetitious manner in which children play with language and thought. It is, instead, the authors stylised interpretation of a situation that would lead to a very different verbal reaction from Kathy and Mother if they were part of the real world. Such stylised written language does not contribute to the maintenance of the richness of the child's oral tradition. In fact, it limits the language of the child. Wolcott warns that in limiting the language the child is exposed to in stories:

"...we limit their language development, rather than employing it as a springboard into the world of fantasy ... and the like."

(Wolcott P. Children's literature in education Vol. 13 No. 3 p. 125).

The language patterns used by O'Donnell and Munro do not contribute to the action and setting of the story. In the story Something good, Kathy and Mark approach a park kiosk to buy ice-cream. One would expect the language to reflect the excitement of the children. Yet, the incident is set out as follows:

"Come with me, Mark.
 I see something good.
 I see something I like.
 I see something I want.
 Look, Mark.
 Look at my ice-cream.
 I like ice-cream.
 Ice-cream is good for me.
 Do you want one too?"

(Rides and slides 1966 pp. 14 - 15).

In this, and many other incidents, it is the manner in which the authors approach the topic and the style employed, rather than the topic itself that is unrealistic. The average child would never react to buying an ice-cream in the way Kathy does. This is the very reason, Wade suggests, why readers do not react favourably to reading scheme books:

"Young readers are unwilling to invest too much in reading because the 'reading book' does not seem to relate to the real world."

(Wade B. Children's literature in education Vol. 13 No. 1 p. 37).

The continued manner in which O'Donnell and Munro use repetition to further their aim of the child learning specific words leads to the child reacting unfavourably to reading scheme books. In books such as Speech rhymes edited by Clive Sansom (1974), the emphasis is placed on repetition, rhyme and alliteration, and yet such books prove very popular with young readers. Further examples of the effective use of repetition and linking in a non-contrived manner can be seen in such well known stories as 'The three little pigs' and the Seuss-type books. In the story of the

three little pigs repetition is used to create reader interest in the story and build the plot to a climax, as can be seen in the wolf's threat to each of the three little pigs:

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff,
and I'll blow the house in."

(Carpenter H. and Prichard M. 1984 p.
525).

In the same manner, the cat in Seuss' The cat in the hat builds suspense by repeating the words:

"But that is not all.
Oh, no.
That is not all ..."

(Seuss Dr. 1957 pp. 14 - 21).

Until the point comes when the cat tries to balance too many things and the inevitable happens:

"That is what the cat said ...
Then he fell on his head!"

(Seuss Dr. 1957 p. 21).

On the other hand, the story of 'Chicken-Licken' in the Janet and John book, Through the garden gate, is an example of how repetition can be used in a meaningless and boring way that does not contribute to the development of the plot. The contrived names of Chicken-Licken, Hen-Len, Cock-Lock, Duck-Luck, Drake-Lake, Goose-Loose, Turkey-Lurkey and Fox-Lox are repeated endlessly. (See Through the garden gate 1949 pp. 23 - 33). Incidentally, all of the above words are listed on pages 80 and

81 of the book as "new words used in Through the garden gate". (Through the garden gate 1949 pp. 80 - 81). In what way could the laborious learning of such contrived words as 'Turkey-Lurkey' possibly contribute to the child's overall reading ability? It is thus evident that repetition is not used effectively in the scheme books.

The final aspect of style to be considered is that of point of view. Norton elaborates on the choice of a point of view:

"An incident may be described in different terms by several people who have the same experience. The details they choose to describe, the feelings they experience, and their beliefs in the right and wrong of an incident may vary because of their backgrounds, values, and other perspectives. Consequently the same story may change drastically depending on the storyteller's point of view."

(Norton D. 1983 p. 93).

Munro and O'Donnell use an unintrusive omniscient narrator throughout both the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark reading schemes. The stories are told from an objective point of view, referred to as "showing" or "the dramatic method" by Abrams. (Abrams M. 1957 p. 21). In this case, says Abrams:

"... the author merely presents his characters talking and acting and leaves the reader to infer what motives and dispositions lie behind what they say and do."

(Abrams M. 1957 p. 21).

This point of view contributes to poor style as it does not allow for the inclusion of anything more than the reporting of incidents in the story. The characters react to the context they are placed in without premeditated thought or consequence. Little can be inferred as to the 'motives and dispositions' of the characters as their language and behaviour is infantile. Each incident is isolated, there to be narrated and forgotten about. In turn, this leads to limited character development and a weak plot.

In sum, style is an important consideration when assessing the literary quality of the reading scheme books, as a fluid style related to the language and speech rhythms of the young child, does much to captivate the readers attention. "In style" say Sutherland et al "there should be appropriateness and integrity." (Sutherland Z. et al 1981 p. 47). Children do react to style, though they may not be able to analyse particular aspects of it. As Huck points out:

"Frequently, a child is better able to identify what he dislikes about an author's style than to identify what he likes."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 13).

Many 'dislikes' are apparent in the style of the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark scheme books, which has an adverse effect on the child's attitude towards reading these books.

Format.

The format of a book covers a wide number of areas worthy of consideration. These include "size, shape, the design of pages, illustrations, typography, quality of paper, and binding." (Huck C. 1976 p. 13). The single most important consideration that needs to be examined when assessing the format of a book is that of the illustrations. (Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 pp. 47 - 102; Sutherland Z. et al 1981 pp. 124 - 155; Norton D. 1983 pp. 104 - 193). In an article entitled Illustration in children's books, Charles Keeping makes the point that the whole issue of the illustration in children's literature has not enjoyed sufficient attention:

"... for so many years, for some weird reason, artists have been the poor relation and yet they have been contributing half the strength of children's books."

(Keeping C. 1970 Children's literature in education No. 1 p. 41).

In recent years, the situation has been rectified to a certain extent, as more people realise and acknowledge the key role illustrations play in children's fiction. More and more attention is being paid to illustrations in children's literature because of the economic viability of doing so - good illustrations sell books - but more importantly, because of the impact the illustrations have on the reader. Sendak has indicated that illustrations need to be created out of a responsibility to and

sympathy for the child audience. The images created must be as seen through the eyes of a child. (See Swanton A. 1971 Children's literature in education No. 6 pp. 38 - 48; Meek M. et al 1977 pp. 248 - 256). Smerdon suggests that the quality of the child's response to illustrations is of far greater significance than that of the adult and postulates that:

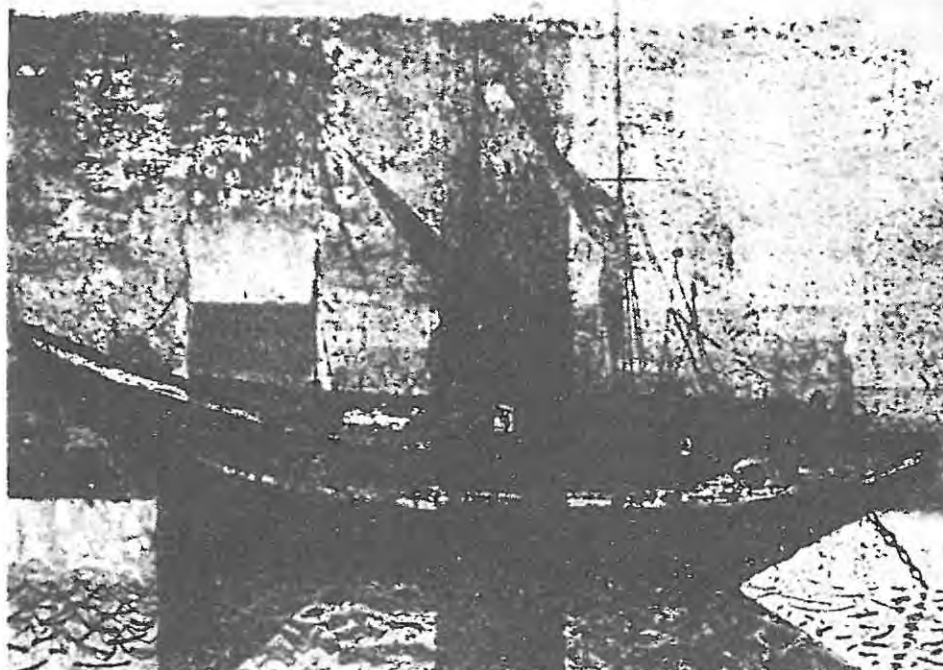
"... we should direct more of our attention to fundamental questions such as:

What kind of pictures evoke what kind of responses from children?
How does such a response vary with age or ability or experience?"

(Smerdon G. 1976 Children's literature in education No. 20 p. 17).

However, much of the response to the above questions has been based on what individual critics believed various illustrations to be worth. Smerdon thus suggests the establishment of some objective measure in assessing illustrations in children's books, despite the "problematic nature of aesthetic preference and its measurement." (p. 19). Smerdon then sets out to clarify "children's preferences for illustrations on an abstract/representational continuum." (See Norton D. 1983 pp. 113 - 118 for a detailed account of the various media available to the illustrator of children's literature). The extremes of this continuum are represented on the one hand, by illustrations such as those of Charles Keeping's:

They went past a group of sailing boats and some old barges.



An illustration from Charles Keeping's Alfie and the ferry boat Oxford University Press 1968.

And on the other hand, by illustrations found in reading scheme books:



An illustration from The boat ride Book Three
Kathy and Mark Reading Scheme 1966.

