A STUDY OF FIFTY YEARS OF NEWFOUNDLAND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND THE COMPILATION OF AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, 1940-1990

GILLIAN MARTIN NOONAN

A Study of Fifty Years of Newfoundland Children's Literature and the Compilation of an Annotated Bibliography, 1940-1990

by

Gillian Martin Noonan, B.A. (Hons.), B.Ed. (Prim.), M.L.I.S.

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

1993

St. John's Newfoundland

ISBN 0-315-91631-1

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine critically Newfoundland children's literature from 1940 to 1990 to ascertain the quantity and the quality of these books, and to provide users of the literature with a selection tool in the form of an annotated bibliography. Newfoundland children's literature was defined as being those books written by Newfoundlanders, published in Newfoundland (excluding books whose rights were purchased from the international market), or containing a significant Newfoundland theme. Anthologies and books written solely for informational purposes have been excluded. Eighty titles were located through searches of the catalogues of the Curriculum Materials Centre in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Newfoundland Room of the Queen Elizabeth II Library at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the Newfoundland Public Libraries; and examination of available publishers' catalogues, a number of standard reference and bibliographic aids, and two published annotated bibliographies of Newfoundland materials. Sixty-eight books were found for personal review and were evaluated following internationally accepted guidelines for excellence. A unified narrative discussion of books for readers under 8 years, readers aged 9 to 12 years, and readers aged 13 to 18 years was prepared. A separate descriptive and critical annotated bibliography

with accompanying recommendations was provided for ready reference. Based on the examination and evaluation of the sixty-eight books, a number of conclusions were drawn regarding the quantity of books available; the quality of text, illustration, and technical production; as well as the state of Newfoundland children's books as a body of literature. A number of recommendations were made in the interest of insuring the continued development of a Newfoundland children's literature of excellence with appeal both in Newfoundland and in the wider community of readers.

Acknowledgements

Many heartfelt thanks are expressed to my parents and my brother for their continued support, encouragement, and confidence throughout my education, and especially during the writing of this thesis.

Thanks are also extended to Patti Lynn and Christopher for all the little but very important things that they did throughout this undertaking.

To the ladies in the Curriculum Materials Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland, my gratitude and thanks for their help, courtesy, interest, and understanding.

To Dr. Betty Brett for her help and criticism in completing this thesis, my thanks and appreciation for all her work.

To Maureen Kent for looking after the final typing and printing of my work, my sincere thanks.

And finally to my husband, Paddy, my deepest thanks for his patience and understanding as I worked towards completing all the little bits that needed to be done.

DEDICATION

To my son, Matthew

Always strive for excellence

but remember to

give your roots rain.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Study

In her landmark work, The Unreluctant Years (1953), Lillian Smith wrote that "good children's books give those who enjoy them a steadying power, like a sheet anchor in a high wind, ... something to hold on to". (p. 16) Good children's literature supports and enhances a child's perceptions of reality, for not only should it acknowledge what a child knows about the world but also it must build upon this knowledge. Newfoundland children's literature, like any children's literature, should enrich its readers' lives as it explores the human experience. It may also illuminate their understanding of the Newfoundland experience, past, present and future, thus, providing for the child-reader a sense of belonging and identity. In any case, the literature must measure up to the standards set by scholars in the field of literature generally and children's literature, in particular.

Newfoundland's children's literature has developed considerably over the past fifty years, both in quantity and quality. The unevenness of the quality, however, must be acknowledged. Critical examination must be undertaken so that the excellence which does exist in Newfoundland's children's literature will be recognized and so that all authors in future works will strive for excellence.

Statement of Problem

Recently educators have given increased attention to both children's literature and the children's own environment and culture. The result has been an increase in the use of children's literature in the classroom and a strong preference on the part of classroom teachers to use local material wherever possible. So that children may have access to books of excellence, both local and otherwise, careful selection is critical. With the large and growing number of children's books available, such selection has become increasingly difficult. Professional tools for the selection of children's books exist in the form of critical articles, reviews, recommended lists of titles, and other such bibliographic aids, both current and retrospective. Few such comprehensive selection aids are available for Newfoundland children's books, however, since those books have not generally been subject to rigorous criticism and evaluation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study, based on the problem identified above, is a three-fold one. The purpose of the study is:

a. To compile a listing, as complete as possible, of those books which have been identified as Newfoundland

children's books, according to the definition adopted for the study.

b. To examine and to apply accepted standards of excellence to this body of literature, so that a critical perspective will exist for professionals interested in the use of Newfoundland children's literature.

c. To offer some guidance in the use and promotion of the best in Newfoundland's children's literature, primarily through an annotated bibliography.

Significance of the Study

With the increasing interest in and use of local children's literature by classroom teachers and with the increase in the amount of local material available, the careful selection of work of high quality has taken on added significance. Unfortunately, guidance in selecting and promoting such material is limited. Some assistance is provided by the Department of Education, which supplies schools with local material. Bibliographic control in this area is, however, inadequate. Without such control, it is often difficult for classroom teachers and teacher librarians to discover what is available and to make informed decisions about what to purchase. This lack of bibliographic control has undoubtedly been one of the contributing factors in the disappearance of some worthy material from publishers' in-print lists.

At present, there is a pressing need for an informed critical analysis of local material, not only to aid those responsible for its selection in the schools, but also to encourage the highest literary and aesthetic standards on the part of the authors and illustrators themselves. As well, a strong criticism may serve to encourage high standards in textual, illustrative, and physical quality of the material from the publishing industry. A healthy criticism of Newfoundland's children's literature is also vital to ensure that the children in Newfoundland schools have exposure to the best.

Definition

For purposes of this study, Newfoundland children's literature will be identified and defined by the guidelines outlined below:

1. Books which are fictional in content. Works which are designed purely for informational purposes will be excluded;
2. Books which have been published in Newfoundland. Books originally published elsewhere but for which a local publisher has purchased publishing rights from the international market will be included only if they fit into category 3 or 4 below;
3. Books which have been published elsewhere but have been written by Newfoundlanders;

4. Books which have been published elsewhere, and are not written by Newfoundlanders, but have a significant Newfoundland theme. Anthologies, even if they included a story or poem with a Newfoundland theme, are not included because the majority of them have themes broader than Newfoundland.

Limitations

To be effective, a study of this nature should be as exhaustive as possible. Limitations, however, are unavoidable. This study will attempt to examine all books published between 1940 and 1990 that meet the definition of Newfoundland children's literature, as set out above.

While an attempt will be made to include all published works in the period under study, some books may be missed. There are circumstances which make it difficult if not impossible to locate all publications. Some books may be out of print. A lack of standard bibliographic sources in this area may mean that no formal record of a particular work exists. Conversely, the record of a book may exist but a copy of the book may not be available. Books published outside of Newfoundland with a significant Newfoundland theme may prove difficult to find, considering the vast numbers of books published within the period.

Organization

This work is reported in two sections. Part One presents a report of the actual study. Part Two contains an annotated bibliography of Newfoundland children's literature. Part One is made up of seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study, including a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the definition of the study, and the limitations of the study. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology of the study. Chapter 3, which examines the nature of children's literature and the elements of excellence in children's literature, provides the background for the study. Chapter 4, Books for Younger Readers, provides a critical review of books appropriate for children under 8 years of age. Chapter 5, Books for the Middle Grades, provides a critical review of books appropriate for children from ages 8 to 12. Chapter 6, Books for Older Readers, provides a critical review of books appropriate for children from ages 13 to 17. Chapter 7 provides the summary of the study with a number of recommendations. A bibliography of works cited is also included.

Part Two, which is primarily intended to be a useful bibliographic tool and selection aid, icludes an introduction for teachers, and an annotated bibliography of Newfoundland children's literature with recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

In attempting to fulfil the purposes of this study a number of steps were followed. In this chapter, these steps are identified and described.

Establishing Standards

In order to establish some evaluative standards which might be adopted in the examination of the body of work which can be considered Newfoundland children's literature, a study of related literature was undertaken. Since the literature pertaining to excellence in children's literature is large, the study was limited. Works published since 1970 dealing with the philosophy and criticism of children's literature, with special attention to those elements which contribute to excellence, were examined. Two exceptions were made in the examination of Paul Hazard's Books Children & Men (1960) and Lillian Smith's The Unreluctant Years (1953). Exceptions were made in the case of these landmark works because of the notable influence Hazard and Smith have had upon the development of a criticism of children's literature. Particular attention was given to works by Canadians such as Egoff, Brett, Smith, Saltman, and Sloan because of the subject of the study.

The philosophical underpinnings of the criteria for judging excellence in children's literature were generally

agreed upon in the literature examined. The statement of these criteria, however, differed with each individual author. The writer, therefore, decided to use the comprehensive statement of criteria developed by Huck. (3rd ed., 1979, pp. 16-17) Permission to do so was sought and granted. (see Appendix A) Reference is made in this statement to the following areas of concern in the evaluation of children's literature.

Plot -- Is the plot well constructed, plausible and credible?

Setting -- Where and when does the story take place? Is it an authentic setting?

Theme -- Is the theme universal in nature? Is it worthy of imparting to children?

Characterization -- How are the characters revealed? Are the characters convincing and credible?

Style -- Is the style of writing appropriate for the story? How does the author create mood?

Format -- Do the illustrations extend and enhance the story? How sturdy is the binding?

The literature search, which provided the general background for the study of Newfoundland children's literature, is reported in detail in Chapter 3. Specific details related to particular literary genres, also a part of the literature search, appear in the appropriate sections of chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Identification of a Preliminary List

The books examined in the study were identified in several ways.

a) The catalogues of the Curriculum Materials Centre in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Newfoundland Room at the Queen Elizabeth II Library of the Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the Newfoundland Public Libraries were examined to compile a preliminary list of books. The search of the holdings of the Curriculum Materials Centre was the most successful. This is not surprising, however, since it is a general policy of the Centre to include in its holdings at least one copy of all Newfoundland publications for children. Eighteen of the twenty titles identified for younger readers, twelve of the fifteen titles identified for the middle grades, and eighteen of the twenty-four titles identified for older readers, were located in the holdings of the Curriculum Materials Centre.

Many of the titles found in the Curriculum Materials Centre were also included in the holdings of the Newfoundland Public Libraries. Seven additional titles published from 1940-1990 were found in the Newfoundland Public Libraries catalogue. There was just one title of which no copy could be found after several searches. This particular item, Melville Thistle's Peter the Sea Trout, was published by Ryerson in 1954. It is included in Appendix C

with ten other titles for which no copy was available for personal examination.

The catalogue of the Newfoundland Room at the Queen Elizabeth II Library contained many of the same titles that had already been identified. Three additional titles for older readers, however, were added.

The searches of these three catalogues identified above yielded fifty-nine titles which comprised the preliminary list.

b) An examination of all available Newfoundland publishers' catalogues was then undertaken to supplement the preliminary list. All available catalogues of Breakwater Books, Jesperson Press, and Harry Cuff Publications were examined. One new title was found in the Breakwater Books catalogue. No new titles were found in the others.

c) An examination of a number of standard reference and bibliographic aids was made. This search proved to be difficult for two reasons. First, "Newfoundland" was not among the subject headings included. Second, the vast numbers of books printed in English made the reading of all individual annotations impractical, if not impossible. The writer, therefore, decided to limit this search to Canadian reference and bibliographic aids held by the Curriculum Materials Centre. In making this decision, the writer was acutely aware that material published outside of Newfoundland, but with some Newfoundland connection could

easily be lost. The writer was confident, however, that the holdings of the Centre would represent a reasonably comprehensive collection of Canadian reference and bibliographic aids. In this search, the following works were examined: Children's Choices of Canadian Books (1980-1991), Volumes 1-7; Canadian Books for Young People / Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse (1988); Atlantic Book Choice. Recommended Canadian and Regional Titles for an Elementary School Library Collection (1983); Atlantic Book Choice. Recommended Canadian and Regional Titles for a Junior-Senior High School Library Collection (1984); Animal World in Canadian Books for Children and Young People / Le monde animal dans les livres de jeunesse canadiens (1983); Mystery and Adventure in Canadian Books for Children and Young People / Romans policiers et histoires d'aventures canadiens pour la jeunesse (1983); and Pictures to Share: Illustration in Canadian Children's Books / Image pour tous: Illustration de livres canadiens pour enfants (1987).

In Children's Choices of Canadian Books, Volumes 1-7, twenty-seven titles were identified. Four of these titles were additions to the preliminary list. Only Paul Kropp's Headlock (Collier Macmillan, 1988) could not be found for examination.

In Canadian Books for Young People / Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse, thirteen titles were identified. One of these titles was an addition to the preliminary list.

In Atlantic Book Choice: Recommended Canadian and Regional Titles for an Elementary School Library Collection, three titles were identified. No additions were made to the preliminary list.

In Atlantic Book Choice: Recommended Canadian and Regional Titles for a Junior-Senior High School Library Collection, seven titles were identified. No additions were made to the preliminary list.

In Animal World in Canadian Books for Children and Young People / Le Monde animal dans les livres de jeunesse canadians, no titles were identified.

In Mystery and Adventure in Canadian Books for children and Young people / Romans policiers et histoires d'aventures canadiens pour la jeunesse, one title was identified. No additions were made to the preliminary list.

In Pictures to Share: Illustration in Canadian Children's Books / Images pour tous: Illustration de livres canadiens pour enfants, two titles were identified. No additions were made to the preliminary list. When it was later discovered that Les saisons de la mer had been translated into English, it was included.

The preliminary list now contained 66 titles.

d) The Annotated Bibliography of Newfoundland Materials for School Libraries, Part I -- Print (1980) compiled by Audrey Hiscock and Linda Braine was the only existing bibliography of Newfoundland materials with

relevance to children that was initially located. As a consequence of an examination of this reference source, eleven titles were identified and added to the preliminary list. Of these eleven, two were located. One was High Tide for Labrador, previously included on the preliminary list as Iceberg!. The other was Lukey Paul From Labrador.

At this point in the search, the writer felt that all obvious sources had been examined and the resulting list was reasonably complete. The preliminary list now contained a total of 76 titles.

Later, the writer discovered another annotated bibliography of Newfoundland books. Simpson's "A Select bibliography of Newfoundland children's books, 1970-1990" (1992) was published whle this study was in progress. Three additional titles were added to the list, bringing the total to 79 titles. All three of these titles were located.

e) Initially, a division of the preliminary list into in-print and out-of-print lists was planned. The writer now decided that such a division would serve no useful purpose, since so many of the books on the preliminary list were out-of-print, even though they were readily available for examination. Instead, the list was roughly divided into three categories: books for younger readers, books for the middle grades, and books for older readers. The preliminary divisions were made using information ascertained from the catalogues or bibliographies in which the books were

originally found. The placement of each item would be tested later when all available material was personally examined.

Examination of the Materials

Since the majority of the books on the preliminary list had been traced through the catalogues of three libraries, they were easily located and read. Only one title could not be found. This title, Peter the Sea Trout, was added to the list of titles of books located in bibliographies or reference aids, but of which no copy could be located for examination. (see Appendix C) The remaining books on the list were located either in a title search of one of the three library catalogues or found by chance in the private collections of the writer's colleagues. In all, 68 of the 79 titles on the preliminary list were found. The eleven titles which were not located have been included in Appendix C. Since they were not available for personal assessment, the writer has not included them in the narrative discussion of Newfoundland's children's literature.

After each item had been read, its placement in the appropriate category was verified. There were some items which could legitimately be included in more than one category. This was done. Tom Dawe's Landwash Days, Angishore, Boo-Man, and Clumper, and Alley-Coosh, Bibby, and

Cark, for example, could justifiably be included in all three categories.

Examination of Published Reviews

A search of published reviews for all titles was conducted. This search was intended to be representative rather than exhaustive. It was restricted to the following journals:

Canadian Children's Literature,

CM: A Reviewing Journal of Materials for Young People,

In Review,

The Horn Book Magazine.

The first three journals were selected because of their Canadian focus. They review only Canadian materials and they have been a significant source of critical review for Canadian publications for children. In Review, the oldest of the three, ceased publication in 1976. The fourth journal was included because of its longevity and its comprehensive coverage of American publications. As well, in the last decade The Horn Book Magazine has included reviews of distinguished Canadian books with greater frequency. Indeed, in its coverage of Canadian books it has added a regular reviewing article, "News from the North". At least one review, not necessarily in agreement with the writer's opinions, was found for many of the books on the

preliminary list; for some, no reviews were discovered. Since the Canadian periodicals searched have only been in existence since the late 1960s, the more recent the publication date of a book the greater were the chances of finding a review. Some reviews were located subsequently in random searches of non-scholarly publications but these were not included. While published critical evaluation of Newfoundland children's literature has increased, there remains a significant need for more criticism.

Preparation of a Descriptive and Critical Analysis

A descriptive and critical analysis of each work was written following Huck's criteria for excellence. These analyses constitute the major components of a unified narrative discussion of books in particular genres. This discussion forms the basis of Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Preparation of the Annotated Bibliography

The purpose of the annotated bibliography was to provide a reference aid for those interested in using Newfoundland children's literature. A descriptive and critical annotation was prepared for each item included. Each annotated bibliographic reference is accompanied by a recommendation. The four categories of recommendations with a recommendation code to be used were: recommended (R), recommended with reservations (RR), marginal (M), and not

recommended (NR). To these categories, the recommendation of highly recommended was added. A decision was made, also, to abandon the use of the letter code in the recommendation and to use instead the full word, so that users of the annotated bibliography would be more readily aware of what the writer's recommendations are. The five categories of recommendation were defined as follows:

Highly Recommended -- Books which demonstrate excellence in content according to Huck's criteria.

Recommended -- Books which are generally of a high literary quality.

Recommended with reservations -- Books which are of a high standard with regard to content but which may contain objectionable material in language and/or subject, or material of concern as expressed in the annotation.

Marginal -- Books which have slight content, and are weak in writing style.

Not recommended -- Books not recommended for reasons stated in the annotation.

In all five categories artistic as well as literary excellence was a consideration. This annotated bibliography, along with a brief introduction to the user, constitutes Part II of this report.

CHAPTER THREE

Background to the Study

The Nature of Children's Literature

Webster's Dictionary (1988) describes literature as "the body of written works produced in a particular language, country, or age", more particularly as "writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest". (p. 698) Huck (1979) further expands on this definition:

> 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. The experience of literature is always two dimensional, for it involves both the book and the reader. (p.4)

It is Huck's latter statement that claims a separate place for the realm of childhood within the world of literature. She writes:

> the uniqueness of children's literature,..., lies in the audience that it addresses. Authors of children's books are circumscribed only by the experiences of childhood, but these are vast and complex. (Huck, 1979, p. 6)

While children's literature can be viewed as a distinct branch of literature in general, the differences between it and adult literature must be explored to fully appreciate the unique character of children's literature.

Bawden (1976) alludes to the particular characteristics of literature for children necessitated by the nature of the

children who are the audience of that literature when she states:

> A good book for children, like a good book for adults, should hold an honest mirror up to life; reflect the emotional landscape they move in, tell them what they want to know. And what they want to know, what they want to understand, is their own situation. (p.10)

Karl (1970) affirms that children's books should be viewed in the same way as are adult books in that they are "...a packaged expression of some aspect of life as it is..." but that all good works of literature also should be something more "...an idea, a viewpoint, a starting point. It is not a finished, complete, didactic expression, but a beginning to be thought about and built on." (p. 6) As Egoff (1973) aptly puts it:

> The role of literature is to develop the individual and it takes a good book to do this. A poor book takes a child and puts him back a step or two, a mediocre book takes a child and leaves him where he is. A good book promotes an awareness of the possibilities of life, the universality of life, the awakening of response. (p.7)

Just as all excellent works of literature, whether they be for adults or for children, strive towards these ideals, the works written for children have certain restraints placed upon them because of the nature of their audience. Books intended for children should never dampen their spirit and their belief in the goodness of the human heart. Hazard (4th ed., 1960) writes that "... instead of pouring out so much material on a child's soul that it is crushed, [the

authors of children's literature] plant in it a seed that will develop from inside...". (p. 43)

Since certain emotional and psychological responses are outside those experienced by children, they are inappropriate for inclusion in a children's book. These responses include the feelings of nostalgia, cynicism and despair. (Huck, 1979, p. 8) Each of these feelings can be deeply experienced by adults and are often found in adult literature. Adults often reflect upon their past, particularly their childhood, but not so the child. For children, hope must remain a constant within their lives. Cynicism and despair are not natural characteristics of childhood. This is not to say that children's books must always have a happy ending, since sadness is indeed a common experience for many children. A feeling of profound sadness, however, does not exclude hope in children's literature.

Children's literature is different from adult literature because the members of the audience it addresses have their own particular types of experiences. Children's literature, nevertheless, fulfils many of the same functions for its audience as does adult literature.

Children's literature helps young readers to more fully understand their present selves and their possible place in the broader world around them. Bawden (1987) affirms this belief, when she writes:

> Stories that operate on a number of levels -- which is only to say all good stories -- help them to understand their own nature, the confusion they may be feeling about the conflicting impulses and emotions they are aware of within themselves, and help them to understand the world they are growing up into. (p. 68)

Karl (1970) obviously held the same opinion as did Bawden. She observed:

> ...the author creates an experience, he shows how things are, how they come to be and feel and grow, in an atmosphere open to examination. Good books of all kinds become for their readers a dimension of life itself, a search for both inward and outward discoveries. (p. 6)

As Huck (1989) succinctly puts it, "whether for adults or for children, great literature illuminates living...". (p. 256)

In providing perspective to our fragmented experience, the study of literature whether as an adult or a child "...gives shape to human experience". (Sloan, 1975, p. 7) But in this process of providing perspective or "illuminating" the world and the experiences it provides, it must be remembered that a function of literature is to illuminate the conflicts and the ambiguities of life. That is, as Lively aptly puts it, "we read to find out more about what it is like to be a human being, not to be told how to be one". (1987, p. 15)

Good books have the inherent ability to develop complex ideas and characters because of the depth of thought and emotion that they can convey. (Egoff, 1973, p. 7) Even though they are not always serious in nature, they may make

profound statements about universal truths with integrity and honesty. (Brett, 1989, p. 18) Hazard (1960) also talks of children's books containing certain truths that are worthy of lasting forever. (4th ed., 1960, p. 44) These truths, he believes, inspire "...one's whole inner life; [and demonstrate] that an unselfish and faithful love always ends by finding its reward, be it only in oneself...". (Hazard, 4th ed., 1960, p. 44) Smith (1973) cites Hazard's view on the importance of universal truths and expands on it by saying:

> To write for children in this way demands a great deal from the writer; a sense of the importance of universal moral and spiritual values, creative and imaginative powers, and strength of expression, of language. (1973, p. 399)

It is the recognition of these universal truths with all that they engender which helps to develop the "humanness" of the reader.

Sloan likens the reading of literature to "...a continuous journal of man's search for identity...". (1975, p. 19) It is through this journal, or perhaps this journey, that children seek ideas and truths, discover new patterns of experience, and find emotional satisfactions that will help them develop into richer, more complete people. (Karl, 1970, p. 5) The second rate piece of children's literature does little to help children's emotional and intellectual development. These books, which Egoff (1973) refers to as the mediocre, do little more than leave the children where

they are, since they offer no challenge or insight into the workings of either the real or the fantastical. (p. 7) But by coming into contact with "genuinely memorable literary experiences", in some measure the reader is "never quite the same". (Rosenheim, 1980, p. 47)

Children's literature should help the reader imagine the possibilities that life holds. In support of this view, Hickman and Cullinan (1989) cite Jerome Bruner's statement,

> ...that one of the contributions of literature is its power for generating hypotheses, for cultivating multiple perspectives or possible worlds. It is the nature of literature, he says, to "...render [the] world newly strange, rescue it from obviousness, fill it with gaps...". (p. 5)

It then becomes the job of the reader or listener "...to bridge the gaps, to imagine the possibilities, to create his or her own completed story". (Hickman and Cullinan, 1989, p. 6)

Literature also helps the reader generate the possibilities in life -- the roads which can be taken. By allowing the reader entry into other people's lives, to overhear snippets of conversations, to catch glimpses through half-curtained windows, literature stretches the reader's knowledge of life. It is these scraps which

> ...alert us to human possibilities, trivial or important, which have occurred to other people but knowledge of which develops, refines or coarsens our personal maps of humanity and our own significance upon them. (Inglis, 1976, pp. 164-165)

Sloan (1975) states that literature

> ... calls forth something from our own imaginative experience, something we 'have always known' but couldn't express until literature put it in to words and image for us. (p. 7)

For children with limited capabilities of expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally this capacity is doubly important. The best books, Brett (1989) states, "... provide tremendous opportunity for the development of language and other associated skills". (p. 18) The power to create visually and verbally is enhanced through the child's reading of literature. Literature, thus, allows the imagination to develop while developing the imaginative capabilities of the reader.

Tucker (1981) cautions that there are times when children do not want to imagine other possibilities but may simply want confirmation of certain common, set ways of thinking. (p. 2) Karl (1970) agrees that for a book to be successful it must "...duplicate some experiences most children have already had, and if it is going to hold the child's interest, it will add some new ones". (p. 9) Rosenheim (1980) also believes that literature should provide the reader, whether young or old, with "... a robust affirmation of our common humanity..." as well as "... our capacity ... to understand and be moved by and to gather to ourselves the products of the creative imagination". (p. 52) The highest pleasures of literature, he goes on to say, are found in the combination of "... the urgency and

authenticity of life as we know it with the excitement and wonder of life as it may yet be known". (Rosenheim, 1980, p. 51) Quality children's literature successfully makes this combination.

Children's literature is a unique branch of all literature because of the audience it addresses. Nevertheless it deserves to be evaluated without condescension. It is in recognizing and appreciating works of children's literature that we are applauding

> ...books that rise above the commonplace formulas of writing for children and young people and convey -- through invention, wit, style, and a profound identification with the subject matter -- a truthful handling of character, emotion, social environment, and sometimes moral dimensions. (Toye, 1990, Preface, xiii, in Egoff and Saltman)

And these books deserve the highest recognition, for they hold the power to influence our children.

Elements of Excellence in Children's Literature

Those who evaluate the merits of children's books, should settle for nothing less than is acceptable in quality adult literature. It may be quite true, however, that more should be expected, considering the audience at which these books are aimed. A good piece of literature, whether it be for children or adults, must possess

> ...a strong plot, deft characterization, vitality of language, and emotional depth -- all in creative tension -- and a narrator's voice that reverberates with both a personal and a cultural accent. (Saltman, 1987, p. 57)

Many noted individuals, among them, Sutherland, Monson and Arbuthnot (6th ed., 1981), Cullinan (2nd ed., 1989), Sutherland (6th ed., 1981), Egoff (1973), and Huck (3rd ed., 1979), have written extensively on the evaluation of children's literature. General agreement on what a critic should examine is found in their work. For the purposes of this study, the criteria outlined by Huck in her landmark work, Children's Literature in the Elementary School (3rd ed., 1979), will be used. While the criteria outlined by any of the aforementioned authors would be more than acceptable, and indeed all have much in common, this writer has chosen those of Huck because in content and form they appear most appropriate.

Huck (3rd ed., 1979) delineates seven areas for critical evaluation of children's literature. (pp. 16-17) These are:

(i) before reading,

(ii) plot,

(iii) characterization,

(iv) setting,

(v) theme,

(vi) style,

(vii) format.