Smerdon's conclusions as to children's preferences in illustrations were reached through a series of detailed, comprehensive and scientifically controlled experiments. He found that the children involved in the experiment, aged six to fifteen years, generally tended to prefer "representational art forms as opposed to those more abstract in treatment" (p. 30) and that there is little or no difference in the choices made by boys and girls. He did, however, find that:

"... preferences vary at certain ages, most noticeably at the infant and less so at the adolescent stages."

(Smerdon G. 1976 Children's literature in education No. 20 p. 30).

The six year old child has a greater preference for the abstract than any other age group. This preference gradually diminishes to a firm preference for representational illustrations in early adolescence. From that point on an appreciation of the abstract tends to increase again, but not to the same extent as is the case with six year olds. The reason for changing preferences can possibly be attributed to the socialisation of the children in the school context:

"It has often been observed, and indeed lamented, that children of preschool and early infant school age often express themselves with much greater creative freedom than do their older counterparts. From early juniors onwards the artistic freedom seems soon lost in an almost neurotic concern with detail and the rightness of a picture ... It is not until later secondary schooling that the child, presumably more sure of himself and his control over his environment, is prepared to experiment with visual media in the free uninhibited manner he used once as a preschool child."

(Smerdon G. 1976 Children's literature in education No. 20 p. 29).

The implications for the illustrations in reading scheme books are enormous. The illustrations in Janet and John and Kathy and Mark are situated on the extreme representational end of the abstract/representational continuum. Yet Smerdon's research has shown that the young child has a clear preference for illustrations that are closely associated with the abstract side of the continuum. Adults, in the form of teachers and parents, are largely responsible for the young child's increasing lack of interest in the abstract as he progresses through school because of the emphasis placed on detail and picture accuracy. The representational images in reading scheme illustrations contribute to the socialisation process of the young child. A process from which the child only escapes, in part, some ten years later.

Having indicated that the representational illustrations do not match young children's preferences, an examination of the illustrations in Kathy and Mark and Janet and John is still necessary to establish their quality within the framework of representational illustrations. Both the Janet and John and the Kathy and Mark teacher's manuals emphasize the care that has been taken in the selection of illustrations. Of the Janet and John scheme, Munro says:

"The illustrations have been drawn by artists who love and understand children ... this makes children accept Janet and John as real children ... The pictures are attractive to children ... The subjects are treated with direct naturalness and good taste."

(Munro R. 1954 pp. 1 - 2).

Munro continues in the same vein in the Kathy and Mark teacher's manual:

"Great care has been exercised over the choice of illustrations ... delightfully illustrated with large, clear pictures. A child learning the first steps of reading spends a considerable time with each page, so the illustrations must be attractive enough to be pleasing after long scrutiny."

(Munro R. 1978 p. 13)

The pictures form an integral part of the story and thus "the illustration always corresponds with the text it accompanies" (Munro R. 1978 p. 13). Whitaker indicates that good illustrations should "reinforce the text by creating atmosphere,

delineating character and expanding meaning." (Whitaker M. 1975 Children's literature in education No. 16 p. 10). Tiedt suggests five criteria for evaluating illustrations in books for children:

- "1. Suit the context of the book.
2. Be understood by children.
3. Support or extend the story context.
4. Represent excellent art in varied media.
5. Avoid stereotyped approaches to art and the ideas portrayed."

(Tiedt I. 1979 p. 34).

(Similar criteria are mentioned by Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 pp. 88 - 95; Sutherland Z. et al 1981 pp. 124 - 125 and Norton D. 1983 p. 119). While Munro's comments on the illustrations in both the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes indicate a meeting of the standards required by Tiedt's criteria, an examination of the illustrations in the schemes does not result in conclusions concomitant with Munro's, particularly with reference to Tiedt's fourth and fifth criteria.

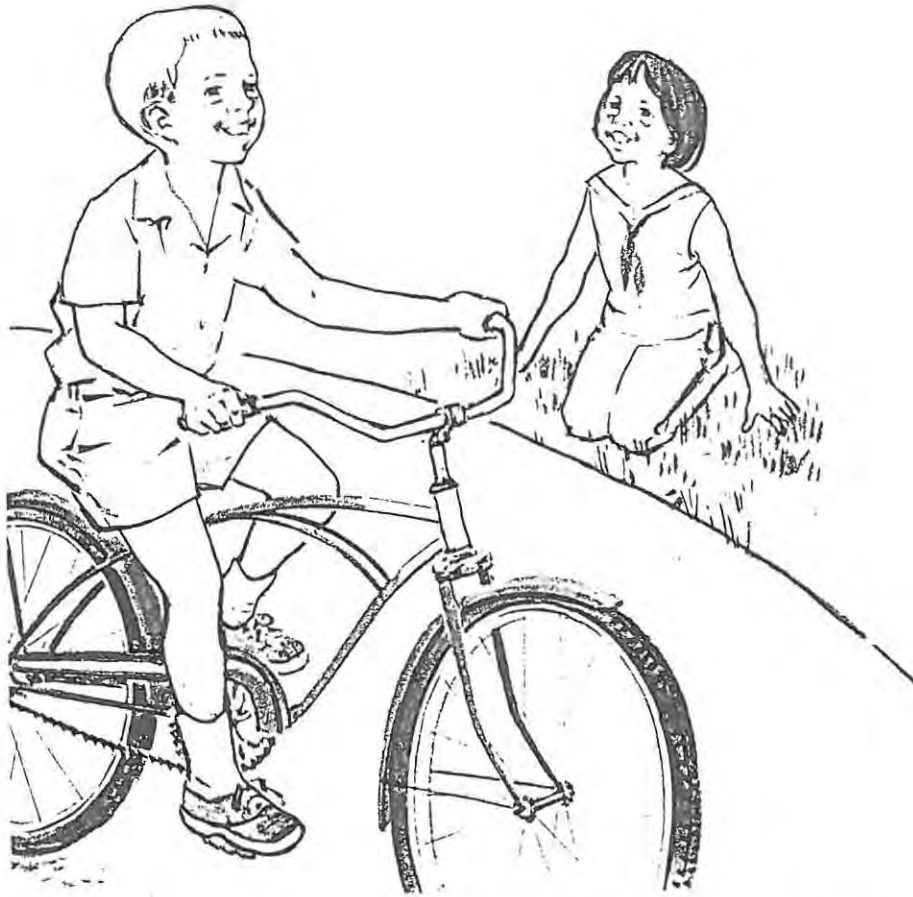
The scheme books succeed in presenting print and illustration in such a way that they form a composite whole. The schemes use a controlled vocabulary which means they have to rely on illustrations to convey meaning that the limited words cannot convey. This is particularly true of the earlier books in the series. In Kathy and Mark Book One, Kathy calls Mark to "come and jump" (p. 7). Without the accompanying illustration, it would be impossible for the child to know what the context is and

what Kathy is jumping on. The illustration reveals this information to the young reader by showing Kathy jumping on a trampoline:



(p. 7).

The next story, entitled Mark can ride, gives no indication in the text as to what Mark can ride. The illustrations expand on the meaning of the text by showing Mark riding a bicycle:



(Kathy and Mark Book One 1966 p. 12)

Despite this positive aspect of the illustrations in the scheme books, they also fall within the category of illustrations that have a didactic purpose. Frequently, illustrations have a didactic purpose within the context of the story:

"Often pictures are introduced not simply to delight - though they should do that - but also to instruct the reader in regard to facts, behaviour, social attitudes and moral and religious concepts."

(Whitaker M. 1975 Children's literature in education No. 16 p. 10).

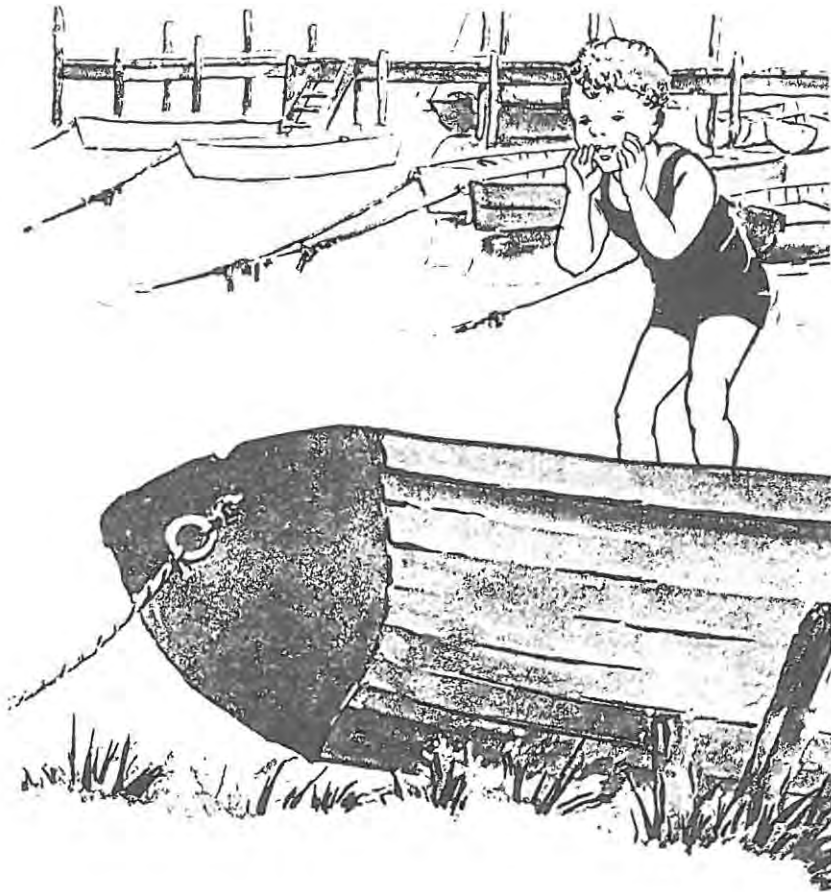
For more than three hundred years these kinds of books have been thought suitable for children by parents and teachers. This diadactic approach is used in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes. The scheme books:

"... present a secure white middle-class, suburban world where father drives off to work in a late-model car while mother performs domestic chores ..."