When these elements combine to produce an affective experience for the reader that is beyond the mere process of reading, an excellent work of literature is created.

In evaluating a children's book, Huck first suggests that we look at the physical properties of the work, such as the title, the cover illustration, the size of print, the chapter headings. (3rd ed., 1979, p. 16) This is not to propose that only the spine and the cover be examined, for as Sloan (1975) emphatically states, "children will never discover the wide and varied wonders to be found in literature by gazing at the spines." (p. 51) However, it must be realized that these physical properties do have a certain influence upon the selection of a particular book by a particular child.

Next, Huck suggests that the plot be examined. Here the evaluator should be concerned with whether or not the book tells a good story. Does the story move? Is the idea original and believable? Does the book build towards a climax? Does the plot develop through a logical series of happenings? (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 16)

Children demand a good plot and strong believable characters. It must be remembered that while their emotional response may have great depth, children's language may be insufficiently developed to express the abstractness of their feelings. Nevertheless, without a good plot to

connect the various elements of the book, the reader will quickly lose interest in reading. As Bawden (1976) writes:

> The clue to what [children] really enjoy is what they reread, what they go back to, and this is almost always a book with a strong narrative line. (p.7)

Huck aptly describes a well-constructed plot as being:

> ...organic and interrelated. It grows logically and naturally from the actions and the decisions of the characters in given situations. The plot should be credible and ring true rather than depend on coincidence and contrivance. (3rd ed., 1979, p.7)

Bawden's demand for a strong storyline in children's literature is clearly evident in Huck's description of a well-constructed plot. Cullinan (1971) adds two other essential factors to a well-constructed plot:

> The beginning, then, is used to pique interest, to make the reader care about what happens, and the ending must contain a satisfactory resolution of the obstacles, problems, or conflicts presented. (p. 45)

The plot of a truly good piece of literature grows from itself, and from the actions of the characters enmeshed in it -- paralleling the development of the fabric of human existence.

The critical consideration of characterization is Huck's third evaluative concern. Here she considers such questions as how the characters are revealed. Are they convincing and credible? Is there any character development? Are the characters stereotyped? (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 17) Along with the plot, the characters draw the reader into the

story. The reader, in this case the child, should become actively involved in the story, moving alongside the characters, measuring oneself against the characters in the book. (Bawden, 1976, p. 8) If the characters never emerge from the flatness of the page, then the child has nothing, since the character fails to provide the reader with any reason to reflect upon what has been read. Cullinan (1971) describes characters as:

> ...[needing to] be an individual as each human being is an individual, unique and distinct from all other human beings. Still, the character must possess some universal qualities common to all mankind without becoming a stereotype. (pp. 52-53)

From their own limited observance of humanity, children should have come to some realization about the roundedness of people's characters. One-dimensional characters, even if they have great adventures do nothing to enrich children's perceptions of the diversity of the people who surround them. Children need to read about characters that cause the action in a story to happen rather than being merely the objects that get acted upon. (Cullinan, 1971, p. 50)

In many cases, the setting of the plot is as important as are the characters. In examining setting in children's literature, Huck is concerned with where the story takes place; how time is indicated; the effect of setting upon the action, characters, or theme; and whether the story transcends the setting and has universal implications. (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 16)

While many books have rather a generic or universal setting, others are tied firmly to a place and a time. Mankind does not exist without a backdrop. Lively (1987), herself a reputable children's author, explains, "... our lives for their short span [run] against the greater continuity of history." (1987, p. 16) For many of us, our time and place here on earth are great determining factors in the course of our lives. Something which is so integral to our lives must be portrayed. Setting is also integral to the lives of the characters within the story. It can be "... viewed as an extension of character, as a symbolic device, and as a means of establishing credibility." (Cullinan, 1971, p. 51) In literature, setting must be portrayed well, so that children begin to understand, and will perhaps later have greater control over their own circumstances, and the impact of their surroundings upon their lives.

A good children's book must contain a theme. It should be a theme worth imparting to children. It should also be one that emerges naturally from the story without overpowering the story or becoming moralizing. (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 16) The theme is the result of the interaction of the plot and the characters. It conveys a message to children about themselves and the rest of humanity. In a good children's book, the theme is neither overt nor

preachy, but unobtrusively it speaks loudly and clearly to the reader.

The relevance of the theme should be universal yet its content may be very simple. Children should be given literature that "...will help them see more, be more, feel more." (Huck, 1989, p. 257) The theme, therefore, should attempt to demonstrate something of what it is like to be a human being. It should combine "...the urgency and authenticity of life as we know it with the excitement and wonder of life as it may yet be known". (Rosenheim, 1980, p. 51) It should do so while retaining the innocence of childhood with its endless possibilities for excitement, adventure, and learning. The result will be an opportunity held in waiting to refine or coarsen a child's "...personal map of humanity...". (Inglis, 1976, p. 165)

The theme should express an original idea as seen through an author's unique viewpoint. This does not mean that a subject can be addressed only once and never again. It is original if it is grounded in truth as an individual sees it which, in itself, is never quite the same as anyone else's view. (Smith, 1973, p. 396) Originality also does not mean that a theme must be uncommon. The way in which a common idea is developed in a story has the power to make that common idea both unique and memorable. "The ingenuity with which the theme is illustrated in a story makes it noteworthy." (Cullinan, 1971, p. 40) Without such

originality or ingenuity in presentation, the result would be a pointless account lacking both impact and challenge. (Smith, 1973, p. 397)

The language and style of the writing must also be considered. In assessing the style of a children's book, Huck (3rd ed., 1979) suggests that the critic must be concerned with whether the style is appropriate for the subject, whether it is straightforward or figurative. The critic will consider whether or not there is a balance between narration and dialogue, whether or not a mood is created, what symbols are used, and whether or not the story is told from an appropriate point of view. (p. 17)

Many people view great literature as being written in a way which excludes the average person from enjoying the book. If literature is going to evoke an emotional response from the reader, the opposite should indeed be the case. The language used and the style of presentation should not prevent access to the book. Sheila Egoff (1973) decisively states the case for simplicity in writing in her comment:

> Sheer readability is a prime criterion of excellence in children's books as it is in adult books. Take the first words of Moby Dick 'Call me Ishmael'. And the first line of Leon Garfield's thriller Smith, 'He was called Smith.' (p. 8)

Simplicity in language will serve to enhance rather than diminish the text. To achieve simplicity, the author must write in the strongest and the most vividly descriptive

language available. (Hunter, 1975, p. 11) This view is also supported by Tucker (1981) who writes:

> ...understatement, as well as getting over the idea of a certain artistic shorthand by inviting readers to fill in the missing detail for themselves, also allows for greater possibilities of reader identification... [the author also runs] less risk of actually standing between children and their imaginative realisation [sic] of a text -- something that becomes more likely when over-explicit illustrations are used. (p. 49)

Huck's (3rd ed., 1979) final element for consideration in evaluating children's books is the format. The concerns here are with whether or not the illustrations enhance and are consistent with story, and with the quality of the paper and the binding. (p. 17) This element harkens back to her first element (p. 26). Before reading the book, Huck suggests, the critic should evaluate the initial reactions to such physical attributes of a book as the cover, the print, the chapter headings. But particular note must be made of illustrations which are vital in the effective presentation of many children's books. As Tucker (1981) explains, the illustrator must ". .remain faithful and sensitive to the text with illustrations which both mirror particular scenes and also convey some of the essence of their story". (p. 48)

The elements of fine literature discussed above are no less important in books for children than they are in books for adults. In addition to these general guidelines, more specific ones for individual genres must also be considered.

These specific guidelines will be discussed in later chapters as they relate to the evaluation of different genres of children's literature.

Books should provide children with information, whether it be about time and place or about the diversity of the human soul. But the information that is given, because of its thoughtful and unique presentation, should in some small way leave the readers not quite the same as they were before reading the work. (Rosenheim, 1980, p.47)

The evaluation of children's literature must earnestly consider and apply all of these characteristics of good children's literature to identify those works which exemplify the highest standards. The result of such thoughtful evaluation will be greater accessibility for children to fine books -- books that can take a child a step further along the road of life. However, if an evaluator of children's books settles for the second rate, or what Egoff refers to as the mediocre, such a book may only leave the child where he is, since it offers no challenge or insight into the workings of either the real or the fantastical. (Egoff, 1973, p. 7) Unfortunately, it is often easier to settle for second best.

CHAPTER FOUR

Books for the Younger Readers

The influence of the first books that children read may remain for an entire lifetime. These books can either draw children into the realm of the printed word or they can leave children outside this realm, seeking their entertainment and delight from other sources. But a love of books and reading is not solely for entertainment value. As Karl (1970) writes:

> These books for the very young are important because they are the books that shape a child's listening and looking in his earliest years when his ideas are just beginning to form. They will help shape his sense of language, his taste in listening and later in reading, his ideas about books and what they contain, his sense of poetry and rhythm, and his approach to learning. The books he has in these years must be well written, they must be entertaining, they must give the consumer high standards of literary taste, they must form a foundation for all the reading that the child and the adult he will become will do later. (p. 12)

Only the very best in children's literature can meet such demanding standards.

The first books that children meet are usually picture storybooks and books of simple verse. Ideally, these books use language with such power and directness that the appeal to the feelings and the imagination of children is immediate. As well, in books for young children, the illustrations must have a similar impact.

In the best picture books, text and illustrations combine to tell a story. Both text and illustrations are of

equal importance and the critic is concerned with literary and artistic excellence. Unlike an illustrated book, the pictures in the picture storybook must complement the text completely. The two exist in a symbiotic relationship, in that each draws life from the other's representation of the story.

In a quality picture storybook, therefore, it is not only the text but also the pictures which must be of outstanding quality. Kiefer (1989) states that these books "...are not toys but are art objects that provide a unique aesthetic experience that has lasting effects". (p. 87, in Cullinan and Hickman) Huck agrees with such a view, adding that they are probably the only real art that children may ever see. (3rd ed., 1979, p. 105) To reach such a standard, the pictures must be of exceptionally good quality but to be truly effective they must be worthy of the text and support it harmoniously. Otherwise the necessary balance which is so critical to excellent storytelling in two media will be lost.

The verse that young children are first delighted with must speak to them at their point of time. (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 308) The language of the verse must create the reader's images that are appropriate to their experience and to their understanding. This poetry should provide them with a fresh look at something familiar and it should do so with an appealing rhythm and sound. Usually poetry for

young children is accompanied by illustrations. These illustrations are as important to the poetic text as they are to the text of a picture storybook. The illustrations of a book of poetry must convey the images of the poet without stifling the images of the child reader.

In this chapter, the focus will be on Newfoundland children's books for the youngest readers. Not surprisingly, such books will consist entirely of picture books, picture story books and poetry. The Newfoundland experience with these types of books for young children is similar to the overall Canadian one. As Saltman and Egoff (1990) point out, the picture storybook was the last genre to develop in Canada with the first example appearing in the late 1960's. (p.133) Newfoundland's first example was the very well received Down by Jim Long's Stage by Al Pittman with illustrations by Pam Hall, (Breakwater, 1976) a picture verse book.

Pittman's collection of amusing verse depicts the antics of the various fish that inhabit Newfoundland waters. Each fish very much has a character of its own, one which is described with a Newfoundland linguistic flourish. For example, "Sid Squid went and hid behind a sunken dory. / His wife came out and gave him a clout. And Sid said he was sorry." (Pittman, 1976, p. [4]) The rhythm of the language along with the easy use of alliteration and hyperbole, will appeal universally to children, not just to those familiar

with the undersea world of our Newfoundland shores. The understanding and appreciation of this book of verse are enhanced immeasurably by the illustrations of Pam Hall. These illustrations, which won the Amelia Frances Howard Gibbon illustrator's award in 1977, effectively convey a realistic picture of what the sea creatures look like and how they behave as they portray their many-sided personalities, which in cases include their more humorous sides.

The coastal waters of Newfoundland and Labrador also provide the setting for the next picture storybook, Ellen Bryan Obed's Borrowed Black (Breakwater, 1979). In this Labrador fantasy, the reader is introduced to Borrowed Black, a villainous character who has borrowed bits and pieces from the world around him, not only to make a house but also to make himself. Trouble begins for him after he has stolen the moon, leaving the coast in darkness for seventeen seasons of night. The moon is finally recovered by a fantastical crew aboard a boat built in the back of a whale. In the ensuing struggle, Borrowed Black is conquered.

The mythical ending leaves the reader with a sense of wonderment. The impossible seems probable. Actual characteristics of the moon are explained as a result of the action of the tale. For example:

> To this very night on the Labrador
> When you stand and watch from the tall, dark shore,

> You can see the cracks in the moon round and high
> And the silver it left on its way to the sky.
> And the fishermen say if you follow the trail,
> You'll come to the boat in the back of the whale.
> (1988, p. [28])

The cracks result when Borrowed Black takes the moon down, and it breaks into a billion and four pieces. These explanations almost convince the reader that a boat in the back of a whale actually exists.

In the first edition, Hope Yandell's illustrations are filled with detail in a crowded and swirling way. Local expressions such as a "sculpin" and a "tickle" are immediately explained in the pictures and help to tie the story to its locale without diminishing its appeal to the wider audience. A major criticism with this work relates to the design and layout. The hand-written script used throughout is difficult to read, particularly where it is superimposed over the pictures, as is sometimes the case. This may have the unfortunate consequence of forcing children to pass over this excellent fantasy.

Borrowed Black was reprinted in 1988 with new illustrations by Jan Morgensen. The second publication also saw the addition of the extremely appropriate subtitle, A Labrador Fantasy, and a much needed change to a more readable print. Morgensen's illustrations, however, have been described as dark and foreboding and lacking in the bright friendliness of the earlier version.(Lyons, 1990, p. 115) While there is a ghostly aura and a shadowiness about them, they are certainly not grim. Instead, Morgensen's

illustrations create a distinct mood of a fantasy world shrouded in mystery. This, to many Newfoundlanders as well as others, is how Labrador is perceived.

From the very beginning picture storybooks about Newfoundland have been associated with the sea. Miriam Renouf's A Whale by the Tail with photographs by Bora Merdsoy (Jesperson, 1982), rather unsuccessfully continues this marine interest. As is the case with many picture storybooks, A Whale by the Tail attempts to be too many things for too many people. It is never quite clear what the purpose is. The book has at its centre what could have been an adventurous story of a whale which becomes trapped in a fisherman's net and must be freed by divers. The approach taken, however, is didactic in nature. This is not necessary, since the best in children's books can provide information to the reader quite effortlessly within the context of a well told tale. (Brett, 1989, p. 17) Here, however, the reader is taken back and forth between the story, written as if a traditional storyteller were relaying it ("Have you ever thought about how big a whale really is? Well, close your eyes and imagine..."), and a factual presentation of information about whales. The transitions between the two styles are rough, even though it seems to have been the author's intention to slip the information in without anyone really noticing it. Good editorial direction could have eliminated this problem and avoided the

repetition of text. At the end, space is provided for children to colour the whale and write their own adventure story! This may be a good idea as a separate classroom activity but hardly a strong literary device.

The lack of clarity in direction is also evident in the photographs chosen to illustrate A Whale by the Tail. It can be argued that photographs are not an appropriate medium for a story, since they are too close to reality. A case could have been made here for the photographs perhaps, since the story is grounded in fact -- whales do get caught in nets. However, these photographs are dark and unfocused, and it is often difficult to distinguish what they are or how they are related to the story. They also serve to emphasize the information which is plugged into the text from time to time, detracting from the story rather than enriching it. This book is a poor example of children's literature. What could have been a solid and entertaining story fails to capture either the interest or the imagination of its audience.

The Discontented Hippopotamus (Harry Cuff Publications, 1982) written by Stella Russell and illustrated by Linda Russell is another example of a book which could have been both interesting and fun-filled for the young reader but which gets mired in cliché and predictability from the start. Russell's tale is the story of a hippopotamus who does not like his name. He becomes quite happy with it,

however, after he meets up with a whale who consoles the hippopotamus at first with comments such as "'What's in a name? The rose, if called by any other name, would smell as sweet'". (1982, p. 4) Once this approach fails the whale proceeds to relate how humans use several names, "'Why, there are dozens of John Smiths, and Tom Joneses!'" (1982, p. 9) This completely satisfies the discontented hippopotamus. Of course, the whale has to explain to the hippopotamus who humans are so he tells him the story of Jonah. It seems more than a coincidence that the particular adventure of Jonah had happened inside the whale who just happened to be the grandfather of the story teller!

There is little humour or delight to be found in this book. The black and white pencil drawings match the story's dreariness. This book makes no effort to "...capture the excitement of living, the joy of being alive..." that Huck (1989) says good children's literature should do. (p. 258)

But Newfoundland's children's literature was not to be without its humour. In 1982, the prolific Newfoundland author, Tom Dawe published his first children's book, A Gommil From Bumble Bee Bight (Harry Cuff Publications). This is a collection of quite witty limericks centring around Newfoundland place names such as Ming's Bight, Bareneed and Joe Batt's Arm. The book's illustrations by Sylvia Quinton Ficken, although in black and white with another colour, for example, orange, added, are very

humorous. Unfortunately, A Gommil From Bumble Bee Bight was poorly presented and bound. Now out-of-print, the book's limericks are enjoyable and informative and deserve reprinting with improved design and binding.

Dawe followed A Gommil From Bumble Bee Bight with the imaginative alphabet book, Angishore, Boo-Man and Clumper (Harry Cuff Publications, 1983) which was also illustrated by Sylvia Quinton Ficken. This book, aptly subtitled A Newfoundland Folk Alphabet, provides the young reader with a true slice of Newfoundland culture.

Using the "A is for..." format, each letter of the alphabet focuses on a different Newfoundland word and is accompanied by a short verse which humorously expounds upon the true meaning of that word. For example,

> Y is for yaffle,
> An armload of cod,
> All salted and dry,
> To some it's not odd,
> Except when the smell
> Gets into your clothes,
> You get awfully fishy
> And rude to the nose. (p.58),

or,

> K is for killick,
> An anchor home-made,
> A crude little grapnel
> In fisherman's trade:
> A stone for its body,
> And sticks for its claws,
> It's fine for a mooring,
> Despite all its flaws. (p. 30)

Ficken's black and white illustrations further illuminate the reader's understanding of Newfoundland.

Dawe's lighthearted verse has the distinct rhythm of the Newfoundland dialect, without being forced or contrived.

The reader cannot help but smile at some of the images that Dawe paints. For example,

> G is for gandy,
> A piece of bread dough
> All done in a frypan
> And garnished just so;
> When served with molasses,
> It gets a bit sticky,
> And stuck in false teeth,
> It gets terribly tricky. (p. 22)

For the Newfoundland child, this book should provide excellent insight into the heritage of the Newfoundland language, while for other children it will reveal the colour and uniqueness of the Newfoundland dialect as well as provide a glimpse of the Newfoundland culture.

Dawe continued exploring Newfoundland words in Alley-Coosh, Bibby and Cark: a second Newfoundland folk alphabet (Harry Cuff Publications, 1987). This book follows the same format as the earlier one but this time, Sylvia Ficken's delightful illustrations are in colour and display a greater intensity than does her earlier work. These illustrations flow over the page, filling it with detailed, often humorous, vivid glimpses of Newfoundland life. As one reviewer suggests, readers "...will enjoy the book as a whole, getting more out of it each time they read the unique verses". (Feltham, 1988, p. 85) Eventhough both of these books are alphabet books suitable for children in their primary school years, they are by no means limited to that

audience. Indeed, the rich folklore and linguistic exploration extend their interest appeal. Unfortunately, neither of Dawe's alphabet books is published in a style worthy of its content.

The pervading influence of the sea is once again central to a picture storybook by Al Pittman. In One Wonderful Fine Day for a Sculpin Named Sam (Breakwater, 1983), with illustrations by Shawn Steffler, Pittman tells the simple tale of the ugliest fish in the sea. The universal theme of this simple story is that true beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Sam, a rather retiring sculpin, just wants to be liked by all the other fish. They, however, view him as the ugliest thing around, since he is all covered in "...splotches and blotches and bumps and lumps...".(Pittman, 1983, p. [15]) It is not until he meets a girl sculpin that Sam finds acceptance. In the sculpin world as in the world of humans, love is blind and the beloved is without blemish.

Sam's search for acceptance among the other fish will find a sympathetic response from many young readers. Sam's search is a search shared by many throughout the world, by the old as well as the young. Nevertheless Pittman makes no attempt at didacticism in his story. Rather, One Wonderful Fine Day remains an understated tale which demonstrates rather than states the important message that true beauty is

found within a character and not just on his face. Beauty is, after all, only skin deep.

Steffler's illustrations are just as successful as is Pittman's prose. Right from the end pages of the book, one feels that Steffler has captured the essence and the beauty of Newfoundland above and below the water. The world beneath the ocean is indeed a beautiful sight, alive with the vibrant colours of the fish and the plant life. Even though our glance at the land is fleeting, what we do glimpse is characterized by the simplicity and the culture of Newfoundland.

Ray Guy's An Heroine for our Time (Harry Cuff Publications, 1983) with illustrations by Sylvia Ficken, is an extremely poor example of what has been published in Newfoundland for children. It is difficult to determine whether or not this ridiculous tale of the adventures of a 2.000 pound baby is really a serious attempt by Guy to write a book for children. Certainly an author of Guy's reputation did not expect that the literary merit of this book would receive critical acclaim. One wonders if this book would have ever been accepted for publication if it had borne the name of a lesser writer. While the dedication does suggest that this was indeed an attempt to write a children's book, on the next page, one is greeted with "This book ought not to be read to children over 95 years or under 10 months without parental guidance". Satire of this kind

and that evident throughout the book is not appropriate for children. As well, the prose is choppy and uneven, and the story at times is difficult to follow. There is little humour to be found. Regardless of who the intended audience is, there can be no doubt that this is not a children's book.

Miriam Renouf's second attempt at writing a children's book is more successful than was her first. 10 Little Caplin (Jesperson, 1984) unlike A Whale By the Tail (1982) is a straightforward attempt to entertain children in a simple way. This is a counting book with a lively little rhyme about the antics of a group of caplin. Unfortunately the illustrations by Deborah Diemand are poor. The objects to be counted, in this case the fish, stand out clearly but they do not resemble caplin. They are not in proportion to the background and their features are not correct. They look more like sharks than caplin. Even though there is an attempt at humour in the illustrations, the simple sketches look amateurish and detract from the text rather than enhance it. The binding, simple staples through the middle, further detracts from the book. While not great literature, Renouf's 10 Little Caplin is an entertaining rhyme which children may enjoy.

In her work Little Snowshoe (Breakwater, 1983), Ellen Bryan Obed once again brings Newfoundland children a book with a distinctive northern influence. Little Snowshoe,

with illustrations by Bill Ritchie, is a simple but gentle story of a white rabbit looking for his mother against a snowy backdrop. Here, the detailed black and white sketches and the text complement each other very well. The reader truly has a sense of the young rabbit's difficulty amid "...the silence of a snow-muffled land". (Lewis, 1985, p. 132) The only human presence, that of a young girl, is distinctly that of an Inuit dressed in parka and seal skin boots. The prose provides opportunity for participation as the young reader may chime in with the familiar question "Where is my mommy?", the answer "There is my mommy!", and the sound of the rabbit's bumping along on the packed snow. Young children will also appreciate the security displayed in the ending when it is the mother rabbit who finds the lost youngster.

Fish once again are the subject of another counting book, Lings 'n' Things (Harry Cuff Publications, 1986) written by Tom Dawe and illustrated by Pamela Dawe. Various kinds of black and white sea life and some ever present gulls swim across the pages of this little book, accompanied by short rhymes detailing their meanness towards a trapped ling. This book certainly lacks the quality of Dawe's other books. A major difficulty with this book is the confusion that will result if the reader does not realize from the very beginning that the ling's predicament will force him to appear throughout the book. Since the ling does appear on

every page, the number of fish counted will be incorrect. This inaccuracy is a major flaw. Since counting books can help the young child make the transition from concrete to visual representation of numbers, accuracy is essential. (Huck, 1979, p. 103)

The use of simple black and white illustrations in Lings 'n' Things was unfortunate, since they do little to enhance the rhymes. The beauty and the colour of the world under the sea is lost. This, however, appears to have been a conscious decision, since the book is subtitled "A Count and Colour Book". But it was not a carefully considered decision, since the illustrations are far too small for a child who would be interested in the text of this book to be able to successfully colour. As well, the suggestion is seemingly made that this book is nothing more than a glorified colouring book rather than one of any literary merit. Never should a piece of literature be confused with a colouring book, whether it is intended for children or not.

Peter Harley's The Clothes Lion (Jesperson, 1986), with illustrations by C. Anne MacLeod, is the mundane tale of a lion who has his wish to have clothes come true only to lose acceptance among his lion friends. The ending is moralistic in tone with his "old" mother smiling an 'I told you so' smile. The language as well as the clothing illustrations

are dated, conjuring up images of "cool cats" with which few children will identify.

Amanda's Baking Lesson (Jesperson, 1986) written by Judith M. Doucette, with illustrations by Anne Furlong, is the story of a little girl who wants to surprise her mother with a cake. When her aunt/babysitter does not immediately help her, Amanda takes matters into her own hands. As expected, disaster strikes when Amanda forgets to put the cover on the blender and then burns the cake. Amanda's mother saves the day when she praises Amanda for her idea, eats the cake, and suggests to Amanda that they make cookies tomorrow. This straightforward story is accompanied by black and white line drawings which are often amateurish, particularly in the depiction of facial expressions. The father, for example, looks as if he is in a trance. The illustrations do little to enhance the story, which in itself is rather bland.

The co-existence of fantasy and reality is explored by John Steffler in Flights of Magic (Breakwater, 1987) with illustrations by Shawn Steffler. With the help of a book, Ruth's imagination takes over as she moves back and forth between reality and fantasy. She has many interesting encounters with characters such as Heroic Hilda, a would-be fortune teller/cobra trainer, before she finally leaves the world of the book behind when she gives it to a lonely girl she does not even know.

While Shawn Steffler's bright and colourful illustrations capture the reader's attention, John Steffler's story has no spark. The story line moves along at a slow pace and yawns at Ruth's encounters. For a story that should have been a light and whimsical flight of magic for a young girl, this book does nothing to enhance readers' imaginations about the world around them.

In 1988, Peter Harley published his second children's book, One, Two Baccalieu (Jesperson) with illustrations by Marie A. Stamp. This is a collection of twenty-one poems with Newfoundland themes, for example, the weather, place names, birds and whales. Two of the poems work particularly well, "One, two, Baccalieu" and "Coves". The rhythm of the language in these two poems creates an enjoyable beat. The opening lines of "Coves" read:

> Horse Cove, Bear Cove, Great Barasway,
> Fox Cove, Seal Cove, Ha Ha Bay,
> Goat Cove, Shoe Cove, Salmon Cove Beach,
> Lady Cove, Ship Cove, Lockers Reach. (p. 19)

In some of the others, "A Dear Little Girl From Deer Lake" for example, the rhyme is forced and enjoyment is lost. Stamp's black and white illustrations are good; they help the reader imagine what the wildlife featured in the poetry actually look like. As with many other books published by Jesperson Press, the binding of One, Two, Baccalieu is poor. What passes for binding is two staples.