(Whitaker M. 1975 Children's literature in education No. 16 p. 17).

This idealised world presented in print, is reinforced in the eyes of the child reader by means of the supporting illustrations. Everything about the illustrations is good, clean and fresh, from the illustrations of the family and pets, houses and neighbours to the local airport, harbour and railway station. Such an approach does not match up to Tiedt's fourth and fifth criteria, namely "4. Represent excellent art in varied media" and "5. Avoid stereotyped approaches to art and the ideas portrayed." (Tiedt I. 1979 p. 34).

A further negative aspect of the illustrations is the way in which they date the schemes, even more so than the text. Clothing is perhaps the most obvious indication that the books belong to a bygone era. In Janet and John Book One, the illustrations of the children playing at the harbour show John in a full costume:



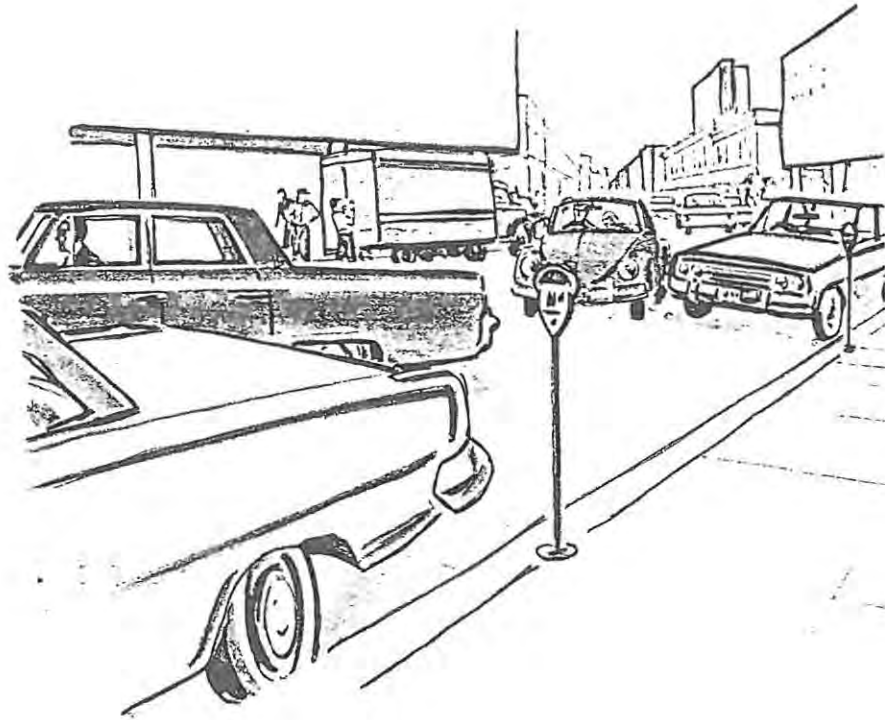
(Janet and John Book One 1949 p. 19).

Many other examples abound throughout the scheme. Even in the more up to date scheme, Kathy and Mark, many of the clothing styles are well out of date. Although Mark now wears a shorts type bathing costume, Father and Mother still wear hats and Mark is dressed in a cap, blazer and grey flannels when the family go on an aeroplane trip. The taxi driver too, wears a uniform no longer common:



(Just like you 1966 p. 4).

Setting and objects too, contribute to the dating of the scheme books. In Janet and John the aeroplanes all have propellers and the trains are steam. While the Kathy and Mark scheme illustrations show jet airliners and television sets, the motor vehicles and household furniture are responsible for dating the books:



(Something to see 1966 p. 27).

Whitaker states that good illustrations "reinforce the text by creating atmosphere, delineating character and expanding meaning." (Whitaker M. 1975 Children's literature in education No. 16 p. 10). Yet the illustrations in both schemes tend to be static. Attention is focused on only the main characters and there is little in the way of sympathetic background to enhance understanding and provide additional meaning for the child. Although the actions of the main characters in the illustrations assist the reader in the process of deciphering the written language, they add little to the development of plot. The

illustrations lack depth and interest though they are linked to the storyline. Yet at this early stage, the illustrations should provide a visual storyline that requires few words to make it comprehensible. A comparison of pictures dealing with the same theme from these two schemes and the Ginn Reading 360 scheme gives a clear indication of the lack of depth in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark illustrations. The illustrations are taken from the first book of each of the three brespective schemes where illustrations, because of the limitations on the language used, play a crucial role:



(Janet and John, Here we go 1949 p. 13).



(Kathy and Mark Book One 1966 p. 32).

Yes, Lad.
I can help.



(Ginn Reading 360 Lad 1980 p. 16).

While the first two pictures focus on the two main characters and a dog with virtually no background whatsoever, the third picture includes significant background. This adds to an understanding of the context in which the action takes place, as well as capturing and holding the child's interest. This allows the teacher to discuss the picture with the reader, or the reader to

examine various possibilities himself. Issues that could be discussed from this single picture include: the season, the setting in the garden and the factory in the background, the different animals and what they are doing, the plants, how the boy is able to help the dog, different shapes in the picture and various counting exercises. Thus, the illustrations in the third picture have enabled the reading process to become far more sophisticated than just 'barking at print', which is not the case in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes.

To conclude, illustrations for children's books must reach high standards of aesthetic quality:

"The adult, who in most cases is the selector of books for younger children, must not forget that for a generation growing up in a world of visual communications, pictures often do speak louder than words."

(Whitaker M. 1975 Children's literature in education No. 16 p. 19).

Illustrations have to compete with attractive and accessible visual media of television and film. While it is important to recognize what illustrations have to compete against for the child's attention, the purpose of the illustrations within the story is the crucial issue. As Huck points out, illustrations:

"... may enrich the interpretation of the story, and should be carefully planned and integrated with the text ... The illustrations give an added dimension."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 13).

This is not the case in the illustrations of the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes.

A number of additional factors need to be considered when assessing the format of a book. Firstly, "typography is very important" (Huck C. 1976 p. 14). The size of the type should be aimed at the age level for which the book is intended and should be displayed in such a way that the text is clear to the reader. Munro indicates that attention has been paid to this aspect in the reading schemes:

"The style and the size of the type chosen and the arrangement of the text on the page greatly affect the ease with which it is read. Care has been taken in the Kathy and Mark reading books to make a very gradual transition from the format used in the earliest books to that which will be encountered later."

(Munro R. 1978 p. 15).

The typography in both schemes meets the criteria of size and clarity, as can be seen from the following examples:

1. Janet and John Book One:

Come, John.
Come and look.

(p. 8).

2. Janet and John Book Six:

The dog could carry a basket.
The kitten could catch a ball.

(p. 8).

3. Kathy and Mark Book One:

Here I come, Kathy.
Here I come.
I can jump and jump.

(p. 9).

4. Kathy and Mark Book Eight:

“It’s a real mystery,” he said. “I know I put it there. Someone must have taken it. But who would want it?”

(p. 35).

Secondly, the quality of the paper and the durability of the binding need to be considered. Little fault can be found with either scheme in this area. Munro makes the point in the Janet and John teacher's manual that:

"Paper of high quality has been chosen because only on a good paper can print be clear and black, as it must be for children's eyes ..."

(Munro R. 1954 p. 1).

The sets of Janet and John and Kathy and Mark scheme books I have examined bear testimony to Munro's claim. If one considers the age of the books and the number of children who have used them, the books are still in very good condition, which can in part be attributed to thick, good quality paper and durable binding.

To conclude, the typography, paper and binding used in the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark scheme books are of a high standard. A bright point in the otherwise rather negative assessment of these scheme books. However, as Huck points out:

"... a book should never be selected on the basis of format alone, without an accompanying evaluation of its content. No book is better than its text."

(Italics mine)
(Huck C. 1976 p. 14).

And, as has been seen, the text of the scheme books fails dismally.

CHAPTER FIVEWHERE TO NOW? CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"Child readers bring certain expectations to a book including a desire to find enjoyment and meaning in it, and I argue that if the author does not meet those demands, the work will leave the reader feeling empty and cheated."

(Richardson C. in Glazer J. and Williams G. 1979 p. 37).

"... a particularly important teaching skill is that of assessing the level of difficulty of books by applying measures of readability. The teacher who can do this is in a better position to match children to reading materials that answer their needs. In our visits to schools we came across many children who were not allowed to read 'real books' until they had completed the scheme. This is an artificial distinction and an unnatural restriction of reading experience. We also came across children who had made good progress through a scheme and were now struggling at frustration level in other kinds of reading, while others were bored by material that was making too few demands upon them. The effective teacher is one who has under her conscious control all the resources that can fulfil her purpose. By carefully assessing levels of difficulty she can draw from a variety of sources."