The capabilities of a handicapped boy is the subject of Franky Can (Breakwater, 1988) by Gerard Thevent. Through

simple statements, Franky describes all the things that he can do before revealing on the last page the one thing he cannot do -- walk. The final statement is somewhat surprising because the clues to Franky's handicap are few. Readers will also be drawn to Thevent's vivid and often humorous full colour illustrations. In addition to breaking any stereotypes about handicapped people, the illustrations of Franky's grandparents demonstrate that old people are vibrant and energetic individuals. Without laying any blame, Thevent makes his point that the handicapped are capable individuals.

As a response to the growing French immersion program in the province, Pat Whelan and Arlene Luke combined efforts to produce A Silly Codfish Tale / Un conte en l'air d'une morue amusante (Jesperson, 1989) with illustrations by Ronan Kennedy. Told in verse by Dapper Tom Codfish, this book provides the reader with a glimpse of the codfish's life under the sea. The codfish, it appears, cannot wait to get to the reader's plate where he will be all dressed up and taste delicious. The French translation, printed underneath the English on each page, is exact except for some slight changes to achieve a rhythmic flow to the words. The black and white illustrations are quite satisfactory. Children would probably find the last two illustrations humorous. First, the codfish is dreaming of himself wearing sunglasses and cooking over an open fire. Next he visualizes himself

on a dinner plate sporting a top hat, bow tie and sunglasses. It is unfortunate that the illustrator's initials are so prominently displayed, and that the illustrations are in black and white because the beauty of the undersea world is lost.

Margaret Miles-Cadman's book, Little Fan and the Fountain Fairy (Breakwater, 1989), is little more than a moralistic story trying to be a successful fantasy. Here, a cat named Little Fan sees a fairy in the fountain of a neighbouring garden. She hopes to make a wish and have it come true. The opportunity never comes but it does not bother Little Fan, once she realizes that with all her good fortune her only possible wish has come true. The story lacks originality in that the reader feels that this same story has been read before but it was much better on that earlier occasion! The illustrations, while supporting the text, appear amateurish in style with the author's initials glaringly noticeable on each and every one.

Notsomuch a Rainbow (Creative Publishers, 1989) by Robert Burt is an overwritten fantasy about the return of leprechauns to their ancestral home because the belief in magic is gone in the New World. The story, based on the oral tradition of the Newfoundland fishing community of Old Perlican, is divided into three parts -- the leprechauns deciding to leave their magical village of Notsomuch, the return ocean voyage during which one leprechaun falls

overboard and goes to Atlantis, and the arrival of the leprechauns in their ancestral home. There is little magical about the tale. The prose is wordy and uninteresting. For example, the discussion leading up to the leprechauns leaving Notsomuch reads:

> But that was fifty years ago, and a lot can happen in fifty years, even in the elfin lives of Tir, Na and Nog. Times were different then, more adventuresome. Tir, his elfish eyes gleaming, remembered the good old days when fairy raids were carried out on unsuspecting berry pickers. Nog stomped his feet and wiggled his ears at the thought of the fairy-laden child they had left for a week, before returning her to the awed human village two roads away. Yes, those were the days, Na thought. They filled one with purpose and ambition. (p. 6)

The illustrations of Wilfred Reid are too much of this world. The three main leprechauns, Tir, Na, and Nog look like pot-bellied shrunken humans. Atlantis, the land Tir visits when he falls overboard, is inhabited by "maidmers" who live in square, realistic buildings that have double-hung windows, human beds and blankets. The only fantasy is that Atlantis exists but not as mythology would lead readers to believe. The theme, "Ask not what a rainbow is but what it might be" is blatantly stated on Imajum, the radiant crystal which is the source of imagination. In Notsomuch a Rainbow, little is left to the imagination.

Ellen Bryan Obed's most recent work, Wind in my Pocket (Breakwater, 1990), is a fine collection of poetry illustrated by Shawn Steffler. The poems follow the seasons of the year and have the universally appealing topics of the

natural world. But for the Newfoundland reader, the flavour of home is never far away. The best examples of this are to be found in the poems "When" and "The White Ships". The speaker in "When" is wondering when winter will leave. Nowhere does the reader hear the speaker talking of the arrival of unfamiliar birds and flowers early in the year. Instead, the tone is definitely authentic Newfoundland, for the speaker talks of the ice breaking up, boats "whishing" up to the wharf, and the geese and the whales appearing. "The White Ships" is another "spring - early summer" poem of Newfoundland. The subject of the poem is icebergs; those majestic towers of white that are expected but, as the poem aptly suggests, no one waits for.

Steffler's illustrations in Wind in my Pocket, also help to firmly ground the poems in Newfoundland and Labrador. The landscape with its wooden houses, deep blue water, and clothes lines blowing in the wind is definitely Newfoundland. The winter poems create images of the great expanses of snow associated with Labrador. An illustration of a young woman -- perhaps a teacher -- going away by seaplane is definitely a common sight for children living on Labrador's isolated coastline. Hopefully this work is indicative of the future work of Obed and other Newfoundland writers and illustrators.

Literature for the younger Newfoundland audience has clearly experienced growing pains. There have been some

bright spots particularly in the work of Ellen Bryan Obed, Al Pittman and Tom Dawe, and in the illustrations of Shawn Steffler and Pam Hall. While authors seem to be attempting to bring Newfoundland into their work -- some with more success than others -- perhaps this regional reference is being overemphasized. As Egoff and Saltman aptly point out,

> Whatever the genesis of a picturebook, or its cultural background, it is the originality of the story, and the freshness, artistry, and complementary quality of the illustrations that give it its lasting power. (1990, pp. 181-182)

If Newfoundland picture books are to achieve literary and artistic excellence, then the authors and illustrators who produce them must realize that by simply setting their work in Newfoundland they are not creating a piece of Newfoundland literature. Attention must be paid to the plot, the characterization, and the theme. The 1988 edition of Borrowed Black is an excellent example of a work in which these elements were successfully integrated and the result is evident in the impact that the whole book (text and illustrations) has upon the reader. Universal standards of excellence must never be sacrificed simply to provide the Newfoundland audience with books with which they can readily identify. It is when literary and artistic excellence combine with regional settings that the literature will have wide appeal and the regional will indeed become universal.

CHAPTER FIVE

Books for the Middle Grades

With few exceptions, the Newfoundland children's literature available to readers between the ages of nine and twelve has drawn heavily upon the Newfoundland context. The authors of these books have placed a great deal of emphasis upon the province's culture, heritage, and landscape. It is as if a conscious attempt has been made to offset the influence of literature from other places and to build a sense of pride in the Newfoundland lifestyle so that the young readers will become more aware of the value of their own environment. This chapter will focus on books appropriate for children in the middle grades.

The range of interests and abilities of the young readers who fit into the middle grades category must be recognized as being very broad. This group may include those who have difficulty in learning to read, those who are fast attaining independence in reading, and those who are becoming interested in world problems and are able to deal with abstract dimensions of a problem. (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, pp. 33, 36) The types of books designed for such a varied group of children must match these diverse needs. This is true of what is available in Newfoundland children's literature. There are books available at different reading levels and in several genres. There are picture storybooks, alphabet books, collections of poetry, and novels. The novel is the most common form.

Novels, especially, have the capacity to transmit the social and the cultural ethos of a society even though novels are usually read silently to oneself. A social and cultural transaction unquestionably takes place during the interaction between the reader and the author's words. "Consequently to study fiction...is to stand at the intersection of various perspectives, and to stand there in an attempt to sort out some bearings...". (Inglis, 1976, p. 158) The end result should be a strengthening of young readers' identities -- to help them understand the conflicting emotions and impulses within themselves, and to develop in them an understanding of the social and cultural context of which they are a part. "Fiction can be a bridge between the child and his future as well as a guide to his present". (Bawden, 1987, p. 68)

It has been mentioned earlier that some of the stories written for readers in the middle grades have striking similarities in setting. It should be noted also that their plots and characters are comparable as well. Of the eighteen novels identified as suitable for the middle grades, seven are works of historical fiction, four are fantasies, three are realistic fiction, with two of those being mysteries, and one is a collection of poetry accompanied by prose commentaries. Three books also appropriate for the middle grades are in the picture storybook format. The main character is male in four of the

historical novels, female in three. All four of the fantasies have females in the leading role. In the realistic fiction, the lead character is male in one of the novels, female in the other, and shared by the two genders with the male being slightly more prominent in the two mysteries. In examining the books produced for readers in the middle grades, the critical discussion will begin with historical fiction, followed by an evaluation of the fantasies, the realistic fiction and the picture storybooks.

Saltman (1987) has identified historical fiction as being one of the standard genres of Canadian children's literature particularly prior to 1975. (p. 57) Given the comparatively high number of historical works produced in Newfoundland children's literature, this is also true of Newfoundland's historical fiction. Historical fiction offers to the reader a tremendous opportunity especially if the reader is a child. As Huck (3rd ed., 1979) explains:

> ...the purpose of historical fiction is not to give an exact chronological understanding of history, rather it is to develop an awareness of people living in the past. Such books will free children from the cocoon of their self-centered little worlds and enlarge their life spaces to include a feeling for the past. (p. 466)

Smith (1953) holds the same opinion. She maintains:

> In its finest form, the historical story brings to a child, through imaginative response, an experience of living in other times. It brings a sense of significance and color of the past in a way that transcends history. (p. 164)

In evaluating historical fiction, certain genre-specific criteria must be considered in addition to the accepted standards for excellence in children's literature. Additional criteria in four areas that need to be considered are: the problem of defining what is the historical past; the determination of the version of history to be presented; the creation of characters and themes that represent universal values unbounded by time, but that adequately reflect the values and spirit of the times; and the development of a good story that highlights the events of history without distorting it.

Levstik (1989) focuses directly on the problem of defining the historical past when she writes: "One of the difficulties of historical fiction is absorbing the reader into the historical era rapidly enough to maintain interest in the story". (p. 139) The key word in this statement is "absorbing". As Hunter (1975) points out, no presumptions about a child's knowledge of any given historical period can be made. (p. 45) The author's task is, therefore, to convey the story's period and setting clearly and simply without having too many gaps that require the reliance on the reader's background knowledge. (Hunter, 1975, p. 45; Levstik, 1989, p. 139) Yet the author must be wary of merely scene painting. (Smith, 1953, p. 175) Success in the writing of historical fiction is achieved when:

> ...[authors have] so well absorbed the material of their period that they can render it with the utmost economy -- providing just enough of the right detail to make the historical setting colorful and evocative, while superimposing upon that setting the relevant activity of the child characters. (Egoff, 1981, p. 185)

Historical fiction also has the propensity to allow its readers to see the past in a variety of different ways. It is not simply something that happened once upon a time. Historical fiction must give an accurate representation of the facts as well as of the values of the time. (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 468) But by providing an accurate representation, the interpretation of history is not precluded. Rather, well written historical fiction "... places the reader at those turning points where choices are not easy..." and "... invites the reader to enter into a historical discussion that involves making judgements about issues of morality". (Levstik, 1989, pp. 141, 137) While the author can not change the evidence, it is possible to present situations which reveal certain truths about the evidence. (Hunter, 1975, p. 47)

The characters of historical fiction must meet specific requirements. As Egoff (1981) points out, they "... must be old enough and mature enough to grasp and hence impart, the nature of the often awesome events in which they find themselves". (p.184) The characters must also be recognizable in their own time but they must be able to demonstrate to children that while the characters lived in a

different time, all people have basic needs in common that remain constant in our time. (Levstik, 1989, p. 138) As noted children's author Penelope Lively (1987) puts it, "... you and I are, inexplicably set against this or that backcloth, that our lives run for their short span against the greater continuity of history". (p. 16) The characters of historical fiction are thus linked directly to the themes presented in the stories, which in turn reveal fundamental truths about the human condition. For the reader, good historical fiction "... should illuminate the problems of today by examining those of yesteryear". (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 469)

Historical fiction must, like any piece of quality children's literature, tell a good story. But telling a good story should not hamper the reporting of history, nor should the reporting of history compensate for a weak story.(Levstik, 1989, p. 144) There must be a balance between fact and fiction. Huck (3rd ed., 1979) believes that fact and fiction must be blended so that the historical background is subordinate to the story. (p. 471) Egoff (1981) maintains that:

> The events themselves,..., do not simply provide a stage for the characters but mold their lives. The historical events do not move to a climax but end with a formative period in the protagonists' lives. They have changed and matured and that is the point of the story. (pp. 164-165)

Smith (1953), however, believes that adventure and action centred upon historical events are the first requirements of

historical fiction and without these no child will be satisfied, especially if the action takes place only on the periphery of historical events. (p. 167) The emphasis in writing good historical fiction should be placed upon the blending of fact and fiction so that the characters and themes grow out of their setting. This would allow children who read historical fiction the opportunity to develop a true sense of history so that they may learn that basic fundamental truths are timeless, even if the situations through which they are revealed are vastly different. If historical fiction overly concerns itself with the facts in action, then it loses its value as a vehicle of interpretation of the past.

The earliest of the historical novels identified for the middle grades introduces an element common to a number of Newfoundland historical novels written for young readers -- a journey by sea. Adelaide Leitch's Lukey Paul From Labrador (Macmillan, 1964), part of the Buckskin Books series, is the story of a ten year old boy from Rattling Tickle on the Labrador coast, who is given the job of journeying further up the Labrador coast to trade a silver fox skin, the catch of a lifetime, for his uncle.

Set in the summer of 1893, Lukey Paul's journey is not an easy one, nor is it merely a trip aboard a boat. His ride up the coast is lost when the skipper who was to provide him with passage to Hopedale to trade the skin has

an accident which prevents him from making the voyage. With the help and encouragement of his friends Mary and Koonik, an Eskimo boy, Lukey Paul stows away aboard Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's steamer "Princess May". When he finally reaches Hopedale, he is swindled of his valuable skin by a trader who gives him less than the winter's supplies the skin should have provided. But it is during his voyage and conversations with the famous Dr. Grenfell, that Lukey Paul begins to realize that, "'There's more to life on this coast than one boy's silver fox!'" (Leitch, 1964, p. 85) Lukey Paul is admonished by Grenfell never to forget that fact.

Lukey Paul From Labrador is a fine choice as a first novel for young readers. It is easily read with a swiftly moving plot filled with adventure and historical insight into life on the Labrador coast in the 1890's. According to Children's Choices of Canadian Books, young readers found the story both exciting and meaningful. (1979, p. 58) The characters are not flat, especially those of Dr. Grenfell, old Mosessee (Koonik's grandfather whom Lukey Paul and Dr. Grenfell help to regain his dignity), and Lukey Paul. The theme of giving up something you consider precious for something far greater is well-suited to this age group. Young readers should easily see how Lukey Paul's gift of his precious whale tooth for Mosessee to carve helped the old man regain his self pride. By helping Mosessee, Lukey Paul resolves his dilemma of getting enough supplies for his

uncle and himself for the winter. This book deserves to be reprinted with new jacket illustrations which should make it more appealing to young readers.

A second work of historical fiction with a Newfoundland setting was written by award winning American author Natalie Savage Carlson. Sailor's Choice (Harper Row, 1966), focusing on a Newfoundland dog, Sailor, is a story of choices. Sailor's owner, Captain Wight, is no longer permitted to keep the dog because of a community law prohibiting dogs from living in his home community. Sailor accompanies Wight on one last trip to the ice where they both meet up with Jamie, a young stowaway whose dream it is to be a seal hunter. Both dog and captain are so taken with Jamie that Wight decides to adopt Jamie and teach him seamanship. Wight also develops an ingenious scheme to keep Sailor.

Carlson's crafting of the Newfoundland setting is well done. For this success she credits the expert advice of her neighbour, a former Newfoundlander, who supplied personal anecdotes from three sealing expeditions in the early 1900's, along with the character of Sailor who was his boyhood pet in an area where dogs were not allowed. (1966, [i]) There is a great sense of adventure on this sealing voyage which is shared by some interesting characters who help to make this a very readable story.

In 1973, Newfoundland born author, Jean Hayes Feather, published Sawtooth Harbour Boy (Thomas Nelson & Son, 1973), a simple portrayal of Billy Harding's teenage years during the 1920's in Sawtooth Harbour, a fictitious Newfoundland fishing community. This book may be considered primarily a vehicle to portray Newfoundland outport culture, as the reader learns much about going to school, fishing on the Labrador, the religious structure of the Newfoundland outport, and the types of work done within a fishing community. While the setting is well developed, the characters are mostly flat. One exception is Billy, who does show signs of growing emotionally as well as physically through his relationship with Uncle Mike McGuire and his own dream of being a doctor. While the story is somewhat enjoyable, it is not always credible, nor does it achieve the blend between fact and fiction necessary for a truly successful work of historical fiction.

Tom, David and the Pirates (Borealis, 1980) by Betty Clarkson is another historical novel that does not succeed. Set in 1672, Tom Smith and David Martin accompany their fathers from their home in Plymouth, England to the New Found Land fishing village of St. John's. While the title leads the reader to believe that pirates are going to be an integral part of the story, this belief is unfounded. The pirates really play a very minor role in the story. In actual fact Tom, David and the Indians would have been a

slightly more accurate title, since the boys have more dealings with the Beothuck than with pirates.

The characters in Tom, David and the Pirates are quite stereotypical and, in some cases, seem to be scarcely credible. The ship's captain is at times environmentally conscious. For example, when he takes the boys and some of his crew hunting Great Auks, he remarks to the lads, "'...we'll take only what we can use and no more. Some fishermen -- and other men too -- kill many hundreds of them. If men keep on this way, there will be no more great auks left'". (1980, p. 70) The boys come to see the Indians as bloodthirsty thieves even though a settler, who is not a fisherman, tries to explain that the Indians are only savage with the fishermen because the fishermen insist on trapping them and shooting them for sport.

Clarkson does succeed in providing the reader with a lot of information about the early settlement of Newfoundland. But the reader quickly becomes mired in the details and at the end feels as if the author herself has tired of the whole story and wishes to conclude abruptly. For example, the pirate attack on St. John's, which should have been something of a climax, is in fact treated as just another event in a long line of events. One reviewer described this novel as, "... a thoroughly boring adventure story. ... What history there is, ..., is mere romantic dressing ... The book is badly edited, patchily illustrated,

and apart from the inherent fascination of its subjects has little to recommend it." (Thompson, 1986, p.90) For the reader looking for an adventurous story of early Newfoundland, Tom, David and the Pirates is just not worth the effort.

In 1980, young Newfoundland readers are finally given a female protagonist -- and an exceptional one at that. Outport Newfoundland, replete with its rich linguistic flavour, is beautifully portrayed in Ella Manuel's That Fine Summer (1980). Here is the story of Mahala Jacobs who is at odds with herself and her community of Fox Cove. Mahala wants to be a boy so that she can fish and have her own boat. She does not like her name, and her friends do not understand her, especially since she does not want to spend the summer in St. John's with her parents. It is during a fine summer spent with her grandfather and a new found friend that Mahala learns about true friendship, tolerance, and herself.

While the story is a simple one, the main characters of Mahala, the grandfather, and Obadiah Birch, Mahala's new friend, are well drawn, except for the stereotypical physical description of Obadiah, an Inuit. Of Mahala, Brett (1992) writes:

> Her strength of character, so convincingly developed as the plot unfolds, leads the reader to believe that Mahala may indeed achieve her goal. She is ahead of her time -- a bold forerunner of the fisherwomen of the present. (p. 51)

Just as strong is the sense of place. The reader is transported to outport Newfoundland of fifty years ago. Of particular importance in creating the setting is the authentic use of dialect. Never does the reader feel as if the dialect intrudes or is forced. It flows freely and easily as it would have in everyday conversation. The charcoal illustrations scattered throughout the text have a somberness which is not entirely suited to the story. On the whole, the illustrations do little to enhance the text and are not really necessary.

A second heroine, who in the everyday course of her life comes to a greater understanding of herself and the society around her, is found in Jean Hayes Feather's second novel, Fanny For Change (Breakwater, 1987). In this work, Feather introduces the reader to eleven year old Fanny Grace who lived in a small outport community called Famish Gut in the early thirties. While there were many things about the community that Fanny liked, there were just as many that she did not appreciate. She longed for real excitement in her life and to live in a community called "Fairy Glen" rather than "Famish Gut". As the title suggests, Fanny decides to do something about these things which she does not like and as the plot unfolds some things do change. At the same time, Fanny learns the truth in her grandmother's advice that we must accept that somethings are beyond our power to change and that somethings are better left as they are.

The strength of this book lies particularly in its character development. Fanny is a strong minded child who is not readily accepting of all in her life yet she does not sit and pine about her lot. Rather, she sets out to do something about it. Even her gender does not stand in her way. For example, as one reviewer points out, Fanny's as well as her brother's hockey skills improve under the coaching of their father. (Montgomery, 1988, p. 69) Fanny should be a believable child to today's reader, even though she is a part of the past, because many of the emotions and experiences she has are similar to those of a modern child. As well, the people around her are well rounded believable characters, possessed of a genuine Newfoundland flavour.

Just as Fanny's feelings are not out of step with those of many of today's children, neither is her grandmother's advice relevant for the past alone. Understanding that there are some things in life we can change and other things that we can not change is a very important lesson for young people, as is the idea that change for change sake is never warranted. Feather has taken this simple but universal theme and built a well-rounded novel of historical fiction for young readers.

The final work of historical fiction for this age group is a translation from the French of Monique Corriveau's Seasons of the Sea. (Groundwood, 1989) Based on an actual diary, this is an account of the McGuire family's last year

(1910) on Oderin, a tiny island in Placentia Bay. After the only school on the island closes, 10 year old Mary Lou's merchant family decides to move to St. John's. The story follows the seasons and features many of the traditional activities associated with outport life. Copying on the ice, mummering, and picking berries are some of these traditions.

Seasons of the Sea is a pleasant story, supplying the reader with lots of tidbits of information about Newfoundland. But there is little feeling of adventure or excitement even when the family goes to visit St. John's by boat. It is an easy read which might provide a useful transition book to chapterbooks for young readers interested in finding out about the olden days in a Newfoundland outport.

In works of fantasy, some of the most profound yet subtle ideas in books written for children can be found. (Smith, 1953, p. 153) Just as with other excellent works of literature, fantasies deal with universal questions concerning issues such as the struggle of good versus evil, and the humanity of individuals. Nevertheless, the most important contribution of fantasy is the help it gives children in developing "...the ability to imagine, to conceive of alternative ways of life, to entertain new ideas, to create strange new worlds, to dream dreams...". (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, pp. 248-249) And it can do this while

providing the reader with a simple kind of pleasure and genuine entertainment.

The works of fantasy written for the middle grades and meeting the criteria for Newfoundland children's literature adopted for this thesis, are not works of high or epic fantasy. They are light entertaining tales set in imaginary worlds not difficult for the average child to picture. The world of Amanda Greenleaf is just such a place. Created by Ed Kavanagh in a series of three short novels -- Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star (Moonstone Press, 1986), Amanda Greenleaf and the Spell of the Water Witch (Moonstone Press, 1987), and Amanda Greenleaf and the Boy Magician (Moonstone Press, 1991) -- Amanda's world is focused on a shallow pool with a waterfall of which she is the guardian. In each book, Amanda has an adventure beyond her home. In Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star and Amanda Greenleaf and the Boy Magician, she travels from her planet to the Blue Star -- a setting not unlike Earth. In Amanda Greenleaf and the Spell of the Water Witch, she travels downstream from the waterfall to the ocean.

In each story, Amanda finds herself on something of a quest. In the first book, she feels compelled to travel to the Blue Star. Her quest is not clearly defined in this story but it becomes apparent near the end that her purpose in travelling to the Blue Star is to bring back music to her planet. She is able to do this because she comes in contact

with a family who, in exchange for her golden hair, give her a flute and music lessons. In Amanda Greenleaf and the Spell of the Water Witch, Amanda must help her two "mer-friends" reach the ocean. Her quest is to overcome the evil of the Water Witch and save her friends. Amanda also discovers that the Water Witch is not totally evil but has been without friends for so long that being evil is all she knows. In Amanda Greenleaf and the Boy Magician, Amanda returns to the Blue Star on a mission for the rulers of her own and other worlds. This quest is to help good conquer the forces of evil and to bring peace to a world being torn apart by war.

In all three of these stories, the thematic development is rather simplistic. While the internal feelings of the characters are weakly developed, the reader does learn about what their outward lives are like. As an introduction to the novel, this maybe satisfactory, since it provides an introduction to the idea of character development for the young reader. The plots of all three books are quite straightforward and easily followed as readers are transported to the readily believable yet fantastic world of Amanda and her friends. While the overly sentimental endings and the dullness of the language may make the books less than palatable for some readers, the sense of adventure is strong enough to maintain some interest on the part of many young readers. The last book in the series, Amanda

Greenleaf and the Boy Magician, is by far the most entertaining of the series, because of the magic, with its unexpected and often humorous results performed by Nollekens, the boy magician.

The first Amanda Greenleaf book, Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star, was illustrated by Tish Holland. Holland's illustrations have the character of old etchings in their style and in their portrayal of the characters. Matthew, Amanda's star travelling friend, for example, may in his manner of dress be mistaken for a Robin Hood.(p. 23) Francis and Trina, the children Amanda encountered on the Blue Star, are reminiscent of cherubs. (p. 38) Amanda Greenleaf and the Spell of the Water Witch and Amanda Greenleaf and the Boy Magician are both illustrated by Janice Udell. Udell's illustrations have a soft, ethereal quality which conveys the magical nature of the tales more effectively than did Holland's work.

Unlike Amanda Greenleaf's world, the imaginary world found in Alice Story's Beneath the Barrens (Breakwater, 1989) does have a slim and incidental connection to Newfoundland. In this light fantasy, Kate, a young girl picnicking on a Newfoundland barrens with her parents, falls through a pond to a mysterious land below. There she, along with her cat, helps two kingdoms of extraordinary creatures -- the Ralans and the Gornbats -- resolve an old

misunderstanding which has caused much strife between them, and celebrates with her friends the coming of peace.

The plot proceeds at a moderate pace and follows a common story line with few moments of slight suspense. Young readers should enjoy Kate's encounters with the Effersneezles who hold the key to solving the misunderstanding between the Ralans and the Gornbats. Some judicious editing would have resulted in a tighter, faster moving adventure story. The Newfoundland connection is not significant to the story and may actually serve to weaken rather than strengthen the narrative. The specific references to Newfoundland could have, therefore, been easily eliminated in the editorial process. Nevertheless, Story has produced an easy read book with a worthy theme of turning violent conflict into peace through understanding.

The best realistic fiction, like other genres of literature, strives to portray universal truths in ways convincing to its audience. Realistic fiction, more than any other type of fiction, "...can provide full-bodied, unforgettable human portraits and characters with whom the young can empathize and recognize as imaginary companions." (Egoff and Saltman, 1990, p. 22) These characters, however, need not be larger than life. They can be models of ordinary boys and girls sorting through personal problems and social relationships, or having fun and adventures

"...without any magic other than their own earnest efforts". (Sutherland, Monson, Arbuthnot, 6th ed., 1981, p. 309)

A.E. Bunting's High Tide for Labrador (Children's Press, 1975), a work of realistic fiction reprinted in 1979 by Scholastic-Tab under the new title of Iceberg!, introduces the reader to thirteen year old Jimmy Donovan, a lad in the midst of an emotional upheaval. On his first fishing trip on the Labrador coast, Jimmy's desperate attempt to prove himself nearly costs him his life and the boat its catch. While Jimmy does come to accept some difficult situations in his life -- mainly the loss of his father and his mother's interest in another man -- there is unfortunately little to endear him to the reader. Some readers have found that the book lacks both excitement and sufficient detail to make unfamiliar situations clear. (Children's Choice, vol. 3, p. 111) In failing to create a sense of reality, particularly through the description of the setting, Bunting fails to engender in the reader a genuine emotional response to Jimmy's plight.

Mystery and detective stories are a form of realistic fiction. Huck (1979) identifies a high interest in mysteries and creating secret codes as characteristic of children in the middle grades. (p. 34) While children, like adults, do tend to enjoy mystery novels with their action, suspense, danger, and problem-solving, many of this type of novel are written to formula and do not necessarily

meet the standards for excellence in children's literature. The two mystery novels which fall into the category of Newfoundland children's literature for the middle grades are no exception.

Frances Shelley Wees' Mystery of the Secret Tunnel (Scholastic-Tab, 1976), first published in 1965 under the title Mystery in Newfoundland, is the story of the Patterson family who are staying in the Newfoundland Hotel while their father is on a geological trip to Labrador. The three oldest children, two boys and a girl, meet some stereotypical characters during their stay at the Hotel, including a glamorous middle aged couple, an inquisitive author, and "... a tall silent man with steely grey eyes and pale skin...". (Wees, 1976, p. 13) The children also have three sets of cousins who take them on a trouting trip on the barrens in the fog. It is during this trip that the Patterson children stumble upon a hidden cave and "pirate" treasure.

Throughout the novel, Wees tries to give the reader a taste of Newfoundland. Unfortunately, all she manages to do is saturate the story with references to Newfoundland history and culture. Some of the references are rather misleading. For example, "There wasn't that much milk to be had in St. John's. People used powdered milk, not really very tasty to drink." (Wees, 1976, pp. 32-33) As well, some

incidents may communicate a false impression of Newfoundland culture:

> 'You'll have to put two and two together. The Kennedys are coming to take you to get The Fish. Kennedy -- Irish-Catholics, no doubt. And it's Friday. In Newfoundland, Catholics still eat fish on Friday. Simple.' (Wees, 1976, p. 16)

The plot is typical of formula mysteries -- a problem to be solved, danger from the bad guys, a lot of coincidence, a simple solution, and a big reward for the child detectives.

Eric Wilson's The Ice Diamond Quest (Harper Collins, 1990) is in a similar vein to Mystery of the Secret Tunnel. Wilson, well known for his Tom and Liz Austen mystery books set throughout Canada, has his two young detectives coming to Newfoundland because their maternal grandmother is dying. An air of mystery is added when the reader discovers that the Austens' young cousin is a big fan of theirs and has written them a letter telling Tom and Liz about a mysterious yacht with an even more mysterious blinking light that sailed into Petty Harbour one night. Treasure is once again on the minds of all the children but in this case there is a twist in the solution of the mystery when the treasure is not quite what was expected.

As with Mystery of the Secret Tunnel, the setting of The Ice Diamond Quest is overpowering. By page ten, the reader has been told that St. John's is the capital and North America's oldest city, the houses are painted bright colours and many are Victorian in architecture, convicts

were executed on Deadman's Hill, Marconi sent the first wireless message from Signal Hill, Newfoundland has its own time zone, 590 VOCM is a local radio station, the rest of Canada is referred to as "up-along", and visitors are "screeched in". At times, the novel reads more like a travelogue than a mystery. Coincidence is once again very important to the Austens' success at solving the mystery. Character development is almost non-existent, except to paint the bad guys bad and the good guys good.

While both Mystery of the Secret Tunnel and The Ice Diamond Quest are easily read and do provide some information about Newfoundland, neither is good literature. Since children have such a marked interest in mysteries and detective stories, it is unfortunate that the offerings in this genre are so slim.

Picture storybooks have been described as reflecting in miniature the cultural vision and themes of a nation. (Saltman, 1987, p. 18) Three picture storybooks which are eminently suitable for the middle grades provide excellent representations of the province's aboriginal past as well as its wildlife and environmental concerns.

In Donald Gale's story, Sooshewan: Child of the Beothuk (Breakwater, 1988) with illustrations by Shawn Steffler, elementary children have the opportunity to glimpse something of the life of Newfoundland's aboriginal people, the Beothuk. Sooshewan, a young Beothuk girl, sets off to

find her father who has not returned from a hunting trip. Her journey is in the dead of winter at a time when the Beothuks are starving. It is her grandmother's insistence just before her death, that sends Sooshewan in search of her father. This search gives Sooshewan the opportunity to prove she is no longer a "woaseesk", a little girl, but a "woas-sut", a woman.

While this book could easily be read aloud to a younger audience, its reading level is appropriate for the middle grades, as is its theme. The theme is a common one of proving oneself in the face of adversity. Even though Gale's prose is wordy, he adequately conveys Sooshewan's courage and bravery in her father's rescue. The text is, however, overshadowed by Steffler's bold illustrations which help develop a strong sense of being surrounded by a very different way of life. One must wonder if this book was written to simply fill a need in the Newfoundland school curriculum. It does, however, have considerable potential in that it shows Newfoundland children the humanity and the culture of these early people who suffered so tragically in their encounters with the white man.

Tom Dawe's work, Winter of the Black Weasel: A Tale Based on a Newfoundland Micmac Legend (Breakwater, 1988) with illustrations by Anne MacLeod, also provides for young Newfoundland readers some insight into the province's aboriginal past. This tale can be regarded as part of the

literature of the oral tradition, based on Dawe's dedication, "In memory of John Paul of Badger's Brook who told his version of the legend and Frank G. Speck who wrote it down in Beothuck and Micmac (1922)". Winter of the Black Weasel is the story of how the Micmacs and the Beothuks became enemies. After the appearance of a black weasel, an evil omen, the young boys of the two Indian nations begin fighting over whether or not they should kill the black weasel. This childish squabbling turns ugly when a young Beothuk boy is killed after the weasel has been slain. The Beothuks are the losers.

Dawe's well written work is an interesting retelling of an old legend with a basic good versus evil theme. The black weasel foreshadows the appearance of the white man in long dark furs and the tragedy which would result to the Beothuks from their coming. MacLeod's illustrations deserve mention. Throughout the book, every alternate page has a narrow band of illustration beside the text. Within these bands, the observant reader may find objects, symbols and motifs which may highlight and foreshadow significant events in the legend. Blood drips from an Indian design, for example. (p. 19) In another example, a unique perspective on the action of the text is provided as the reader looks down upon the scene. (p. 7) Unfortunately, the larger illustrations vary in quality. In two of the illustrations, for example, the illustration has inaccurate

features and the picture can appear distorted. (pp. 2, 22) Since these two illustrations in question are of background scenery, the successful grounding of this legend in reality is somewhat diminished. As well, any purposeful intent of such distortion will certainly not be readily apparent to youthful readers. In fact, some readers and critics may find that, overall, the illustrations overpower rather than complement the text.

The savageness of the conflict, the blood, and the haunting image of the white man make this a particularly inappropriate book for young children. Nevertheless, with a more mature audience, this legend provides an excellent resource for discussion of the cruelty and inhumanity of man as well as the fate of the Beothuks.

In 1982, award winning illustrator Pam Hall published On the Edge of the Eastern Ocean (GLC Publishers). Written as an epic poem, this is the tale of a young puffin forced by nature to leave his home before he is ready to survive on his own. Fate brings him to the Vanished Isle of Funk where he meets the ghosts of the extinct Great Auks and their leader, Linneaeus. Linneaeus tells the young puffin many stories of how the Great Auks vanished, about other birds in other parts of the world, and of the perils of man and oil. During his stay, the young puffin grows and gains the knowledge that he needs to survive on his own. On his return home, the young puffin tells the stories that

Linneaeus has shared with him, and thus earns the respect of the other nations of birds as well as his name Geb, the Windwalker.

The water-colour illustrations of award winning illustrator Hall are as descriptive as is the language of the tale. The loneliness of the young puffin adrift on the vast ocean (p. 15) is graphically depicted as are the ghosts of the Great Auks. (p. 36) They loom larger than life over the young puffin, giving the reader an accurate and vivid sense of the Great Auks' presence.

Strongly environmental in tone, this is a very well written and well illustrated tale. The physical and intellectual growth of the young puffin is clearly depicted in both the text and the illustrations. For children, aware of their own growth, this young puffin and his plight should be quite meaningful. Beyond the simple story, the young reader can be lead to consider broader issues about ecology, and man's exploitation of nature.

In 1980, Tom Dawe produced Landwash Days: Newfoundland Folklore, Sketches, and Verse for Youngsters (Newfoundland Book Publishers), a collection of twenty-five poems, each of which is accompanied by a prose commentary and a black and white illustration. The landwash is, as Dawe describes it in his author's note, "...all the area on the shoreline, especially that marvellous world around the tide-marks where all kinds of creatures lived." ([i]) In his collection of

poems, Dawe introduces the young reader to lumpfish, squid, tickleace, snails and many other creatures, along with providing some traditional beliefs about these creatures, the weather, and life in a fishing community.

Dawe's poetry and prose commentaries are quite appealing because of his warm, friendly style of writing. To some readers, the folklore imparted will be common knowledge but to many it will be an insight into Newfoundland culture. The black and white illustrations are simple drawings which serve well to highlight the pieces they accompany. Some readers may not find them appealing while others will see them as an appropriate part of Dawe's recollections. The quality of this collection is not exhibited in the binding. While the reading level and the content of Landwash Days are certainly appropriate for the middle grades, the appeal of this work is universal. Unfortunately, Landwash Days is no longer in print.

Universal appeal is characteristic of much of Dawe's work. A Gommil From Bumble Bee Bight, Angishore, Boo-Man and Clumper, and Alley-Coosh, Bibby, and Cark, three collections of poetry evaluated in the chapter on books appropriate for younger readers, have this universal appeal which extends beyond the younger readers. Readers in the middle grades, as well as many older readers will enjoy Dawe's witty and informative poetry.

It has been written that in its literature, the soul of a nation can be laid bare. (Harrison, 1987, p. 435) The works of historical fiction as well as the picture storybooks published for this age group have opened up the setting, history and culture of Newfoundland and Labrador for the young reader. Books such as That Fine Summer, Lukey Paul From Labrador, Sailor's Choice, Fanny For Change, The Winter of the Black Weasel, and On the Edge of the Eastern Ocean, have artfully explored universal themes within the Newfoundland context while providing captivating stories for young readers. The same cannot be said of the works of fantasy and mystery that have been produced during the same time period. These books have tended towards providing light entertainment of a mediocre nature and have done little or nothing to develop excellence in Newfoundland's children literature.

CHAPTER SIX

Books for Older Readers

Newfoundland children's literature suitable for readers aged thirteen to eighteen consists of books written in a variety of styles and genres. Once again, the stories draw heavily upon the Newfoundland context replete with its coastal landscape and distinctive linguistic heritage. In almost all of these books, there is a predominant central character struggling to come to terms with life. The teenage reader, therefore, is provided with the opportunity to identify not only with the physical setting of the story but also with the lead character's coming of age. In this chapter, Newfoundland children's literature for teenagers will be evaluated to ascertain whether or not the books succeed in meeting the standards of excellence set out by Huck for children's literature and in so doing, illuminate adolescence and the dawning of adulthood.

In attempting to group literature according to age, the problem of drawing lines between what is and is not suitable for a given age is encountered. Nowhere is this problem more evident than with books for readers from thirteen to eighteen, particularly those at the upper range of the group. Many books of adult fiction could be considered quite appropriate for mature teenage readers. For the purposes of this study, the only books included are those books which have a teenager as one of the central

characters, or which have been written by a teenager. While this will exclude the works of such noted authors as Cassie Brown, Harold Horwood, and Margaret Duley whose works are often used within the Newfoundland high school program, this qualification will also eliminate any arbitrariness in deciding what may or may not be considered children's literature for teenagers.

Sloan (1975) defines literature as "...a continuous journal of man's search for identity." (p. 19) This definition is most appropriately applied to children's literature for teenagers. Coming of age with the realization of all the responsibilities and expectations entailed by adulthood, is the most common theme found in Newfoundland children's literature for older readers. It is a theme depicted not only in realistic fiction and adventure stories but also in historical fiction, science fiction, and mystery, and as well as in the poetry. There are other common characteristics as well. The ocean very frequently is important to the setting. Also, the indigenous people of Newfoundland, the Beothuks, appear in a number of stories. The female reader may feel somewhat neglected, as a central male character is more predominant. There are, however, three teenage authors and the international success of Newfoundland author, Kevin Major, to serve as inspiration for all readers. For the older reader there is much to explore in Newfoundland children's literature.

Realistic fiction portrays the real world with its many joys and sorrows. Huck (3rd ed., 1979) defines it

> ... as that imaginative writing which accurately reflects life as it was lived in the past or could have been lived today. Everything in such a story can conceivably have happened to real people living in our natural, physical world. (p. 390)

Realistic fiction has a special contribution to make to the lives of its readers. As Egoff and Saltman (1990) write:

> All types of fiction can contribute to an understanding of the many facets of life, but more than any other, realistic fiction can provide full bodied, unforgettable human portraits -- characters with whom the young can empathize and recognize as imaginary companions. (p. 22)

This opinion supports that of Huck (3rd ed., 1979). Huck affirms that children seem to identify more readily with characters in books of realistic fiction than with those in fantasy or science fiction. (p. 391) Characterization is, therefore, a key element in any examination of realistic fiction.

Realistic fiction is often surrounded by controversy because of the vast range of sensitive topics that can be dealt with thematically, and because of how the author handles these topics. The questions of how real and how graphic writers of realistic fiction should be, must be asked in evaluating these books. Appropriateness and good taste must be considered. (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 391) Didacticism must be avoided. The author, in writing on personal or social problems, must be wary of not attempting

to teach or preach. The theme should be subtle yet permeate the entire story. (Cullinan, 2nd ed., 1989, p. 393)

The critic must also consider the plot, setting, style and format of works of realistic fiction. As with any book, there must be a good story which swiftly involves the reader. The setting in realistic fiction must be credible but it may be irrelevant to the story. (Cullinan, 2nd ed., 1989, p. 392) The style can be as varied as the books themselves. It is the successful combination of all the literary elements that results in the best piece of children's literature. This is true for Newfoundland children's literature as it is for quality literature in general.

Realistic fiction in Newfoundland's children's literature had a promising start with Good-bye Momma (Breakwater, 1976), written by Tom Moore with illustrations by Gerry Squires. Moore tells the story of Felix Ryan, a young boy who is faced with his mother's death, his father's remarriage and the many adjustments involved with moving from his grandparents' home to live with his father whom he does not know very well and a stepmother whom he resents. In this first person narrative, readers will undoubtedly find themselves involved in Felix's poignant account of what it was like to be five years old and have to accept dramatic change in his young life. Moore captures quite well the thinking of a five year old in his descriptions. For

example, at his mother's wake, Felix explained his feelings as: "I was enjoying all the attention being paid to us ... I would try to look as pitiable as possible." (p. 27) The magnitude of the situation was lost on the young boy. Such vivid descriptions of feelings succeed in drawing the reader into Felix's Newfoundland world, replete with its stories of sealing trips and the Gerald S. Doyle nightly news bulletin on the radio. The reader's emotional response to Felix's difficult situation is assured. As one reviewer puts it:

> The story is so full of incident, of character and of feeling that Tom Moore will doubtless be asked if the story is autobiographical. The details of life in the community of Delight come across with such clarity that they must have been lived. (Saunders, 1977, p. 39)

Fortunately for Newfoundland readers, after being out of print for some time, this book has now been reprinted. The second printing became available in the spring of 1993.

With the publication in 1978 of Kevin Major's first novel, Holdfast (Clarke, Irwin), realistic fiction for older readers of Newfoundland children's literature, gained recognition both nationally and internationally. Holdfast was the winner of the Canada Council Award for Children's Literature, the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians Award, the Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award, and the School Library Journal Best Book of the Year award. It was placed on the Hans Christian Andersen Honor List. One review called it "... a landmark in Canadian writing for young people." (McDonough, 1978, p. 70)

In the novel, Major tells the story of fourteen year old Michael who is confronted with the reality of his parents' deaths. Michael's problems increase when he has to move away from his small outport home of Marten, leaving behind all he knows and loves, including his grandfather and younger brother, to move in with his aunt and uncle in a larger more urban town. The adjustment to this new way of life is more than Michael can handle. With the aid and company of his cousin, Curtis, who is at odds with his parents, Michael sets out to return to Marten and to what remains of his former life.

Major's characterization of Michael is well done. The reader is drawn into Michael's overwhelming feelings from the very beginning. It is not difficult to imagine oneself standing alongside Michael as his parents are buried at the opening of the story. The attachment Michael has to his parents and his home is vividly portrayed as Michael recalls events and experiences from his life. His confusion and turmoil with reference to what will happen next is very effectively depicted. Landsberg (1985), however, does not believe that Michael is credible as a character because of his lack of growth. She states:

> Michael does not learn much or change during his painful odyssey; in fact, the whole of his accomplishment is to 'hold fast' to his own rough-and-ready viewpoint, his outport individualism, against the sneers of the townies and the bullying of his uncle. (Landsberg, 1985, p. 82)

This is a narrow view of the character. Grief is a profound emotion that is only overcome with time. Often "holding fast" to what is known and loved is the only way through it. While it is true that we see little change in Michael as a result of his experiences, his simple coping at such a time is enough of an accomplishment for one so young. The reader is never given the impression by Major that Michael believes life is static. Major's Michael knows only too well that life continues, whether one wants it to or not. Hope is fleeting but the reader cannot help but believe that Michael will survive. His return to his roots is a reason for optimism that there may be a happier turn of events.

Michael's story is a gripping tale told in the first person. As Ellis (1984) describes it:

> Michael tells his own story in the universal unpolished and passionate voice of youth but, more important, in the lilt and cadence of Newfoundland speech. (p. 99)

Language is an important element in Holdfast. The novel is rife with Newfoundland words and phrases like "scravelling", "boughwiffen", and "a face on her like a turbot". The teasing that Michael suffers because of his accent is symbolic of his alienation in the new urban environment provided for him by his oppressive aunt and uncle. Yet the appropriateness of Michael's rough language is a concern for some readers of the book as well as for some critics. While the profanity is sometimes difficult to take, Michael's frustration and anger demand its use.

Regarding Michael's language, Egoff and Saltman (1990) write:

> Michael's use of profanity (again not overused) is to be taken as a sign of stress and adolescent rebellion -- his anger at his loss demands an outlet in expletives and wrongdoing. It is made clear that he does well in his English classes. (p. 52)

The language of Holdfast is clearly intended for a mature audience. To some, the profanity will be offensive and excessive while other readers will see it as adding to the convincing characterization of Michael.

Egoff (1981) praised Major's use of regionalism in Holdfast as being a "... rare quality that gives dimension to [the] problem novel." (p. 75) The Newfoundland setting is inescapable in Holdfast. It permeates the very being of the characters. Michael is who he is because of where and how he lives. The use of dialect further strengthens the sense of place. Nevertheless the story has a universal appeal. Evidence of this is the fact that the book has been translated into five languages including Hebrew.

The critical response to Major's second novel Far From Shore (Delacorte, 1980) was also very favourable. This book won the Young Adult Book Award for best Canadian book of 1980 from the Canadian Library Association and was chosen as a Best Book of 1980 by School Library Journal. In Far From Shore Major follows the life of a family for several months as the family members deal with the father's unemployment

and drinking, the son's problems with growing up, and a general deterioration of the family unit.

As is the case in Holdfast, Far From Shore has a strong male protagonist in fifteen year old, Chris. The story takes place in the summer after Chris has failed Grade Ten, and his whole world is falling apart. Through the innovative use of four narrators -- Chris, his mother, his father, and his sister -- Major successfully depicts the complexity of the issues facing the family. Chris's actions and reactions to family problems are central to the story. His drinking contributes to his involvement in acts of vandalism and his irresponsibility almost results in a boy's drowning. In Far From Shore, however, the reader does not feel the same sympathy for Chris and his difficulties as one does for Michael in Holdfast. The crudeness of Chris's character is heightened by the crassness of his language and attitudes. This pervades the book and is seen in such comments as this:

> You comes across some of the sleaziest-looking broads you'll ever lay eyes on walking the roads over there. You needs a combination lock on your zipper almost .... But Stan don't give a shit what they looks like. They're all the same with a paper bag over their heads he says. (p. 71)

As Brown (1992) points out:

> ...sex has lost its sense of mystery. It is no longer a matter of morality or of significance. It does not motivate serious thought or inspire poetry. It is just another topic to be exploited. (p. 29)

This casual and crude attitude towards and descriptions of sexual feelings and relationships could easily offend many readers. The material is certainly intended for a mature audience but young readers should not be left with such a narrow, dismal and loveless view of sex.

Social problems such as unemployment can cause tremendous added pressure for teenagers already coping with the onset of adulthood. While reading and sharing in the struggles of other teenagers may help to provide a perspective on one's own life, there must be some sense of what is right and good in the world otherwise the future does indeed look bleak for teenage readers. Far From Shore, unlike Holdfast, ends with some sense of hope for Chris and his family -- the relationship that Chris has with Susan is a positive one, his parents are comfortably together and his father does have some hopes of a job. But Chris is not a role model. Any sympathy he receives from his audience is limited. He only serves to show the harsher side of teenage life, a life depicted without much alternative.

The Journey Home (Gage, 1980), written by Michael J. McCarthy, also portrays a young man in trouble. David, the young man in question, is on probation and living in a foster home. After the death of his friend in a robbery, David runs away from police and ends up in Port-aux-Basques, Newfoundland. There, his chance meeting with Silas, an elderly fisherman, provides a new beginning to David's life.

It is through his relationship with Silas that David changes. At times, McCarthy's description of these changes tends to be melodramatic. For example,

> As I watched him steam out of the harbour, I thought about how much I had come to love this man, with his kindness and his courage, and I thanked whatever fate had led me to his boat. In his own way, without fanfare or preaching, he had taught me new values and made a man of me. (p. 92)

The story, however, is fast paced and entertaining. The reader's interest is maintained in wondering whether or not David will get caught by the law, and will get together with the girl in whom he is interested. The Journey Home is romantic and adventurous, and should provide any teenage reader with some light entertainment.

Kevin Major's third novel, Thirty-six Exposures (Delacorte) was published in 1984. This is the story of seventeen year old Lorne's last months of high school. The thirty-six exposures in Lorne's camera give the reader thirty-six images of Lorne's life, experiences, and background. During these final months of high school, Lorne becomes friends with the wild and daring Trevor, and helps organize a student strike after a teacher's punishment of Trevor is perceived as unjust. Eventually, the strike is resolved and Trevor dies tragically in a drunk driving accident. Lorne, however, through it all, never really emerges as a well-rounded, cared about character. Eventhough Major tries to make him multi-dimensional with his interests in photography and poetry and his search for

his roots through a local history project for school, what motivates Lorne is never clearly understood by the reader. Lorne's coming of age is for a mature audience as there is strong language and sexual activity throughout the book.

The Newfoundland setting is ever present in Thirty-six Exposures particularly through Major's use of dialect. Once again Major handles the Newfoundland dialect well, making it easy for readers to believe that it is indeed the language of the characters.

Many pieces of realistic fiction which concern themselves with the problems of teenagers coming into adulthood give a one sided portrayal of life. This is so with Thirty-six Exposures. Indeed the teenage years can be ones of alienation and hard sought independence as is the case with Michael in Holdfast or Chris in Far From Shore. For Michael and for Chris, to a lesser degree, the reader develops a sympathetic attachment. No such empathy is felt for Lorne. Lorne never learns from the experiences he has in the waning days of high school and the reader does not wonder or care about what will happen to him in the future.

Vivi Aguirre, the central character in Gloria Montero's The Summer the Whales Sang (James Lorimer, 1985), is a thirteen year old girl spending her summer in Red Bay, Labrador with her mother. Like the lead characters in the previously discussed works of realistic fiction, Vivi's life is in turmoil. Her parents have separated for an indefinite

period, and she is spending her thirteenth summer in the isolated Labrador community of Red Bay with her filmmaker mother. During her summer and through her experiences with several locals and the archaeological workers at the Basque whaling station, Vivi begins to accept the changes taking place in her life.

Montero's characterization in The Summer the Whales Sang is uneven. Vivi is portrayed quite well as a maturing teenager torn between her parents. Yet readers may not feel emotionally involved with her and care about what becomes of her family. Both the archaeological workers and the local Newfoundlanders are depicted stereotypically. The archaeological workers, most of whom are not Newfoundlanders, are viewed as interesting people pursuing a romantic but grimy lifestyle. The local Newfoundland people, however, are unfairly presented as being either juvenile delinquents from broken homes, or crazy.

The setting of The Summer the Whales Sang is distinctive. Montero is very informative in her descriptions of the Basque whaling station under excavation at Red Bay. She gives thanks to Jim Tuck, an archaeologist at Memorial University, and to Parks Canada for authenticating the book. Montero uses the Basque ancestry of Vivi's father to include a lot of information about the homeland and customs of Basque people. This is certainly an informative book for the teenage reader. The story,

however, is rather dull and may not hold the reader's attention through to the end.

Dear Bruce Springsteen (Delacorte, 1987) by Kevin Major is a departure from the author's previous works. In this problem novel, Major uses neither the Newfoundland setting nor dialect. His main character, Terry Blanchard, could live in many small towns in North America. Terry, fourteen years old, is having difficulty coping with his parents' separation, communicating with girls, and finding his own place in the world. Lacking someone to talk to about his feelings, Terry begins to write to rock star Bruce Springsteen about his life. Through his letters, the reader learns about Terry's problems and his dreams.

Using Terry's letter writing as a literary device, Major gradually makes the reader a trusted confidante of Terry. Once Terry's life begins to sort itself out and Terry's relationship with his father begins to improve, the length and number of the letters decline. Major does an excellent job of allowing his main character to speak for himself, revealing what is important in his life and how his experiences make him feel. The language of the letters is never that of an adult but is the language of a fourteen year old boy. The last letter is an unfortunate exception. It begins:

> It's been a long time since I wrote you. I've thought about it a lot, and I think maybe I'll make this the last one. When I started all this I really needed someone I could talk to. (Lucky you,

> right?) Now I'm going to give you a break and shut up. The past few months have been a bit crazy. The letters that I wrote to you are the one thing that tied it all together. (p. 133)

While such comments could be interpreted as representing Terry's understanding of himself and his experiences, the final comment, in particular, does not sound like the character the reader has come to know in the course of the novel.

The absence of a strong Newfoundland setting is seen by Egoff and Saltman (1990) as detrimental, for without it they view Dear Bruce Springsteen as "...little more than another problem novel". (p. 75) While it may be just that, Dear Bruce Springsteen provides teenage readers with a character who could easily be their friend.

The main character of Helen Fogwill Porter's novel, January, February, June or July (Breakwater, 1988), winner of the 1989 Canadian Library Association Young Adult Book Award, could be the friend of many of its readers. This is the poignant story of Heather Novak who is at odds with the world. The relationships in Heather's life are not what she would like them to be. Her sisters and mother are preoccupied with their own lives, her American father is absent, and the boyfriend she thought she had is gone to seek employment outside of the province before her unwanted pregnancy is discovered. Heather feels as if she is facing the world on her own. The decision to end her pregnancy

without any family support, leads Heather to discover that her family members do indeed care a great deal about her.