(Bullock report 1975 par. 7.32 p. 113).

A practical approach to the teaching of reading.

This study has examined the literary quality of the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark reading schemes. Both schemes have been found to be lacking in literary merit in all the areas investigated. The practical issue of the continued usage of schemes of poor literary quality in the schools remains. Just how these schemes are used in the schools is an issue that other researchers will need to investigate. It would seem possible however, at this stage, to investigate a number of practical approaches to the problem of classroom practice. It must be emphasised that what follows is a tentative exploration into areas that require detailed analysis beyond the limits of this study.

Much of what is to be investigated in this chapter is dependant on one's views of the nature of the reading process. The four major approaches can be summarized as follows. Firstly, there is the view that reading is translating print into vocal language which focuses attention on letter and word recognition and letter-sound associations. The second major viewpoint expressed is that reading is primarily making sense of visual language which focuses attention on reading as an act of meaningful communication. Thirdly, there is the view that the strengths of the first two approaches can be combined into a single interactive approach where focus of attention in the approach changes according to the demands made by the reading task. The

final, and most recent approach, is based on the view that the child learns to read by recognising words from his own vocabulary, built into sentences that he creates with the assistance of the teacher. This language experience approach is used by the Breakthrough to literacy project. Johnstone stresses the fact that the Breakthrough approach:

"... is not a reading scheme. It does not enable a child to become literate in the fullest meaning of the word."

(Johnstone M. 1979 pp. 1 - 2).

Once a child has grasped the basics as taught by this approach, he then moves on to a reading scheme or individualised reading.

Cliff Moon counters those critics who believe that there is a single correct method of teaching reading by quoting from the 1975 BBC television programme, How do you read?:

"As long as there are children who learn to read without teaching, sometimes without recourse to books, often before they commence school, sometimes having never had a story read to them ... as long as there are children like that, we cannot be certain that any method of teaching reading is the only or right way."

(Moon C. (Ed.) 1985 p. 1).

It is not my intention to analyse the merits of the various approaches, but it is necessary to note that of the four

approaches, it is only the language experience approach that allows for the possibility of using reading material other than a reading scheme as a basis for the approach. The first three approaches are all reading scheme bound and the language experience approach can lead on to using a reading scheme. Thus reading schemes tend to dominate the teaching of reading in schools. In a recently completed, and as yet unpublished, survey carried out by the Reading and Language Information Centre at the University of Reading School of Education, 49.83 percent of the 1,186 teachers of four-to eight-year-olds throughout the British Isles who responded to the survey used one major reading scheme. (Child education May 1987 p. 6). The replies received from a letter sent to twenty-three schools in the Eastern Cape (Chapter One) would suggest that the percentage of teachers using one major reading scheme is much higher in South Africa. It would thus appear that the average junior primary teacher in C.E.D. schools is using a reading scheme as the basis of an approach to the teaching of reading.

Yet this study has shown that the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark reading schemes, still in use in the C.E.D. schools, do not match up to the criteria for good literature. Criticism of reading schemes in general must, surely, give rise to the need for teachers to question their reliance on such schemes. Whitaker, for example, describes them as "vapid and bland as pabulum, safe but not stimulating." (Whitaker M. Spring 1975 Children's literature in education p. 17).

These scheme books frequently are, in the words of Tucker:

"... something of a showcase for the conventional opinions of the middle class of the time, from whom most of its authors have usually been drawn."

(Tucker N. 1981 p. 192).

Laurenson and Swingewood add that in any literature:

"A connection is evident between economic and social structure, the author's perspective, his self-image, and the character of his work."

(Laurenson D. and Swingewood A. 1971 p. 92).

And Meek sums up the wide-ranging criticism of reading scheme books in her comment that:

"... there is little virtue in most reading scheme books, as books."

(Meek M. 1982 p. 67).

Why then, do outdated reading schemes survive in the schools? Root suggests that ignorance on the part of the teacher is part of the reason:

"Regretably some teachers are not so well informed and they struggle on, using out of date, often ineffective resources."

(Root B. and Jack A. 1983 p. 9).

Financial considerations too, play a major role in the decisions taken whether to replace existing material or not. It is far less costly for a school to replace damaged or missing books from the existing scheme than to purchase one or more of the modern schemes. Modern schemes of a high literary quality are available, but at a considerable price. For the most part, these schemes are published in Britain. The current rand/pound exchange rate and the governments inexplicable insistence on the taxation of books used in educational institutions, both contribute to many of these modern schemes being financially beyond the reach of the average school. (The price of the Ginn Reading 360 scheme serves as an example. The core readers presently cost R504-70 per set. At least six sets are needed to introduce the scheme effectively, leading to an initial outlay of R3 028-20 plus General Sales Tax of R363-30. This excludes teachers manuals for each of the thirteen levels, each costing about R25-00, extension readers, flashcards and charts, which would at least double the initial outlay figure). In addition, the percentage of the C.E.D. schools' annual budget that is allocated to the purchase of literature for children is very small. Funds simply aren't available to buy new schemes. It usually requires the efforts of a highly motivated staff working in conjunction with the School Committee and Parent Teacher Association to raise the necessary funds. Such active campaigning for books occurs in a small minority of schools as most P.T.A.'s mistakenly see the C.E.D. as supplying all the educational 'software' required by the schools; their role being the raising of funds to purchase buses, rugby balls and suchlike.

A final aspect worthy of consideration is that of the relationship between literature and social practice. Eagleton indicates that:

"... art is a form of social production ... which closely determines the nature of art itself ... art is first of all a social practice rather than an object to be academically dissected. We may see literature as a text, but we may also see it as a social activity, a form of social and economic production which exists alongside, and interrelates with, other such forms."

(Eagleton T. 1976 p. 60).

The reading scheme books generally reflect the views and status of the ruling class and thus remain in use as long as they are socially viable, even if they have no literary merit.

Given the limitations and problems as outlined above, what can the individual teacher do to improve the quality of the approach to reading in her classroom? While the control the C.E.D., the principal and the head of the junior primary department exercise over classroom practice must not be overlooked, it is possible for the individual teacher to take some constructive steps towards improving reading approaches. What follows are suggestions as to how those constructive steps can be taken, bearing in mind a word of caution from Root:

"... like all approaches to reading (a single approach) is not the solution for each and all."

(Root B. and Jack A. 1983 p. 10).

One must accept that the schemes examined in this study are being used in the schools and that the education authorities are unlikely to take steps to eliminate the use of these schemes overnight. Thus the first positive step that the individual teacher should take is to become aware of the limitations and shortcomings of the particular scheme they are using. Root presents a concise summary of the points that need to be considered when evaluating a reading scheme in the booklet entitled A survey of reading schemes. (Root B. and Jack A. 1983 pp. 10 - 11). At present, it is largely up to the individual practicing teacher to do this research for herself and there is no doubt that in-service courses arranged by the C.E.D. would go a long way towards alleviating a lack of knowledge of the shortcomings of the various reading schemes and approaches to reading. It is pleasing to note that the necessary attention is given to the examination of reading approaches and schemes at the local university, both in the junior and senior primary courses. (See Annexures 4.1. and 4.2. for English method course outlines at Rhodes University). If the individual teacher examines a number of reading schemes, it will soon become apparent that not all the schemes fall prey to all the harsh criticisms that have been levelled against reading schemes in general. Root elaborates:

"In the immediate post war years the idea of a strictly controlled vocabulary flourished and reading schemes became perpetually associated with boring, repetitive and meaningless prose. There has persisted, in some quarters, an insistence that all schemes are devoid of literary merit. This is just not so. More recently a new image has emerged, influenced by the move of many respected and highly acclaimed children's authors into this particular field. There are thoughtful sensitively written schemes which do enable children to learn to read with real pleasure and satisfaction."

(Root B. and Jack A. 1983 pp. 10 - 11).

The Ginn Reading 360 scheme is such a scheme. While criticisms of such schemes do exist, a close examination of their content reveals a closer approximation to 'real' books than to the traditional reading scheme. The Ginn Reading 360 scheme uses a number of different authors and illustrators as opposed to the rigid O'Donnell M. and Munro R. format seen throughout the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark schemes. Thus the graded readers with different authors/illustrators is very similar to Bernice and Cliff Moon's colour coding of individualised readers approach. (See Moon B. and C. 1984 pp. 3 - 7). The use of such up to date, modern schemes that fulfil many of the requirements to be considered good literature are the solution for those teachers who don't have the confidence or competence to abandon the reading scheme approach completely. They may also be of value to the beginner reader, providing that the scheme answers to the criteria which have been dealt with in this dissertation. Betty Root, in a publication entitled In defence of reading schemes,

makes the point that well designed schemes can be supportive to children in their first tentative efforts to read. Root continues:

"Many of the more recently published schemes are thoughtful and sensitively written and not a few teachers are grateful for their expertise because they recognise that in the early stages of learning to read what matters above all else is for children to succeed. The text must be accessible to them."

(Root B. 1986 p. 4).

However, it is necessary to "draw from a variety of sources" (Bullock report 1975 p. 113) and to this end Root lists and examines nine reading programmes of high literary quality. (See Root B. 1986 pp. 6 - 11). The question of having the finances available to purchase a number of these reading programmes has already been addressed. Most of these schemes do, however, closely approximate colour coded children's literature and it is thus possible to use part of a scheme quite effectively in conjunction with an individualised reading programme.