January, February, June or July, with its strong Newfoundland flavour in setting and dialect, is described by one reviewer as "... an accurate and revealing portrait of a Newfoundland family in crisis." (Milburn, 1990, p. 6) The reader is drawn into Heather's family and exposed to its nuances both positive and negative. The relationships between the characters, mainly all female, are at times jarring to the readers's sensibilities, for the values that the characters hold and which govern their actions may not be accepted or understood by the reader. Brett (1992) describes January, February, June or July as "... the 'inside story' of one family's struggle to survive." (p. 55) This is an apt description from Heather's point of view prior to her abortion. While the description of the events after the abortion is short, the reader can easily see that Heather is not as alone or as distant from her family as she thought. Heather learns that love is more than an outward show of affection. With such a thought provoking and positive ending, it is unfortunate that the language, the graphic details of sexual encounters and medical procedures, and the subject matter make January, February, June or July a novel for mature audiences only.

Ask Me No Questions (Prentice-Hall, 1990) by Linda Phillips, Peter Ringrose, and Michael Winter is the story of

Leslie Tunney, a fifteen year old girl whose father has sexually abused her over a number of years. The abuse began when Leslie was three and ended, at her insistence, when she was thirteen. The novel begins with the Tunney family newly moved to St. John's from Corner Brook. Leslie, now fifteen and having difficulty dealing with her feelings about what has happened to her, narrates her own story. She has not told anyone about her father's actions but the discovery that her father has been abusing her younger sister, Susan, leads Leslie to decide something must be done. Her reluctance to take action is finally overcome after Susan attempts suicide. Ask Me No Questions goes beyond Leslie's disclosure to tell about the legal process which begins with the disclosure, and the counselling that Leslie receives to help with her own feelings of guilt and shame.

Ask Me No Questions is a pensive novel that neither sensationalizes its subject nor goes into graphic detail. The emphasis is on the emotional effect of the abuse on Leslie and how her disclosure affects the course of her family's life. As one reviewer comments:

> The novel conveys an empathy for all the family members, insight into the emotional consequences of abuse for the victim, and an authentic representation of the legal action and helping structures available to adolescent abuse victims. (McKnight, 1991, p. 109)

The character of Leslie is well depicted. She is portrayed as a thoughtful, shy girl who does well in school. The abuse she has suffered shadows her. As Leslie tells it:

> I thought about the house then, and Susan, and what might be bothering her. It seemed as long as my mind was occupied with the present situation, I was fine. ... I wondered what was making Susan so upset. I had enough on my mind to block out, without her in there too. (p. 58)

Leslie is very aware of the two sides of her character -- the public and the private -- and she is afraid that others will see her private shame. Her relationship with Martina Bungay and Martina's family show Leslie what a family could be. Mrs. Bungay, Martina, and Ann Randolph all provide Leslie with the emotional support that she needs.

Ask Me No Questions has an emotional depth that is often lacking in problem novels. The writers have done a very good job in conveying how Leslie feels but the lengthy descriptions of the legal process and the available help lessen the literary quality of the novel. Nevertheless, Ask Me No Questions does address with empathy an important social issue which is of personal interest and concern to many teenagers.

Physical abuse and a teenager's determination to end it is the theme of Escape! (Jesperson, 1989), Michael J. McCarthy's novel for older readers. The quiet life which fifteen year old Chuck and his widowed mother live is swiftly changed by his mother's remarriage. Cliff, Chuck's stepfather, seems at first to be a model citizen and husband. Appearances are quickly altered when Cliff frequently becomes intoxicated and is physically and verbally abusive toward Chuck and his mother. Chuck's

mother becomes mentally debilitated from the abuse she receives and the guilt she feels for Chuck, and is committed to a nursing home. Chuck decides he must escape. A golden opportunity presents itself when he is chosen to go on a school exchange trip to Mount Pearl, Newfoundland. With the aid of his host, Jodi Maloney and her Aunt Jennie, Chuck is able to assume a new life in Newfoundland. During his stay in Newfoundland, Chuck helps uncover a robbery ring in the supermarket where he works, leaving the owner, Mr. Smith, indebted to him. In return, Mr. Smith uses his connections to alert the RCMP in Ontario to Cliff's possible underworld connection. Eventually, Chuck and his mother, who recovers once Cliff is removed from her life, are reunited.

Escape! is a fast paced problem novel that never lets the reader's attention sway. The plot proceeds in a systematic way that is often predictable and based on coincidence. For example, Mr. Smith, the supermarket owner, has a RCMP friend in Ontario who immediately has Cliff tailed for illegal activities. While there is drama, mystery and suspense in Escape!, there is also romance as Chuck "falls madly in love" with Jodi the moment he sees her. (p. 24)

Characterization could have been an important element in Escape! with Chuck's emotional turmoil being explored. McCarthy, however, examines the motivation and behaviour of his characters only in a superficial way. Chuck's mother is

a stereotypical battered wife who does not leave her abusive husband because she has signed over her house to him and she suspects that he has underworld connections. Jodi is little more than a very attractive girl with a big heart, and Mr. Smith is aptly described by his name. Even the character development of Chuck is minimal. He either reacts immediately with little thought to his circumstances, or is easily swayed by the advice of Aunt Jennie.

Some teenage readers will become involved with Chuck and his problems. While some of these readers may unfortunately be able to identify with the book's theme, few will find in this novel much help in dealing with situations similar to Chuck's.

Another important social and medical issue possibly of interest and concern to teenagers, is the subject of Janice Stuckless's A Dream Come True (Jesperson, 1990). This is the story of two teenagers, Katie and Darryl, who fall in love only to discover that Darryl is dying of AIDS. The story begins with Katie, a fifteen year old who wears two hearing aids, is friendless and is overprotected by her parents. Her hearing disability has made Katie very self-conscious and introverted. It is not until Darryl, the high school basketball star, notices her and starts dating her that Katie comes out of her shell. Within months, the relationship has grown serious only to be seemingly thwarted by the diagnosis of Darryl's illness. Nevertheless, true

love reigns supreme and Katie decides she will stand by him because of all Darryl has done for her self-confidence.

Written by a teenager, A Dream Come True is a sentimental and unconvincing story of teenage romance. Neither reclusive Katie with her bouts of self pity nor Darryl who is modest about his success on the basketball court engender any sympathy from readers. The story is slow moving and often discusses at length what Katie plans to wear on her dates with Darryl. The diagnosis of AIDS is totally unexpected. Readers will no doubt wonder if Stuckless is capitalizing on the topical in her choice of AIDS. There is little discussion of the course of the disease, only that Darryl got it from being an intravenous drug user, and is now dying. His fate is quickly and unquestioningly accepted by all the characters, and the story ends melodramatically with the two starstruck teenagers being "promised" to each other for what ever time Darryl has left.

Mystery stories are a popular type of realistic fiction. Teenage readers, like both their younger and adult counterparts, enjoy the suspense, danger, intrigue and problem-solving of a well written mystery novel. As previously mentioned, however, many mystery novels are not well written but are constructed around a formula of predictable plots, stiff dialogue and flat characters. In the two mystery novels which are part of Newfoundland

children's literature, the flaws of poorly written mysteries are clearly evident.

The Treasure of Kelly's Island (Harry Cuff Publications, 1983) by Michael J. McCarthy is the story of two boys -- Kent, a boy from Toronto, and Mac, an orphan living near Topsail Beach, Nfld. -- who set out to find pirate's treasure on Kelly's Island. The boys are aided in their search by Big John Harding, an elderly fisherman, and his Newfoundland dog, Newfie. While searching the island where the pirate Black Jack Kelly supposedly buried the gold, the boys encounter drug dealers who imprison them aboard their yacht, planning to kill them later. The Newfoundland dog helps the boys escape. Later, the boys find a treasure map hidden inside a Bible that was in the house Kent's family had rented for the summer.

The plot of The Treasure of Kelly's Island is straightforward and predictable. Characterization is limited. Kent's parents, for example, are trusting souls in the background, and Big John is an old fisherman living alone with a dog and a pipe. Little is revealed about the motivation and feelin of any of the characters. The story is overwritten and in need of tighter editing. One sentence, for example, begins: "When we got to the fishing stage..." and the following sentence starts: "When we entered the fishing stage...". (p. 8) Thematic development is slight. This is just another story of looking for pirate

treasure with the treasure hunters meeting up with some bad guys who slow down their search but all works out in the end.

The second mystery for older readers is Judy Gibson's The Secret of Devil's Cleft (Jesperson, 1987). In this novel, the main character is a teenage girl named Mary Nutwhistle who lives on the Battery near the mouth of St. John's harbour. Something about a particular vessel arouses the curiosity of Mary and her friends. When they discover a mysterious piece of string in a cleft in the cliff, they correctly surmise that something bad is going to happen. Coincidently, a friend of Mary's family arrives from Northern Ireland expressing negative views about the British and the Prince and Princess of Wales who are about to visit St. John's. Mary decides to appeal for help to her teacher whose husband is an investigator with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. The teacher's husband helps out and they uncover a planned insurrection timed to coincide with the visit of the royal couple.

The Secret of Devil's Cleft is an overwritten novel with a contrived plot. Mary and her friends just happen to stumble on clues, and to be pursued by strange sailors. Most unbelievable of all is the fact that a Constabulary investigator would be interested in the writings of a school child in his wife's class. As an aside, when she gets to meet the royal couple, Mary tells Prince Charles about the

protest by her neighbours against the outer ring road. As with most formula written mysteries, character development in The Secret of Devil's Cleft is non-existent. Judicious editing might have solved some of the problems evident in this novel, but then again, it might not have.

Outdoor adventure and survival stories are an integral part of realistic fiction. The best of these subgenres will go

> ...Beyond the recording and ordering of the minutiae that provide a sense of reality to create in the reader a genuine emotional response to what is portrayed. (Egoff and Saltman, 1990, p.20)

Furthermore, Egoff and Saltman (1990) write:

> The Canadian landscape provides an impetus for plot, a strong sense of regionalism, a threat of physical danger, and opportunities for acts of heroism, intrepidness, and selflessness. (p. 22)

In Newfoundland children's literature, this statement about the role of the Canadian landscape is perhaps even more valid. Three stories which are part of the subgenres of outdoor adventure and survival stories, and which exemplify Egoff's and Saltman's statement are Storm Dog of Newfoundland (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), Stormswept (The Ryerson Press, 1950), and The Black Joke (Little, Brown, 1962).

In Anthony Fon Eisen's Storm Dog of Newfoundland, the Newfoundland dog and his young master, Alan, are indeed heroes in the romantic tradition. Alan is aboard his father's schooner, the "Bonny Ann", when she runs headlong

in the fog into a smaller fishing boat. Only the skipper of the small boat survives and Alan attempts to help him out. Although his efforts are rebuffed, Alan meets and falls for the skipper's daughter, Martha. Sadly before they have much of a chance to get acquainted, Martha and her family leave for Labrador with the conniving Captain Brady, and Alan goes in the same direction aboard his father's schooner. On his journey, Alan has to take an injured friend, Jim, a Montagnais Indian, back to his village. The two become shipwrecked along with Storm, the Newfoundland dog, on an iceberg. Storm's warmth and later his swimming prowess are key to Alan's and Jim's rescue. Upon arriving in Jim's village, Alan discovers that Martha and her family are nearby. With the company of Martha's younger siblings, Alan and Martha enjoy a few idyllic days together and find a treasure of ambergris which will aid Martha's family financially. Unfortunately, Brady and Martha's ne'er-do-well father have other ideas for the money which the ambergris will bring. Martha takes the treasure and her brother and sister and flees in the path of a storm. A daring and dramatic rescue at sea by Alan and Storm follows, with the loss of Storm's life to save his master.

Storm Dog of Newfoundland is a very dramatic, and romantic adventure. The action never lags as the reader is swept along with the story. Fon Eisen's descriptions heighten the drama. For example:

> The wind itself held him there. It pinned him against the rock like a giant hand, while the wave-tops came leaping up over the ledge, clutching fingers of the sea, furious to seize and drag him back. And every one the wind tore apart and flung wide scattering foam, dazzling to see by the endless lightning. (p. 227)

The setting aboard ship and on the Labrador coast are intrinsic to the action of the story. Alan and Storm are depicted as true heroes. The young man is shown as concerned deeply for his friends, and courageous in his action. The dog is fearless and devoted to his master's slightest needs. Martha is a spirited girl, independent yet dependent upon the support of a man. While the descriptive language does create the atmosphere, it does have its melodramatic moments. For example:

> Alan flung himself down beside Martha in the dark, to do all that a mortal could do, to give artificial respiration, to breathe his own very life into her if he could. She could not, could not die. God in His great mercy would not let her die. Alan told himself desperately. Strength and courage had done all that it could do. Now her life hung in the balance, upon the will of Heaven. (p.232)

That aside, Storm Dog of Newfoundland is a classic adventure story with strong heroes and a dramatic setting on the Labrador coast.

Similar in style to Storm Dog of Newfoundland is Stanley C. Fuller's Stormswept, also an adventure story with a teenage hero. The untimely death of John Minton, Sr. leaves his family in a desperate economic situation. His son, John Minton, Jr., decides to take his father's schooner

fishing to ensure his family's survival. Facing near impossible odds, but with the aid of his mother's faith and the earthly help of Uncle Jerry Brown, John Jr. succeeds in getting his family out of debt and established in a comfortable fashion. Along the way to his success, John engages in daring races through life threatening ice floes, has a mysterious passenger aboard ship, and performs a miraculous rescue at sea.

Stormswept, however, does not have the same credibility for the reader as does Storm Dog of Newfoundland. No matter how much brawn John Jr. displays, it is difficult to believe that he could succeed at clearing his family's debt and securing their future -- a task his father, a respected skipper, had not achieved in thirty years at sea. The arrival of the mysterious passenger who turns out to be a fugitive, is also too good to be true. The theme of becoming a man is a noble one but John Jr.'s comment, "'Goodbye, Peter Pan! I'm awfully sorry you never became a man.'"(p. 64), reduces its importance. Drawing its existence from the economic realities of a life at sea and its drama from that same source, the story is an entertaining one, providing the reader with a lot of information about the schooner fishery and a Newfoundland of an earlier time.

Farley Mowat's The Black Joke is also a story about the survival of one's livelihood. The "Black Joke" is a

schooner with a world wide reputation for speed. Unfortunately for her owner, Jonathan Spence, the schooner's reputation has come to the attention of rum runners. Simon Barnes, the local merchant, attempts to buy the schooner for the rum runners. Spencer refuses even though he faces hard financial times. Barnes quickly hatches a scheme to trap Spence and gain control of the "Black Joke". While on a voyage for Barnes to St. Pierre, the "Black Joke" is impounded by the French authorities and Spence is jailed. Spence's sons escape and seek out the help of Pierre Roulett, a Miquelon fisherman and longtime friend of Spence. Together they manage to rescue the schooner and return her to Spence.

The Black Joke is a rollicking adventure filled with excitement and drama. Mowat firmly and quickly establishes the setting to ground his story in reality. The reader knows as well as Jonathan Spence does that the schooner is his family's only means of survival, a survival dependent upon a life on the water. The villains he creates in Simon Barnes and the rumrunners are satisfactory and his heroes, particularly the Spence boys, are believable and applaudable. The Black Joke is a well written, credible adventure that should capture the imaginations of many young readers.

Historical fiction should bring a realism to the past for the reader. The intrinsic value of well written

historical fiction for children, according to Huck (3rd ed., 1979) is to help develop in young minds an awareness of people living in the past. (p. 466) As discussed in the previous chapter, there are four additional criteria to be considered in the evaluation of historical fiction. These are: the problem of defining what constitutes the historical past, the determination of which version of history is to be presented, the creation of characters and themes that are representative of universal values unbounded by time but adequately reflecting the values and the spirit of the times, and the development of a good story that highlights the events of history without distorting it.

Works of Newfoundland children's historical fiction for older readers date back to 1957 with the publication of The Dangerous Cove (Copp Clark) by John F. Hayes. The winner of the 1959 Book of the Year Award from the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians, The Dangerous Cove is an exciting story set in 1676 in the small fictional Newfoundland community of Treshaven's Cove. The Devonshire fishing admirals have arrived for another fishing season. This time they have orders from King Charles II to evict the settlers. In Treshaven's Cove, two teenage boys, Peter Thistle from the community and Tom Thorbourn, a survivor of a shipwreck, help the community to defend themselves successfully against the fishing admirals. While the residents struggle to cling to their property throughout the

long summer, the boys learn that an old pirate vessel, the "Berbice", anchored in the harbour, has clues to pirate treasure. The fishing admiral who has come to Treshaven's Cove also knows of the connection between the "Berbice" and the pirates' treasure. The ensuing struggle is the source of fast paced excitement for the reader.

Egoff (1967) commends The Dangerous Cove for having:

> ...a theme of interest, the selection from history of such characters and facts as will carry a story forward without letting it bog down, sound research, able characterization, and passable writing. (p. 92)

Later, however, Egoff and Saltman characterize Hayes' writing as having impeccable historicity but as being bland because Hayes never takes sides. (1990, p. 108) The Dangerous Cove does have a theme worthy of exploring with young readers and Hayes recounts Newfoundland history as it applies to the story without overwhelming the story. Prowse's A History of Newfoundland is cited by Hayes as the source of his factual material.

The main characters of The Dangerous Cove are clearly defined even if they are sometimes stereotypical in their behaviour. Grobber, the Devonshire fishing captain who has taken over Treshaven's Cove, is as despicable as the reader might expect. John Thistle, Peter's father and the unspoken leader of the community, is brave and fearless. Hayes, however, comes down clearly on the side of the community and the boys as they fight against the fishing admirals and

capture the pirate treasure. The story and its language are not bland. That can be seen, for example, in this sentence:

> In the narrow channel between the sheer walls of Venture Rock and the shore of the mainland, the sea piled in furious ridges, wickedly swirling as it sucked back and forth with treacherous currents. (p. 26)

The overall result is a historical adventure that captures the reader's interest right to the end of the story.

In the early seventies, two historical novels, Copper Sunrise (Scholastic, 1972) and Riverrun (Clarke, Irwin, 1973), centering on the Beothuks were published. Copper Sunrise by Bryan Buchan is the story of the tragic friendship between Jamie, the middle son of Scottish settlers, and Tethani, a Beothuk boy. The time is early in the permanent settlement of the Newfoundland coast and, to many of the settlers, the Beothuks are a thieving nuisance. To eliminate any problems that they may have with the Beothuks, some of the settlers decide to hunt the natives down. Young Jamie, however, discovers another side to the natives. He meets Tethani while trouting one day and their friendship rapidly develops. Jamie visits the Indian encampment, meets Tethani's family, and learns the Indian language and their customs. He never tells his family about his new friends. Robert, Jamie's older brother, becomes involved in the hunt, and it is after shooting a Beothuk, a member of Tethani's family, that the brothers come face to face. While Robert suffers from his actions, other hunters

do not. Eventually, all of the Beothuks living near Jamie's village are killed, including Tethani. Jamie takes it upon himself to carry out his friend's burial rites as he had seen Tethani do, so that Tethani may join his family in the afterlife.

Copper Sunrise is a deeply moving tale of true friendship told from the point of view of young Jamie. To each other, Jamie and Tethani are just boys who enjoy fishing and the outdoors. Their characters are well portrayed. Jamie is driven upstream by his curiosity about the natives. He had heard many tales about the Beothuks. What he discovered was completely different. He discovered that:

> [Tethani] was no giant, murdering cannibal; I had met no sudden, horrible death. I had seen only a tall, black-haired boy, with coppery skin and a smile that showed the space between his teeth -- a boy who caught big fish with his hands and played music that haunted me for hours afterward. (p.25)

Jamie and Robert represent the opposite points of view about the Beothuks. Robert, however, does retain some of his boyhood innocence which surfaces as revulsion over his killing of a Beothuk. The Beothuks are portrayed as a gentle people trying to maintain their existence just as the settlers are doing.

The significance of the title makes the tragedy of the novel more intense. The Beothuks believed that copper was the most beautiful colour. After a death, the family would wait for two messengers, a copper sunrise and the appearance

of a bird or sea animal just before or after the sunrise, to tell them that the spirit of their departed loved one was safe. The safety of the loved one was partly based on the burial rites being correctly and completely carried out. When the white hunters corral eighty Beothuks on the edge of a cliff and force them to their deaths in the waters below, the reader is acutely aware of the horror these people must have felt. Buchan's lack of graphic detail maintains the dignity of these Beothuks, just as Jamie's actions for Tethani after his death maintains Tethani's.

Riverrun by Peter Such is not as successful a novel as is Copper Sunrise. Such tells the story of the last days of the Beothuks' existence from three different perspectives. First, Nonosabasut, a hunter, is the main character and the focus of his story is the deterioration of the Beothuks' way of life. Women will help them hunt this year, something which never happened in his father's time. The white men come and take Nonosabasut's wife, Demasduit, leaving him with a sick child. Eventually Nonosabasut is killed by the white men while trying to rescue Demasduit. After Nonosabasut's death and her escape from the white men, Demasduit's story of her life both with the white men and after her return is told. Finally, Shawnadithit becomes the central figure in the story. Her life in captivity and the last years of her people are then the focus of the story.

Riverrun, a book for mature readers, is somewhat difficult book to read. The transitions from one character's perspective to another's are not always smooth. Such writes as he believes the Beothuks would have spoken in English. His use of this style of language is not always successful and this may increase the reader's difficulty of the story. There are times, however, when Such conveys a haunting tone in this novel. Better editing, therefore, may have solved the problem, resulting in a more poignantly told story of the Beothuks' demise.

First Spring on the Grand Banks (James Lorimer, 1978) by Bill Freeman, is a classic tale of the Newfoundland fishermen struggling to survive against all odds. Set in the 1870's, two children, John and Meg Bains, along with Captain Canso and his wife Peg "steal" away from Nova Scotia to the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in the "Newfoundlander", the banking schooner that Canso's late father, Captain Sheen, owned. Canso's father was lost at sea attempting to earn enough money to pay off Mr. Hunter, the Nova Scotia merchant who laid claim to the banking schooner on Captain Sheen's death. Canso seeks help from his father's long time friend, Captain Donovan, to pay off his father's debts and retain ownership of the "Newfoundlander".

The story is filled with hardship other than Canso's. Donovan lives in the community of Tower Rock on the Burin Peninsula of Newfoundland. It is a community that lost all

but one of its men to the same fishing tragedy that took Captain Sheen. The sole survivor was Jack Adams who returned but disturbed mentally. In helping themselves, Canso, John, Meg and Peg also help the community to prepare for the long hard winter ahead and to regain their dignity.

Intrigue and suspense pervade the story as allusion is made through the comments of Jack Adams that there was something suspicious about the loss of Hunter's schooner with Captain Sheen and the men of Tower Rock aboard. Readers will also wonder whether or not John, Meg and the residents of Tower Rock will succeed at the inshore fishery, thereby providing for themselves and freeing Captain Canso, jailed for being in debt to the merchants.

First Spring on the Grand Banks is filled with information about the Grand Banks fishery and the inshore fishery of the 1870s. Freeman has also included some photographs of the period, diagrams of the sails of a banking schooner, and a glossary of terms which help the reader's understanding of the story.

The characterization is satisfactory, even if it is rather flat at times. The heroes and the villains behave as they should. The motivation for all of the characters' actions is readily understandable. Overall, the reader is treated to an interesting story about a different time in Newfoundland's history but a time not without its parallels to the present fishery crisis.

Set in the 1690's, Quest of the Golden Gannet (Breakwater, 1979) by Dorothy P. Barnhouse, is the story of Tad Evans, a young lad who has shipped out from England with his great uncle Skipper Jabez Evans aboard a Yankee trader. Aboard ship Tad becomes friends with the captain's daughter, Angel, a girl around his own age. While Angel is caring for a sick crew member, the pair learn of a plot by two of the crew to hijack the ship to collect a lost treasure in Newfoundland, and then to sail to the pirate haven of Tortuga. Just in time, Tad and Angel help prevent the attempt. Finding his father is one of Tad's hopes for this trip. His father was last reported in St. John's, Newfoundland at the time of D'Iberville's raid on the town during King William's War. As they arrive off the Newfoundland coast, the war ends and they discover that Tad's father, who has been held captive on St. Pierre, has been released.

Quest of the Golden Gannet received the Beaver Award for Juvenile Fiction. Overall, it is an entertaining story which would have been significantly better if more care had been given to the editing. The plot is a straightforward one set against a historical setting around which the story revolves. More exploration of the behaviour and motivation of the characters would have improved the quality of the tale.

A different historical period is covered in Tom Moore's Tom Cods, Kids and Confederation (Jesperson, 1979). Set just days before the vote on Confederation with Canada held in 1948, this short novel examines the Confederation debate through the eyes of a group of teenage friends. Just as their parents are not all of the same opinion on the Confederation question, neither are these teenagers. The issue threatens to divide the friends until the dissenter realizes that he cannot let Confederation come between him and his friends.

Told in the first person as the reminiscence of an older man, Moore's descriptions are clear, drawing the reader into Fleet's world as he remembers it. For example, Fleet's description of his father reads as follows:

> Father sat at the other end of the table and lit his pipe. He stared straight ahead of him and I knew that he was daydreaming about the confederation question and considering his own part in that question. He often daydreamed like this, and if you spoke to him either didn't hear you or came back to reality like a stranger from some far away place. As he sat, it was almost as if he could see the fighting and the arguing; the desperation of people fighting to hold on to their past and a group of equally determined men eager to bring in changes. So he sat and dreamed in our kitchen that summer evening. (p. 27)

The characterization, particularly that of Fleet and his father, is well done. The reader is well aware of what motivates their actions. Joey Smallwood plays an important role, and rightly so, in the conversation. Fleet's reaction to seeing Smallwood in person is quite telling. From having

listened to Smallwood on the radio, Fleet expected him to be a big strong man. When Smallwood walked from the boat and Fleet saw that he was a small, wiry man who was a bit sea sick, Fleet's expectations were "rudely shattered". (p. 34) It is perhaps unfortunate that Moore did not choose to use dialect in his conversations. Nevertheless, Tom Cods, Kids and Confederation depicts well an important period in Newfoundland's history.

The illumination, and often the intensification, of reality can be achieved in well written fantasy. (Egoff and Saltman, 1990, p. 229) It is the grounding of the fantastical events of a story in the often stark reality of life that makes fantasy an influential and credible experience for the reader. Kevin Major's fifth novel, Blood Red Ochre (Delacorte, 1989) is a powerful combination of realistic and historical fiction, and fantasy that will leave the reader pondering about the responsibilities of modern man for his ancestors' deeds.

Blood Red Ochre is the contemporary story of David, a fifteen year old with the problems of school work, his family relationship, his identity and the opposite sex; and the historical story of Dauoodaset, a fifteen year old Beothuk faced with the life threatening situation of finding food for his starving family on the verge of extinction. A dark mysterious girl named Nancy who has just arrived in David's hometown, links the two stories. The name of Nancy

foreshadows who the girl turns out to be, for Nancy is the name given to Shawnadithit, the last of the Beothuks, by her white captors. As Nancy is the female interest of David in the present, Shawnadithit is the intended bride of Dauoodaset in the past. The stories are told in alternating chapters between David's present and Dauoodaset's present, culminating with Nancy telling the penultimate chapter, as all three -- David, Dauoodaset, and Nancy -- meet on Red Ochre Island where time is suspended.

In telling the stories of David, Dauoodaset, and Nancy, Major uses two different writing styles. For David, Major writes in the familiar third person found so frequently in contemporary writing. For Dauoodaset and Nancy, Major uses the first person point of view and he writes in a formal style of English which at times becomes almost poetic. This technique serves to separate the two stories in the reader's mind. As well, it adds to the credibility of the characters within their own story. David is very much a contemporary teenager with contemporary problems. Dauoodaset is all the more believable as he relates in the first person his compelling account of his people's decline. The use of "I" intensifies the reader's emotions when it is these same characters that are killed at the hands of the white men.

Responsibility is the theme of Blood Red Ochre. It is a theme that works on several different levels. Through his school work, David is taking some responsibility in

discovering his own identity. Dauoodaset has undertaken a more serious responsibility of providing food for his dying people. But it is Nancy/Shawnadithit who verbalizes the deepest question of responsibility when she shouts at David:

> 'Now you know the fear your ancestors drove in to the hearts of my people! Now you suffer as they suffered. It was the first of your father's family who came to this land.' (p. 130)

The guilt that David experiences at the end of the novel is not a guilt localized to the people of Newfoundland. This guilt has become universal in the complex relationship between the descendants of the native peoples and the white settlers, wherever there has been immigration and displacement of aboriginal people. As one reviewer writes of Blood Red Ochre, "this novel is a troubling one, carefully crafted to prevent an easy dismissal of the issues it presents." (Ellis, The Horn Book Magazine, LXV, no. 5, 1989, p. 660)

Science fiction writing is a branch of fantasy that encourages readers to speculate about mankind's future. A well written science fiction story will make readers see their own world in a new perspective. (Huck, 3rd ed., 1979, p. 296) Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the science fiction writing of Newfoundland's children's literature will achieve Huck's expectations.

John H. C. Pippy's Beware the Fugitora (Breakwater, 1989) is the story of two boys who find an alien time travel device, a fugitora. The boys use the device to travel to

the past where they meet Beothuck Indians. The boys' travel to the past gets them into a life threatening predicament. The alien owners of the fugitora save the boys, return the boys to their own time, and scold them for using something about which they know nothing.

The characterization in Beware the Fugitora is poor and stereotypical. The Beothuks are depicted as blood thirsty savages who are planning to sacrifice the boys. The aliens who help rescue the boys are fierce but kind. The boys are flat characters who never emerge as believable. This is a science fiction adventure that is best forgotten.

Reena and the Riser (Groundwood, 1989) by Juanita J. Smith is a fast paced, action adventure set in some future time where space travel is common. Captain Nechay Senchens of the pirate vessel "Reena's Scavenger" and his crew decide to hijack a government freighter carrying a cargo of precious gems. This decision leads them into a trap set by the evil Governor Kamkillan. The gems contain a bugging device allowing the technologically advanced government ship, the "Riser", to capture the pirate vessel. Senchens is forced to decide whether to sacrifice himself and let his crew go free or attempt to escape.

Smith, only thirteen when she wrote Reena and the Riser, tells an entertaining story. This novel, however, is little more than a fast-moving adventure story with a futuristic setting. The world of Nechay Senchens does have

some interesting technological developments, for example, holograms, and long range galactic tracking devices. Except for the everyday acceptance of the characters of intergalactic space travel and life on other planets, there is little to distinguish Senchens' world from present day. Smith does attempt to explore the humanity of her characters, all of whom are adults. The author's efforts are somewhat successful in the scene where Cameron Jotekke, the "Reena"'s second in command, is tortured before Senchens, and in the scenes from the past of Senchens' love interest, Razelle. The character descriptions focus primarily on the characters' physical characteristics not upon complex adult emotions. Reena and the Riser, however, should appeal to teenage readers interested in an action story set in a future time -- a story that requires little thought about the impact of scientific change on their present society.

The Survival Squad (Breakwater, 1990) by teenager Floyd Priddle, does attempt to engage readers in exploring the possibilities of future life on Earth. Set immediately after a nuclear war, the story follows four friends as they attempt to survive. The group luckily finds shelter in a fall-out shelter under a store where they manage to live for some time. Eventually they venture outside to see what has become of their world. Civilization, as they knew it, has disappeared. In order to survive, the teenagers are forced

to become warriors defending themselves and what they do have in the fall-out shelter.

Survival after a nuclear holocaust is both an intriguing and horrifying idea. A novel exploring such a theme has a lot of potential for the examination of human reactions and relationships. The characters in The Survival Squad demonstrate little depth. The females are stereotyped as weak and dependent. The males become killing machines with little hesitation or thought for their actions. There are many unanswered questions in this novel, as one would expect given the speculative nature of the subject. Today's teenagers do possess a certain level of knowledge about the effects of nuclear war; this knowledge is left unacknowledged. For example, there is no mention of anyone getting radiation sickness. The physical injuries reported could happen without a nuclear holocaust. The potential for a good story is present and judicious editing might have uncovered it. The Survival Squad, however, is unevenly written, with rough transitions, and a melodramatic ending.

Gell Mackey's Raggets! (Jesperson, 1990) is the unbelievable story of twelve year old Andrew helping a race of beings who live far beneath the earth's surface defeat a pulp and paper company that is polluting the environment. Andrew's adventures are not only confined to helping the "Groundies" but also he must fight off foul smelling shrew like creatures called raggets, and enlist the aid of a

variety of bizarre creatures who live below the earth's crust.

The plot of Raggets! is difficult to follow, with many secondary events distracting the reader's attention. For example, just as Andrew and Elvis, the groundie whose world is being polluted, are about to leave for Elvis's homeland, Andrew and Elvis get into a discussion of the nude pictures of girls covering the walls of Andrew's clubhouse. (p. 9) Any thematic development is difficult to find in the convoluted plot.

Characterization is almost non-existent. Readers are expected to feel sympathy for Andrew who lost his father in a car accident on Andrew's birthday and who lost his dog to a ragget. Mackey fails to engender any sympathy for Andrew, who displays obnoxious behaviour and attitudes from the very beginning of the novel. For example, it is difficult to empathize with a character described as:

> Halfway through the last shake, Andrew realized that he had forgotten to lift the seat -- "Next time," he reminded himself. Between the burping and the breaking of wind, he decided to skip going back to bed, and take advantage of the screw up in time. He headed straight for the kitchen. "Give Mom's vocal cords a break," he thought. (p. 2)

Mackey does make an attempt at creating a believable but technologically advanced world for the groundies. He is not successful. It is difficult to imagine, for example, a technologically advanced society buying into three major manufacturers of video cassette recorders so that they can

record the activities of humans at all times except when the electricity fails. Raggets! is not a credible or an interesting science fiction adventure.

Poetry provides its readers with the opportunity to see and feel the familiar in new and fresh ways. Unfortunately, Newfoundland poetry written especially for teenage readers is limited to Tammey Palmer's You're the Bumble in My Bee (Jesperson, 1986). Teenage readers will readily identify with the poetry in this collection. Written by a teenager, these poems were "...inspired by the beauty and awe of nature, the actions and feelings of others, even moments created in [Palmer's] imagination." ([i])

While the poems tend to be romantic and idealistic at times, their language is sensitive and engaging. Many readers will understand the feelings behind such sentiments as:

> Night is coming quickly,
> leaving behind the light
> and memories of today.
> And while I don't agree,
> there's nothing I can do
> or say.
> (from "The End of a Day", p. 63)

or:

> I've looked everywhere but they're nowhere in sight
> Oh, how could I forget! I ate them last night.
> No wonder this morning I turned so pale
> When I looked at the bathroom scale.
> (from "The Chips, the Drink, and the Bar", p. 23)

Palmer especially paints descriptive images of the natural world. "A Picture of Tranquillity" is a fine example of a

poem about the sea and the shoreline. Not only do the words aptly describe the picture the reader sees but also the flow of the words provide the music of the tide rolling on the sand. (p. 15) Readers will find much to think about in Palmer's poetry and some may be pleasantly surprised at the nature and depth of one teenager's thought.

The majority of the Newfoundland children's literature available for older readers does attempt in some way to illuminate adolescence and the dawning of adulthood. Some of the authors of these books are more successful at achieving this goal than are others. The work of internationally recognized author Kevin Major, and of Helen Fogwill Porter are by far the most successful. Several of the novels, The Dangerous Cove, The Black Joke, Blood Red Ochre, and Copper Sunrise dramatically recreate a sense of the Newfoundland past for older readers. Newfoundland heritage and linguistic traditions are well represented. There are many worthy starting points for an exploration of Newfoundland through Newfoundland children's literature for the older reader.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

Truly excellent children's literature supports and enhances a child's perceptions of reality by acknowledging what a child knows about the world, and building upon this knowledge. Newfoundland children's literature is no exception. It, too, should enrich its readers' lives as it explores the human experience. The finest of Newfoundland children's literature may also illuminate for children who read it the understanding of the Newfoundland experience past, present and future.

An informed criticism is important to the flourishing of the arts in any society. Critical evaluation must take place if the finest books of Newfoundland children's literature are to survive and if future authors and illustrators are to be encouraged to strive to achieve similar or greater degrees of excellence. This vital criticism in any comprehensive and readily available form has been lacking. Teachers and others, however, have been bringing Newfoundland books into the classroom as increased attention has been given to both children's literature and the children's own environment and culture. Departments of Education have frequently made available to the schools, without charge, books written and/or published in

Newfoundland. Careful selection of the available Newfoundland children's literature, based upon standards of excellence in children's literature, is now more necessary than ever as the number of books being produced increases. A comprehensive selection aid for Newfoundland children's literature is imperative. A primary purpose of this study was to prepare such a selection aid drawing on the period, 1940-1990.

In the preparation of a comprehensive aid to the selection of Newfoundland books in the period, 1940-1990 a number of procedural steps were followed.

1. Definition. For the purpose of this study, Newfoundland children's literature was identified and defined by the following guidelines:

A. Books which are fictional in content. Works which are designed purely for informational purposes are excluded;

B. Books which have been published in Newfoundland. Books originally published elsewhere but for which a local publisher has purchased publishing rights from the international market are included only if they fit into category C or D below;

C. Books which have been published elsewhere but have been written by Newfoundlanders;

D. Books which have been published elsewhere, and are not written by Newfoundlanders, but have a

significant Newfoundland theme. Anthologies, even if they contained Newfoundland stories or poetry, and were omitted because the majority of them have themes broader than Newfoundland.

2. Establishing standards. An examination of material on the philosophy and criticism of children's literature published primarily since 1970 was undertaken to establish standards of excellence that may be applied to Newfoundland children's literature as to all literature for children. The critical literature revealed general agreement both on the nature of children's literature and the criteria by which it should be evaluated. For uniformity and convenience the writer chose to use the comprehensive evaluative statement recommended by Huck for the evaluation of children's literature. (3rd ed., 1979, pp. 16-17) This statement makes reference to the following areas of concern in the evaluation of children's literature: plot, setting, theme, characterization, style and format.

3. Identification of a preliminary list. Identification of the books for the study was then carried out in the following manner:

a) The catalogues of the Curriculum Materials Centre of the Faculty of Education at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Newfoundland Room at the Queen Elizabeth II Library at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the Newfoundland Public Libraries were examined to compile a

preliminary list of books. This preliminary list contained twenty titles for younger readers, fifteen titles for the middle grades, and twenty-four titles for older readers. The majority of these titles were located in the holdings of the Curriculum Materials Centre.

b) All available Newfoundland publishers' catalogues were examined to supplement the preliminary list. One new title was located, bringing the number on the preliminary list to 60 titles.

c) Some Canadian reference and bibliographic aids held by the Curriculum Materials Centre, Memorial University were examined to extend the preliminary list. The aids examined included: Children's Choices of Canadian Books(1980-1991), Volumes 1-7; Canadian Books for Young People / Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse(1988); Atlantic Book Choice. Recommended Canadian and Regional Titles for an Elementary School Library Collection(1983); Atlantic Book Choice. Recommended Canadian and Regional Titles for a Junior-Senior High School Library Collection(1984); Animal World in Canadian Books for Children and Young People / Le monde animal dans les livres de jeunesse canadiens (1983); Mystery and Adventure in Canadian Books for Children and Young People / Romans policiers et histoires d'aventures canadiens pour la jeunesse (1983); and Pictures to Share: Illustration in Canadian Children's Books / Image pour tous: Illustration de livres canadiens pour enfants (1987).

Seven titles were added to the preliminary list from these aids bringing the total number of titles to 66.

d) The Annotated Bibliography of Newfoundland Materials for School Libraries, Part I -- Print (1980) compiled by Audrey Hiscock and Linda Braine was examined to augment the preliminary list. Eleven titles were identified and added to the preliminary list. Only two of these titles could be located. Cathy Simpson's "A Select bibliography of Newfoundland children's books, 1970-1990" (1992) was examined later. Three titles were added to the list. All three were located for personal examination.

e) The preliminary list was then divided into three categories: books for younger readers, books for the middle grades, and books for older readers. These categories were decided upon based on the information ascertained from the catalogues or bibliographies in which the books were originally found. These divisions were tested later when all available material was personally examined. In the final count, there were 22 titles in the younger readers category, 18 titles in the middle grades category, and 28 titles in the older readers category.

3. Examination of the materials. Each available book was then read and examined in terms of those standards of excellence to which reference has already been made in 2 above. Their placement in the appropriate categories was verified, with some being included in all three.

4. Examination of published reviews. Reviews published in Canadian Children's Literature, CM: A Reviewing Journal of Materials for Young People, In Review, and The Horn Book Magazine were examined. These journals were selected for their scholarly nature and, in the case of the first three, because of their Canadian content. The latter was included because of the comprehensiveness of its American coverage and an apparent increasing recognition of the worth of children's books from north of the border. This has been reflected in increased coverage of Canadian titles particularly in the regular column, "News from the North".

5. Preparation of a descriptive and critical analysis. A descriptive and critical analysis of each work was prepared adhering to Huck's criteria for excellence as a part of a general discussion of particular genres. This formed the content of Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

6. Preparation of the annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliographic reference was written for each book examined. The annotation is both descriptive and critical. Each annotation is accompanied by a recommendation: highly recommended, recommended, recommended with reservations, marginal, not recommended.

The careful search for Newfoundland children's books carried out according to the procedural steps identified above resulted in a listing of 80 titles, of which 68 were

available for personal review. Of these titles, 22 were classified as books for younger readers, 18 were considered to be particularly appropriate for the middle grades, and 28 were for older readers. All of the books for younger readers were in the picture storybook format and a number were works of poetry. Of the remaining 46 books identified for the middle grades and older readers, 41.3% were realistic fiction, 28.2% were historical fiction, 10.8% were fantasies, 8.6% were science fiction, 4.3% were poetry, and 6.5% were in the picture storybook format. The works of realistic fiction could be further divided into 26.2% stories of growing up, 8.6% mysteries, and 6.5% stories of outdoor adventure and survival. There were no biographies, and few books based on traditional literature.

Conclusions

After examining and evaluating the books identified as Newfoundland children's literature from 1940 to 1990, the writer has formulated a number of conclusions regarding the content and the format of these works.

1. There is some indication that in the period under study, 1940-1990, there has been an increased emphasis upon the publication of books for children. In the 1940's, one title for children was published. The numbers increased to six titles in the 1950's and six titles in the 1960's. During the 1970's, fourteen books were published. The

number of books published in the 1980's increased significantly with a total of 51 titles.

2. Just as the numbers of children's books published has increased, so has the quality of the works improved. While the books published in the 1940's, 1950's and the early 1960's tended to be of a relatively high standard, those of the late 1960's and the 1970's were generally of a lesser quality. In the 1980's, however, the number of high quality publications increased, even though there were still some mediocre ones.

3. In the fifty years from 1940 to 1990, historical fiction and realistic fiction have been the predominant genres, accounting for over half of the books appropriate for the middle grades and for older readers.

4. Surprisingly, there have been very few books of poetry written for children. The majority of those that have been published have been produced for younger children. These have included such fine works as Down By Jim Long's Stage, Wind in my Pocket, Alley-Coosh, Bibby, and Cark, and Anqishore, Boo-Man and Clumper. The only books of poetry published for the two older groups have been Landwash Days and You're the Bumble in my Bee. This is particularly surprising in a culture where song, dance and recitation have played such an important part.

5. Books based upon traditional literature, particularly literature of the oral tradition, are sparse.

In only two works, Robert Burt's Notsomuch a Rainbow and Tom Dawe's Winter of the Black Weasel, do the authors formally acknowledge the basis of their story in traditional literature. The former comes from the oral literature of Old Perlican, Trinity Bay, and the latter is based on a Micmac legend written down in 1922. Considering the role storytelling has played in the Newfoundland culture, the absence of this type of literature is perplexing. Unfortunately, many stories, songs, and poems may be lost to younger readers who do not grow up within a strong oral tradition typical of the Newfoundland of the past.

6. There are no biographies in the Newfoundland children's literature published between 1940 and 1990. There are some works of historical fiction such as Tom Moore's Good-bye Momma and Monique Corriveau's Seasons of the Sea which are biographical in flavour but true biographies for children do not exist.

7. Considering the wide appeal of mystery and detective stories among children, there have been relatively few published in the period under study. Those that have been published are poor in quality, offering little in originality to children who read them.

8. While the number of fantasies written has been relatively low, the publication of Pam Hall's On the Edge of the Eastern Ocean and Kevin Major's Blood Red Ochre are significant milestones for this genre. Blood Red Ochre

successfully combines fantasy, historical fiction and realistic fiction. Some of the other fantasies that have been published such as Ed Kavanagh's Amanda Greenleaf series do show some promise for the future of this genre.

8. The works of science fiction found in Newfoundland children's literature are relatively few. Two of the four published during the period where written by teenagers. These books, however, do little to encourage readers to view their own world in a new way or to speculate about mankind's future.

9. While the subject matter covered in Newfoundland children's literature is quite broad, ranging from shipboard adventures to early settlement, from archaeological digs to the exploration of subterranean worlds, and from growing up to social issues such as sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy, there have been two subjects which are particularly noteworthy because of the Newfoundland context. These are the stories about the Beothuks and about Labrador.

The Beothuks, Newfoundland's aboriginal people, have been the subject of a number of fine books including Winter of the Black Weasel, Copper Sunrise, and Blood Red Ochre. The treatment of their extinction at the hands of the white man from disease and guns has been admirably handled and should provide children with much to consider with reference to the actions of their ancestors and the mistakes of history.

Labrador, for many people, is a land of mystery. It has been the subject of books for all ages, from the youngest child reader to those in high school. The best of these books include Borrowed Black, Little Snowshoe, Lukey Paul From Labrador, and Storm Dog of Newfoundland. In the latter two, a historical perspective of Labrador is created, giving children the opportunity to learn of the traditional fishery on the Labrador coast as well as introducing them to such a famous individual as Sir Wilfred Grenfell. The former two books, both by Ellen Bryan Obed, describe a different Labrador. Borrowed Black is a mythic tale of adventure and fantasy while Little Snowshoe depicts a young rabbit's search for its mother against the snowy Labrador landscape.

10. The theme of growing up is prominent in all realistic fiction for children. This is also true of Newfoundland children's literature from the 1940's to the 1990's, whether the books be for the youngest readers, those in the middle grades, or older readers. The characters deal with problems experienced by many children, including moving to a new home, death, divorce, alcoholism, unemployment, and abuse. The majority of these issues are handled credibly and with compassion.

11. Coming of age is the most common theme found in the Newfoundland children's literature for older readers. It is a theme depicted not only in realistic fiction but

also in the poetry, historical fiction, science fiction and fantasy for older readers. Particular note must be made of the success of Kevin Major's work in this area. His books have received wide acclaim and have been published in several languages.

12. The Newfoundland context plays an important role in many of the works of Newfoundland children's literature. Both the physical setting and the linguistic heritage have been emphasized by authors and illustrators.

13. A rural Newfoundland is home to the majority of the characters in Newfoundland children's literature. The landscape, whether it is rural or urban, helps to mould the characters who live in it. Michael in Holdfast, Heather in January, February, June or July, Mahala in That Fine Summer, and other characters are all products of their environments. This identification of the characters with their setting will provide a connection with their own lives for Newfoundland readers.

14. The use of dialect has been significant in the work of a number of Newfoundland children's writers. In fact, Kevin Major has been lauded for his superb depiction of Newfoundland speech. Two other writers, Tom Dawe and Al Pittman, have also used Newfoundland's linguistic heritage to their advantage.

15. The Newfoundland of the past has been dramatically recreated in novels such as The Dangerous Cove, The Black

Joke, Copper Sunrise, Good-bye Momma, Sailor's Choice, and Fanny for Change.

16. The Newfoundland context has been well represented in works for younger readers through the illustration and language of the texts. The writing of Tom Dawe, Ellen Obed, and Al Pittman, and the illustration of Shawn Steffler and Pam Hall have brought Newfoundland to life for younger readers. However, writers and illustrators must be cautioned that by simply setting their work in Newfoundland without consideration to literary or artistic excellence, they are not creating a piece of Newfoundland literature.

17. Although there has been a strong sense of place in many of the works of Newfoundland children's literature, the literature has been growing more universal in its themes. This is especially true of the books of Kevin Major but the work of Ellen Bryan Obed and Helen Fogwill Porter also have a broad appeal. In a work like Ask Me No Questions the Newfoundland setting is only incidental; the problem is universal.

18. There has been a shift in characterization during this period. In the early years and up until the 1970's, the main character tended to be male. Of the books examined from 1940 to 1990, there was a male protagonist clearly identifiable in thirty books and a female one in fifteen books. Male characters overwhelmingly predominated in the books for older readers. Females in leading roles were not

represented until 1980. Those females present in the works published prior to 1980, had a stereotypical feminine image. Martha, for example, in Storm Dog of Newfoundland, demonstrated strength of mind and action but was dependent upon a male character. In books published since 1980, however, the distribution of male and female characters has been equal. The more recent female protagonists have tended to be independent, strong, determined individuals like Mahala in One Fine Summer.

19. The quality of the illustration of Newfoundland children's literature has been uneven. While Pam Hall won the Amelia Frances Howard Gibbon award for best illustration in 1977 and the work of Shawn Steffler continues to be praiseworthy, many other children's books have amateurish and uninspiring illustrations. In the best illustrations there is a distinct sense of Newfoundland both under the sea and on the land.

20. The production quality of many Newfoundland children's books has been poor. Many have been published with paper covers and held together by staples. There have been such editorial problems as the repetition of lines of text and even some grammatical errors, not justified by the context. Many publications suffer seriously from lack of editorial direction. Many suffer from poor packaging. These difficulties still exist, even though improvements are apparent.

21. Many fine books of Newfoundland children's literature have been allowed to go out-of-print quickly. Ella Manuel's That Fine Summer, Tom Moore's Goodbye Momma, John Hayes' The Dangerous Cove, and Tom Dawe's Landwash Days: Newfoundland Folklore, Sketches, and Verse for Youngsters are just a few examples. Moore's novel, Goodbye Momma, has been recently reprinted. That this is indicative of a future trend is greatly to be hoped. It is also much to be desired that those books considered deserving of being brought back into print will be given much more attractive packaging.

22. There are many titles of Newfoundland children's literature published during the period from 1940 to 1990 that are worthy of being shared with today's children. There have been several examples of nationally and internationally recognized children's books of excellence. Although the cut-off-date for this study is 1990, it is evident that the quality of Newfoundland children's literature continues to improve. Some examples of this trend are Kevin Major's Eating Between the Lines (Doubleday, 1991), winner of the Canadian book of the Year Award for 1991, and Diana: My Autobiography (Doubleday, 1993), a work of biographical fiction as well as Al Pittman's On a Wing and a Wish. Saltwater Bird Rhymes (Breakwater Books, 1992), another book of poetry. As well, it is noteworthy that a growing interest in fantasy, science fiction and the occult

is being recognized in Barbara Lane's Daddy's Back: A Story of the Supernatural (Jesperson, 1991) and Justice for Julie (Jesperson, 1992). Here again it is imperative that literary excellence not be sacrificed in the exploration of subjects of passing interest. After a lengthy struggle with unevenness in quality in both text and construction, Newfoundland children's literature may be coming into its own, deserving to be recognized as literature within the province of Newfoundland, across Canada, and internationally.

Recommendations

Based on a review of the literature regarding excellence in children's literature and careful examination of the Newfoundland children's literature published between 1940 and 1990, a number of recommendations about Newfoundland children's literature in general appear justified. These are listed below.

1. Publishers should improve the technical quality of the books which they publish. This includes professional editing as well as the total packaging of the product.

2. A number of books of Newfoundland children's literature are no longer in print but they represent some of the finest books of Newfoundlandia and deserve to be reprinted for today's young readers. In some cases the

reprinted version is deserving of much better packaging than was the case in the original.

3. Authors and illustrators of Newfoundland children's literature should write and illustrate for the universal child. This does not imply that any flavour of Newfoundland must be left out of their work to make it acceptable to the international market. If authors and illustrators strive for excellence and seek out the universal in their regional world, then what is Newfoundland will only serve to enhance their final product, making it literature for all children. Contrived regionalism serves neither the region, the reader, nor the literature.

4. A strong, informed and current criticism of Newfoundland's children's literature is needed. This will help to ensure that only the best is produced for children. Such criticism may also help to ensure that the best will remain in print.

5. Newfoundland schools should actively support the demand for the best in Newfoundland children's literature by using only the best in the schools, and by not settling for less than that.

6. Newfoundland children's books should not be purchased solely because they are Newfoundland books. While some may see this action as being supportive of local industry, it is actually detrimental in that it does not

demand that the publishing industry maintain standards of excellence for their products.

7. The Department of Education of the Government of Newfoundland should make judicious selection in the books it purchases for distribution in the schools, regardless of the fact that the books may be published locally.

8. Children's literature must be held in high esteem, recognized as literature, not just stories anyone can write. Such literature must be evaluated in terms of established criteria for excellence. This position needs to be promoted so that children's literature will not be considered as second rate writing, intended just for children.

9. Fine books deserve fine illustrations. In picture books and picture storybooks in particular and in illustrated books in general, care must taken by publishers to ensure that the quality of the text is at least matched by the quality of the illustrations.

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PART II

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

OF

NEWFOUNDLAND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE,

1940-1990

Introduction

Quality children's literature should enrich the lives of its readers. It may achieve this goal through illuminating the readers' understanding of themselves, and of other people and places in the past, present, and future. The same expectations should be held for Newfoundland children's literature but with the added goal of illuminating the readers' understanding of the Newfoundland experience. By reading literature which achieves these goals, Newfoundland children will hopefully find a sense of belonging and identity peculiar to their home.

From 1940 to 1990, Newfoundland children's literature has developed considerably both in quantity and quality. These books are being used more frequently in Newfoundland classrooms as the emphasis on children's literature and the children's own environments increases. Care must be taken in the selection of books for use in the classroom if children are to share in the very best of children's literature. Unfortunately, the criticism of Newfoundland children's literature is sadly lacking. Comprehensive selection aids for this material are virtually non-existent. To provide a ready reference aid for teachers, teacher-librarians, and others interested in using Newfoundland children's literature, three annotated bibliographies have been compiled. The Newfoundland children's literature

included in these bibliographies were identified using the following definition:

1. Books which are fictional in content. Works which are designed purely for informational purposes are excluded;
2. Books which have been published in Newfoundland. Books originally published elsewhere but for which a local publisher has purchased publishing rights from the international market are included only if they fit into category 3 or 4 below;
3. Books which have been published elsewhere but have been written by Newfoundlanders;
4. Books which have been published elsewhere, and are not written by Newfoundlanders, but have a significant Newfoundland theme. Anthologies, even if they included a story or poem with a Newfoundland, are not included because the majority of them have themes broader than Newfoundland.