For the more self confident teacher, the relatively new approach of individualised reading offers a challenging and exciting way to teach reading. It must, however, be stressed that it is crucial for the teacher adopting such an approach to be convinced that this approach is the most effective way to teach reading, as individualised reading is still at the centre of the vociferous rules and reading schemes vs. no rules and 'real'

books debate. In recent years much has been written to support the newer individualised approach (Bennett J. 1979; Meek M. 1982; Moon C. (Ed.) 1985; Waterland L. 1985), but as with any established system, the supporters of the rules and reading schemes approach strongly deny the viability of the approach advocated by Bennett, Meek, Moon and Waterland. Much of the support for the traditional approaches is based on the view that:

"... established, trusted, long-term methods ... have been responsible for teaching the vast majority of people to read."

(Munro R. 1978 p. 1).

A second argument from the traditionalists is that there is insufficient research to indicate that the individualised reading approach works. Root poses the question:

"... you would need a great deal of courage to assume that all children learn ... to acquire a knowledge of reading by osmosis ... provided they are read to frequently and surrounded by beautiful books. Where is the research to prove this point of view?"

(Root B. 1986 p. 5).

Yet, as I have indicated, a number of researchers have shown that the individualised reading approach works and most of these studies are examples of how the average teacher can abandon a reading scheme in favour of 'real' books. Bennett's booklet, Learning to read with picture books (1979), deals with the philosophy behind the individualised reading approach and how it

has been successfully implemented. Waterland's book, Reading for real (1985) deals similarly with the practical approach in the school context. Practical ways to teach reading, edited by Moon (1985) is perhaps the most comprehensive source of how the individualised approach can be introduced and used, as each of the contributors express ideas that they have used effectively in their own primary school classes.

Details of just how a teacher would go about introducing individualised reading in a C.E.D. school are more than adequately covered in the references mentioned above. A brief summary of the major steps to be taken in introducing an individualised reading programme follows, although it must be stressed that the unique circumstances of each school will have an influence on just how the details surrounding each of these major steps are implemented.

1. Any change in policy must start with an awareness of the shortcomings of the approach being used and the advantages of using the approach being considered.
2. The next positive step is to remove the outdated scheme material of poor literary quality from the classroom.

3. Replace outdated material with a detailed language experience and individualised reading approach. The language experience approach is best outlined by the Breakthrough to literacy project.
4. The teacher must use every available opportunity for reading to the children.
5. The books in the junior primary section of the school library can serve as a core for the implementation of an individualised reading policy.
6. Additional books can be made available through a bulk loan from the local public library.
7. The finances that would have been spent on updating the reading scheme material can now be used for the purchase of 'real' books of genuine literary merit.

The manner in which a local school went about introducing a language experience approach and individualised reading is given in Annexure Six.

In conclusion, it is necessary to stress once again, the importance of children being exposed to books of literary merit. The examination of Huck's criteria have given an indication of what elements have to be considered when assessing children's

literature. Over and above these basic literary considerations, books for children should engage the interest of the reader and above all, be fun. Wolcott suggests:

"The most important functions of books for earliest readers are to build children's faith in themselves and to make reading fun."

(Wolcott P. 1982 Children's literature in education Vol. 13 No. 3 p. 123).

And Mitchell adds:

"The ultimate test of stories and verse is whether they help children to retain their native gift of play with language and with thought."

(Mitchell L. in Wolcott P. 1982 p. 124).

Good literature, says Norton:

"... entices, motivates, and develops. It opens doors of discovery and provides endless hours of adventure and enjoyment."

(Norton D. 1983 p. 4).

And Sutherland et al add:

"... there is no pleasure exactly like the moment when book and reader meet and are just right for each other."

(Sutherland Z. et al 1981 p. 4).

In literature for children, adults have the responsibility to enable children to become "aware of the enchantment in books." (Norton D. 1983 p. 4). Norton quotes Cullinan's statement that:

"Adults are responsible for providing books and transmitting the literary heritage contained in nursery rhymes, traditional tales and great novels."

(Cullinan B. in Norton D. 1983 p. 4).

Tucker too, points to adult responsibility in this regard:

"In whatever way young people finally decide to make use of literature, therefore, the existence of this potential treasure-trove at their disposal is something that should ... be brought to their attention."

(Tucker N. 1981 p. 232).

Adults control children's literature. It is thus worth remembering de la Mare's admonition at all times:

"Only the rarest kind of best in anything can be good enough for the young."

(de la Mare W. 1942 p. 11).

Summary of conclusions and recommendations.

This dissertation has examined the literary quality of two reading schemes currently in use in C.E.D. schools in the Eastern Cape.

Conclusions.

1. Research has shown that there is no single method of teaching reading that is suitable for all children. Much debate still surrounds the rules and reading schemes vs. no rules and 'real' books approaches to the teaching of reading.
2. It would appear that the majority of schools, both in Britain and South Africa, use reading schemes as the basis of their approach to the teaching of reading.
3. A number of schemes in use in the schools are outdated, irrelevant, stereotyped and boring. Yet researchers have pointed out that books for children need to be the antithesis of the content of such scheme material.
4. The C.E.D. Guide of 1984 appears to support various approaches to the teaching of reading but limitations in material available through the C.E.D. List of approved books restrict the individual school's choice. Further inherent contradictions undermine the validity of the C.E.D.

approaches to the teaching of reading as stated in the Guide.

5. A number of teachers in C.E.D. schools in the Eastern Cape express opinions that they do not have the authority, finance or knowledge to replace outdated reading scheme material.
6. From an examination of the Janet and John and Kathy and Mark reading schemes currently in use in some C.E.D. schools, the following aspects of their literary quality emerge:
 - (a) There is little development in plot, the ordering of most of the events in the stories occurring in haphazard fashion, with a trite and inconsequential storyline.
 - (b) The stories are set in the universal present in a typical middle class Anglo-Saxon family, which limits the universality of these books for children. The preoccupation with middle class material possessions leads to a dating of the books.
 - (c) The overriding theme of the scheme books is that of idealistic middle class values and principles of behaviour.

- (d) In attempting to portray the typical and universal, the characters are presented in a flat and stereotyped manner.
- (e) The style employed in the scheme books is poor in that it results in dull and contrived repetitious reading for the child reader.
- (f) The illustrations do not meet the five to eight year old child's preferences for the abstract and tend to represent stereotyped approaches to art. The illustrations too, contribute to a dating of these schemes.
- (g) The typography, quality of the paper and durability of the binding are of an adequately high standard.

Recommendations.

The following recommendations seem pertinent:

1. that further research be conducted into the approaches to the teaching of reading in C.E.D. schools in respect of stated policy and current implementation of this policy;

2. that schools and teachers examine the approach to the teaching of reading that they are using in order to become aware of:
 - (a) the shortcomings of the schemes used
 - (b) the viability of introducing alternative approaches;
 3. that the C.E.D. provide relevant in-service courses to assist serving teachers in reviewing and updating their knowledge of the reading process and reading materials available;
 4. that universities and colleges, where it is not done, provide for a detailed examination of reading approaches and schemes within their English method courses;
- and
5. that further and continued efforts be made to ensure that young readers have access to a wide variety of quality literature.
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INDEX TO ANNEXURES

- Annexure One: Peter Horner's summary of approaches to the teaching of reading.
- Annexure Two: Letter sent to a sample of Eastern Cape English medium schools
- Annexure Three: Extract from the Cape Education Department List of Approved Books (reading schemes)
- Annexure Four: Contents of the schemes examined.
- Annexure Five: Rhodes University : literature course content.
- Annexure Six: Victoria primary school English literature policy.

ANNEXURE ONESUMMARY OF TWO APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF READING
PETER HORNER**Chapter 3: Approaches to the Teaching of Reading**

In this chapter, some of the main approaches to the teaching of reading will be considered.

Reference has been made already to the two main methods, the alphabet method of ancient times, which led to the phonic method and the look and say or whole-word method.

Look and Say Methods

This method is based on the assumption that children see words in 'wholes' and that when these words are put into meaningful sentences they will find enjoyment and so be motivated to go on reading. The growth of child-centred education, stressing 'learning' rather than 'teaching' and emphasizing the theory that interest was a great motivator, coupled with the appeal to Gestalt psychology, did much to foster the growth of the 'Look and Say' approach. Publishers welcomed it as it gave greater scope to artistic expression and attractive book production than did the earlier methods employing a phonic approach. The Look and Say methods also permitted the vocabulary of primers to employ words of high interest value from the children's own speech vocabulary. The Happy Venture Readers by Schonell and Serjeant (1939) was one of the first Look and Say schemes to be widely used. It was followed by Janet and John (1949); McKee Readers (1956) and many others since.

Advantages

1. Words of interest to the children can be used, either singly or in sentences.
2. Confidence can be built up quickly.
3. More pictorially interesting books can be produced.
4. From the earliest stages attention can be given to meaning.

Disadvantages

1. Tremendous demands are made on the child's powers of memory.
2. This gives rise to artificially controlled vocabularies and meaningless repetitions.
3. The child is given no equipment to deal with new words and so resorts to guessing.
4. Confusion arises between words of similar pattern, e.g. 'look' and 'book'; 'mummy' for 'monkey'.
5. No recognition is given to the fact that English is basically an alphabetic language.

The Phonic Approach

The term 'phonic' denotes a written system of symbols representing sounds and should not be confused with 'phonetics' which is the scientific descriptive analysis of speech.

Mention has been made earlier of the mid-nineteenth century phonic approach of the 'cat sat on the mat' or the 'fat pig did a jig in the bog' variety. Although this particular approach to phonic teaching was largely displaced by the Look and Say method, phonic teaching was never completely abandoned and in the 1950s a movement of revolt against Look and Say was set off by the publication by the Ministry of Education of two surveys of reading standards, *Reading Ability* (1950), and *Standards of Reading 1948-1956* (1957). These surveys revealed a disquieting number of school leavers and adults who, in terms of the society in which they lived, were functionally illiterate. Many people were quick to blame the exclusive use of Look and Say methods in Infant Schools for these poor results.

In 1954 Daniels and Diack published *The Royal Road Readers* which is basically a phonic-word method. The child is introduced in Book 1 to a number of pictures which illustrate 3-letter words, as: top, tin, tap, tub; the common initial sound is introduced as an integral part of the whole word. The two principles observed in this scheme are (1) That letters stand for sounds, and (2) That children should be trained to hear the phonemes (sound units) within words and not in isolation.

Comprehension is encouraged by the use of exercises of the sentence completion type which require understanding of the reading matter. Since the publication of the Royal Road scheme many Look and Say schemes have added a phonic section to their supporting material and other phonic schemes have been published. *Sounds and Words* (Southgate and Havenhand 1960); *Sound Sense* (Tansley and Nichols, 1960); and *Racing to Read* (Tansley and Nichols, 1962) may be mentioned.

Advantages

1. It gives to the teacher a systematic and progressive structure of teaching techniques.
2. Children are given the skills to enable them to tackle new words on their own.
3. Children taught by a phonic method master spelling more thoroughly.
4. The new phonic approaches are equally suited to group or individual work.

Disadvantages

1. Phonic teaching with its insistence on phonic build up leads to boring drilling of symbols and sounds.
2. Skill in the mechanics of reading is often gained at the expense of meaning.
3. Words and phrases are often presented out of context and so are meaningless to children.
4. Necessary language limitations of phonic based primers result in bored children.
5. Many of the child's everyday speech words cannot be taught phonically, i.e. once, was, to, said, have, etc.

Mixed Methods

This term is usually taken to mean the commonly claimed practice of using a combined Look and Say and Phonic approach to the teaching of reading.

ANNEXURE TWO

LETTER SENT TO A SAMPLE OF EASTERN CAPE ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

Dear Colleague

As the Head of English at Victoria Primary School, I am presently engaged in research into Reading Schemes in the Junior Primary phase. I am particularly interested in hearing what schemes are used in C.E.D. schools in the Eastern Cape for two reasons. Firstly, in order to revise the schemes currently in use at Victoria Primary School and secondly, as one aspect of my research into reading for an M.Ed degree.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could fill in the attached questionnaire and return it to me at Victoria Primary School, P O Box 531, Grahamstown, 6140 as soon as possible.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

NIGEL WATERS

.....
Please detach, complete and return this form to Mr Nigel Waters, P O Box 531, Grahamstown, 6140.

1. Name of School:
(Do not complete should you wish to remain anonymous)

2. Reading Schemes currently in use:
.....
.....

3. Reasons for choice of these schemes:
.....
.....

4. Any additional Comments:
.....
.....
.....

Thank You.

ANNEXURE THREECAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, ENGLISH AS FIRST LANGUAGE, LIST OF
APPROVED READING SCHEMES

1. The Beehive Scheme
2. Beacon Reading Series
3. Happy Venture Series
4. Kathy and Mark Reading Scheme
5. Wide Range Readers
6. Link-up (Australian Edition)
7. Windows
8. Breakthrough to Literacy
9. Science Research Associated Reading Laboratory Series
10. Reading 360, The Ginn Reading Programme

(Refer to the C.E.D. List of approved textbooks, English as first language section, pp. 34 - 70 for a breakdown of the components of each scheme).

ANNEXURE FOURCONTENTS OF THE READING SCHEMES EXAMINEDAnnexure 4.1The 'Janet and John' scheme basic readers"Phonic Method:

Here we go
 Janet and John 1
 Janet and John II
 Janet and John III
 Janet and John IV
 Once upon a time

Whole-Word Method:

Here we go
 Off to play
 Out and about
 I went walking
 Through the garden gate
 I know a story
 Once upon a time

Extension Books:

High on a hill
 Days in the sun
 The five-and-a-half club"

(Munro R. 1954 p. ix).

Annexure 4.2The 'Kathy and Mark' scheme basic readers

"Book 1 - Kathy and Mark
 Book 2 - Indoors and out
 Book 3 - Rides and slides
 Book 4 - Something to see
 Book 5 - Just like you
 Book 6 - Real and make-believe
 Book 7 - Around the corner
 Book 8 - All through the year"

(Munro R. 1978 p. 10).

ANNEXURE FIVERHODES UNIVERSITY : LITERATURE COURSE CONTENT
JUNIOR AND SENIOR PRIMARYJUNIOR PRIMARYRHODES UNIVERSITY : EDUCATION DEPARTMENTCOURSE CONTENT FOR LANGUAGE COMPONENT OF ENGLISH METHOD COURSE
FOR B PRIM ED III AND DEJP III STUDENTS

1. The teaching of English as main language in the Junior Primary Phase:
Aims/Objectives/Attitudes
2. School readiness:
An overview (related to Education 2 preliminary studies on school readiness)
3. Spoken language:
Development of language (related to Education 2 preliminary studies on language development)
Language competence and the JP child - de Villiers; Button; Tizard; Tough et al
Language difficulties
Remediation
4. Spoken language in the Junior Primary classroom:
Creating opportunities for spoken language
Teacher's language and children's language
The case for a structured oracy programme - review of research projects and their significance in the South African context
Oracy across the curriculum
Spoken language and technology
Seminars by students of prepared oracy programmes and projects (group presentations)

5. Reading:

How do children read?

The development of the teaching of reading in the primary school - survey of methods

Current research on the teaching of reading

Reading schemes

The language experience approach

Individualised reading

USSR

Students' appraisal and evaluation of reading material

Early skills

Comprehension - current thinking

Classroom/group/organisation

Assessment/record keeping

Reading and technology

Reading difficulties

Remediation

5. Poetry:

Verse - rhymes and jingles, etc.
(rhythm of language)

"Real poetry"

Poetry writing and the Junior Primary child

6. Drama:

Theatre

Music and movement

Role play and the JP pupil

SENIOR PRIMARYENGLISH METHOD COURSE OUTLINE : SENIOR PRIMARY

<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>
2 x Single periods	1 x 3 period 1 x 2 period	1 x 2 period 1 x 1 period
1. Attitudes to the teaching of English 2. What is 'English'? 3. How has English as a subject developed? 4. Progressive theories since 1920. 5. Socio-linguistics: English and social justice. 6. Changing views of the 'Good' English teacher. 7. What is 'the reading process'? 8. The junior primary dilemma: Look-say Phonics 9. The language experience approach. 10. Frank Smith: an analysis of the skills that a fluent reader possesses. 11. Insights children must achieve in order to learn to read. 12. The role of the teacher. 13. Overview of reading teaching in phase 1. 14. Reading at phase 2 level: objectives. 15. What is meant by comprehension? 16. Text books - a critical examination. 17. Functional Reading Development. 18. Cloze procedure. 19. Prediction exercises. 20. Reading for different purposes. 21. Sequencing exercises. 22. Multiple choice. 23. Developing word attack skills. 24. Promoting reading speed. 25. Skimming. 26. Scanning. 27. Developing critical awareness.	1. Poetry: attitudes towards 2. Children as poets. 3. The English scene. 4. Poetry anthologies. 5. Language across the curriculum. 6. Theme and topic teaching. 7. Applying language across the curriculum. 8. Children's writing. 9. The teaching of spelling. 10. Responding to children's writing. 11. Drama as a learning medium. 12. Examination of resources. 13. Reading aloud. 14. Writing for children. 15. Evaluating reading aloud. 16. Peer group reading. 17. What is children's literature? 18. Guides for evaluating children's literature. 19. Books for ages and stages. 20. Book reviews. 21. A literature policy. 22. Uses of children's literature. 23. Children's literature and themes. 24. Testing reading age. 25. Testing book suitability. 26. School libraries. 27. Promoting reading. 28. Research topics: - study of an author - study of a genre - racism in children's literature - sexism in children's literature - comics - the supernatural - illustrations - picture books - humour - fear in children's books - censorship - how a book/s can be used - role of literature in the classroom - of interest + <u>Dip Eds:</u> 29. Reading laboratories. 30. Newspapers in education. 31. Oracy. 32. Supporting language skills. 33. Planning a language programme.	1. Reading laboratories 2. Newspapers in education. 3. Oracy. 4. Supporting language and skills 5. Planning a language programme. 6. Language tests. 7. Homework. 8. Reporting. 9. Resource projects.