The works of Newfoundland children's literature were chosen in the following manner:

1. the catalogues of the Curriculum Materials Centre of the Faculty of Education at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Newfoundland Room at the Queen Elizabeth II Library of the Memorial University of Newfoundland, and

the Newfoundland Public Libraries were examined to compile a preliminary list of books;

2. the preliminary list was then supplemented by an examination of:

(a) all available Newfoundland publishers' catalogues;

(b) standard Canadian reference and bibliographic aids held by the Curriculum Materials Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland;

(c) any existing bibliographies of Newfoundland materials (such as the annotated bibliography compiled by Hiscock and Braine in 1980).

Every effort was made to ensure that the listing of Newfoundland children's literature published from 1940 to 1990 was as all encompassing as possible. Limitations, however, are unavoidable. The location of all publications may be hampered because of circumstances beyond the writer's control. Standard bibliographic sources in this area are incomplete or non-existent, therefore, a record of a particular work may not exist. Conversely, the record of a book may exist but a copy of the book may not be available. Considering the vast numbers of books published within the period, books published outside of Newfoundland with a significant Newfoundland theme may prove difficult or impossible to find.

After the identification of the works of Newfoundland children's literature, the books were evaluated according to

the comprehensive statement of evaluation criteria recommended by Huck (Appendix A). In a small number of cases titles of works which could be considered Newfoundland children's literature were found but, since no copy of the book could be found for evaluation, a judgement could not be made. A bibliography of these books is be found in Appendix B.

The annotated bibliographies of Newfoundland children's literature are divided into three sections: Books for Younger Readers, Books for the Middle Grades, Books for Older Readers.

In each category, the books are listed in alphabetical order according to author. If there is more than one book by an author, the books are listed in chronological order according to the date of publication. For each book, full bibliographic data is provided along with a brief descriptive and critical annotations.

In addition to the annotation, references to reviews published in Canadian Materials, Canadian Children's Literature, In Review, and The Horn Book Magazine have been included for any titles which were reviewed by these publications. The references to published reviews are not comprehensive. The writer searched only the aforementioned reviewing journals to provide a representative sampling from the major Canadian reviewing journals of children's

literature and the preeminent American reviewing journal of children's literature (The Horn Book Magazine).

Recommendations regarding the quality of each title and a suggested grade level for use of the work accompany each book. The recommendations regarding quality are scaled as follows:

Highly Recommended -- Books which demonstrate excellence in content according to Huck's criteria.

Recommended -- Books which are generally of a high literary quality.

Recommended with reservations -- Books which are of a high standard with regard to content but which may contain objectionable material in language and/or subject, or material of concern as expressed in the annotation.

Marginal -- Books which have slight content, and are weak in writing style.

Not recommended -- Books not recommended for reasons stated in the annotation.

Books for Younger Readers

Burt, Robert. (1989). Notsomuch a Rainbow. Illustrated by Wilfred Reid. St. John's, NFLD.: Creative Publishers. ISBN 0-920021-63-8. 32 pp.

With reference to three leprechauns, Tir, Na, and Nog, Notsomuch a Rainbow is the story of how the leprechauns decided to leave the new world for their ancestral home because humans no longer believed in them and their magic.

Based on oral tradition, this tale is overwritten and boring. There is little fantasy or magic in either the text or the illustrations.

Not recommended.

Dawe, Tom. (1982). A Gommil From Bumble Bee Bight. Illustrated by Sylvia Quinton Ficken. St. John's, NFLD.: Harry Cuff Publications. ISBN 0-919095-19-4. 56 pp.

A Gommil From Bumble Bee Bight is a collection of witty limericks focusing on Newfoundland place names.

Dawe has produced a thoroughly enjoyable and humorous collection of poetry. Ficken's illustrations, although not in full colour, appropriately capture the humour of Dawe's verse. The publisher, however, should have supplied this book with a more substantial binding. A Gommil From Bumble Bee Bight is an appropriate book for all ages, not just for younger readers.

Highly recommended. All ages.

Dawe, Tom. (1983). Angishore, Boo-Man and Clumper. Illustrated by Sylvia Ficken. St. John's, NFLD.: Harry Cuff Publications. ISBN 0-919095-50-X, 64 pp.

Angishore, Boo-Man and Clumper is Tom Dawe's first Newfoundland folk alphabet book. A Newfoundland word is chosen for each letter and explained through the humorous verse and illustrations accompanying it. Sylvia Ficken provides memorable and humorous black and white illustrations. Some examples of the words included are: Q is for quiff, Y is for yaffle, and Z is for zyzzle.

With much imaginative stimulation and delight for readers, Dawe and Ficken have combined to produce a collection of humorous verse that brings to life many interesting Newfoundland words. Unfortunately, the binding is poor. Angishore, Boo-Man and Clumper is an appropriate book for all ages, not just for younger readers.

Highly recommended. All ages.

Dawe, Tom. (1986). Lings 'n' Things. Illustrated by Pamela Dawe. St. John's, NFLD.: Harry Cuff Publications.

In this counting book, a collection of short rhymes describe the meanness of a variety of sealife towards a trapped ling.

The pleasure of Dawe's verse is diminished because of the inaccuracies of the illustrations. Readers will be confused in counting the sealife if they do not realize from the beginning that the ever present ling is not to be counted. The illustrations by Pam Dawe are deliberately done in black and white so that young readers can colour them -- an entirely inappropriate activity for a piece of literature.

Marginal. Preschool-K.

Dawe, Tom. (1987). Alley-Coosh, Bibby, and Cark. Illustrated by Sylvia Ficken. St. John's, NFLD.: Harry Cuff Publications. ISBN 0-921191-11-1. [54] pp.

Alley-Coosh, Bibby, and Cark is Tom Dawe's second Newfoundland folk alphabet book. Each letter, brightly and descriptively illustrated in full colour by Sylvia Ficken, represents a Newfoundland word and is accompanied by a humorous verse explaining the meaning of the word. Some examples of the words included are: Q is for quism, Y is for yop, and D is for dows'y poll.

This is an imaginative and entertaining book both in text and illustration. Readers will learn a lot about traditional Newfoundland folk customs and language as they enjoy the humour of Dawe's verse and Ficken's illustrations. It is unfortunate that the publisher did not provide a better binding for such a fine piece of Newfoundland literature. Alley-Coosh, Bibby, and Cark is an appropriate book for all ages, not just for younger readers.

Highly recommended. All ages.

Doucette, Judith M. (1986). Amanda's Baking Lesson. Illustrated by Anne Furlong. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-86-5. [32] pp.

Amanda wants to surprise her mother by baking a cake. Disaster strikes as Amanda does this on her own but Mom saves the day by enjoying the cake anyway and suggesting that she and Amanda bake cookies tomorrow.

A bland story is accompanied by rather poor black and white illustrations. While it may alert young readers to what may occur if they try to bake without adult supervision, the reading time learning the lesson could be used in a much more interesting and fulfilling manner.

CCL, 47, 1987 pp. 73-74.

Not recommended.

Guy, Ray. (1983). An Heroine for our Time. Illustrated by Sylvia Ficken. St. John's, NFLD.: Harry Cuff Publications. ISBN 0-919095-40-2. 60 pp.

An Heroine for our Time is a ridiculous tale of the adventures of a 2,000 pound baby.

This is not a book suitable for children. The satire found throughout is inappropriate in children's literature, the prose is choppy and uneven, and the story is difficult to follow.

Not recommended.

Harley, Peter. (1986). The Clothes Lion. Illustrated by C. Anne MacLeod. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-90-3. [35] pp.

The Clothes Lion is the story of a lion who has his wish of having clothes come true but he loses his friends.

This is a dull tale with a moralistic ending. The language and the illustration of the clothing are of a style with which few children will identify.

Not recommended.

Harley, Peter. (1988). One, Two, Baccalieu. Illustrated by Marie A. Stamp. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-85-7. [37] pp.

One, Two, Baccalieu is a collection of twenty-one poems with Newfoundland themes including birds, place names, whales, and weather.

This is an enjoyable collection of poetry for younger children. "One, Two, Baccalieu" and "Coves" are examples of the best poems. The black and white illustrations are good, easily aiding the reader to picture the subjects of the poetry. Unfortunately, the binding is quite poor.

Recommended. K-6.

Miles-Cadman, Margaret. (1989). Little Fan and the Fountain Fairy. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-72-2. [29] pp.

A light fantasy about Little Fan, a cat, hoping to make a wish after seeing a fairy in a fountain. Little Fan eventually realizes that with all her good fortune she does not need any wishes granted.

Little Fan and the Fountain Fairy lacks originality and is accompanied by amateurish illustrations which do little to boost interest in the story.

CCL, 60, 1990 pp. 128-129.

Not recommended.

Obed, Ellen Bryan. (1979). Borrowed Black. Illustrated by Hope Yandell. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-919948-69-3. [34] pp.

In this Labrador fantasy, readers are introduced to the despicable character, Borrowed Black, who has created himself and his home out of stolen articles. When he steals the moon leaving the coast in darkness for seventeen seasons of night, a crew of fantastical creatures aboard a boat built in the back of a whale set out to take the moon back.

Borrowed Black is a wonderful tale. The illustrations by Hope Yandell are very descriptive in a crowded and swirling way. The handwritten script may pose problems in

deciphering by young readers particularly where the script overlaps the text.

CCL, 20, 1980 pp. 61-63; CM, VIII/2, 1980, 126-27.

Recommended. Grades 2-6.

Obed, Ellen Bryan. (1984). Little Snowshoe. Illustrated by William Ritchie. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-919519-29-6. [26] pp.

Little Snowshoe is the simple but gentle story of a young rabbit searching in the snow for his mother.

Accompanied by excellent black and white drawings by William Ritchie, this story will appeal to the youngest readers who will not only enjoy the security evident when the mother is discovered but also enjoy joining in on the repeated lines.

CM, XIII/6, Nov. 1985, 272; CCL, 1985, 39/40, 130-32, 137-39.

Highly recommended. Preschool-Grade 1.

Obed, Ellen Bryan. (1988). Borrowed Black: A Labrador Fantasy. Illustrated by Jan Morgensen. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-14-5. [30] pp.

This is a new edition of the aforementioned book. The story is the same but the handwritten script has been clarified and the illustrations changed completely which makes it more easily read by younger readers. Jan Morgensen's illustrations create a distinct mood for the story. They cast a ghostly aura, a shadowiness, about the tale which is quite appropriate. Morgensen's depiction of Borrowed Black and the crew aboard the whale is excellent.

CCL, 57/58, 1990 pp. 114-116

Highly recommended. Grades K-6.

Obed, Ellen Bryan. (1990). Wind in My Pocket. Illustrated by Shawn Steffler. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-74-9. [28] pp.

Wind in My Pocket is a delightful collection of poetry. The twenty-two poems follow the cycle of the seasons as they focus on the universally appealing topics of the natural world. Particularly appealing are the poems "When" and "White Ships". The former tells of the arrival of a distinctly Newfoundland spring while the latter is about icebergs.

Obed's poems and Steffler's illustrations are grounded in Newfoundland and Labrador. The poetry has a lilting quality as it describes and creates images of the province which are echoed in the bright illustrations replete with wooden houses, deep blue water, and colourful lines of clothes drying in the wind.

CCL, 62, 1991 pp.95-98; CM, XVIII/5, Sept. 1990, p. 217.

Highly recommended. Grades K-6.

Pittman, Al. (1976). Down By Jim Long's Stage. Illustrated by Pam Hall. St. John's, Nfld. ISBN 0-919948-29-4. [40] pp.

Down By Jim Long's Stage is a collection of verse describing the antics of various creatures who inhabit the undersea world of the Newfoundland coast. Some of the creatures depicted are squid, lumpfish, and rosefish.

Pittman's verse is delightful as it describes with a Newfoundland linguistic flourish the undersea world around Jim Long's stage. Hall's illustrations, which won the 1977 Amelia Frances Howard Gibbon Award for best illustration in a Canadian children's book, bring out the distinctiveness of character possessed by each fish.

CM, V/2, Spring 1977, p. 90; CCL, 12, 1978, 45-47.

Highly recommended. Grades K-6.

Pittman, Al. (1983). One Wonderful Fine Day for a Sculpin Named Sam. Illustrated by Shawn Steffler. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-919948-86-3. [26] pp.

The universal theme of beauty being in the eye of the beholder is given a Newfoundland twist in One Wonderful Fine Day. Sam the sculpin, the ugliest fish in the sea, withstands the ridicule of the other sea life until he meets a girl sculpin who loves him just the way he is.

One Wonderful Fine Day is an understated tale that gets its message across without being didactic. Pittman's prose is clear and precise but with a flavour of Newfoundland. Steffler's bright and colourful illustrations have captured the essence of Newfoundland above and below the water.

Highly recommended. Grades K-4.

Renouf, Miriam. (1982). A Whale by the Tail. Illustrated by Bora Merdsoy. St. John's, NFLD: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-07-5. [30] pp.

A Whale by the Tail is the story of a whale that gets entangled in a fishing net and needs to be freed by divers. In addition to providing readers with a work of fiction, Renouf intersperses the story with facts about whales.

This is a poor example of a children's book. The story is didactic in approach and the transitions between the fictional and factual material are rough. Photographs are usually an inappropriate medium for a work of fiction. Merdsoy's photographs are dark and unfocused, making it difficult to see how they fit into the story.

Not recommended.

Renouf, Miriam. (1984). 10 Little Caplin. Illustrated by Deborah Diemand. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-46-6. [20] pp.

10 Little Caplin is a simple counting book with a lively little rhyme about the antics of a group of caplin.

While Renouf's rhyme is enjoyable, the illustrations provided by Diemand are poor. The caplin which the reader is to count stand out clearly but they do not have the appearance of caplin in either proportion or features. These illustrations along with a poor binding detract from the book.

Marginal. Preschool - Grade 1.

Russell, Stella. (1982). The Discontented Hippopotamus. Illustrated by Linda Russell. St. John's, NFLD.: Harry Cuff Publications. ISBN 0-919095-31-3. 12 pp.

The Discontented Hippopotamus tells the story of a hippopotamus that does not like his name. The hippopotamus is consoled by a whale that suggests the hippopotamus use two names as humans do.

Both the story and the black and white illustrations are characterized by their dreariness. Cliché and predictability are quite evident throughout the story.

Not recommended.

Steffler, John. (1987). Flights of Magic. Illustrated by Shawn Steffler. Victoria: Porcepic Books. ISBN 0-88878-265-9. 42 pp.

A book helps young Ruth move back and forth in her imagination between a fantasy world and reality. She encounters many interesting people in her "flights of magic" before she gives the book away to a lonely girl.

While Shawn Steffler's bright illustrations capture the reader's interest, John Steffler's story has little magic. It is slow paced and dull. The appealing characters that Ruth meets do not come to life for the reader.

CM Sept. 1988, XVI/5, pp. 183-4.

Marginal. Grades 2-4.

Thevenet, Gerard. (1988). Franky Can. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-13-7. [30] pp.

Franky is an engaging and entertaining young boy who can do many things -- except walk.

Written quite simply and accompanied by bold, amusing illustrations, Franky Can is an excellent book to entertain young children as well as educate them about the many capabilities of disabled people.

Highly recommended. K-3.

Whelan, Pat, & Arlene Luke. (1989). A Silly Codfish Tale / Un Conte en L'air d'une morue amusante. Illustrated by Ronan Kennedy. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-921692-14-5. 27 pp.

A Silly Codfish Tale / Un Conte en L'air d'une morue amusante is a short rhyming tale about the world of cod fish told in English and in French. It is a rather slight tale in which the codfish, named Dapper Tom/Marcel describes his world and what he believes he would look like and taste like on a human's plate.

There is little spark in this book. While the rhyme is pleasant, it seems almost pointless, and the black and white illustrations add very little of interest to the text. The French version is slightly different at times in an effort to maintain the rhyme of the text.

Marginal. K-1.

CCL, 62, 1991 pp. 95-98.

Books for the Middle Grades

Bunting, A.E. (1975). High Tide for Labrador. Illustrated by Bernard Garbutt. Chicago: Children's Press. ISBN 0-516-08819-X, 77 pp.

Thirteen year old Jimmy's desperate attempt to prove himself as an able seaman on his first trip on the Labrador nearly costs him his life and the fishing boat its catch. Instead, Jimmy comes to grips with his father's death and his mother's relationship with Big Simon, the first mate who took him on the trip.

This adventure story with good character development, particularly of Jimmy, has a dramatic setting aboard ship in the Labrador ice. The reader is drawn into Jimmy's life, and wonders about the outcome. The ending should encourage discussion about how Jimmy's life will change as a result of his experiences.

Recommended. Grades 4-6.

Carlson, Natalie Savage. (1966). Sailor's Choice. Illustrated by George Loh. New York: Harper Row. 140 pp.

On a sealing voyage off the northeast coast of Newfoundland, Sailor, a Newfoundland dog, unites his master, Captain Wight with Jamie, a young stowaway. Since Captain Wight's community no longer permits dogs within its boundaries, Wight is looking for a new master for Sailor. The dog decides on Jamie, who has stowed away to fulfil his dream of being a seal hunter. Eventually Wight decides to adopt Jamie, and he ingeniously solves the problem of Sailor's new master.

Based upon actual experiences of the author's neighbour, a former Newfoundland resident, this is a very readable story. Award winning author, Carlson, has created well rounded characters within a believable and exciting setting. The use of local expressions is well done -- never put on or forced. The theme of making choices in life is well portrayed. The reader not only gets to enjoy the personal stories of Captain Wight and Jamie but also learns about a sealing voyage in the early 1900s.

The Horn Book Magazine, Dec. 1966, XLII/6, pp. 715-716; In Review, Winter 1967, p. 25.

Highly recommended. Grades 4-7.

Clarkson, Betty. (1980). Tom, David and the Pirates. Ottawa: Borealis Press. ISBN 0-88887-050-7. 93 pp.

In 1672, Tom Smith and David Martin accompany their fathers on a fishing voyage to Newfoundland. This is the story of their trip across the Atlantic, their work on shore and what they did and saw in their spare time in the growing community of St. John's, Newfoundland.

Clarkson's purpose in writing the novel seems to be to enlighten the young reader about the early years of Newfoundland history. While footnotes primarily about boats and fishing found throughout the story do help to further the reader's understanding of the Newfoundland context, little is done to maintain the reader's interest in the story. Little effort is put into creating the setting. The characters are flat and stereotypical. The title itself is misleading as pirates play a very minor role in the story.

CM, IX/3, 1981, p. 171; CCL, 41, 1986, pp. 89-92.

Not recommended.

Corriveau, Monique. (1989). Seasons of the Sea. Abridged and translated by David Homel. Illustrated by Debi Perna. Toronto: Groundwood. ISBN 0-88899-086-3. 96 pp.

Based on an actual diary, Seasons of the Sea recounts the last year, 1910, that the McGuire family spent on Oderin, a tiny island in Placentia Bay. The story centres around ten year old Mary Lou as it follows her life through the seasons and features many traditional activities of outport life.

This is a pleasant story which could serve as a transition book to chapter books for young readers. While there is little feeling of adventure or excitement, Seasons of the Sea is an interesting and informative story.

CCL, 62, 1991, pp. 60-62.

Recommended. Grades 4-6.

Dawe, Tom. (1980). Landwash Days: Newfoundland Folklore, Sketches, and Verse for Youngsters. St. John's, NFLD.. Newfoundland Book Publishers. ISBN 0-920508-15-4. 56 pp.

This is a collection of twenty-five poems accompanied by prose commentaries and black and white illustrations about the creatures and folklore of Newfoundland beaches.

The poetry and commentaries are quite good. They have universal appeal in their subject matter and style. The illustrations are simple yet descriptive of the piece which they accompany. The binding, however, is poor.

Highly recommended. Grades 4-6.

Dawe, Tom. (1988). Winter of the Black Weasel. Illustrated by Anne Macleod. St. John's, Nfld.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-16-1. [30] pp.

Based on the literature of the oral tradition, Winter of the Black Weasel tells a story of how the Micmacs and the Beothuks became enemies. When a black weasel, an evil omen, appears in the community, violence and bloodshed erupt between the two groups of Indians.

A well written and interesting legend with a strong theme of good versus evil. The illustrations are quite dramatic; at times, they overpower the text. Symbolism is quite prominent in the illustrations, some of which may be disturbing to some young children.

Recommended. Grades 4-6.

Feather, Jean Hayes. (1973). Sawtooth Harbour Boy. Don Mills, Ont.: Thomas Nelson. ISBN 0-176-32913-7. 128 pp.

Sawtooth Harbour Boy is the simple portrayal of Billy Harding's teenage years in a fictitious Newfoundland outport.

The novel has a strong sense of place and can be considered primarily a vehicle to portray outport culture of Newfoundland in the 1920's. The character development is weak, except for that of Billy, who does show signs of emotional as well as physical growth. The blending of fact and fiction necessary for a successful work of historical fiction is not always achieved.

Marginal. Grades 4-7.

Feather, Jean Hayes. (1987). Fanny for Change. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-31-5. 79 pp.

Fanny for Change is a story of growing up. Eleven year old Fanny Grace learns an important lesson through the course of her everyday life. Fanny realizes that while there are some things in life which she can change, she must also accept that there are many which she cannot. Moreover, some things are better left as they are.

This well written work of historical fiction possesses convincing characters and a strong sense of place and time. It is an excellent transition book to chapter books for young readers.

CCL, 50, 1988, pp. 68-69.

Highly recommended. Grades 4-6.

Gale, Donald. (1988). Sooshewan: Child of the Beothuk. Illustrated by Shawn Steffler. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-15-3. [26] pp.

Sooshewan is a young Beothuk girl who at her grandmother's insistence goes out in the winter in search of her father. This journey provides Sooshewan with the opportunity to prove herself as a young woman, no longer a little girl.

While the reading level and theme of Sooshewan: Child of the Beothuk is most appropriate for the middle grades, this book could be read aloud to a younger audience. The theme of proving oneself in the face of adversity is well done. Readers catch glimpses throughout of Beothuk customs, life, and language. The illustrations are colorful but are sometimes more powerful than the text.

Recommended. Grades 4-6.

Hall, Pam. (1982). On the Edge of the Eastern Ocean. Toronto: GLC Publishers. ISBN 0-88874-055-7. [42] pp.

Written as an epic poem, On the Edge of the Eastern Ocean tells the story of a young puffin that has been forced by nature from his home. The young puffin reaches the Funk Islands where he comes under the tutelage of the ghosts of the Great Auks. Linnaeus, the leader of the Great Auks, not only teaches the young puffin how to survive but also tells

him how the Great Auks became extinct, about other birds, and about the perils of men and oil.

Strongly environmental in tone, this is a well written and illustrated tale. The character of the young puffin develops under the instruction of the Great Auks whose presence looms larger than life over the young puffin. This is an excellent aid to discussion about environmental issues related to the oceans.

Highly recommended. Grades 4-7.

Kavanagh, Ed. (1986). Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star. Illustrated by Tish Holland. St. Catharines, Ont.: Moonstone Press. ISBN 0-920259-11-1. 54 pp.

Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star, the first in the series, takes Amanda, a guardian of a waterfall, to the Blue Star. While she is there, Amanda meets a poor family who teach her about music and give her a flute in exchange for some of her gold hair. Amanda Greenleaf brings this gift back to her people.

This is a simple but enjoyable story. The character development is slight but the fantasy world of Amanda Greenleaf and her waterfall are believably created for the young reader. Of the three books in the Amanda Greenleaf series, Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star is the weakest in characterization and story line. Nevertheless, many middle grade readers who are just starting to read novels will enjoy it.

CCL, 47, 1987, pp. 73-74.

Recommended. Grades 3-5.

Kavanagh, Ed. (1987). Amanda Greenleaf and the Spell of the Water Witch. Illustrated by Janice Udell. St. Catharines, Ont.: Moonstone Press. ISBN 0-920259-12-X. 56 pp.

In Amanda Greenleaf and the Spell of the Water Witch, the second in the Amanda Greenleaf series, Amanda has to help two "mer-friends" reach the ocean to save their lives. To do this, Amanda must overcome the evil of the Water Witch. Amanda is successful in her quest and learns the power of friendship when she realizes that the Water Witch is not really evil but just friendless and bitter.

This is a simple story that moves quickly and has an admirable theme about friendship and its value. Readers learn about the character and history of Amanda Greenleaf. The soft black and white illustrations suit the tone of the novel quite well. The novel is a good choice for introducing middle grade readers to novels.

CM, XVI, May 1988, p. 88; CCL, 57/58, 1990, pp. 116-118.

Recommended. Grades 3-5.

Kavanagh, Ed. (1991). Amanda Greenleaf and the Boy Magician. Illustrated by Janice Udell. Goderich, Ont.: Moonstone Press. ISBN 0-920259-33-2. 72 pp.

In Amanda Greenleaf and the Boy Magician, the third in the Amanda Greenleaf series, Amanda returns to the Blue Star with Nollekens, the Queen's magician. Sent to find out why the people of the Blue Star are at war with each other, Amanda and Nollekens help to bring peace to the star.

This is an entertaining story with some humorous and unexpected moments. The character development is elementary but credible. The reader is easily transported to the believable but fantasy world of Amanda and her friends. A strong sense of adventure should hold young readers' interest but older readers may find the end sentimental. Amanda Greenleaf and the Boy Magician is a good introduction to the novel for readers in the middle grades.

Recommended. Grades 3-5.

Leitch, Adelaide. (1964). Lukey Paul From Labrador. Illustrated by Joe Rosenthal. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada. 116 pp.

Set in the summer of 1893, Lukey Paul From Labrador is the story of ten year old Lukey Paul who is sent by his uncle up the Labrador coast with a silver fox skin to trade for winter provisions. Lukey Paul makes the journey aboard Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's steamer "Princess May". Even though Lukey Paul is swindled in his trade, he gets the necessary provisions and learns a valuable lesson about self respect when he gives up his precious whale tooth.

Lukey Paul From Labrador has a swiftly moving plot filled with adventure and historical insight into life on the Labrador coast and the work of Dr. Grenfell. The characterization and setting are well done. The theme of

giving up some precious material thing for something far greater in value -- in this case, personal dignity -- is one which is well suited to the middle grades. This is an excellent choice for introducing novels to young readers.

Highly recommended. Grades 3-6.

Manuel, Ella. (1980). That Fine Summer. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press.

Mahala Jacobs is at odds with herself and her community. Mahala wants to be a boy so she can have a boat and go fishing. Her peers do not understand her, especially since she does not want to go to St. John's with her parent for the summer. During the summer that she spends with her grandfather and a new friend, Mahala learns about true friendship, tolerance, and herself.

That Fine Summer is a simple story with well developed characters. Mahala is portrayed as a strong-willed girl, ahead of her time. The strong sense of place is powerfully created through the authentic use of dialect. This is a "must read" which has a potent impact on the reader.