week beginning	LITERACY (3 periods)
0 16 February	Introduction to the course. Formation of reading groups. Issue group novel 1
1 23 February	Topic: Reading aloud. Input: A talk in the dark. Input: Reading aloud in the primary classroom. Workshop prep: Selecting a book/story to read aloud Workshop prep: Discuss group novel 1: Rating scale.
2 2 March	Input: Criteria for literature suitable for reading aloud. Workshop: Reading your selected story. Workshop prep: Draw 3 titles for individual reading. Workshop: Writing a story for children.
3, 4, 5	Teaching practice
6 30 March	Input: What is children's literature? Input: Guides for evaluating children's literature. Workshop: Report back: children's literature in the schools. Workshop prep: Issue group novel 2. Workshop prep: Discuss and organise slide-tape projects.
7 6 April	Input: Books for ages and stages. Workshop: Book reviews? Workshop prep: Issue group novel 3.
	VACATION
1 20 April	Input: A literature policy in the schools. Workshop prep: Research topics set. Workshop: Discuss group novel 3. Workshop prep: Issue group novel 4.

week beginning	LITERACY (3 periods)
2 27 April	Input: The 'uses' of children's literature Workshop: 'Using' group novel 4. Workshop prep: Issue group novel 5.
3 4 May	Input: Children's literature and theme teaching. Workshop: Applying group novel 5 to theme teaching. Workshop prep: Issue group novel 6.
4 11 May	Input: Testing reading age. Workshop: Testing a child's reading age. Workshop: Discuss group novel 6. Workshop prep: Issue group novel 7. Workshop prep: Book for week 5.
5 18 May	Input: Assessing book suitability Workshop: Determining readability levels. Workshop: Group novel 8.
6 25 May	Input: Promoting reading: Book sells. Workshop: King Mansolain?

7 1 June	King Mansolain - a book event.
8 8 June	King Mansolain - a book event.
9 15 June	Slide-tape presentations: groups 1 + 2 + 3
	VACATION
1 20 July	Input: School libraries.
2 27 July	Input: School libraries.
3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Teaching practice
	VACATION

week beginning	LITERACY (3 periods)
1 14 September	Research teach back : Group A Slide-tape presentation: Group 4
2 21 September	Research teach back : Group 3 Slide-tape presentation: Group 5.
3 28 September	Research teach back: Group C Slide-tape presentation: Group 6
4 5 October	Research teach back: Group D
5 12 October	Research teach back: Group E
6 19 October	Research teach back: Group F
7 26 October	Course review
2 November	Swot week
	<u>Assignments</u> 1. Slide tape presentation : 50% 2. Research teach back : 50% <u>Dates</u> Refer course programme.

ANNEXURE SIXTHE VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LITERATURE POLICY2. READING IN THE CLASSROOM, OTHER THAN THE READING SCHEME2.1 Basic Assumptions of the Reading Process

- 2.1.1 Reading is a global activity rather than a collection of isolated skills. One cannot, therefore, teach skills in isolation and out of context and expect these to be applied to general reading.
- 2.1.2 Meaning is the initial and essential concern of the reading process. The emphasis would therefore be on:
- meaning (semantics)
phrases
single words
syllables
letters (phonics)
- 2.1.3 We learn to read all our lives - there is no threshold or "end point".
- 2.1.4 Reading is concept driven i.e. the reader brings prior knowledge to the text; he predicts while is reading; he confirms or modifies hypotheses while he is reading. In short he actively interrogates the text rather than passively waiting for the text to "reveal all".
- 2.1.5 Silent reading is most desirable for reflection and comprehension, therefore reading aloud is not essential in learning to read.

2.2 Teaching of Reading in the Classroom

Objectives: to keep the pupils motivated to learn to read; to let the pupils understand that there are many purposes and uses for reading.

SUB A:

Aim: to develop the child's concept of print:

the front of the book
print (not picture) tells the story

directional rules (top, left, etc)
 first and last
 what is a word
 what is a letter
 what is the first letter in a word
 upper and lower case letters
 function of the space
 use of punctuation

The Teaching Strategy for the Language Experience Approach

Expose the child to as much print as possible.

The relationship between spoken and written language is the first thing to be recognised by the beginner reader. This relationship is recognised by the child through the writing and reading back of her own language.

Initially sentences are dictated by the child and written by the teacher (probably one or two simple sentences). Later the child will write her own sentences. These are corrected by the teacher so that the final draft when read by the child, is correct. The child should read this to as many audiences as possible.

Writing and reading his own language as much as possible:

individual sub-titles to Art/Craft,
 personal news and experience,
 summaries/conclusions of group discussion,
 criticism and summaries of drama work,
 comment and report of excursions and other exciting events.

Through theme work the single sentence is gradually extended to several sentences and eventually to story writing.

SUB B:

Aim: to develop reading skills for different purposes.

Strategy: Through Environmental and General Themes, pupils read a variety of texts designed for specific purposes e.g. read about a dinosaur to write about his appearance and habits; or read this page and say how it makes you feel.

As it is in Sub B that the pupils are taught to meet the demands of print, it is the responsibility of the teacher to:

- lay the foundation for neat and orderly setting out of assignments within each theme;

- carefully structure the teaching of initial study skills, e.g. recognising the main ideas and relevant detail; supply headings and relevant detail to classify correctly; supply headings and ask for relevant detail; supply relevant detail and ask for headings; build and practise skills during Environment Study lessons through Themes;
- keep a balance between transactional-type and poetic-type reading and response in each theme.

STD 1:

An enhancement of Sub B aims and strategy through exposure to more challenging texts and a variety of Reading Activities.

2.3 Possible Activities for the Teaching of Reading, (of examples)

(Share ideas, learn from colleagues and keep up to date with Research into Reading).

- 2.3.1 Children read their written work to as many audiences as possible.
- 2.3.2 Sequencing: words jumbled up
sentences jumbled up
pictures and sentences
pictures and words
sentences
paragraphs
- 2.3.3 Matching: pictures and sentences
pictures and words
two sentences the same
endings and beginnings
one whole sentence to one jumbled sentence
sub-titles to a series of pictures
sub-titles to paragraphs
- 2.3.4 Filling the missing word.
- 2.3.5 Choosing the correct sentences ending.
- 2.3.6 Choosing the correct word.
- 2.3.7 Cloze Exercises.

- 2.3.8 Prediction.
- 2.3.9 Cause and Effect Relationships.
- 2.3.10 Recognition of main idea through paragraph analysis.
- 2.3.11 Characterization.
- 2.3.12 Reading for detail. of Bloom's Taxonomy for ideas.
- 2.3.13 Reading for Research Purposes.
- 2.3.14 Understanding Poetry.
- 2.3.15 Reading Critically e.g. Fact or Fiction.

3. INDIVIDUALISED READING

3.1 AIMS:

- 3.1.1 We learn to read by reading.
- 3.1.2 Emphasis is on meaning and fluency and therefore the books available must be appealing to the children.
- 3.1.3 Children respond individually to books; and tastes and interests vary. This is respected in the child reader - the book, therefore should be her own choice so that she is motivated to read it.
- 3.1.4 The child should meet with immediate satisfaction. This is also achieved by reading at her own level of availability, hence the graded books.
- 3.1.5 The child should be able to read widely at any one level and be able to attempt other levels as she wishes.
- 3.1.6 She meets many language styles and themes, thus broadening her general knowledge, and knowledge and use of Language.
- 3.1.7 Silent Reading is encouraged.

3.2 The Grading and Selection of Books: (Of CLIFF MOON'S LIST)

- 3.2.1 Books are selected for their appealing presentation, interesting stories, natural use of

language, humour and varied themes.

- 3.2.2 The thirteen levels (stage 0 - 12) are graded in difficulty - amount of direct pictorial information, amount of print, vocabulary range, sentence complexity and style are some of the considerations.
- 3.2.3
- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Stage 0 (white) | - | picture storying. |
| Stage 1 (red) | | |
| Stage 2 (yellow) | - | caption books/ |
| Stage 3 (red and yellow) | | introductory |
| Stage 4 (blue) | | readers |
| Stage 5 (blue and red) | | |
| Stage 6 (blue and yellow) | | |
| Stage 7 (green) | | |
| Stage 8 (green and red) | | |
| Stage 9 (green and yellow) | - | developmental |
| Stage 10 (green and blue) | | readers |
| Stage 11 (beige) | | |
| Stage 12 (beige and red) | - | bridging |
| | | readers |

3.3 Assessing the Level of the Child's Achievement

Initially this is difficult in Sub A as the pupils are experimenting with books in general and do not use reading ability as a criterion for selection. However, the following points should be noted:

- 3.3.1 The pupil has not achieved Stage 4 (blue) until she can read the print with the pictures covered. This follows for Stage 5 (blue and red), but here the child's eye movements will indicate how heavily he is relying on the pictures.
- 3.3.2 For Stages 6 - 12 the pupil must show that she can cope with most of the books in the stage whether she has read them or not.
- 3.3.3 In all cases pupils should read with a measure of fluency and understanding of the material.

3.4 The Child's Behaviour in the Reading Room

The reading room is the place where we get children hooked on books and we hope to establish reading for recreational purposes as a lifetime habit. So it is here where the child develops a love of books and where she discovers that reading is an enjoyable experience.

It follows that the teacher must develop a positive attitude in each child - a confidence in her own ability to learn to read, whatever her pace. Progress, therefore, is highly praised, however minimal. While the child soon realises that some children are "better" readers, she must believe that she will also reach these levels of achievement, only more slowly.