Highly recommended. Grades 4-8.

Story, Alice. (1989). Beneath the Barrens. St. John's, NFLD.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-66-8. 104 pp.

On a bright summer day, Kate and her cat fall through a pond to a mysterious world beneath the barrens. There they help two kingdoms -- the Ralans and the Gornbats -- resolve an old misunderstanding which has caused years of strife.

Beneath the Barrens is a slight fantasy that moves at a moderate pace. The Newfoundland connection is slim and incidental. While the storyline is fairly predictable, Kate does have an exciting adventure and encounters some out-of-the-ordinary creatures.

CM, XVIII, July 1990, pp. 182-183.

Recommended. Grades 4-6.

Wees, Frances Shelley. (1965). Mystery of the Secret Tunnel (Original title: Mystery in Newfoundland). Richmond Hill, Ont.: Scholastic-Tab. 156 pp.

While on a trouting trip with their Newfoundland cousins, the Patterson children, visitors to the province, stumble upon a hidden cave containing pirate treasure.

Mystery of the Secret Tunnel is a formula written mystery novel. The characters are flat. The plot is very slight and predictable. Coincidence plays too big a role in the story. Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders are depicted as quaint, almost backwards at times.

CCL, 12, 1978, pp. 82-85.

Not recommended.

Wilson, Eric. (1990). The Ice Diamond Quest. Toronto: Harper Collins. ISBN 0-00-647142-0. 145 pp.

On a visit to see their dying Newfoundland grandmother, Tom and Liz Austen help a cousin solve the mystery surrounding a strange yacht with a blinking light that sailed into Petty Harbour one night.

The Ice Diamond Quest is in the Tom and Liz Austen mystery series. Formula written, it has flat characters, a predictable plot, and an overbearing setting. The ending is unexpected.

CM, XIX, March 1991, p. 90.

Marginal. Grades 5-7.

Books For Older Readers

Barnhouse, Dorothy P. (1979). Quest of the Golden Gannet. St. John's, Nfld.: Breakwater. ISBN 0-919948-60-X. 97 pp.

In the late 1690s, Tad Evans and his great uncle, Skipper Jabez Evans, ship out on a Yankee Trader bound for Newfoundland. Tad's father was last believed to be in St. John's at the time of D'Iberville's raid on the town. Aboard ship, Tad becomes friends with Angel, the captain's daughter. Together they uncover a plan among some of the crew to hijack the ship, collect a lost treasure and sail to the pirate haven of Tortuga. The attempt fails. With the signing of the Peace of Ryswich, King William's War ends and Tad's father, imprisoned on St. Pierre, is released.

Quest of the Golden Gannet has a straightforward and, at times, entertaining plot. Even though the novel won the Beaver Award for Juvenile Fiction, the book suffers from poor editing. The character development is basic, with some stock characters among the ship's crew.

CM, VII, Autumn 1979, p. 211

Marginal. Grades 6-8.

Buchan, Bryan. (1972). Copper Sunrise. Richmond Hill, Ont.: Scholastic. ISBN 0-590-73835-6. 111 pp.

Set somewhere on the Newfoundland coast at the beginning of permanent settlement of the island, Copper Sunrise is the story of Jamie, the middle son of a Scottish family, who befriends a Beothuk boy named Tethani. To many of the white settlers, the Beothuks are viewed as a nuisance who should be hunted down. Jamie finds himself in the middle of a such a hunt, forced to decide between his people and his Beothuk friend.

Tersely written, this tragic story of friendship magnifies the demise of Newfoundland's native people. The characterization is excellent, especially that of Jamie and his older brother, Robert, who is taken in by the hunters. The development of the friendship between Jamie and Tethani is beautifully depicted. This novel, which is too good to miss, will affect the reader deeply.

CM, 1972, p. 17; In Review, 7, Spring 1973, p. 30.

Highly recommended. Grades 6-9.

Fon Eisen, Anthony. (1948). Storm Dog of Newfoundland. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 234 pp.

Storm Dog of Newfoundland is the story of the blossoming relationship between Alan and Martha, and how Storm, Alan's Newfoundland dog, fearlessly saves their lives. Initially brought together after the collision of their fathers' boats, Alan and Martha meet again on the Labrador coast. There they stumble upon some ambergris, a valuable product found in sperm whales. The ambergris leads to a daring sea chase which almost costs the young people their lives.

This novel is a very dramatic, romantic adventure. To contemporary readers, the language may be melodramatic in nature and the characterization, stereotypical. Nevertheless, the story is a fast paced and enjoyable "page turner".

Highly recommended. Grades 6-9.

Freeman, Bill. (1978). First Spring on the Grand Banks. Toronto: James Lorimer. ISBN 0-88862-220-1. 171 pp.

When John and Meg Bains and their sailor friend Captain Canso discover that Canso's father has died and his schooner, "Newfoundlander", seized to pay his debts, they take the schooner and leave for the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Hoping to raise a crew and catch enough fish to pay off the Nova Scotian merchants, Canso seeks out the help of Captain Donovan, an old friend of Canso's father. Donovan's help is forthcoming once Canso agrees to help the widows and children of Tower Rock who had lost their menfolk to the same fishing tragedy that had claimed Canso's father.

Set in the 1870s, this is an exciting adventure story providing the reader with a lot of information about the fishery in Newfoundland. Characterization is satisfactory, but at times slight. The action and intrigue as John and Meg try to beat the merchants against near impossible odds, help to maintain the reader's interest. Photographs from the 1870s and a glossary help the reader's understanding of the fishery.

CCL, 1982, 26, 81-83.

Recommended. Grades 6-8.

Gibson, Judy. (1987). The Secret of Devil's Cleft. St. John's, Nfld.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-88-1. 112 pp.

Mary Nutwhistle, a teenager who lives on the Battery, uncovers a planned insurrection during the visit to St. John's, Nfld. by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

This mystery novel is not credible. Coincidence and happenstance play a major role in moving the story forward. The story is overwritten and the plot contrived. Mary's teacher's husband, for example, is an investigator with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and helps Mary after he reads the homework assignment containing her suspicions.

Not recommended.

Hayes, John F. (1957). The Dangerous Cove. Vancouver: Copp Clark. 265 pp.

Set in 1676, The Dangerous Cove is the story of two fifteen year old boys -- Peter Thistle from the community, and Tom Thorbourn, the survivor of a shipwreck -- who help protect Treshaven's Cove from the ravages of the fishing admirals. The boys also stumble on information that one of the Devon captains is aware of, that leads them on a hunt for pirate treasure.

Winner of the 1959 Book of the Year Award from the Canadian Children's Librarian's Association, The Dangerous Cove is a fast paced and exciting adventure. The story is based on historical fact of the time period. The characters, interesting and well developed help move the action of the story forward. The subject matter should appeal to many young readers.

Recommended. Grades 7-9.

Mackey, Gell. (1990). Raggets! St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson. ISBN 0-921692-26-9. 93 pp.

Twelve year old Andrew helps an alien named Elvis save his world located deep beneath the earth's surface.

Raggets! is a convoluted and boring story. Poor characterization and an unbelievable plot do little to maintain the reader's interest.

Not recommended.

Major, Kevin. (1978). Hold Fast. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin. ISBN 0-7737-5429-6. 170 pp.

The highway deaths of his parents throw fourteen year old Michael's world into turmoil. He is forced to leave his home, his younger brother, his grandfather, and all that he knows and holds dear to live in a hostile urban environment with his aunt and uncle. Hold Fast is Michael's story to hold onto what remains of his former life as he comes to grips with his grief and the changes that he has to accept.

This gripping novel told in the first person won several major awards, including the Canada Council Award for Children's Literature. It has been called a landmark novel in Canadian writing for young people because of its strong use of setting and dialect. The language can at times be rough. A must read novel about struggling to maintain one's identity in the face of adversity.

CM, VI, 1978, p. 217; In Review, 12, Summer 1978, p. 70; The Horn Book Magazine, LX, Feb. 1984, pp. 99-103; CCL, 14, 1979, pp. 81-83.

Highly recommended with reservations. Grades 9 up.

Major, Kevin. (1980). Far From Shore. New York: Delacorte Press. ISBN 0-440-02455-2. 215 pp.

The world of fifteen year old Chris is falling apart. His father is unemployed and drinking, his mother may be looking for comfort from someone else, Chris has failed Grade Ten, he has no summer job, and his choice of friends leads him into trouble. Fortunately after a difficult summer, the future does not look as bleak for Chris or his family.

Written using four different narrators -- Chris, his sister, his mother, and his father -- this novel won the Young Adult Book Award for best Canadian book for 1980. While the language can be crass, the book tells an interesting and well written story of a Newfoundland family facing difficult times.

CM, IX, 1981, p. 93; CCL, 22, 1981, pp. 50-53.

Recommended with reservations. Grades 9 up.

Major, Kevin. (1984). Thirty-six Exposures. New York: Delacorte Press. ISBN 0-385-29347-X. 155 pp.

During the last months before high school graduation, seventeen year old Lorne befriends wild and daring Trevor, whose disciplining by an autocratic teacher causes him to lead the students on strike and Lorne into a confrontational situation with that teacher. Tragedy strikes when Trevor is killed in a drunk driving accident. Lorne finds himself considering his heritage through a school assignment and begins to contemplate a future away from Newfoundland.

A problem novel, this book has a unique format -- there are thirty-six chapters just as there are thirty-six exposures on Lorne's role of film. The content is definitely for mature readers because of the graphic descriptions and the vulgar language.

CM, XIII, March 1985, p. 61; CCL, 43, 1986, pp. 56-57.

Recommended with reservations. Grades 10 up.

Major, Kevin. (1987). Dear Bruce Springsteen. New York: Delacorte Press. ISBN 0-385-29584-7. 134 pp.

Needing an understanding friend for his problems and his dreams, Terry writes letters to his favourite rock star, Bruce Springsteen. Terry's parents have separated and he misses deeply his father's presence. His letters to Springsteen help him work out his feelings and express his aspirations.

Major creates a very believable and likeable character in Terry. His problems and dreams should be readily identifiable for many teenagers but his story will be enjoyed by a broader audience than those with similar difficulties. Terry's letters propel the story forward at a fast pace which maintains reader interest.

CM, XVI, Sept. 1988, pp. 172-3; CCL, 51, 1988, pp. 78-80.

Highly recommended. Grades 6-9.

Major, Kevin. (1989). Blood Red Ochre. New York: Delacorte Press. ISBN 0-385-29794-7. 147 pp.

Nancy is a mysterious new girl in David's high school class. Their school assignments on the Beothuk Indians bring them together, culminating in their canoe journey to Red Ochre Island, a burial place of the Beothuk people. Intertwined with their story is the story of Dauoodaset, one of the last of the Beothuks, and the final desperate days of his people. In the last chapters, Major brings the present and the past together in a memorable confrontation.

This powerful novel deals not only with the problems of David, a teenager in search of his identity, but also with the responsibility of present day people for the actions of their ancestors against Newfoundland's native people, the Beothuk. Major's characters are well constructed and the reader is drawn into the two parallel stories. In creating the different worlds of David and Dauoodaset, Major writes in two different styles. For David, Major uses a third person narrative with the language of contemporary teenagers. For Dauoodaset, Major writes in the first person in poetic prose. The ending is not expected. It successfully draws the two stories together leaving the reader with much to consider.

CCL, 61, 1991, pp. 59-60; The Horn Book Magazine, LXV, Sept./Oct. 1989, pp. 656-661.

Highly recommended. Grades 7 up.

McCarthy, Michael J. (1980). The Journey Home. Toronto: Gage. ISBN 0-7715-1660-6. 146 pp.

David, on probation and living in a foster home, runs away from police after the shooting death of his friend in a robbery. He ends up in Newfoundland, where he is befriended by Silas, an elderly fisherman and the only resident of Bear Cove. His relationship with Silas, the only positive relationship David has had since his parents' deaths, helps David to change his mind about the world and face his past.

This problem novel, easily read, has adventure, romance and mystery. While the events happen too quickly and coincidently to be credible, The Journey Home will appeal to the reluctant reader because the fast pace and the action easily catch the reader up in the story.

In Review, 12, Autumn 1978, p. 69.

Recommended with reservations. Grades 9 up.

McCarthy, Michael J. (1983). The Treasure of Kelly's Island. Illustrated by Sylvia Quinton Ficken. St. John's, Nfld.: Harry Cuff Publications. ISBN 0-919095-51-8. 90 pp.

After hearing that the pirate Black Jack Kelly had supposedly buried gold on nearby Kelly's Island, Kent, a boy from Toronto; Mac, an orphan living near Topsail Beach; and Big John Harding, an elderly fisherman, set out to investigate. During their hunt, the boys encounter drug dealers but are able to escape with the aid of Big John's Newfoundland dog. Eventually a map found in a Bible in the house Kent's family is renting leads them to the treasure.

Coincidence is key to The Treasure of Kelly's Island. The character development is flat, the story is generally overwritten, and any theme is lacking.

Marginal. Grades 6-9.

McCarthy, Michael J. (1989). Escape! St. John's, Nfld.: Jesperson. ISBN 0-921692-26-9. 77 pp.

Fifteen year old Chuck has his life dramatically changed when his mother marries Cliff Rockman, a successful business man and former sports star. The change is not for the better. Rockman's abusive rages drive Chuck's mother into a nursing home and Chuck to run away in Newfoundland during a school exchange visit. The friends he makes in Newfoundland help Chuck overcome his problems.

This fast paced problem novel will capture the reader's interest as Chuck's problems grow and he attempts to escape from the physical abuse afflicted by his stepfather. Character development is slight and stereotypical. Coincidence plays an important role in the resolution of Chuck's problems. The book is marred by several typographical errors.

Marginal. Grades 6-9.

Montero, Gloria. (1985). The Summer the Whales Sang. Toronto: James Lorimer. ISBN 0-88862-904-4. 165 pp.

Vivi Aguirre spends her thirteenth summer in Red Bay with her film-making mother, discovering things about whales and the Basques who hunted them back in the 1600s. The people she meets and the experiences she has force Vivi to

think about herself growing towards adulthood, and her parents' separation.

This is an interesting story with a fascinating locale. The book was authenticated by Memorial University archaeologist Jim Tuck, and Parks Canada. The portrayal of the local people as either juvenile delinquents from broken homes or crazy folk creates a definite imbalance in characterization. A teacher's guide is available from the publisher.

CM, XIV, Jan. 1986, pp. 17-18; CCL, 44, 1986, pp. 53-54.

Recommended with reservations. Grades 7-9.

Moore, Tom. (1976). Good-bye Momma. St. John's, Newfoundland: Breakwater. ISBN 0-919948-18-9. 70 pp.

Felix Ryan, now grown, remembers being five years old and dealing with his mother's death and the remarriage of his father.

In this short novel, the characterization is excellent. Moore captures the essence of being five and facing difficult times. The flavour of outport Newfoundland is captured in the descriptions. A must read that fortunately has been reprinted.

In Review, Winter 1977, p. 39; CCL, 14, 1979, pp. 65-67.

Highly recommended. Grades 7 up.

Moore, Tom. (1979). Tom Cods, Kids and Confederation. Illustrated by Rosemary Savory. St. John's, Newfoundland: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-10-5. 65 pp.

"Fleet" reminisces about the visit of Joey Smallwood to his community, the ensuing battle between the adults over Confederation, and the effects of the Confederation battle on himself and his teenage friends.

This is a slight but interesting recounting of the Confederation debate within a small but fairly representative community through the eyes of a teenager. Some of the characters, Fleet's father for example, are well drawn. The descriptions are quite vivid. The illustrations, however, are black and white, rather amateurish, and add

little to the tale. Teenagers interested in learning about Confederation should find this an engaging read.

CM, VII, Autumn 1979, p. 216.

Recommended. Grades 7 up.

Mowat, Farley. (1962). The Black Joke. Illustrated by Victor Mays. Boston: Little, Brown. 218 pp.

The "Black Joke" is a schooner with a worldwide reputation. Unfortunately for Jonathan Spence, her captain, life in 1935 on the south coast of Newfoundland is difficult. Spence's economic problems are compounded when Simon Barnes, a ruthless local merchant, is offered $10,000 for the schooner by rum runners. When Spence refuses to sell his ship, Barnes hatches a plan so that Spence will lose his ship in St. Pierre. Spence's sons, along with the aid of some Miquelon friends, save the day.

This is an exciting adventure story. The author quickly establishes the setting, capturing the reader's interest and moving the story forward at a rollicking pace. There is an interesting cast of characters with some character development of the key players. From the very beginning, the reader is on Spence's side. One feels like cheering at the end.

The Horn Book Magazine, XXXIX, Dec. 1963, p. 607; CCL, 1, 1975, pp. 63-65.

Highly recommended. Grades 6 up.

Palmer, Tammey. (1986). You're the Bumble in My Bee. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-920502-74-1. 63 pp.

A collection of fifty-eight poems about nature, human emotions, and the imaginings of the poet.

You're the Bumble in My Bee is a fine collection of poems for teenage readers -- and perhaps others as well, both younger and older. The poet, a teenager, brings a fresh point of view to many familiar scenes and situations. The language is rich in images.

Highly recommended. Grades 7-12.

Phillips, Linda, Peter Ringrose, & Michael Winter. (1990). Ask Me No Questions. Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada. ISBN 0-13-050568-4. 204 pp.

Fifteen year old Leslie Tunney is the victim of sexual abuse by her father. Leslie has lived with her secret for many years but the realization that her father has also been abusing her younger sister, Susan, and Susan's failed suicide, force Leslie to find the courage to tell what has been happening to her.

Sensitively told in the first person, this story draws the reader into Leslie's life. While the detail is at times clinical, the story remains compelling. Empathy for all family members is effectively established. The subject matter of Ask Me No Questions may raise some objections. Nevertheless, this novel deals with an important and all too real social issue which should not be hidden.

CM, XVIII, July 1990, p. 185; CCL, 62, 1991, p. 109.

Recommended with reservations. Grades 10 up.

Pippy, John H.C. (1989). Beware the Fugitora. St. John's, Nfld.: Breakwater Books. ISBN 0-920911-65-X. 135 pp.

Two boys discover an alien time travel device, a fugitora. The device transports them to a Newfoundland of the past where they encounter Beothuk Indians. But for the arrival in the past of the alien owners of the fugitora, the boys would have been killed violently by the Beothuks.

Beware the Fugitora is a poorly written story with stereotyped characters.

CM, XVIII, May 1990, p. 130.

Not recommended.

Porter, Helen Fogwill. (1988). January, February, June or July. St. John's, Nfld.: Breakwater. ISBN 0-920911-27-7. 199 pp.

Heather Novak is a sensitive fifteen year old at odds with her world, when she discovers that she is pregnant after her first brief romantic relationship. Feeling that her family, a family of women since her father is absent and her grandfather is dead, are too preoccupied with their own lives to care about hers, Heather opts to have an abortion alone.

The winner of the 1989 CLA Young Adult Book Award, January, February, June or July is a compassionate portrait of a teenage girl who believes she is alone in the world. The working class milieu of her family situation is revealingly accurate. The setting of downtown St. John's, Nfld. is well done. The graphic and clinical descriptions of the medical procedures which Heather undergoes, as well as the subject of abortion may cause difficulties for some readers.

CM, XXVII, Sept. 1989, p. 232; CM, XVIII, Jan. 1990, pp. 6-7.

Recommended with reservations. Grades 10 up.

Priddle, Floyd. (1990). The Survival Squad. St. John's, Nfld.: Breakwater. ISBN 0-920911-45-5. 200 pp.

The story follows the experiences of four friends during the early days following a nuclear war. The group finds a well equipped fall-out shelter which they use as their home until they believe it is safe to go outside. Once they venture out of the shelter, they have some violent confrontations with others also trying to survive.

Written by a teenager, The Survival Squad is an ambitious novel that fails. There is lots of action and much conversation between the characters but this does little to move the story forward. The characterization is slight and, in the case of the females, stereotypical. The transitions between chapters is rough and the ending is melodramatic. Some judicious editing may have yielded a tighter, more gripping story.

CM, XVIII, Nov. 1990, p. 276; CCL, 63, 1991, pp. 73-74.

Marginal. Grades 8 up.

Smith, Juanita J. (1989). Reena and the Riser. Toronto: Groundwood. ISBN 0-88899-100-2. 124 pp.

Captain Nechay Senchens and the crew of "Reena's Scavenger" hijack a government freighter carrying a load of priceless gemstones. The cargo, destined for the evil governor Kamkillan, is bugged. Kamkillan sends "The Riser", one of his most technologically advanced vessels in pursuit of the pirate vessel. Once the pirates are captured, Senchens is faced with the difficult decision of whether to sacrifice himself or his crew to escape.

Reena and the Riser is an entertaining science fiction story written by a thirteen year old author. The author gives lengthy and distinct descriptions of the physical appearances of the novel's characters. While the novel is set in the future, the present does slip into the setting from time to time. Even though the novel is superficial in its exploration of human emotions and behaviour, it is a fast paced story which should appeal to young teenagers.

Recommended. Grades 6-9.

Stuckless, Janice. (1990). A Dream Come True. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press. ISBN 0-921692-34-X. 71 pp.

Fifteen year old Katie lacks self-confidence because she has no friends and wears a hearing aid. Darryl, the high school basketball star, asks her out for a date, becomes her boyfriend, and solves Katie's confidence problems. Unfortunately, just as their romance gets serious, Darryl is diagnosed with AIDS. After some self-pity, Katie decides to stand by Darryl and the couple become "promised" to each other for whatever time Darryl has left.

Written by a teenager, A Dream Come True is a melodramatic, predictable teenage romance. The characterization is poor. The reader feels little empathy for Katie and Darryl. There is no discussion of AIDS other than that Darryl contracted the disease because he was an intravenous drug user.

Not recommended.

Such, Peter. (1973). Riverrun. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin. ISBN 0-7720-1010-3. 145 pp.

Riverrun is a fictionalized account of the last years of the Beothuks. Nonosabasut begins the novel telling of how he fought the white men for his wife, Demasduit. Demasduit picks up the narrative after her husband's death at the hands of the white men. She tells of her life with the white men and her eventual escape. Shawnadithit then takes over, telling of her experiences as a captive and of the last days of the Beothuk. The narrative concludes with the diaries of white men who had captured Shawnadithit.

Riverrun is a difficult novel to read, partly because of its abstractness and partly because of the changing points of view. The tone of the work is haunting which is most appropriate given the fate of the Beothuk. The

illustrations are actual drawings done by Shawnadithit during her captivity.

Marginal. Grades 9-12.

Tiller, Stanley C. (1950). Stormswept. Toronto: The Ryerson Press. 213 pp.

Teenager John Minton overcomes near impossible odds to ensure the survival of his family in a comfortable fashion after his father's death.

Stormswept is an adventure story in the romantic tradition complete with a teenage hero, daring races through life-threatening ice floes, the arrival of a mysterious fugitive aboard ship, and a miraculous rescue at sea. The character development is slight. A well developed setting propels the story forward. The reader is provided with plenty of information about the schooner fishery and Newfoundland in an earlier time.

Recommended. Grades 7-9.

APPENDIX A

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Before Reading

What kind of book is this?

What does the reader anticipate from the:

- Title?
- Dust jacket illustration?
- Size of print?
- Illustrations?
- Chapter headings?
- Opening page?

For what age range is this book appropriate?

Plot

Does the book tell a good story? Will children enjoy it?

Is there action? Does the story move?

Is the plot original and fresh?

Is it plausible and credible?

- Is there preparation for the events?
- Is there a logical series of happenings?
- Is there a basis of cause and effect in the happenings?

Is there an identifiable climax?

How do events build to a climax?

Is the plot well constructed?

Setting

Where does the story take place?

How does the author indicate the time?

How does the setting affect the action, characters, or theme?

Does the story transcend the setting and have universal implications?

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (continued)

Theme

Does the story have a theme?

Is the theme worth imparting to children?

Does the theme emerge naturally from the story, or is it stated too obviously?

Does the theme overpower the story?

Does it avoid moralizing?

Characterization

How does the author reveal characters?

- Through narration?
- In conversation?
- By thoughts of others?
- By thoughts of the characters?
- Through action?

Are the characters convincing and credible?

Do we see their strengths and their weaknesses?

Does the author avoid stereotyping?

Is the behaviour of the characters consistent with their ages and background?

Is there any character development or growth?

Has the author shown the causes of character behaviour or development?

Style

Is the style of writing appropriate to the subject?

Is the style straightforward or figurative?

Is the dialogue natural and suited to the characters?

Does the author balance narration and dialogue?

How did the author create a mood? Is the overall impression one of mystery, gloom, evil, joy, security?

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (continued)

What symbols has the author used to intensify meaning?

Is the point of view from which the story is told appropriate to the purpose of the book?

Format

Do the illustrations enhance or extend the story?

Are the illustrations consistent with the story?

How is the format of the book related to the text?

How sturdy is the binding?

Other considerations

How does the book compare with other books on the same subject?

How does the book compare with other books written by the same author?

How have other reviewers evaluated this book?

Source: Huck, Charlotte. (1979) Children's Literature in the Elementary School (3rd ed., updated). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp. 16-17.

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APPENDIX B

ANNOTATIONS OF REVIEWING PERIODICALS

CCL. Canadian Children's Literature/ Litterature canadienne pour la jeunesse. Canadian Children's Literature Association, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario. 1975- .

CCL is published quarterly. It reviews primarily books published in Canada or written by Canadians. Its critical articles on the nature of Canadian children's literature often include examinations of other forms of material, for example, periodicals, and videos.

CM: A Reviewing Journal of Canadian Materials for Young People. Canadian Library Association, 200 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Ontario. 1971- .

CM has been published yearly, quarterly, and now, monthly. It reviews both print and non-print materials produced in Canada, by Canadians, or dealing with Canadian topics.

The Horn Book Magazine. The Horn Book, Inc., 585 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02116. 1924- .

The Horn Book Magazine is published six times a year. It reviews books for children from kindergarten through adolescence. While the reviews are primarily of American publications, Canadian books are included. As well, a regular column, "News From the North" features Canadian materials.

In Review: Canadian Books for Children. Ontario Provincial Library, 14th Floor, Mowat Block, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario. 1967-1976.

In Review was published four times a year. It provided critical reviews of Canadian books for children.

APPENDIX C

TITLES FOUND, NO BOOK LOCATED

Bice, Clare. (1954). The Great Island: A Story of Mystery in Newfoundland. s.l.: Macmillan.

Feaver, Jeanette D. (1979). The Unhappy Gornf. St. John's, NFLD.: Jesperson Press.

Garrett, Helen. (1966). The Brothers From North Bay. Philadelphia: Westminister Press.

Holliday, Joe. (1955). Dale of the Mounted in Newfoundland. s.l.: Thomas Allen.

Kropp, Paul. (1988). Head Lock. s.l.: Collier Macmillan.

Schull, Joseph. (1968). The Jinker. s.l.: Macmillan.

Thistle, Melville W. (1954). Peter the Sea Trout. Toronto: Ryerson.

Thornley, Ruth. (1979). The Bright Idea. s.l.: The Author.

Thornley, Ruth. (1979). The Greedy Bear. s.l.: The Author.

Wakeham, P.J. (1958). Princess Sheila. s.l.: The Author.

Wakeham, P.J. (1971). West Adventure: The Voyages of Gaspar and Miguel Corte Real. s.l.: Carlton Press.