There is NO place for a sense of competition or for a sense of failure to develop - the teacher must guard against these negative influences in every possible way. The child must be concerned with her own progress, not a race to the finish. Selecting books from levels already achieved is therefore, as acceptable as selecting from future levels. Personal selection is what counts.

The teacher herself must display an interest in the books, share the child's enjoyment and show personal enjoyment in the books. It would be helpful to the child if she were to make personal comments in response to the stories, to read the books in this room herself with obvious enjoyment and generally discussing and recommending books with interest and enthusiasm.

Because reading development is so important, the reading room must be visited every day for a substantial period of time - preferably half an hour or more.

SUB A:

- 3.4.1 Discuss with the children the care of books and responsible behaviour in the reading room.
- 3.4.2 Encourage the child to choose her favourite books for the teacher to read to the class.
- 3.4.3 As the child gains in reading confidence, she can read her book (however simple) to a group or the class. Encourage the class to commend the child on her progress.
- 3.4.4 The child chooses a book to take home to read herself or have read to her (as she chooses). The next day she discusses the book with a partner, reads it to her and recommends it (or otherwise).
NOTE: Peer recommendation of books is vital to reading progress.
- 3.4.5 Then the old and her new book are shown to the teacher. One of the books is read to the teacher and discussion follows. Discussion can be stimulated by questions such as:

- why did you choose this particular book?
- who was your favourite character (or picture)?
- how did you feel when?
- did you like the ending? Why/why not?
- if you disliked the book, why?
- do you think it is a good title? Can you think of another?
- did any part make you feel lonely/pleased/frightened?

- 3.4.6 If an unknown word is encountered, the child must be encouraged to use picture or contextual clues to work it out for herself. She must realise that the emphasis is on meaning.
- 3.4.7 To develop her confidence, the child is encouraged to read to people outside the reading room e.g. principal, librarian, secretary, other teachers.
- 3.4.8 The child chooses a partner to read her new book to. More efficient readers should be encouraged to "teach" slower readers to read chosen books.
- 3.4.9 Encourage the child to fill in her own reading record as soon as she is able to recognise the title of the book.

SUB B:

- 3.4.10 The pupil should rely less and less on pictorial information and more and more on print. Therefore the teacher must reinforce the use of contextual clues for word identification: "Go on reading and finish the phrase/sentence, now go back and guess the word".

NOTE: This tactic will not work if the book is 2 levels or more beyond the pupil's achieved level.

- 3.4.11 The pupil must know and appreciate the level she has achieved and know that this is where reading is "comfortable" and where reading can be practised. However (if necessary), she should be motivated to attempt books at higher levels - seeing this as a way to learn to read more efficiently and effectively. This balance can only be achieved if the teacher and pupil, in consultation, discuss individual reading achievement honestly, sensitively and with a positive attitude towards future progress.

- 3.4.12 The pupil must come to recognise what is meant by fluent reading and achieve this fluency through practise in levels already achieved.

Fluency: the ability to read print meaningfully, smoothly and at speed.

- 3.4.13 By the end of Sub B every pupil should be able to read silently and uninterruptedly for at least 20 minutes. Satisfaction in this occupation should also be evident.

NOTE: the teacher should also read books from the reading room silently during this period.

- 3.4.14 Every child must have an individual consultation (read aloud/discuss) with the teacher at least once a week. A record and comment on this must be kept on the profiles/record book. This consultation is in addition to brief and passing comments with the children about their books each day.

STANDARD 1:

- 3.4.15 See Sub B's list of comments.
- 3.4.16 By the end of Std 1 every child should be able to read silently for 30 minutes.
- 3.4.17 As level 12 is achieved the pupils are introduced to the resource centre where they begin reading on level 13 and subsequently freely from the general selection.
- 3.4.18 Regular consultation with the teacher must take place. The emphasis here is on encouraging the child to make critical comments on a book read - showing interpretive reading, recognition of theme, characterisation, etc and the ability to evaluate the book read. Good reviews/appraisals/comments on books should be shared with the class - both those favouring and those disparaging a book. In general insightful comment is to be nurtured wherever possible.

PURPOSE OF SELECTED USES OF BOOKS

Remember: Literature should be a mainstream study, not an optional extra.

1. Core Reading Lists

- 1.1 These control the breadth of a child's reading experience.
- 1.2 No list should be considered in isolation as the four core lists are seen as a cumulative reading experience for the senior primary child.
- Alterations to these lists must, therefore, be carefully considered in the light of a four-year reading growth.
- 1.3 A good rule of thumb is to compare the proposed book with one of a similar kind already on the list. It should replace a book only if it is better and keeps the general balance of kinds of books on the lists as a whole.

2. Books for Reading Aloud

These should be books demanding in theme and style but which lend themselves to a serialised form of reading.

Further considerations are:

- 2.1 the interest level of the age group-
- 2.2 The amount of description (too much description is tedious to the young listener)
- 2.3 humour in the book - humorous books are often best read aloud for a shared laughing response as the child reader's sense of humour is not necessarily well developed (e.g. Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang)
- 2.4 the format of the book - the story should not rely on any visual presentation as the class are listening not viewing (e.g. The Shrinking of Treehorn is not suitable for this reason)
- 2.5 a story that benefits most from a shared response, be it laughter, tears, frustration, horror or fear. (e.g. the horror and fear in Old Mali and the Boy is best felt when shared)
- 2.6 books that are worth a read but are not likely to be read by any but the most avid readers (e.g. The George McDonald Fairy stories).

3. Free Reading

In general, books that have appeal but do not rate an intense reading i.e. books more concerned with plot than theme.

4. Group Novels

4.1 These control the depth of a child's reading experience.

4.2 Books selected should be able to stand up to a re-read at a later stage of the child's reading growth. He should find the re-read satisfying because the author's intent becomes more meaningful.

4.3 The reading experience should offer the young reader a standard of interpretation which he can take to his private recreational reading.

4.4 The experience should offer the reluctant reader or slow learner an opportunity to meet with a quality and kind of book that he would not choose for individual reading, but would be prepared to attempt in order to participate in and enjoy a shared peergroup reading experience.

4.5 It is through this shared experience that the child can learn to:

relate incidents to his own life;
tolerate uncertainty;
distinguish between humour and irony;
discern metaphoric distinction;
avoid accepting the world uncritically or for granted.

In other words, by contributing to and sharing in group discussion, the child will learn to read more critically and with more awareness of the author's intent.

4.6 Clearly any book selected should meet with the above criteria and intentions. Books selected for group novel purposes should, therefore, be books that present suitable but challenging themes in a plot which encourages a read to the end.

4.7 A piece of advice - become familiar with all of the present stock of group novels so that you have something to measure against when selecting further titles.

- 4.8 Each group has to do a minimum of three novels per year.

Points to Consider when using Group Novels

1. Give the children a set time in which to complete the group novel e.g. a week.
2. These books must be read silently during class reading periods or at home and must be completed within the limit given.
3. The teacher must decide on the groups and which book is to be given to a particular group.
4. There must be a specific time allocated on the timetable for group discussions.

The Purpose of Group Discussions

It is a powerful means of developing both their oral communication skills and thinking processes, we therefore need to provide this opportunity because it:

1. Allows an "open" approach to discussion which develops a hypothetical style of learning;
2. Encourages exploration and hypothetical questions asked by the child;
3. Gives the pupils the opportunity to re-articulate knowledge and re-interpret ideas;
4. Develops the social element of verbalizing for one another - the need to explain to someone who does not understand is crucial;
5. Develops in the pupil the ability to stand outside one's own knowledge and see it as relative;
6. Ensures that the pupil himself takes responsibility for the adequacy of this thinking.

Tips on Group Organization for Discussion Work

The Pupils:

Until a child can verbalize his learning or knowledge or his OWN language, he cannot call it his own.

1. Four to six pupils is ideal.
2. Pupils should sit in a conversation setting i.e. facing each other; with their copy of the Group Novel and Discussion Sheet.
3. Select a group leader as she can assist with the controlling of the noise level, issuing material, etc.
4. The pupils must be clear on their purpose for these discussions i.e. it is a time of learning not playing; and they are to develop their oral communication skills and thought processes.
5. The pupils must realize that the creative section is also "work" and they must therefore give of their best.

The Teacher:

The teacher's role is that of the conversationalist who encourages discussion and makes room for new ideas.

1. She should join groups unobtrusively and seat herself at the same level as the pupils - psychologically this makes her contributions more "equal". She must train herself to accept her fallibility in the classroom.
2. Accept ALL contributions, however tentative or "wild".
3. Guide and encourage through open-ended comments such as "Yes, what other interpretations are possible?" or "Can anyone build on what Jenny has said?" etc. The teacher must be careful not to hinder the pupils by implying that her ideas are the "right" ones.
4. Through experience, the teacher will learn when it is helpful to join a group (e.g. when conversation is stilted, non-existent or out of control) and when it is better to leave the flow of conversation uninterrupted by your intrusion.
5. The teacher must know why she wants group discussion so that there is some structure to these lessons.
6. She must accept what might appear to her as uneconomical talk - different people have different ways of reaching understanding and we all need time to reflect. Have faith in the idea of talking to learn!
7. At the end of the lesson (even if they need more time for the creative activities), the teacher must allow time for the children to discuss their feelings about their times together and what they have learnt from it. It is the teacher's task to draw the threads together.

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